



Xelabus 543 SK52 OGY. © Robert Winkworth





## Editorial & Club News

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Well, we got here in the end. What an extraordinary year it has been. Who would have thought that this time last year the world would be laid to siege by the Chinese, and the health and wealth of our nation devastated in just a few short months. Yet as I write this, there is light at the end of the tunnel despite the current lockdown.

When you look locally, it is amazing how bus and coach operators seem to be pulling through and, in some cases, now appear to be thriving, although I doubt the loss of income earlier in the year will be easily recovered. Two items which stand out from the past twelve months are: firstly, the speed at which the Traffic Commissioners moved to adapt the registration process. For a government body not known for its dexterity, it was extraordinary that the system was adapted almost overnight to meet the ever-changing demands of the operators.

The second stand out event, and probably providing operators with the majority of their current income, is the complete about-turn in the provision of school and college transport. From the moves in recent years to encourage registration of commercial services to a return of closed operations. Additional Government funding has allowed local authorities to expand provision, and some local operators have seized the opportunity for further development. Living as I do on a relatively minor back road, this expansion can be seen first-hand, whilst Stagecoach continues to provide a limited public service designed to meet the needs of the local sixth form college we now have passing the door: Xelabus, Aldermaston Coaches, AMK, Bluestar, Mortons x2, two unidentified white coaches and numerous small nine seaters with private hire plates. Bearing in mind this is just one quiet road, if multiplied up nationally, it illustrates the effect of this additional funding on the PCV economy and can only be a positive thing.

Just as an aside to this additional school/college provision, it carries the same young people who just last year were willing to go on strike and worship at the altar of Greta Thunberg in the name of saving the planet. How do they equate this with travelling up to 20 or 30 miles each day, and I hope the operators will not mind me saying, on vehicles that in the main are past their prime?

So, who will predict what will happen in 2021? Well no one in their right mind, at best we should look for a return to some normality. However, the Solent Omnibus Club has kept going in 2020 by learning new ways of communicating, and I feel that its strong sense of community will drive the Club forward in 2021 and beyond.

Whether you're a member of the SOC\* or one of our friends in the industry, it just remains for me to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, safe, positive and prosperous new year.

Barry T. \* SOC members will receive a final 'special' news sheet in December.

### 2021 Photographic Competition

As many members have been unable to get out-and-about with their cameras in 2020 and the likelihood that social distancing will still be in place for the 2021 AGM, the format will be different and the competition will be a one-off special. The theme will be:

#### 'In memory of Bob Gray'

Members are invited to enter one photograph of a preserved vehicle. The photograph must be taken by the entrant.

Photographs should be submitted to the normal email address as jpegs or by post to my home address (details on the current membership list). The closing date for entries is Sunday 6th December 2020. The competition entries will be placed into a slide show, similar to the virtual meetings, and distributed by email for members to vote. Results will be announced and the shield awarded at the AGM or in the February edition of the news sheet.

**Committee.** Chairman: Roger Watts, Secretary: James Woodcock, Treasurer: David Etheridge.

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### Contributions invited for the December members only special news sheet.

A chance for members to contribute a small selection of their photographs taken during 2020. Please include a location and vehicle details as a minimum. Closing date for contributions Wednesday 2nd December 2020.

The November virtual meeting had municipal operators as its title. Once again we had a diverse range of contributions from a large number of the membership. Thank you once again for taking the time seek out interesting aspects and delve into your collective memories to make the evening interesting.

The December virtual meeting will be a 'freestyle evening'. Members are invited to submit up to four photographs/memories/speech bubbles on anything PCV related. **Closing date for entries is Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.**

### Michael Dryhurst Collection. Words by Roy Jetten.



20 KOR 462 Guy Arab 111 Park Royal (frames)/Guy H30/26R 17/07/52

21 KOR 463 Guy Arab 111 Park Royal (frames)/Guy H30/26R 4/11/52

21 KOR 463 at the Gosport Ferry terminus shortly after delivery, at this time showing off the famous Guy Chieftain radiator cap. For some unknown reason 21 was delivered over three months after 20, both were identical to the five all Guy vehicles acquired previously since 1949.

The pair did differ in an notable way from those delivered earlier, the upstairs interior roof was given an wooden effect finish, a process known as 'dragging' to give a wood grain look, over time this darkened as the upstairs roof suffered from the nicotine staining from smokers.

Both at their first major overhaul the roofs were repainted cream in line with the rest of the fleet. opportunity was also taken to freshen up the rexine covered window surrounds on both decks, the upper half being a mushroom shade and green for the lower half, this repaint brightened the upper deck interior considerably.

Both led uneventful working lives until the replacement of the railway arch at Fareham Station, this should have been the end of incidents at this site, though on the 17th March 1969, 20 travelling through the arch came into collision with the lowering jib of a mobile crane on the western side of the arch which caused considerable damage to the front upper deck of the bus. Surprisingly it was sent off to Strachan's at Hamble for repair, the result of the rebuild was an remarkable likeness to what it was before. Being at insurer expense no doubt saved this bus going for scrap.

The above incident was amazingly captured on film by a Provincial bus driver, later Bob Gray acquired this footage, and therefore many SOC members may have viewed this incident courtesy of Bob for themselves.

The pair both passed into National Bus Company ownership on the 1st January 1970, they continued in service until withdrawn at the end of the year in 1970. Eventually, via a dealer, going for scrap at Barnsley during February 1971.

## Livery? Chris Drew



In the early days of my enthusiasm about buses, I was really quite wet behind the ears about some aspects of it. I thought all buses that worked in towns were red and those in the countryside were green. I lived in London. All the buses around me were red but take one step past Esher or Leatherhead and they were all green. In the beginning this also rang true for the places the family went to i.e., Brighton's town buses were red & cream but the country buses that arrived from a long way off were i.e. Southdown or Maidstone & District were green, although different shades.

But as you might guess, this changed dramatically as I grew up. With the intake of books came an explosion of different liveries and the realisation that Nottingham Corporation where green and Eastern Counties were red.....so that theory went out the window.

But let's get to the object of this piece. At what point in time would you choose to stop the development of a bus company livery? There was a point at the beginning of the 70s where this decision was taken out of our hands. The NBC meant the end of many a rich livery not only the BET

companies but already nationalised fleets plus the odd independent. One question, would it have been more palatable if the Tilling colours had been chosen rather than the washed out shades of red & green used? At the same time, the PTEs also managed to make a great swath of municipal liveries vanish. Later, even the NBC liveries were banished by selling them on to the independent sector and we're still living with the consequences of that.

Evolution was the other route. There were sometimes gradual changes to livery's or complete reversal of the main colour as new breeds of buses came on stream and with simplified shapes came simplified livery applications. Also the way the paint was applied sometimes made a difference. This brings me to the point where I would like to have stopped time.

Glasgow Corporation, late 50s, green cream and orange applied by brush with maroon ling out and wheel hubs.

After this time spray painting took over which meant different proportions of colours were applied which would be a close second place to the original. Then the orange was changed to yellow and the moment was gone.





## PIONEER MOTOR SERVICES, ST MARY BOURNE. David Lindsell

From 1919 to 1969 Harold Tibble and later, his son Reg, ran a bus service, Pioneer Motor Services, from St Mary Bourne to Andover with a weekly trip to Newbury market via Crux Easton. This Bedford OB was waiting in West Street for its next duty in 1968. EDL642 had the dubious distinction of working the last ever trip back to St Mary Bourne when the service closed in 1969. This bus previously worked for Southern Vectis on the Isle of Wight as its number 213.



Two other other buses EHO745 with Newbury & St Mary Bourne screen up and EOR350 with Andover & St Mary Bourne screen up. They used to have a Whitchurch - Hurstbourne Tarrant route running Mon, Weds, Fri-Sun but this was withdrawn in November 1955.

### FLEET LIST

EHO745 – Bedford OWB with Duple B32F body new June 1943.

EOR350 – Bedford OWB with Duple B32F body new May 1944

SMF961 – Bedford OB with Duple C29F body new June 1947

EDL642 – Bedford OB with Duple C29F body new to Southern Vectis number 213 in June 1948.

JXP525 – Bedford OB with Duple C27F body new March 1949

FMO92 – Bedford OB with Duple C29F body new December 1949

The Route is now currently covered by Stagecoach buses operating the C3 on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. With three return trips on each day.

I would like to thank Anthony Raper and Peter Yarlett who helped with this article especially in respect of the pictures.



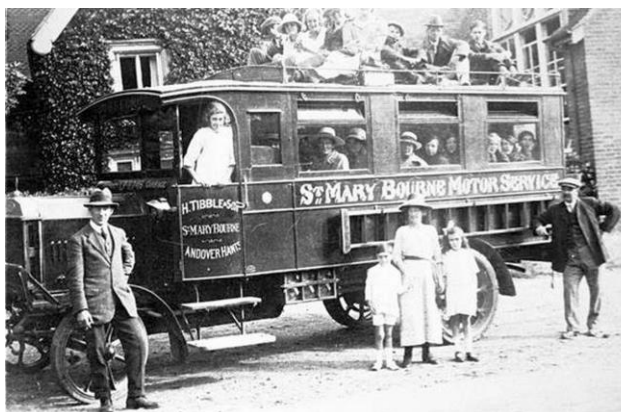
EHO 745



EOR 350



EDL 642



Top left; SMF 961

Bottom left: Tibbles Bus. 1919 Dennis chassis.

Above: St Mary Bourne garage.



## Kirby's of Rayleigh OTW 116K. John Williams

Many years ago when working in Southend, I was lucky enough to live almost opposite Kirby's of Rayleigh Yard. One day I heard a strange vehicle sound, looking up from under the bonnet of my Ford Cortina MK1, I was confronted by a Kirby' coach, but like nothing else I knew.

Research led me to OTW 116K, the first Setra registered in the UK with a very odd engine sound. It was powered by a rear mounted Henchel Diesel, (eventually taken over by Mercedes Benz).

Shortly afterwards a new driver joined Southend Transport, Tom Wright was the ex-lead driver with Kirby's. Chatting with him he told me only the Boss and he were allowed to drive OTW. Whilst in the yard it lived(s) in its own Garage and when put up for a Certificate of Fitness renewal it gained a full seven year ticket.

According to comments on Flickr, Setra offered Kirby's a new Setra in exchange for OTW, in the hope of adding it to their museum, Kirby's refused. Sadly it appears OTW has been off the road since 1995.

Kirby's also had the 2nd Setra in the UK, WNO 115W in the classic style we know. The 3rd Setra FTP 137X was purchased by Harold Button for his Premier of Fareham fleet, based at Titchfield Common.



© Cliff Essex FF36100 (Flickr)



WNO 115W © Frans Angevaare (Flickr)



FTP 137X Philip White (Flickr)

## 12th June 1988, Midibus Driver of the Year Competition. Chris Drew

When I get a new copy of Buses magazine in my hands, I thumb through quickly to get a rough gist of what's in it, then go back and look again when it's quiet and I can give it the consideration it deserves. So it was with issue 398, May 1988. On flicking through, a well composed, simple B/W quarter page advert caught my eye. I returned to it with diary in hand. It read....

"London Buses presents The first Midibus Driver of the Year Competition."

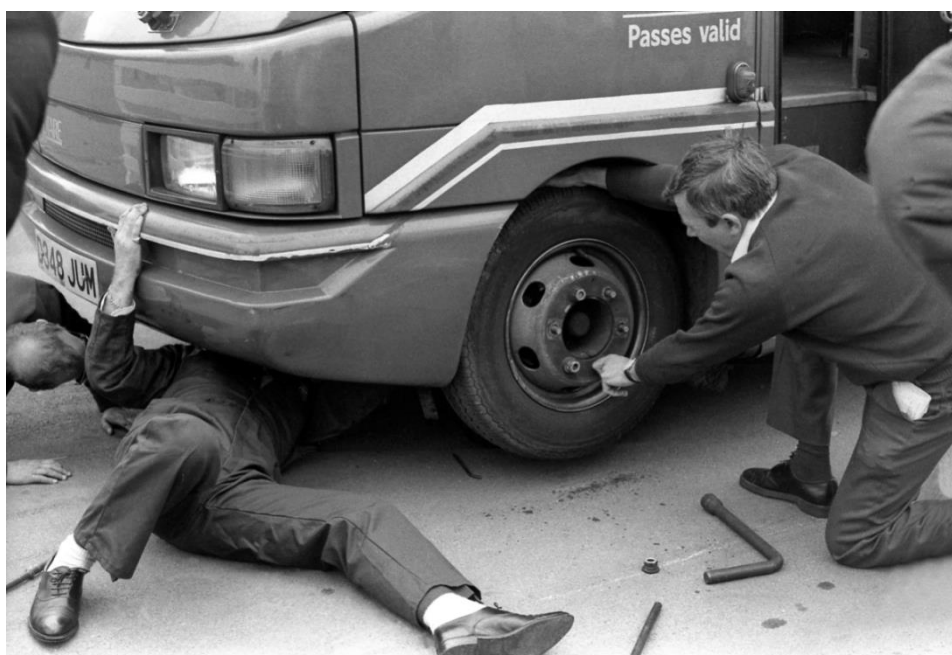
It was to be held in Battersea Park on June 12th. This was a must.

Dawn heralded with the promise of a fine day. The large piece of tarmac that used to be the start for the HCVC Rally had been set aside for the days challenges. Of course the area is not unknown for its competitions. In the 18th & 19th centuries, the piece of land was then called Battersea fields and was a popular spot for duelling. Indeed, on March 21st 1829, the Duke of Wellington and the Earl of Winchilsea fought just such an item. Neither was hurt because honour gave way to chivalry and both men fired wide of their targets on purpose and the Earl had to write an abject apology. 1829 was also the year George Shillibeer started his the first stage bus service in London and also the first University boat race was run.

By the time I arrived there was a good crowd of onlookers gathered, some just passing through, some joggers, some dog walkers and enthusiasts. I wonder how many realised that the ground they were walking on was once the vegetable larder of London. The area was once marshland and when drained became very fertile. The site was known for its carrots, melons and famous 'Battersea Bunches' of asparagus. Another crop and one that kept London smelling sweet was Lavender. This spread up to the hill which still bares its name to this day and thanks to the 1951 Ealing comedy written by T.E.B. Clarke and starring Alec Guinness and Stanley Holloway, is known and loved worldwide.

On the tarmac course were laid out traffic cones and barriers which drivers had to negotiate in different directions so as to show their skills. The buses used were all Optare CityPacers and indeed the whole day was sponsored by Optare. The CityPacer was described as Optare's deregulation flagship, an answer to the converted bread vans that were invading city streets. Its looks certainly made it stand out from the Transits and Sherpas already on the street and its comforts appreciated by passengers who used them. It was designed from the start to be a small bus and not a van conversion. The first ones arrived in London in July 1986 and started work in Orpington. Soon batches were ordered for specific routes that put them into the heart of London's back roads. Some working the South Kensington area were thought of as so 'cool' they were knick-named 'Sloane Rangers'. The last three in 1988, were for a special CareLink service connecting main line rail stations, for which, they were fitted with a tail lifts to aid the infirm. In all, they only lasted a few years in London, a victim of their own success, but they did show what could be done.

Apart from the main competition, there was also an area set aside for other buses, preserved or of historical interest. Apart from the driving competition, there was an "it's a knock out" style event going on as well. The photograph comes from that. This particular event meant a crew, gathered from all parts of the garage, had to push the bus the length of the course, change a wheel, and push it back. There is also a copy of the original advert from issue 389.



**London Buses present  
The first  
Midibus Driver of the Year  
Competition**

**Sponsored by  
OPTARE**



**Battersea Park 12th June from 10am**

See London's Midibus drivers perform at their best in the driving tests as well as in our 'it's a knockout' style competition.

It's a great family day out with other attractions such as a vintage Bus Rally, a Transport Flea Market and a Barbeque. (Rally entry forms from Neville Dolphin, Camberwell Training Centre, Warner Road, SE5 9LU). Don't miss this unique day out.



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**"RT & RF Celebration" - Epping Ongar Railway, 8th September 2019. A pictorial review by Adrian Willats.**



RF MLL 523



RT KYY 987



The blue board in the windscreen said:  
HARROGATE TRANSPORT TOURING  
SOCIETY WEEKEND TOUR.



The Lodge's OBs were running an excursion to their own open day.



Just a few of the many RT family buses attending. They included RTs, RTLs and RTWs, mostly in either red or green.



Not in either red or green was RT3316 (LYR 535).



Rare Cravens-bodied RT1499 loads at North Weald station. For those not aware, seven window bays upstairs and five down - "normal" RT family bodies had six bays up and four below!



Left: At Lodge's depot, many of their own "current" and vintage fleets were on display, plus some guest vehicles.

Right: Double deckers used on local schools services.



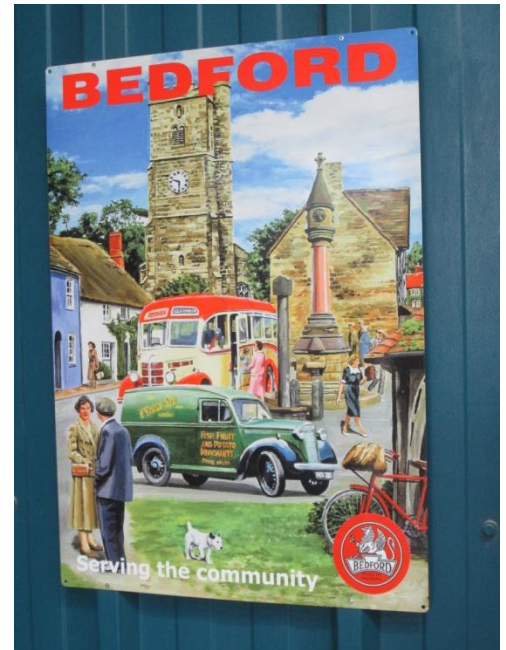




A car show was also taking place at Lodge's premises. This is a 1965 Mk. II Riley Elf, still with the sliding windows of the Mk. 1 - wind-ups came in with the Mk. III Elf, produced from 1966 to 1969.



Some of the Lodge's heritage fleet were VERY elderly! There was also some interesting smaller items (see next two pages) in a collection obviously hinting at more than a little 'enthusiast' interest from the family through the years!



Old advert posters are always interesting - and Lodge's were apparently quite keen buyers of the Bedford marque!



Is it just me, or does he look a little creepy!





## Two continents, forty-five minutes apart. Barry T.



Scania, operated by ALSA in Tangier.

Just forty-five minutes is all it takes to get from Europe to Africa on the high-speed catamaran that plies the waters between Tarifa, Spain and Tangier, Morocco.

Arriving into Tangier in October 2019, it could be described as the start of a National Express odyssey as the city's bus network has been ALSA operated since November 2013. The majority of city services throughout Morocco are now under ALSA control, the Spanish subsidiary of NE Group. Walking around Tangier, it is apparent that it is an affluent city but with some rough edges that are often associated with major ports. The buses certainly reflected the latter, not being helped by the rather dismal blue livery. The majority of the fleet is made up of aging Scania's with a mixture of locally assembled bodies operating 44 routes and utilizing 192 buses.

Leaving Tangier, it is time to board Africa's first high-speed train, built using Spanish trains identical to those used in Europe. The line currently only runs to Casablanca, although most of the infrastructure is in place for the entire route to Marrakesh, the express due to arrive fifty years after Crosby, Stills and Nash sang about it.

Casablanca is an industrial city set on the Atlantic coast, not quite the dream setting of Ingrid Bergman but perhaps more suited to Sam. The population of 3.4m is catered for by Casa Bus operating 66 urban and suburban routes, the city is also served by two tram routes. In 2019 ALSA won a fifteen-year contract to operate local services in Casablanca, initially operating 400 buses, which is due to expand to 700 during 2020. ALSA has ordered 500 Euro VI buses from Daimler (420 Conecto and 80 Conecto G) plus 200 Irizar i3le's built on Scania 320UB4x2 chassis, to update the fleet. 150 of the vehicles have been purchased on behalf of L'ECI Al Baida, the local transport authority.

Departing Casablanca, heading north by road along the coastal plan past the Irizar factory, brings us to Rabat, the capital of Morocco, which is a cosmopolitan city with a population of 0.5m. Until quite recently, it was renowned for a shambolic public transport network operated by Stareo, a company that has been in financial difficulties for a number of years. ALSA won the tendering process and now operates in excess of 400 buses on 21 bus routes in the city. A modern two route tram system also crosses the city on segregated roadway.

Heading inland via the walled city of Meknes to Tommy Cooper country, the city of Fez - the first city visited that does not have ALSA as the public transport provider. Fez, once a major city on the Trans-Saharan trade route, today sits at the crossroads to/from all the major cities in Morocco, with a population of 1.2m. With two medinas and a modern city, there is a lot of ground to cover. The modern part of the city is covered by an extensive bus network utilising buses in various states of repair, whilst the oldest medina is served by minibuses terminating at the old wall gate entrance. Regrettably, finding information on the bus network is impossible.



Tata Hispano bodied bus in Casablanca.



ALSA Scania K250 with Higer body in Rabat.

Finally, the journey south to Marrakesh. Marrakech is the fourth largest city in Morocco, after Casablanca, Fez and Tangier, with an urban area of 88.80 sq miles and a population of 953,305. Since 1999 ALSA has managed the transport network in the city, and is now operating 42 city routes, three suburban services and the one line BRT route utilizing 257 vehicles. The



majority of buses are Scania which are built as knock-down kits at Scania's factory in Katrineholm. With so many tourists visiting the city, the bus network is probably the most accessible in Morocco, with several termini, clearly defined bus stops and readily available publicity. (*Marrakesh was covered in detail in a previous article*)

Considering ALSA forms part of National Express, an operator with a wealth of experience in operating local and express services with easily accessible travel planning information, it is a pity none of this expertise filters down to Morocco. The ALSA website is abysmal, with emphasis on corporate values and no recognition for the demands of the travelling public, such as route planning and timetables. Perhaps if we inhaled some of the hippy smoke, all would be much clearer.



Mercedes Benz Sprinter in Fez.



Tata Hispano operating in Fez.

### 30 Years ago (First published in new sheet No.10 July 1979

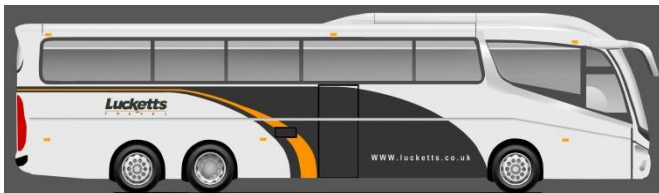
With the delivery of many new post-war models old faithful's which had struggled on through the war years were now being discarded; sometimes by their third or fourth owners. Among those with local origins were Portsmouth Corporation's Tilling Stevens E60A6. No.82(RV 1145) entered service in 1932 and was withdrawn in 1944. This was not the end however for she was then loaned to Hants and Sussex and was not finally scrapped until July 1949. she carried an English Electric H26/24R body.

Another noteworthy event was the last of Southampton Corporation's 1937 Thornycrofts. 62. a Daring DD5LW with Park Royal H30/26H body was withdrawn in 1946 and went to Nottingham Corporation(125) until it passed to a sport's club in Ruddington for use as a dressing room. An even older but less unusual, 'oldie' was Southdown 708, another Tilling Stevens this time with Harrington C30R coach work. Withdrawn in 1938 she went to that collector of other folks cast-offs, Gilberts of Tunbridge Wells until 1943 when she passed to Skinners of Hastings. 708 was consigned to the scrap yard at Ore in July 1949 but her end was not yet in sight - she remained there until at least 1955.

What wonderful sights they would make at Bus Rallies today, but alas the preservation movement 30 years ago was very much in its infancy. Hants and Dorset were taking delivery of 1225-1229 Bristol K6A's and 1230-33 Bristol K6B's all with ECW, L55R bodies, these vehicles should have been numbered TD 921-9, but they never carried these numbers.

Portsmouth Corporation were taking delivery of the last of their Crossley bodied Crossleys with Turbomotors and Salerni Transmitters, these were replaced of course with Leyland 8.6. oil engines, clutches and gearboxes from withdrawn TD'4s between May 1957 and January 1960. Gosport and Fareham Omnibus Co. were taking delivery of 6/7 (HCG 41/2) their first all Guy vehicles, although others were to follow.

A little way from this area, but a very significant time for London Transport, the first RTW class had just entered service from Tottenham Garage marking the start of the 'eight footers'.



## Operator News



### Bluestar

YN56 FFP was destroyed by fire on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020.  
 Barton Peveril College Services.  
 602/610/611/618/620 Stubbington - Whiteley - Locks Heath - Warsash – Lowford.  
 603 Portchester - Fareham – Segensworth.  
 605 Wellow - Romsey - North Baddesley.  
 612/613 Nursling - Lordshill - Millbrook - Shirley – Bassett.  
 616/625 Waterside - Lyndhurst – Totton.  
 623 Alresford - Winchester - Otterbourne - Chandlers Ford.  
 624 Plaitford - Whiteparish - Lockerley - Woodley - Ampfield – Hiltingbury.  
 682 Fair Oak – Bishopstoke.  
 692 Southampton City Centre - Portswood – Swaythling.

### Bryant Travel

Increase at existing operating centre, Emsworth & District Motor Services c/o Kattenhorn & Partners Ltd, New Lane, Havant, PO9 2NE. New authorisation 8 vehicles.

### Coliseum

Neoplan HIL 7978, currently Solent Coaches PIW 5729 (HX06 RVN) for sale £24,950.

### First Bus

New service, 25 The Hard - Southsea - Eastney (Hayling Ferry) via Old Portsmouth, Southsea Shops, Waverley Road, Devonshire Square, Bransbury Park from 30<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Vehicles in Southampton City Red Livery Route 3: 63061 SK63KKB, 63062 SK63KKC, 63064 SK63KKE, 63063 SK63KKE. HY09 AUW/AOT/AUO/AOS transferred to First Beeline September 2020.  
 HY07 FSX to First South West.



69386 (HY09 AZB) in the Southampton depot, painted up ready for transfer to Berkshire for use on the 4 to Heathrow, taken on 14th October. © David Etheridge

### Flixbus

Withdrew the Portsmouth/London service after just two weeks.

### Gard

PH1146678 94 Chamberlayne Rd, Eastleigh. This rather itinerant of operators continues changing addresses. On this occasion the business is registered to Eastleigh whilst the operating centre remains in Ringwood.

### Gemini, Marchwood

OptareSolo YJ07 EJA acquired from Aldermaston Coaches, new Blackpool.

### Jet Connect, Cosham

Acquired from Wheelers, NL57 LHG Ford Transit.

### Lucketts

YN56 NTG and A20 HLC for sale.



©PA (Hampshire Live)  
 Ports mouth Historic Dockyard, landing craft LCT7074.

### Meon Valley Community Bus Association

Operating between West Meon and Fareham from 28 September 2020, amended timetable.  
 Operating between Soberton Village Hall and Winchester from 28 September 2020, amended timetable.  
 Operating between West Meon and Waterlooville from 28 September 2020, amended timetable.  
 Operating between Soberton Village Hall and Petersfield Waitrose, from 28 September 2020 amended timetable.

### QV Education

Operating between Boundary Oak School and Alverstoke, Clayhill Road route number Stubbington, from 5 November 2020 amended stopping places and timetable.  
 Operating between Boundary Oak School and Whiteley, Lidl route number Whiteley/ Hamble from 5 November 2020, amended stopping places and timetable.



### Stagecoach

From October 2nd late evening journeys in Winchester on services 1, 3, 5, Spring, 64, 66 and 69 which normally run on Fridays and Saturdays will be "temporarily withdrawn" due to the current 2200 lockdown.

A funeral has been held for the World's Shortest Bus Driver after he died of a heart attack. Frank Hachem, who gained the Guinness World Record in 2018, died in hospital after he fell ill at his home in Havant on Tuesday (October 20). His funeral took place at Kingston Cemetery in Portsmouth on Friday (October 23). Colleagues at Stagecoach, where he worked as a driver, have spoken of their shock at his death and paid tribute to him.

### Wheelers

MAN/Wright SF08 RNZ for sale £37,500. New Ford Transit M16 YR20 OJM.

### Xelabus

YR10 AZU, new Menzies, currently in South Wales for sale still in livery. £17,500.



561 SN56 AGU (G13 XEL) in service on 25<sup>th</sup> September still carrying its old registration. © David Etheridge

### G503 SFT

Emsworth & District/Portsmouth City Coaches. Much travelled G503 SFT Leyland Olympian/Northern Counties, started life with Kentish Bus 1989, did time with London & Country around Croydon. Worked for GHA in Wrexham before coming back south to E&D, passing to Portsmouth City Coaches. Eventually exported in 2019 and now working in Myrtle Beach South Carolina for Big Red Bus Co.



© Big Red Bus Co.

### Hampshire County Council

Bus priority measures are part of plans for improving travel in Portsmouth after securing over £26m from the government's Transforming Cities Fund.

Working in partnership with Hampshire County Council and the Isle of Wight Council, the joint bid was awarded £55.6 million towards 23 public transport, walking and cycling schemes. They are expected to reduce journey times by 20%. Over the three year funding period, project partners First Bus and Stagecoach have committed to investing in 29 new high-quality low-emission buses for the Portsmouth city region.

Centred on a network of bus-priority routes, which build on the success of First's Eclipse and Star, South East Hampshire Rapid Transit aims to make it easier, quicker and more convenient for people to travel in the area using public transport. The rapid transit routes will better connect with rail services, local bus services, walking and cycling routes, as well as local waterborne transport.

### NATIONAL NEWS

**Alexander Dennis** is transferring chassis production from Guildford to Falkirk.

**Ian Allan** closed the last of its book and model shops on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020. The shop opened in 1987 was located just outside Waterloo Station. The event warranted a half page feature in the Sunday Times.

**School/College Transport.** It was confirmed on 2 October that the additional funding stream would continue beyond the October half term. In total, £27,444,623 has been allocated by DfE for that period. That is 37.6% less than the £43,999,868 provided in the first half of the term.

### Yet another plea.

In recent months we have lost contacts for fleet news update from Stagecoach and First Bus. This has depleted our 'News' input even further. I have asked before and this is my final plea; if anybody has a contact or can provide fleet information on both large and small operators within the SOC area, I would be grateful to hear from you. I am more than happy to maintain the contact or format your information.

As the original intention of the club was to provide news to members via the news sheet, if we have no news, we might end up without a news sheet.

# Covid19's effect on the Solent Bus Network. David Etheridge

Well we are now in Lockdown-2 which is a lot different to the original Lockdown as although we are being told to stay at home there are many more essential reasons to leave home, including it seems going to the garden centre to get a pot plant. Also so far during this lockdown the Government has not been giving out messages not to use public transport unless absolutely necessary.

Bus services are mostly unchanged due to the Governments CBSSGR (coronavirus bus service support grant) being paid to operators to make up the shortfall in income during the pandemic which requires operators to run services near to the service levels being operated in early March to qualify. This grant has no official end date with operators currently being informed that they will be given eight weeks' notice of its withdrawal.

Before the start of the Lockdown bus usage had stabilised at just below 60% of the 2019 usage for both London and the rest of the UK but had dropped to around 45% for operations outside London during the school half term week, London did not seem to be so affected by the school holidays. During the first week of Lockdown usage dropped again to around 45% during the week and 30% over the first weekend, but again London was less affected over the weekend managing 37% loadings.

National Rail and the Tube had been operating at just over 30% of 2019 passenger loadings, and both dropped to around 25% loading at the start of the Lockdown. The tube suffered more than the buses in London over the first weekend of Lockdown with loadings down to 17%.

Cycling which was supposed to way forward at the start of the Covid-19 outbreak with weekday usage at around 150% and 250% at weekends seemed to have suffered from the poor weather during the second half of October with weekday usage being below 100% most days and as low as 50% on Tuesday 27th October although weekend usage remained at around 125%.

During the first few days of the new Lockdown usage was just above 2019 usage.

The latest update from the Traffic Commissioners office is that the current emergency measures that allowed operators to amend services with 24 hours' notice to local authorities and the TC's office was amended on 3rd August to 72 hours' notice.

From 3rd January 2021 this is due to be modified to 7 days to LA's followed by 28 days to the TC's office giving a 35 day notice period. Also the charge to register a change is to be reintroduced by the TC's office.

It is still intended that the 28 day LA notice followed by 42 TC's office notice period (70 days) will be reintroduced during 2021 with all services reverting to their March 2020 timetables unless a new registration is submitted. No date has been set for this although operators have been told they will be given 84 days' notice.

By monitoring web sites, Traveline and other information that came my way here is a list of changes to all Solent area bus services between the 26th October and 15th November 2020.

## **First Bus Portsmouth / Fareham.**

2 The Hard – Paulsgrove: 08/11 two extra journeys Mon to Fri 07.52 & 08.24 from Commercial road to QA Hospital.

3 Fareham – Portsmouth: 08/11 two extra journeys Mon to Fri 15.05 & 16.50 Hilsea to Commercial Road & Sunday service end brought back from 23.59 to 22.26.

13, 14 Portsmouth – Baffins: 08/11 Mon to Fri frequency increased from hourly to every 20 mins & Sat / Sun from two hourly to hourly with service start Sat / Sun 45 mins earlier.

25 The Hard to Hayling Ferry: 08/11 rerouted to serve Old Portsmouth with retiming but no change to overall frequency or spread.

E1, E2 Fareham – Gosport: 08/11 Mon to Fri start of 6 minute frequency brought forward from 07.54 to 06.36.

## **First Bus Southampton.**

2 Southampton – Millbrook: 08/11 Sunday service start retimed from 05.30 to 06.20.

3 Lordshill – Thornhill: 01/11 Sunday service start retimed from 04.49 to 06.09.

9 Southampton – Sholing: 01/11 retimed for reliability, no change to frequency or spread.

11 Southampton – Weston: 08/11 Mon to Fri service finish retimed from 22.52 to 22.14 & Sun service start retimed from 04.59 to 05.59.

**Go South Coast Bluestar** No Changes.

**Go South Coast Unilink** No Changes.

**Go South Coast Salisbury Reds.**

X7/X7R Salisbury to Southampton: 01/11 winter timetable introduced – not serving Paultons Park.

**Go South Coast morebus** No Changes.

**Meon Valley Community Minibus**

5/11 services suspended for second lockdown.



### **National Express.**

030 Fareham – Portsmouth – Guildford – Victoria: 9/11 reduced to one journey Tu/W/Th and two journeys F/Sa/Su/M.

032 Southampton – Winchester – Basingstoke – Victoria: 9/11 reduced to one journey Tu/W/Th and two journeys F/Sa/Su/M.

035 Poole – Bournemouth – Ringwood – Victoria: 9/11 reduced to two journeys Tu/W/Th and three journeys F/Sa/Su/M.

204 Poole – Bournemouth – Ringwood – Southampton – Winchester – Heathrow: 9/11 reduced to three journeys Daily.

### **Stagecoach Havant & Chichester.**

54 Chichester – Petersfield: 01/11 15.50 ex Chichester retimed to 16.00.

91/92/93 Midhurst – Petersfield: 01/11 17.40 ex Midhurst retimed to 17.50 and 17.10 and 18.10 ex Petersfield retimed to 17.20 and 18.20 to give better rail connections.

700 Portsmouth – Bognor Regis: 15/11 service extended Mon to Sat from Flansham Park Southdowns to Flansham Park Health Centre at Bognor Regis end.

### **Stagecoach Winchester.**

7 Winchester – Sparsholt: 01/11 08.30& 16.40 ex Winchester now 607 closed school journeys.

64 Winchester – Alton: 01/11 22.20 M-Sat ex Winchester extended from Alresford to Alton and Peter Symonds College days two 64S closed school reliefs added.

68 Winchester – Salisbury: School days only 10.07 ex Salisbury retimed to 10.27 and 14.40 ex Winchester retimed to 13.40.

69 Winchester – Fareham: 01/11 14.53 ex Winchester school journey renumbered as 691 closed school journey.

85 Winchester – Andover: 01/11 most journeys Mon to Sat retimed, 09.15 ex Andover renumbered to 853 closed school journey .

### **Xelabus.**

X6/X7 Eastleigh – Hiltingbury: 09/11 Mon to Fri special two hourly service plus school journeys introduced (normal Sat & Sun service).

X9 Eastleigh – Bishops Waltham: 09/11 Mon to Fri to Sat service with school journeys and extension to Eastleigh colleges added (normal service Sat).

X10 Bishops Waltham – Southampton: 09/11 Mon to Fri to Sat service with school journeys (normal service Sat).

X21 Southampton – Chilworth Science Park: 09/11 lunch time short journeys to Airport Parkway suspended.



Lucketts BK67LOD. Scania K410EB6, Caetano C56FLt at Eastleigh Airport Parkway Saturday 7th November 2020. The first of three rail replacement weekends in November for Southampton/Eastleigh/Winchester. © David Etheridge.



## The Robert Martin Collection



Owen's of Yateley OWC 762 At Southsea.  
BRISTOL OLYMPIAN/



First Manchester Volvo B10LA, Wright  
Fusion new in 1999 at Netley rally.



A Blue Triangle RCL CUV 239C and a First  
Bristol Olympian NC at Showbus.



Left: Metrobus 585CLT  
Olympian at a wet North  
Weald rally.

Right: Metroliner T67 KLD  
a Trident ALX400 new in  
1999, also at North  
Weald.



Apologies to Adrian Willatts, this photograph left the  
depot before I got to include it in the last edition. As a  
result some of the text in model buses did not make sense.  
Crawley MRS Show (Horsham)13.4.19.



Pilgrim Coaches BPR101Y. Leyland TRCTL11/3R with  
Duple C57F body, new 1983 to Shamrock & Rambler.  
Photographed in Bedford Place, Southampton.

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