

Winterbourne Gunner Bus Escapes Accident 1931

An unemployed bus driver, who was engaged by Main Lines Co. to drive between London and Plymouth during the Christmas rush was fined £5 by the Salisbury city magistrates on Monday for dangerous driving on the London road on Christmas-eve. He was Sidney Arthur Baker, of 54 Craven-avenue, Plymouth, and he pleaded not guilty.



The case against Baker was that on Christmas-eve when he was driving a Mail Lines bus towards Salisbury, he cut in on the London road between a Winterbourne Gunner bus also going towards Salisbury, and two light cars coming in the opposite direction.

The police witnesses were Albert Spears, of Winterbourne Gunner, Henry Edwards, of Gomeldon, and Leonard B Kerley, of Winterbourne Earls, passengers in the Winterbourne bus, and PC Berryman.

It was alleged that when the Winterbourne bus was approaching the curve on the London road near the railway bridges, the defendant drew up from behind, passed the other bus at a speed from 30 to 45 miles per hour, and by going over the white line, cut in between the bus and two oncoming cars. The small bus, it was alleged, had to swerve into a bank to avoid a collision. As the defendant's bus passed the other bus, half its length just missed the bonnet and its tail just missed striking the bridge.

Baker, in defence, said he sounded his horn when the road was quite clear and he overtook the small bus outside the cemetery gate and was waved on by the driver. When he had drawn up by the side of the bus he noticed a light car approaching in the opposite direction. He had to make up his mind quickly as to what was the safest thing to do, and he accelerated and went through. The light car which approached him had not to ease down very much. Cross examined, he said he did not agree that he passed the other bus on the bend.

Baker was fined £5 and £1 8s costs and his license was suspended. He said he was unemployed and was allowed a month to pay.

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