

NOTES FROM THORNHAM

This picture was taken on Saturday 26th May from the Four Horseshoes corner. It shows a Galloways bus on their last day of operating the 456 and 459 routes which connected Stowmarket, Gislingham, Eye and Diss.



Galloways had run the service for about 20 years, previously operators had been Simmonds and Braybrooke.

A bus map of 1924 shows the Eastern Counties Road Car Co Ltd was operating a web of routes radiating from Bury and Ipswich, including their number 8 from Diss to Ipswich via Eye. In 1931 they became the Eastern Counties Omnibus Co and that service evolved to the 113 and 114 of today.

People tell how not that long ago they walked or cycled to the Bull or White Horse, leaving their bikes there while they took the bus to Ipswich. Nowadays it is very different. Few people are willing to risk traffic and potholes even for that short distance and lifestyles rarely fit in with bus timetables and bus stops.

A new 456 service is being run by minibus between Stowmarket and Gislingham. It extends to Thornham Magna and Eye on Saturdays only. Being a minibus it is not legally required to be accessible. There is also a new school bus route to carry those children to Eye who were previously able to use suitably timed public 456s.

The history of cross country routes such as the 456 is harder to discover, having been operated by local companies which took over from the old village carriers with their horses and carts serving market towns and railway stations.