

100 Years of Service

CROWFOOTS CARRIERS LTD

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Founded in 1912 following the Coal strike
- Founded by John Crowfoot
- Invested in motor van after World War I to out perform competition
- By 1930's expanded range of products carried for its diverse customer base.

CROWFOOTS STORY 1912-1950

Crowfoots Carriers journey began at the start of the last century by John Crowfoot a budding entrepreneur who made a living involved with the coal industry. However, following the national coal strike of 1912 John chose to diversify his small business by delivering local items and goods between the various boot and shoe factories in and around the Earl Shilton to Leicester area, a journey of some 10 miles.

From the start he faced severe competition with at least five rival carriers competing in the same market.

After the Armistice in 1918, John took the decision to invest his modest earnings and replace his horse and cart with a motor van. This gave the fledgling business an

edge over the other local carriers allowing quicker, more frequent deliveries to customers.



Horse & cart similar to the one used by John Crowfoot to move coal and other local goods.

By the late 1930's a Morris-Commercial three-ton van was being used, now able to do two trips a day to Leicester when needed. The items carried had changed, the shoe trade was still the biggest customer, but provisions, including sacks of sugar, were now daily consign-

ments from the Leicester wholesalers.

Ice carried on the cab step, covered by a wet sack, was also a regular traffic for the local butchers etc. Also, in keeping with the tradition of the local carrier, John's son Dennis Crowfoot (Snr) carried out orders for shopping, and during the war was to be entrusted with ration books to enable those items to be purchased.

In 1947 Dennis Crowfoot (Snr) became seriously ill potentially ending the company's story. Nevertheless his son also called Dennis, chose to resign his commission in the RAF to join the business and help his father. In doing so Dennis Crowfoot (Snr) was able to recover and continued to work alongside his son.



1955 Crowfoots operated from its depot in Earl Shilton, Leicestershire

BUT WHY BROWN LORRIES?

In the early 1950's the fleet was doubled with the purchase of a 2nd truck. This new vehicle was ordered to match the colour of the then first truck in Burgundy Red. With the accidental incorrect mixing of paints the result came out Brown. An

embarrassed paint shop owner explained the colour was not brown but 'off burgundy'. The two vehicles continued to be used and what quickly became apparent to Dennis Crowfoot was that this new colour didn't show the dirt and muck lorries pick up

as much as the older red vehicle did. Hence in recompense for his mistake the paint shop owner repainted the old truck in the same colour as the new lorry. 'Crowfoot Brown' was then adopted as an official colour on the Joseph Mason Paint chart.

CROWFOOTS STORY 1950-2012

During the period of Nationalisation in the early 50's and the 25 miles radius limit growth was sought through strategic partnerships with other carriers including a very effective interchange of traffic with Collins Express Parcels, Walsall Wood. Such partnerships allowed Crowfoots to deliver further than local rivals and get around the restrictive work practices of the time to the benefit of its customers.

"The Crowfoot family are proud to know they have been successfully serving their customers for over 100 years"

Crowfoots Carriers by now under the direction of Dennis Crowfoot (Jnr), developed its service, despite considerable and changing competition including that from BRS Roadline and from other local carriers.

By the early 80's the shoe trade no longer accounted for the majority of work carried following the closure of local shoe manufacturing (Barwell for many years manufactured more boots and shoes than anywhere in Europe).

The business moved from its original base at Earl Shilton to Barwell and Dennis Crowfoot sought growth through acquisition of other local carriers

unable to cope with the changes in the parcels market. These included neighbouring Briers Carriers, Shepshed and Derby



By the 1970's the fleet had expanded to over 20 vehicles

Express Deliveries. Later came M & S Transport, Stalybridge with 20 vehicles. With these acquisitions Crowfoots were able to expand the area of coverage for customers. The former M & S depot at Stalybridge, a former LM&SR goods warehouse was occupied by New Age travellers within hours of Crowfoots moving to their new depot at Park Street, this despite being left fully secured including closed circuit TV. The warehouse was to be totally vandalised. The Greater Manchester Police not only were unable to prevent this, but also suffered one of their own vehicles being destroyed.

The depot network was consolidated during the 90's with the closure of the Shepshed depot and its amalgamation with a newly built Derby depot close to the centre of the city.

Dennis Crowfoot (Jnr) died on the 29th June 2000, but Crowfoots Carriers remains a family

business with the fourth generation Philip and Michael running the business between them.

Both their sons subsequently joined taking the company to a fifth generation family business. Philip's son Robert took up responsibilities for IT, sales and acting as current DGSA and Michael's son Geoff also took on sales and operational duties including the introduction of vehicle tracking to the fleet allowing Crowfoots to track the progress of individual deliveries.

Crowfoots now operate from three new individually designed depots at Barwell, Derby and Stalybridge, each with workshop facilities and having the latest purpose designed security installed. Crowfoots direct area of delivery has also expanded considerably from its humble 10 mile beginnings now including the North West, Yorkshire and central England.

Diversifying its portfolio in the late 90's Crowfoots also offers its customers storage and warehousing services which complement its distribution



Dennis William Crowfoot pictured by his Harvard aircraft during a tour in Canada, Late 1940's

network. This has grown to now include over 100,000 square feet of warehousing.



Over 100,000 sq feet dry secure alarmed storage facilities

Whilst other carriers have ceased operations, withered on the vine or have been consumed by enterprises which in turn have suffered difficulties, the Crowfoot family are proud to know they have been successfully serving their customers for over 100 years, proving that a family-run business with a sound understanding of skills and commitment can still succeed and prosper on the same street as the conglomerate.



One half of the head office depot in Leicester now over 5 acres