

The Pinelands Bus Company hung out here

THANK YOU to those readers who responded to my query in the last issue regarding the mystery of "Halfway House" near Woodside Drive.

Apparently this building was a corrugated iron structure in Northwalk, used to house the buses of the Pinelands Bus Company which was in operation during the early days of Pinelands.

Mr Moore, a Pinelands resident living in Northwalk next to Halfway House, started the bus service between Pinelands and Mowbray in 1929. It was a double decker bus with Mr Moore at the wheel. Mrs Moore and a relation, Mrs Dennison, collected the fares.

The bus route included Northwalk, Acacia Way, Central Avenue, Serpentine and Meadoway. The service was extended as Pinelands grew and the terminus was eventually located in Francis Road.

These were all gravel roads but were spray tarred in 1939. This proved unsatisfactory and they were properly tarred in 1937.

There were no actual bus



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stops, and passengers were picked up wherever they stood on the route. In June 1933, the Pinelands Civic Association resolved to introduce bus stops, as by now Mr Moore had purchased a second bus to service the route at peak times. These were 8 am to 8.30 am, 1.30 pm, and 5 to 6 pm.

At a public meeting in June 1941, the Pinelands Bus Service revealed that it was costing the company over £168 (R336) for licences and insurance, and there

had been a wage increase of eight shillings (R1.60 cents) a week, and a war allowance of £3 (R6). The cost of a new bus chassis and body was £2690 (R5380). Because of these high costs, the company increased the fares – from Mowbray to the terminus in Pinelands would be fourpence (three cents) and from Twickenham Road in Mowbray to the Pinelands Bridge would be one penny (1 cent). Servicemen would travel at half price.

Three months later complaints were levelled against the company regarding its service. More buses were required to keep pace with the growth of Pinelands but the British war-time Government would not allow the export of new bus components. Mr Moore undertook to source the parts from America

The Civic Association formed a committee to go into all aspects of the bus service. Season tickets, a school bus to Campground Road in Rondebosch and more bus stops were on the agenda of the first monthly meeting.

After some time Mr Moore extended his bus service to Cape Town and purchased additional buses. Eventually the service was taken over by Golden Arrow Bus Service.

I have a vivid recollection from my childhood of seeing a red London Bus trundling along Central Avenue in the early 1960s, looking quite out of place. It transpired that the bus company had bought a number of second-hand buses from the UK and had not had time to repaint them before putting them into service!

