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### Handing over keys

After 21 years of building up his business, Gordon Duncan handed over the keys of his busing company to Ken Stone last week. Mr. Stone and his wife Ann have bought the Cobden business which includes a fleet of nine buses.

## Duncan Bus Lines of Cobden changes ownership

For more than 21 years, Gordon Duncan has been a school bus driver, and he says it's been a great way of earning a living.

"It's the kind of load that loads and unloads itself." That's what Gordon always says to people who ask how he can stand having a load of noisy kids as his cargo.

Of course, being the owner of your own fleet of nine buses helps make the job all the more tolerable. Gordon has had the option of running the business without ever leaving the bus yard, but he's always enjoyed working a daily run himself.

And now that he's sold his Cobden based business, Gordon hopes to keep on busing for as long as he can.

On January 3rd, Gordon H. Duncan Bus Lines Ltd. became Cobden Bus Lines Ltd. when ownership of the business was transferred to Ken and Ann Stone of Cobden. Included in the sale were the bus yard and garage along Main Street, and the nine buses, the station wagon and half-ton truck which make up the fleet.

But on the surface at least, the operation of the business won't be changing much.

Mr. Stone has worked for the Ministry of Transportation and Communications for some 24 years, and he plans to continue with the job. So, Gordon has agreed to stay on and manage the business for Ken and Ann, and of course he'll still be a driver. "The business will carry on much as it has been," says Ken.

It's an arrangement that suits Gordon just fine, and he admits he might not have been so eager to sell if it had meant he wouldn't be able to work anymore. And he won't mind the switch from owner to employee. "If ken works me too hard, I'll quit," he jokes.

Gordon spent 15 years farming in the Almonte area before moving to Cobden in 1964 with his wife Mary and their three children. He went into the busing business immediately with four buses, and he also ran a feed mill and sold International Harvester farm equipment from the same location along the CPR tracks in the village.

He recalls being the first bus driver to pull into the yard at Opeongo High School when it opened in 1968. The new school allowed Gordon to expand his business to nine bus runs and two additional kindergarten runs. Around the same time he closed the feed mill and stopped selling farm equipment, focusing all his energies on the busing operation instead.

As if running a business weren't enough to keep him busy, Gordon entered the world of municipal politics in the early 1970's. He served the village as a councillor for 11 years before being defeated in the 1982 election. Over the years he sat as council's representative on the Astrolabe Arena Committee, and was also a member of the building committee for the water and sewage treatment plants.

Looking back, Gordon recalls how the village streets were once plowed with a farm tractor with a bucket on the front—the only real piece of equipment the village owned. He headed the committee which oversaw

the purchase of new trucks and other much needed equipment.

The process of handing over the ownership of the busing business took seven months, with the deal having to be approved at various levels. Because the Renfrew County Board of Education contracts the buses to carry its students, the board had to be consulted. And the Ministry of Transportation and Communications also had to approve the sale. Then there were licences to transfer and reapply for. Finally all of the buses had to pass safety inspections.

But, now that the paper work is behind them, both Ken and Gordon are eager to get back to the business of busing. Along with regular school routes, Ken says he will continue to offer charter service to private customers.

But charters can involve the most work, Gordon says with a laugh. "My worst memory from being in business is of a ski trip charter. I took 29 girls to Montebello, and I had to load and unload all their skis and suitcases."