



Those who operate the bus service have an enviable knowledge of local people and affairs. John Brotherton (left) was a conductor for twenty-six years before taking his job at the Grassington depot. Harry Parker (right) has been driving buses for five years. He was previously a conductor.

**SERVICE 71** involves some nineteen miles of narrow, up and down, roadway, bordered by walls made without mortar, passing through Rylstone, Hetton, Cracoe, before touching the Wharfe valley, and then travelling in the company of some of the finest Dales scenery.

It is a friendly service because the drivers and the conductors know practically all the passengers. "They just hold out their hands with money in 'em, and expect you to know their name, address and destination," lamented a new conductor. The veterans of the run knew all this information — and more besides!

It is a light-hearted service because the dalesfolk who travel on the bus outside the rush hours — when it is full of weary workpeople — have put on their best "setting off" clothes and are in the mood for gossip and enjoyment.

It is also a Service with a capital "S." As Mr. Ward pointed out: "The rural bus service is an amenity that is wanted. This transport link is essential in the Dales. I sometimes wonder how people managed before the buses came. I suppose they would stay put for most of the time. Now people like moving around."

As Harry Parker drove down the narrow roads, expertly avoiding the rough

patches which need the attention of road authorities, blowing the horn in acknowledgment of the waving of his many friends, and keeping a sharp look-out for jay-walking hens or sheep, I began to contrast the rural service with the wearying perambulations of city buses. They work on stricter timetables, their drivers and conductors using as many calories on a short run down the busy streets as Derek Ibbotson, the Yorkshire runner, uses on the race track.

The present company has run the service for twenty-nine years, taking over the business of C. Chapman Ltd. "Kit" Chapman is still well remembered as the dalesman who operated horse-drawn coaches in Wharfedale, handling the Royal Mail as well as passengers and light goods.

**FOR** a time the present company carried the mail from Skipton to the Dales villages, and from 1930 to 1931 the 6-25 p.m. bus from Grassington had a mail box clipped on the front. Anyone could flag it down and post letters. The box was collected by the postal authorities on its arrival at Skipton. The first bus, a Tilling Stevens, had a rear entrance.



At Buckden, where the bus crew stretch their legs for a few minutes, there are four passengers for Grassington — Mrs. Winifred Charlton, Mrs. Mary Dixon, Mrs. Dora Mitton, and Miss Jennie Dixon.

The red-sided buses carry school-children and workers to Skipton. They transport quarrymen to the works at Swinden and Threshfield. And children attending the new school at Grassington are picked up each morning. Newspapers are carried, and on the journey from Ilkley to Grassington, at 5-30 p.m., evening papers are distributed by the bus driver, who collects the money and hands

it over to a newsagent at Burnsall. It is a custom which has been in existence since 1930.

The Road Traffic Act took a lot of the fun out of operating buses. Previously it was possible to see calves in sacking, crates of hens and even piglets being carried. This applied particularly to the run "over the tops" to Wensleydale.

Billy Stevenson was the driver of this bus, one of the old-time Chapman fleet.

