



## Bill Bates: motor coach proprietor and carrier

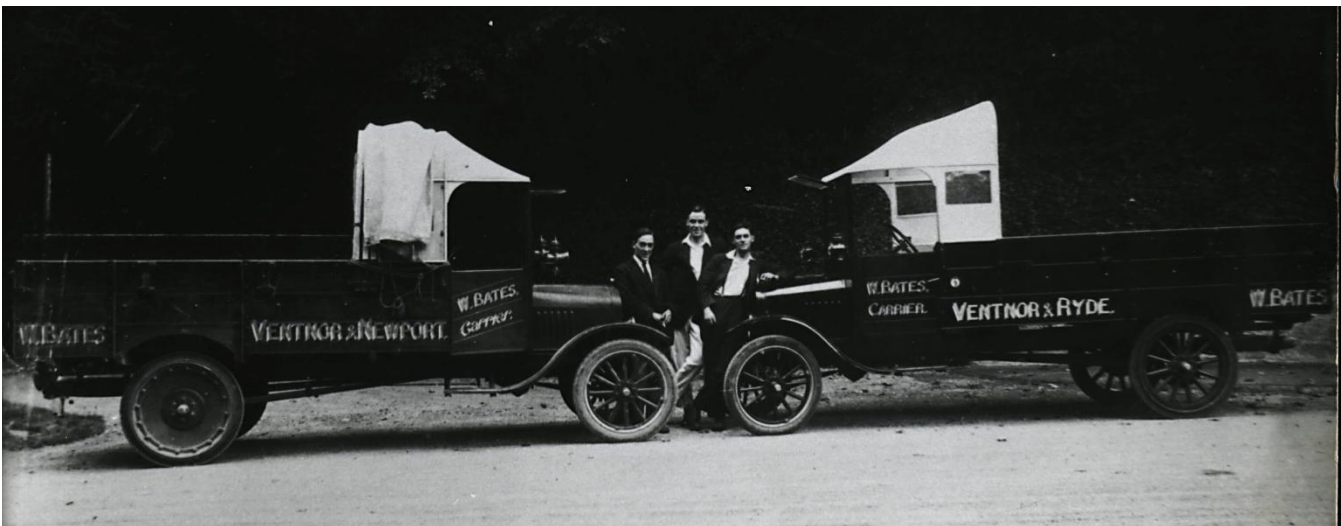
Bill Bates was born in Birmingham in 1898 and came with his family to Ventnor in 1911. His parents had taken on the Globe Hotel in the High Street and Bill became an apprentice with Martins, the local coachbuilders. When war broke out in August 1914, he managed to enlist in the Army, giving his age as 18 rather than 16. He served from 1914 to 1919, some of the time in India. Back in Ventnor by 1920, he started up a road carrier business, running motor lorries between Ventnor and Ryde and between Ventnor and Newport. Then, in the late 1920s, he formed a passenger coach business, eventually running a small fleet of four vehicles, initially described as charabancs, but later as motor coaches. He teamed up with Solent Line Coaches who operated on the mainland, picking up their through passengers from Ryde.



The adjacent image shows one of those coaches, the DL registration just visible, in the 1930s, with Fred Nobbs thought to be the driver. The four coaches comprised a Lancia 20-seat charabanc, a 14-seat Chevrolet, a 20-seat GMC Waveney, and a 20-seat Austro-Fiat. Bill Bates eventually sold his coach business to Crinage's early in 1937. His lorries were retained and were used in the coal and coke merchanting business that he established just before the Second World War. This was later to be taken over by his son, Reg Bates.

Bill Bates and his wife Emily Kate became stalwarts of the local British Legion, Bill serving continuously on its committee from 1943. Bill died in 1966, aged 68, after a long illness.

The image below shows Bill Bates (left) with his two lorries about 1924-5, parked nose to nose at the west end of Park Avenue.



*Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre*



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