

Solent Bus News

Newsletter of the Solent Omnibus Club. Established 1969

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Diary 2017

Most meetings are held at Portchester Community Centre 7.45pm.

April 7th

Keith Morton and James Woodcock – Preservation for the layman.

May 5th

Members' Evening – Buses and Operators before 1960. Slides and prints or your own computer presentation from this golden period.

June 2nd

My life and career in buses-John Horn.

July 7th

Evening at Bob Gray's

Bob and Sue always make us welcome at the Funtley bus garage.

August 4th **3 x Members half hour.**

September 1st

Members evening ~20 years of Arriva.

Slides and prints or your own computer presentation.

October 6th **The return of Andy Warton.**

November 3rd **TBA**

December 2nd **Christmas fun quiz.**

January 5th 2018

Roger Watts New Years Address.



Photograph from the John Bulman collection.

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Editorial

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Shaun Daniels provided us with the rare chance to visit Stagecoach's Portsmouth's depot. Praise indeed to Shaun for giving us this opportunity and heartiest congratulations for his determination in securing this visit. I had drafting this prior to the event, hoping Shaun would be rewarded by a good sized turnout. In reality our hopes were fully realised and it is difficult to see anything that could have been improved.

Lucketts group have begun to take delivery of its new coaches which also appear as Worthing and Coliseum vehicles whilst Wheelers have obtained a new double decker for coach work. Lucketts are still to receive 14 National Express coaches and the next bulk delivery will be for Stagecoach in Portsmouth with twenty long Enviro 200s for the Portsmouth Leigh Park service.

I have made a couple of changes within this newsheet. I have suspended the quiz, a) because of time pressure, but primarily, b) after over 900 questions they are really "me" centred. The second change is in the thanks to where, given the way the newsheet is produced, is invariably unfairly incomplete.

Anyway, we would welcome features for the newsheet, however short. Please give us some contributions to share with members. I can now guarantee you will not be singled out in the thanks to!

Sadly, for the second edition in a row, we have to report the death of a member, Trevor Croombs

Club News

Our April meeting saw two contrasting contributions. Keith Morton gave us an insight into the pros and cons of bus preservation with what we could call warts and all. Planning permission is imperative and using leased premises for storage creates more vulnerability. Keith showed us the problems which the bulk of preservationists would most likely keep quiet about.

James Woodcock showed a selection of photos which he had taken randomly during this year. Being an engineer in a van his journey takes him further afield than the Solent area, and his contribution gave a fine range of buses to be randomly found in the south and London. An interesting idea with some interesting shots.

May saw a member's presentation on the theme of small buses. It was interesting to see the variety shown of this period in buses history with its small vehicles, both locally and further afield. Thank again to those member's making the presentation. It is worth reminding ourselves that no member presentation equals no meeting!

Almost home, having started life in Southampton and currently operating school services in Winchester.
T745 JPO, DTK, Andover, Hants.
Dennis Trident with East Lancs H47/27F.
New in 1999 to Solent Blueline.

Photographed in Winchester, March 2017.

© Barry T.

Trevor Croombs Obituary.



Member Trevor Croombs died recently at the age of 77. Trevor was a member of the Club from 2002 until his death, finding out about us through a casual discussion with Bob Gray. Before retiring, Trevor worked in a fibre glass factory in Camberley. He then became a technician at Surrey University in Guildford and subsequently at Southampton University.

Like many of us, he had a lifetime interest in buses, thought to the extent where he obtained two buses for preservation. They are ex Southdown Bristol RE 481 T481TCD and ex East Kent Park Royal bodied Leyland Tiger. JG9938, which he obtained from Quantock Motor Services. The RE attended his funeral service and the Tiger is currently at Amberley.

Trevor leaves his wife and two daughters.

News from our area. (First fleet and route news and Stagecoach fleet news will normally be found elsewhere in this newsheet)

Angela Holidays, Lowford. New is VDL FHD2 122-370 C49Ft. It has registration R600ACL and is its first VDL.

Asda at Havant has also terminated the free services run by Stagecoach. (see also Xelabus) It appeared that most passengers have the national bus pass anyway. A ride on it one day gave the impression of being on a coach trip, as all passengers appeared to know each other extremely well!

First Bus. The 2017 contract for Marwell Zoo route M1 commenced at Easter and will operate at school half term and again for the summer school holidays.

Hythe & Waterside Coaches. The company had two successes in the recent 'UK Coach Awards 2017'. Fiona Bucksey was specially commended in the customer service award category. The company was also a finalist in the 'Top Small Fleet Operator' category. This small, very smart operator on the extreme west of our area very seldom gets a mention, but anytime you are in the Fawley area it is always worth a look in the depot.

Homelessness has been a big issue over the past winter. A new initiative in the conversion of a Volvo Olympians into emergency accommodation. Locally Go Ahead south coast have provided one for Weymouth and on the Isle of Wight, the latter venture being heavily covered on BBC South. Within our area Stagecoach has provided a model for Portsmouth.

Portsmouth City Council has opened its long awaited bus station at The Hard interchange. It opened on May 14th and trails of bus destination information was to be seen late in the evening ten days earlier.

Princess Southampton. New is MA17 YJB, a Scania.

Victory Travel and its sole director Paul Donald were disqualified indefinitely from holding or obtaining a PSV O licence, after the Traffic Commissioner immediately revoked the company's six vehicle licence. In addition he disqualified Mr Donald indefinitely from acting as a Transport Manager. The company's base was at Cranleigh Road, Fareham, and they failed to attend the Bristol Public Inquiry. The Commissioner said that the "breadth and seriousness of the shortcomings," affecting all management systems and producing potentially lethal results, meant that Victory Travel and Paul Donald had forfeited their good repute and that more than just mere revocation was necessary to safeguard public safety. Adverse maintenance investigations by the DVSA led to the company failing to deal with the shortcomings; a wheel loss on the M3 in November 2016; failure to manage driver's hours and breaking guidelines about the transport of football supporters. BBC also covered a swimming club who were left in the lurch when the coach did not turn up.

Wheelers has a new Enviro 400 on order. It will be registered SM17WTJ, The MAN Mobi people coach with which Wheeler is becoming associated is also being represented by a new model, SL17WRL. BX56XBL, a BMC was exported to Cyprus in March, whilst BIG9871, a Leyland Olympian has been sold to Deckerbus

Wheeler Connect Limited, Southampton Sat 6th May 2017 W2 Southampton - Shirley - General Hospital - Lordshill (M-S). Last day of operation - reverts to operation by Xelabus which is using its old number X11. Wheeler has given up the contract at short notice.

On 5th April **Winchester City Council** agreed to buy the freehold of Winchester Bus Station from Stagecoach for the sum of £4million. This means that once the purchase is complete Stagecoach will have to pay for use of the bus station which they currently don't have to do. The site forms part of the area known as Silver Hill and the purchase will make the redevelopment of the area that bit easier with one fewer landowner. In the meantime, the council intends to make improvements to the site in the short term and to make changes that will improve the flow of buses through the city centre.

Xelabus. J8 XEL (R711 YWC) a Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer, new to Stagecoach East London, 1997 is currently for sale on ebay for £1595Xelabus Limited, Eastleigh

Fri 5th May 2017 Havant (ASDA) free service. Last day of operation; ASDA has ended the funding.

Mon 8th May 2017 X11 Southampton - Shirley - General Hospital - Lordshill (M-S). New, replacing Wheelers W2. Four mid-day journeys are rerouted as follows: from city at top of Dale Road left turn instead of right turn to run via Tremona Road, Warren Avenue and Coxford Road to re-join old route. To city, four journeys run via Coxford Road, Warren Avenue and Tremona Road. The reason for the rerouting is unknown but although it increases the length of the route, there is no increase in journey time.

Thanks this time to all contributing members.

4 Silver Jubilee ~ Roger Watts (part 2)

LONDON TRANSPORT				Route	Advertiser
SRM no.	RM no.	Reg. no.	Type		
SRM1	RM1898	ALD 898B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	2 Norwood - Victoria - Golders Green	Abbey National
SRM2	RM1848	848 DYE	AEC/PRV Routemaster	52 Victoria - Ladbroke Grove - Mill Hill	Addis
SRM3	RM1650	650 DYE	AEC/PRV Routemaster	19 Finsbury Park - Piccadilly - Tooting Bec	Air Jamaica
SRM4	RM1889	ALD 889B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	2B North Finchley - Victoria - Crystal Palace	Amey Roadstone Corporation (ARC)
SRM5	RM1668	668 DYE	AEC/PRV Routemaster	12 Harlesden - Oxford Circus - Norwood Junction	Bulmers
SRM6	RM1912	ALD 912B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	159 West Hampstead - Brixton - South Croydon;	Townsend-Thoresen
				Mon-Sat	
				68 Chalk Farm - Waterloo - South Croydon;	
				Sun	
SRM7	RM1871	ALD 871B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	25 Victoria - Stratford - Becontree Heath	Chloride (Exide batteries)
SRM8	RM1787	787 DYE	AEC/PRV Routemaster	25 Victoria - Stratford - Becontree Heath	Daily Mirror
SRM9	RM1907	ALD 907B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	7 Acton - Oxford Circus - Bloomsbury; Mon-Sat	Glaxo Farley
				15 Richmond - Aldgate - East Ham; Sun	
SRM10	RM1914	ALD 914B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	137 Archway - Oxford Circus - Crystal Palace	Goddard
SRM11	RM1910	ALD 910B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	12 Harlesden - Oxford Circus - Norwood Junction	Heinz
SRM12	RM1911	ALD 911B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	22 Putney Common - Piccadilly - Homerton	ICI
SRM13	RM1648	648 DYE	AEC/PRV Routemaster	1 Marylebone - Waterloo - Bromley; Mon-Sat	IDV Smirnoff
				1A Charing Cross - Greenwich; Sun	
SRM14	RM1896	ALD 896B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	11 Hammersmith - Victoria - Liverpool Street	International Paints
SRM15	RM1903	ALD 903B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	38 Leyton - Piccadilly Circus - Victoria	JVC
SRM16	RM1920	ALD 920B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	25 Victoria - Stratford - Becontree Heath	Kimberly Clark
SRM17	RM1894	ALD 894B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	52 Victoria - Ladbroke - Grove - Mill Hill	Kosset
SRM18	RM1906	ALD 906B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	25 Victoria - Stratford - Becontree Heath	National Westminster
SRM19	RM1904	ALD 904B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	159 West Hampstead - Brixton - South Croydon;	Nestles (Nescafe)
				Mon-Sat	
				59 West Hampstead - Brixton - Old Coulsdon; Sun	
SRM20	RM1899	ALD 899B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	7 Acton - Oxford Circus - Bloomsbury; Mon-Sat	Louis Newmark
				15 Richmond - Aldgate - East Ham; Mon-Sat	
SRM21	RM1870	ALD 870B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	159 West Hampstead - Brixton - South Croydon;	Selfridges
				Mon-Sat	
				59 West Hampstead - Brixton - Old Coulsdon; Sun	
SRM22	RM1900	ALD 900B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	137 Archway - Oxford Circus - Crystal Palace	Singer
SRM23	RM1902	ALD 902B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	38 Leyton - Piccadilly Circus - Victoria	Tate & Lyle
SRM24	RM1922	ALD 922B	AEC/PRV Routemaster	2 Norwood - Victoria - Golders Green	WD & HO Wills - Lambert & Butler
SRM25	RM1850	850 DYE	AEC/PRV Routemaster	1 Marylebone - Waterloo - Bromley; Mon-Sat	Woolworths
				1A Charing Cross - Greenwich; Sun	

Source: Buses, June 1977



A VRT in Portsmouth in June 1977 for the SJ park & ride operation.
©Roger Watts

BUSES FOR THE 1977 SILVER JUBILEE

Forty years ago, in June 1977, the silver jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II took place and Southsea hosted one of the most important events - the Fleet review. Large numbers of visitors were expected who would arrive mainly by car, so an elaborate Park & Ride scheme was organised from 25th to 28th June 1977. Southdown Motor Services hired nearly 100 additional buses to run the Park & Ride services from twelve car parks around the City to the sea front, and Portsmouth Corporation Passenger Transport Department organised the transport for large parties of school- children and others to view the lines of warships. The Corporation planned to hire twenty buses from Southampton City Transport. Local independent operators provided further buses and coaches for the Tuesday evening firework display (on the 28th).

All the organisation and good intentions turned out to be superfluous to need, with very little take up for the Park & Ride, the Southampton buses being cancelled as unnecessary, and the independent operators' vehicles being sent home without carrying many, if any, passengers. I was driving a Southern Motorways Ford R1114 and was sent back early without carrying anyone!

However, the basic organisation proved to be sound and has been repeated for similar events several times since then, most recently when Bluestar operated the America's Cup Park & Ride in July 2016.

LIST OF BUSES DRAFTED TO SOUTHSEA FOR THE FLEET REVIEW												
Alder Valley (12 vehs)				Midland Red (9 vehs)				Western National (9 vehs)				
800	458 EOT	Ds Lo III	Ar	6044	JHA 44E	Dr CRG6	Ar	Silver	573	MOD 573P	BI VRT	
832	AAA 505C	"	Wn	6162	SHA 862G	"	"		1972	471 FTT	BI FLF	
833	AAA 506C	"	"	6165	SHA 865G	"	"		2063	BOD 23C	"	
835	AAA 508C	"	"	6172	SHA 872G	"	"		2075	BUO 150B	"	
839	AAA 512C	"	"	6173	SHA 873G	"	"		2090	BOD 32C	"	
840	AAA 513C	"	"	6185	SHA 885G	"	"		2097	BOD 39C	"	
852	AAA 525C	"	"	6192	UHA 192H	"	"		2101	EDV 513D	"	
857	AAA 530C	"	"	6201	UHA 201H	"	"		2102	EDV514D	"	
941	PPM 902R	BI VRT	ECW	6225	UHA 225G	"	"		2104	EDV 516D	"	
942	PPM 903R	"	"									
943	PPM 904R	"	"	Potteries (PMT) (18 vehs)				Western Welsh (2 vehs)				
944	PPM 905R	"	"	632	KRE 632P	BI VRT	ECW		LR2269	PKG 368H	Ld PDR1	
				633	KRE 633P	"	"		ND1776	NOW 462R	LN	
Bristol Omnibus (5 vehs)				634	KRE 634P	"	"				Silve	
C5073	MOU 747R	BI VRT	ECW	635	KRE 635P	"	"	Southampton City Transport (20 vehs)				
C5094	NTC 570R	"	"	636	KRE 636P	"	"	104	OCR 148G	Ld PDR1	EL	
C5096	NTC 572R	"	"	637	KRE 637P	"	"	107	OCR 151G	"	"	
C5098	NTC 574R	"	"	646	OFA 646P	"	"	112	OCR 156G	"	"	
5512	LHT 722P	"	"	Silver	647	OFA 647P	"	"	120	OCR 164G	"	
				648	PEH 648R	"	"		124	TTR 158H	"	
City of Oxford (2 vehs)				649	PEH 649R	"	"		136	TTR 170H	"	
441	JWL 994N	BI VRT	ECW	650	PEH 650R	"	"		137	WOW527J	"	
446	PJO 446P	"	"	651	PEH 651R	"	"		139	WOW 529J	"	
				652	PEH 652R	"	"		156	WOW 546J	"	
East Kent (4 vehs)				653	PEH 653R	"	"		158	WOW 548J	"	
	GJG 742D	AEC Rt V	PR	654	PEH 654R	"	"		159	WOW 549J	"	
	GJG 750D	"	"	655	PEH 655R	"	"		177	PCR 300M	" AN68 "	
	GJG 755D	"	"	656	PEH 656R	"	"		184	PCR 307M	"	
	JJG 12P	Ld AN68	ECW	Silver	657	PEH 657R	"	"		185	PCR 308M	"
									191	HTR 561P	"	
Eastern National (4 vehs)				Red & White (4 vehs)					195	HTR 557P	"	
2774	987 KOO	BI FLF	ECW	RS4271	YAX 594J	BI RESL	ECW		199	HTR 569P	"	
2825	JHK 460C	"	"	N2877	PKG 735R	LN 11.3m	LN		385	JCR 385E	AEC Rt V	
2837	LWC 663C	"	"	N2977	PKG 736R	"	"		386	JCR 386E	"	
3053	LJN 648P	BI VRT	"	Silver	N3077	PKG 737R	"	"		389	JCR 389E	"
London Country (3 vehs)				Southern Vectis (3 vehs)				12 NBC COMPANIES:				
AN35	JPL 135K	Ld PDR1A	PR	605	BDL 581B	BI FLF	ECW		75 VEHICLES			
AN71	JPL 171K	"	"	607	BDL 583B	"	"		1 CORPORATION:			
AN121	VPB 121M	"	AN68	"	610	CDL 478C	"	"	20 VEHICLES			

6 It's 2017 "Spring Gathering" time, and Adrian Willats heads for the event formerly known as "Cobham".....

An encouragingly mild and sunny Sunday 9 April saw myself and fellow SOC member Robert Martin heading for one of the 'annuals' in our hobby calendar and an event that we have supported most years since our first visit back in 1984! We usually travel by train to Weybridge, then catch the free service 462 run between there and the Brooklands site by the London Bus Museum. No change in that this year, except for the fact that railway engineering works gave us a replacement bus service in each direction between Haslemere and Woking.

On the outward run, we had the pleasure of upstairs front seats in one of the three-axle, 100-seaters in the Mortons fleet - quite an experience as we made swift progress along the more rural roads, scraping the odd tree more than once! Memories of earlier close encounters with such foliage came to mind when we recalled travelling around the Northney area of Hayling Island, back in the 1980s, on Southdown route 301 - reminding us, yet again, that it is very nearly thirty nine years since we began enjoying our transport hobby together!

At Weybridge, our bus to the 'gathering' turned out to be green RT3491, new in March 1952 and - if my memory hasn't let me down - the very same bus that took us to our very first "Cobham" event (at the old museum in Redhill Road, of course) some thirty three years earlier!

As readers may recall, (see "This hobby never changes", news sheet June 2016), very few new models or books attract my money these days, with most of my enjoyment coming from the purchase of old slides, some prints and many an old bus or railway magazine at bargain prices. This time was no exception, with twenty five slides and sixteen prints added to my collection. Near the entrance to Cobham Hall, now the home of the London Bus Museum, old magazines are usually left on a window ledge with

notices asking visitors to help themselves for free - but adding that a donation would of course be welcome! Near the end of our visit, we happened to take a rest there (on a handy old bus seat!) just as one of the LBM staff was adding more magazines and small books to those already there. Having seen some of what he was emptying from the box, I waited until he had finished and managed to obtain LOTS London Bus Reviews for 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1984, plus an Ian Allan "ABC London Buses" from 1979 - all in quite reasonable condition and well worth the coins that I gratefully added to the donations box! From one of the many traders' stalls came two old PSV Circle Fleet Histories for £2.50 apiece - Portsmouth Citybus/Pathfinder UK (PH14) and Hampshire Bus/Pilgrim Coaches/Provincial (PH13).

Model railway manufacturers Bachmann (the new owners of EFE) were there, with a stand displaying new and recently released model buses and commercials in both 1/76 ('OO' gauge) and 1/148 ('N' gauge) scales.

Finally, a sequel to the 'Peterlee Panther' story in that June 2016 article. From the stock of Paula and Phillip Stephenson, who come all the way from Batley in Yorkshire for these "Southern" events, one of my print purchases was a photo of another of United's Mercedes 608Ds in that rather 'understated' white and pink livery, this time it was 2457 (C657 CVN).

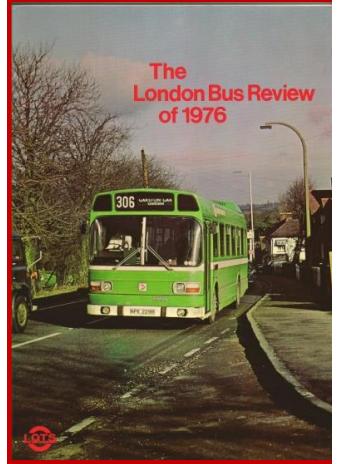
Having arrived not long after 10.00, we finally left somewhere around 16.00 with RML3 taking us back to Weybridge station. We travelled home by train and replacement bus service, (this time a less exotic "Lucketts Bucket"!) and, with the weather still warm and sunny, reflected on a pleasant and productive day at the event that, though it may not be physically in that location anymore, we still like to think of, in the same way that we have done for over thirty years, simply and affectionately, as "Cobham".....



Above: United 2457 (© Paula & Phillip Stephenson).



One of the new Bachmann EFE models - we saw the real original bus (AYG 941H) at Ashford rail depot open day in 1982!



The London Bus Review of 1976



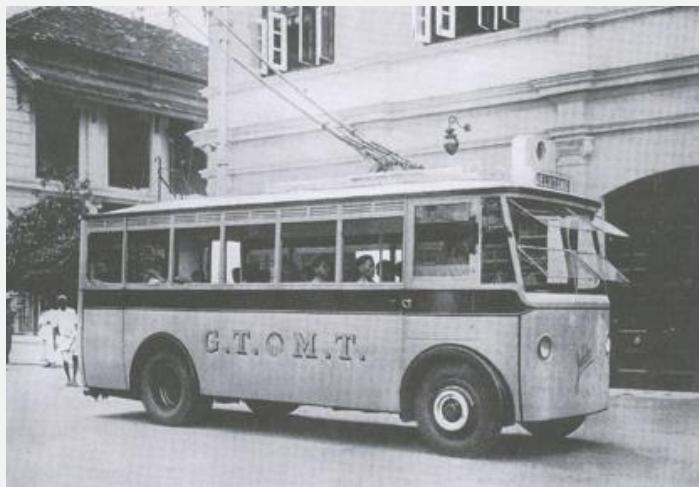
London Country RP90 'surveys' the scene, including Brighton 23 (23 ACD), and Stagecoach 201 - both images (& model above) © A. Willats.

Two of the LOTS Reviews.



The London Bus Review of 1975

Geoff Burrows postscript to the recent Small Vehicles evening.



Between 1934 and 1940 Ransomes Simms & Jefferies delivered 24 of these vehicles to George Town (Malaya). Believed to be the smallest commercially produced trolleybuses in the world, RSJ designed and manufactured the chassis and 35hp motors. The 21'-6" by 7'-2" bodies were also to Ransomes design, but built by the operator, George Town Municipal Transport, probably using CKD kits. A variety of entrance positions were used for the 24 seat bodies. A further two were diverted to Trinidad in 1940 due to the war. RSJ, based in Ipswich, produced many trolleybus chassis and bodies, but is better known for agricultural machinery and lawn mowers.

In 1952 Armstrong's of Ebchester, near Newcastle on Tyne, bought this Austin K8 with a 13 seat coach body built by Churchill of Norwich. Fleet no 89 (EJR 308) was only 15'-7" long and 6'-5" wide. The chassis, rated at 25cwt and powered by a 2.2 litre petrol engine, was more often used for ambulances. Armstrong was later taken over by the Tyne & Wear PTE, together with Galley, another local operator. Tyne & Wear then began an express service between London and Newcastle using the Armstrong/Galley fleet name. In complete contrast to EJR 308, Neoplan double deckers were used.



Brighton coach rally 1985 ~ Robert Martin



I visited Malta in March 2017 to see how the bus operation was performing and to travel on the new Otakar Buses which are manufactured in Turkey (also to visit my favorite pizza restaurant, check if my favorite bars are still there, get some spring sun and to visit Comino for the first time).

Malta is made up of three islands, the main island with a population of around 305,000, the smaller island of Gozo with around 35,000 inhabitants and between them the small island of Comino with around 50 people resident. Added to the permanent population are a number of tourists for most of the year. Malta and Gozo have bus networks.

To understand the current situation you will need to know a bit about the history of bus services on Malta. Although there were some services before the Second World War, things really started after the war with cooperatives running routes from most areas of the island to the capitol Valletta, the drivers owned their own bus which had a license from the Maltese Transport Department (MPT). Many buses had local bodies on chassis imported from the UK or assembled from parts of military vehicles left on the island after WW2 or were complete vehicles imported from the UK at the end of their useful life there. Many buses had been personalized by their owners so the manufacturers names on the front often had little to do with the actual vehicle. By the end of the 1990's there were 507 licenses on Malta and 79 on Gozo with about half this number required for peak summer operation, so owners worked one day on one day off, doing contract work, maintenance or another job when not required for service.

By 2000 although the bus fleet was of great interest to enthusiasts the MPT felt the service was not what should be expected in an advanced European Country, with no low floor vehicles and most vehicles not conforming to recent EEC regulations. Between 2000 and 2010 MPD gave various grants to help license holders purchase new low floor buses (and scrap the old buses), during this time around 100 new buses were purchased for the main island and one for Gozo and a number of more modern buses, including some first generation low floor buses were imported from the UK. Most of the new low floor buses were King Long's from China purchased in batches by MPT and sold on to operators at a discounted price.

By 2010 the relations between the Malta and Gozo cooperatives and MPT were at a low.

The cooperatives wanted the fares increased from the low around half a Euro a trip but the MPD refused due to the poor state (old) of the fleet and poor reliability (there were even stories on Gozo of a number of journeys missed when a drivers decided to go home for lunch!). By 2010 MPT had had enough and decided to put the whole network on both islands out to a single tender (there are no buses or much else on Comino). Existing license holders were offered a payment if they handed in their vehicles (some kept them for contract work or got a better price from elsewhere). This was not the daylight robbery many owners claimed as most were not making a living from operating their buses, their relatives did not want to inherit the licenses, there was no longer much competition to purchase licenses put up for sale and the system was already changing as a number of 'Garages' had built up collections of over twenty licenses using employed drivers.

Arriva won the contract to operate the services on Malta and Gozo from Sunday 3rd July 2011, there would also be a new network of services designed by a UK transport consultancy contracted by MPT. The lead up to the takeover did not go well as license holders gave up early if they found

alternative employment or if their vehicle developed a fault they decided was not worth repairing. Also a number of license holders and drivers decided to transfer to Arriva so were taken off the road for training in the weeks leading up to the takeover. This led to a shortage of buses and drivers with reliability collapsing.

By the start of service Arriva had a fleet of 174 new King Long's (49 9m & 125 12m), 65 of the unloved Mercedes bendi-buses from London (fitted with air con and reflective glass), 10 Optare Solo Hybrids (still awaited), 2 Volkswagen / Bluebird Tucano minibuses and 41 of the newer low floor buses handed in. The other 'handed in' buses were to be scrapped, but after much work from enthusiasts in Malta around 100 were saved for preservation with a proposed museum (still awaited), although a number have since been sold on by MPT for preservation including a number returned to the UK.

The first day of Arriva operation did not go well as it became apparent the transfer of drivers to Arriva was part of an orchestrated protest with the drivers resigning on the first day by parking up buses with passengers mid route and walking off. Also during the first weeks it became apparent the new network did not work as some passengers needed to use three buses on the new 'hub and spoke' network with local routes from the hubs to complete the journeys they used to make on one bus, also many of the services between hubs could not cope with the loadings. Within a few days due to driver shortages Arriva had to hire in contract operators to operate some of the routes, and import temporary drivers from the UK on higher wages which did not help the moral of local drivers.

Over the summer of 2011 a number of service changes were made, which reintroduced many of the old services (although with new route numbers) which required even more contract vehicles to operate the services. Arriva also brought in 26 temporary buses from its dealership in the UK, 9 Solo SR's, 12 VDL SB200's (2 Plaxton Centro, 1 MCV, 9 Wright) and 5 Temser Avenue's.

By mid 2013 the bendibuses had become as unloved on Malta as in London, not all made it into service with the first two only being used for training then as spares and the final examples never making it into service. August 2013 brought things to a head with three catching fire and one becoming stuck in the center of Mosta in the Friday evening peak after the driver tried a U-turn after running off route and ending with the bus parked V style with the rear blocking someone's front door and the front up against the plate glass window of a car showroom, so that even a very thin pedestrian could not get buy.

The MPT ordered the bendibuses off the road from September 2013 resulting in contract buses being required again. This was the last straw for Arriva which it appears had been losing money on the islands from the start having got their sums wrong and never really getting the drivers on their side after walking into the disagreement between the MPT and the co-operatives.

Arriva handed back the operation to the MPD on 2nd January 2014, handing over the assets on the Islands for 1 euro! MPD operated the services directly during 2014 and arranged the lease of 22 Volvo B7RLE's with Wright bodies and 23 Solo M900SR's from Dawson Rentals in the UK to replace the bendibuses. The operation was put out to tender again and was won by Autobuses De Leon, part of the Spanish Alesa group which is itself part of the UK National Express Group on a 15 year contract (with up to 10 years of extensions available).



Otokar Kent C



Otokar Vectio C's

Autobus De Leon took over from January 2015 and ordered 143 Otakar Vectio C's (9.6m) which arrived in September 2015 and followed this with 33 Otakar Kent C's (12m) which arrived in June 2016. They also leased 32 Mercedes Citaro's that had been used by National Car Parks and had three doors, two nearside and one offside - the offside door removed before shipment to Malta. The arrival of these vehicles allowed the Dawson Rental vehicles to be returned and the remaining Co-operative vehicles to be withdrawn as well as service enhancements promised by ADL. There were some problems when ADL took over as MPT increased fares from the Arriva fare of around 1 euro to 2 euro's although island residents could get a card that gave a 50% discount, also the weekly tourist ticket (14 euro) was withdrawn.

So how are things in 2017. The ticketing problems have been solved after the EEC declared the new fares discriminatory. Since fares are now 1.5 euro with a summer peak fare (July to September) of 2 euro. The tourist ticket (tallinja card) has been reintroduced at 21 euro for seven days although now a smart card not available from drivers (it is obtainable from the shop in the departure area at the airport and other shops across Malta and Gozo). Islanders can use a prepayment card similar to Oyster in London which gives discounted fares. The service reliability was good during my visit, although time keeping is still a problem with a bus running fifteen minutes late not being unusual, bare this in mind if you visit the island and do not panic the bus will come! The delays are down to too many cars on small islands and the Maltese art of creative parking, Maltese bus drivers get buses through some amazing gaps in the small villages - an art form in its self and do their best to keep to time. The worst offender on my visit was the bus back to the airport which arrived over half an hour late on an hourly service, I was just working on plan B! Although the driver made every effort to make up some time heavy traffic conditions meant we were around fifty minutes late by the time we arrived at the airport, good job I had decided to arrive at the airport early. There are reports from September 2016 of 99% service reliability and 95% of buses departing on time, but it appears the departure reliability dropped 30% when the schools reopened!

All buses were in the Lime Green and White MPT livery in March 2017 and I got the impression that the drivers were relatively happy with their current employer. There are reports of driver shortages partly due to the low pay rate of 6.5 euro an hour in an economy that is comparable to Hampshire (housing costs and supermarket prices similar), ADL has recruited drivers from Spain and Portugal (they have to speak English - the MPT requirement for all drivers having to speak Maltese has been dropped) to overcome these shortages. Many journeys I used had full standing loads with drivers not wanting to leave passengers behind, but there becomes a point when

you can pick up no more passengers. There were a couple of occasions when reliefs were promised, we were often far from Valetta and there did not seem to be a spare bus about, so standing on a full bus seemed the best option! One of the worst routes for under provision is the service from the port at L-Imgarr to Victoria on Gozo, the number of tourists coming off the boat could easily have filled three buses - but only one was provided! Those of us in the know either use lesser used back door routes to reach popular destinations or set off towards Valletta to board a bus while it still has seats available and you are sure to get on. I am sure many UK operators would like to get the loads many routes get in Malta.

The Otakar Vectio's and Kent's both have two doors with the center exit being a narrow single leaf. The Vectio's give a good ride although there are steps towards the rear, seem well powered, the seats are reasonably comfortable with some padding (about as much as you get these days) and are particular useful as they are slightly narrower than the King Longs. The Kent's are level floor throughout with the engine in a cubicle in the nearside rear corner, although the seats over the wheels are raised (much better layout than a Wright - B7RLE), all seats have a couple of pieces of moquette stuck to the plastic shell with minimal padding (ouch!). The Kent's seem to have less power than the Vectio's, although as they are used on the shorter services through the busy tourist area to the west of Valletta they so do not get the chance to show their full performance. The King Longs were a revelation as when I rode them under Arriva ownership they rattled so badly they should have been sold by Mothercare and their automatic gearboxes seemed incapable of a smooth change. The rattles have been fixed by use of rubber tape and rubber bushes fitted in the handrail joints, all I rode on were quiet apart from one with a loose glass panel behind the driver. Someone has found a fix for the gearboxes, or the drivers have got used to them, and the seats seem more acceptable after riding on a Kent. The main problem I could see with the King Longs was that a number were showing quite severe bodywork panel corrosion, particularly to the rear end, so they may not have a long life ahead of them although they are only six years old. I never got to experience one of the Citaro's.

Latest vehicle news is that the ten hybrid Optare Solo's were withdrawn at the end of last year with nine offered for sale (one apparently beyond repair), so I did not get a chance to sample one of these in March. It appears there were no buyers and it is rumored that some are being prepared for return to service. Four of the Mercedes Benz Citaro's have returned to the UK and are having the offside door refitted, and a fifth has suffered severe fire damage in Malta, the old Citaro problem! So the other 27 may not have a long life on Malta.



Above: Two King Longs.

Left:
Mercedes
Benz Citaro,

Right:
Volkswagen
- Bluebird
Tucano



It hardly needs saying that, for many enthusiasts who came from near and far, the annual Friends of King Alfred (FoKAB) running day, with its accompanying transport 'bazaar', was an annual favourite that gave something to do in the middle of our hobby's "closed season" - not to mention an escape from any post-Christmas 'blues' at home! This is now the third event since the move to early May, and I am aware that the jury is still out as to whether the move was a good idea. I understand that a major factor was the (supposedly) imminent redevelopment of the bus station and surrounding area, with the other aspect being that - hopefully - a better weather 'average' might be expected outside mid-winter. I attended for some years on 1st January, usually for a few morning hours only as it is my wife's birthday. To be honest, I think that I probably had more dry days than wet, but it must be agreed that it was sad that the 2014 event, the last to be held in January, was very definitely on the damp side - an unfortunate way to end many years of tradition. I have no wish to upset anyone or get into FoKAB's (or any other group's) politics, aware as I am that people whom I know in both the SOC and VTG are also FoKAB members, but it does seem that, amongst vehicle owners, stall holders and 'punters', there is still much muttering that it '..isn't what it used to be..'



Bristol, Leyland (two Atlanteans and a PD2), AEC, BMMO and Bedford - perhaps those inclined to criticise could tell me why *that's not variety!*

However, I like to keep an open mind - and also support the efforts of FoKAB and their guest vehicle owners and traders who all do their best to give us an enjoyable day. I travelled this time, as last year, on 'feeder' service F from Fareham, courtesy of Terry Lawson and ECG 112K. Upon arrival at the bus station, Terry parked No. 12 at the back of the garage building - only to be 'greeted' by a marshal who told him, rather officially it must be said, that '..You can't leave it there - we've got too many buses out here and we need to get rid of some!..'. Terry politely replied that the RE would have to stay there at least for a short time while he found those in charge and got his schedule for the day which, as he pointed out to the 'hi-vis' gent, they had failed to post out to him! Now I know that things go wrong even with the best will in the world, but in my opinion that is *not* the way to speak to a person who is supporting *your* event by bringing *their* bus, to some degree at least at *their* expense!!

Anyway, that particular 'gent' will know who he is, and it's not my business to have a word in his ear - but I hope that somebody does. On to the rest of the day! I was scarcely off the RE's steps when I saw my friend Kevin who had come down from Buckinghamshire for the day, so we lost no time in catching up as we only meet up a few times a year. We enjoyed a few rides to and from the Park & Ride, plus one 'circular' on route 4, travelling on Southampton 289, the open-top King Alfred Atlantean, (downstairs though, as 'up top' filled up quickly!), one of the Panthers and London Transport MB90. On both the Panther and Atlantean, souvenir tickets were issued - a nice reminder (along with one's purchases and photographs taken) of days out such as these. The conductor on the Atlantean was an elderly but sprightly character with white hair and beard - issuing very old style tickets from a rack and using a bell punch. Kevin and I were sat at the back, and ticket issuing had obviously started with those hardy souls upstairs. We did wonder at one point if he would reach us before arrival back at the bus station, but manage it he did (just - with a bit of persuading the bell punch to co-operate) and I think ours were the last two tickets issued on that trip. Perhaps it is appropriate that what might have been the oldest crew member that day was issuing the oldest style of ticket - a nice touch!

The number and variety of buses running may also come in for criticism, with people saying that they are always the same. Well, I say they are not! Although some seen this time were arguably 'regulars', that is not to say that there were no buses 'new' to the event. For example, the London Merlin has not, to my knowledge at least, been there many times if at all, and I certainly hadn't previously seen Midland Red 5424 (EHA 424D) or Rawtenstall 18 (RTC 822), the later 'presented' in the livery of Scout Motor Services. Others (as far as I know) were making a debut too, such as Thames Valley 214, (VMO 234H), a Bristol LH/ECW in Thames Valley red and cream but with Alder Valley fleetnames and original style white NBC 'double-N' symbol. Also there after recent restoration was Southampton 289, (E289 HRV), an East Lancs bodied Leyland Olympian new in 1987. After my friend departed for home somewhere around 2.00pm, I took a couple more rides - one on Southampton 1 and the other a second go on MB90. With the vehicle graph supplied with the programme, one could not only choose journeys based on preferred vehicle type, but also see how many buses and coaches were rostered for service - and a lot of people, ourselves included, were seen to do just that. My view, therefore, is that the numbers and variety were fine!

One area which could hardly have escaped some comment this year was the reduced number of stalls in the 'bazaar'. Normally they fill both the main hall and smaller room across the corridor, but this time all were accommodated in the main hall. Even then, it looked like at least one may have not turned up, as there was a row of chairs provided facing the stage at one end - very welcome for a rest naturally, but no substitute for a stall fee not coming in!! Despite this thinner density, I still managed to acquire 11 prints, 20 slides and 15 assorted old bus magazines!

As well as these purchases, my day consisted of the chance to ride on (and photograph) various vehicles, plus having the chance of a decent natter with a friend whom I see all too rarely, even though we first met 37 years ago. Add to that pleasant journeys to and from the event (thank you, Terry!) and this particular 'punter' went home well satisfied with his day. I agree that changing a long established traditional place in the calendar *may* be a risk, but in these days of ever increasing costs - bus fuel primarily - those too easily inclined to moan should give this event time to settle in its new date and keep supporting the efforts of FoKAB and their guest vehicle owners and traders to ensure that a much valued event is not lost to us all.

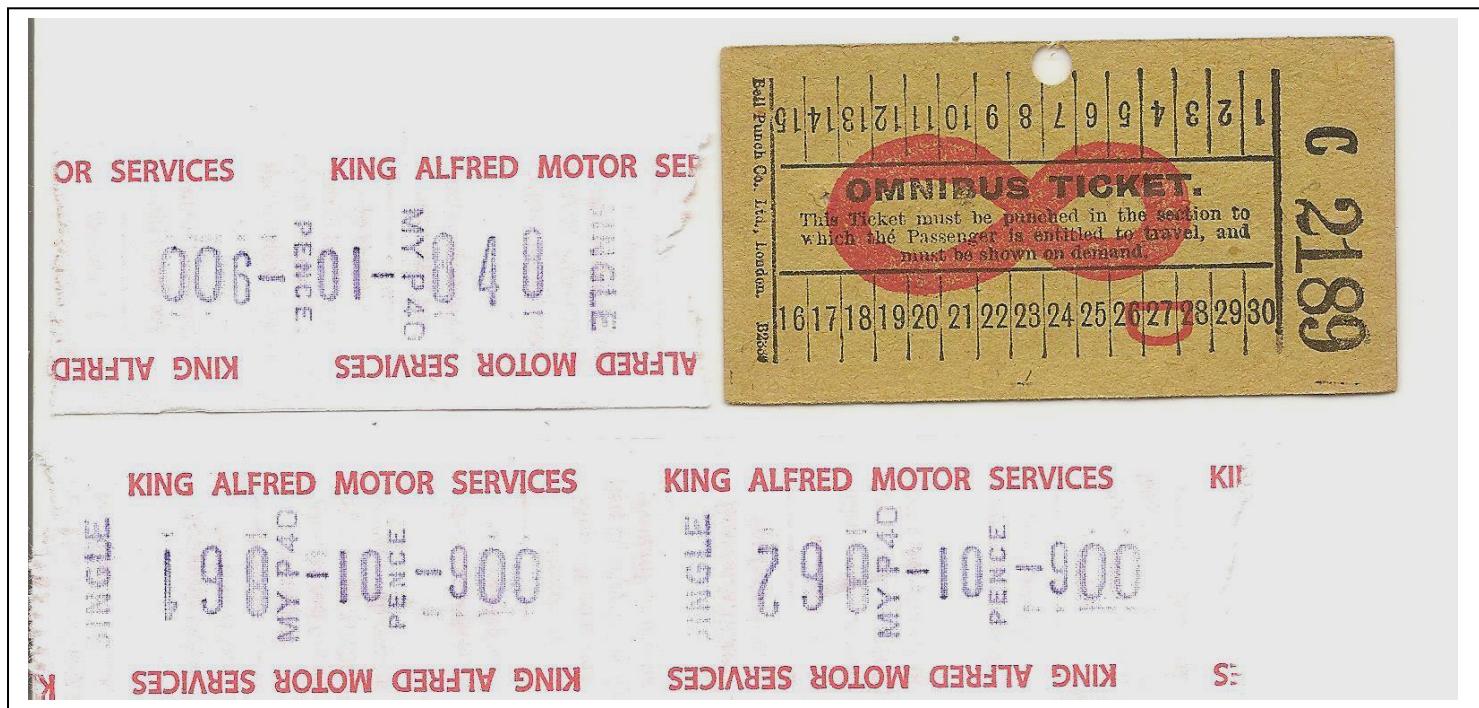


Southampton and "Scout", buses as referred to in the text.





Thames Valley and London Transport buses as referred to in the text.
Below: Souvenir tickets



This article represents my own personal view. Other opinions are available on any issues mentioned, and I'm sure that the editor would welcome further articles!

FIRSTSOLENT BUS SERVICES. John Kirby

W2 (WARSASH - WHITELEY) (PH0006159/442)

New service on contract to Whiteley Shopping Centre. Hourly on Saturdays only from Saturday 29/4/17.

Outward: WARSASH, CLOCK TOWER - Warsash Road - Lockswood Road - Peters Road - Heath Road - Locks Heath, Locks Road - Centre Way - LOCKS HEATH, LOCKS HEATH CENTRE - Centre Way - Locks Road - Park Gate, Admirals Road - Swanwick, Hunts Pond Road - Botley Road - Duncan Road - Swanwick Railway Station - Duncan Road - Botley Road - Whiteley, Whiteley Bus Gate - Sweethills Crescent - Yew Tree Drive - Rookery Avenue - Parkway - Whiteley Way - Bluebell Way - private road - WHITELEY, TESCO EXTRA.

Variation: One journey starts from WARSASH, CLOCK TOWER, then operates via standard route to terminate at LOCKS HEATH, LOCKS HEATH CENTRE.

Return: WHITELEY, TESCO EXTRA - private road - Bluebell Way - Whiteley Way - Parkway - Rookery Avenue - Yew Tree Drive - Sweethills Crescent - Whiteley Bus Gate - Swanwick, Botley Road - Duncan Road - Swanwick Railway Station - Duncan Road - Botley Road - Park Gate, Hunts Pond Road - Locks Heath, Church Road - Centre Way - Locks Heath, Locks Heath Centre - Centre Way - Locks Road - Warsash, Warsash Road - circumnavigate the roundabout at the junction with Shore Road - Warsash Road - WARSASH, CLOCK TOWER.

Operating Depot: Hoeford.

Normal Vehicle Types: Dennis Trident 2, Alexander Dennis Trident 2.

19 (PORTSMOUTH - NORTH END) (PH0006159/411)

Both directions: The last day for this service was Friday 21/4/17, using bus 53206.

19A (PORTSMOUTH - NORTH END) (PH0006159/411)

Operated in one direction: The last day for this service was Friday 21/4/17, using bus 53206.

Normal Vehicle Workings.

Further examples of afternoon school and college services include the following. The bus on service 653 then operates SD4, as 33002 demonstrated on 29/3/17. The bus on service SD6 also covers a journey on 7A, using 32768 on 29/3/17. Similarly, the bus on service SD7 also covers a 7A journey, as 32763 did on 29/3/17.

A Dennis Trident 2 or Alexander Dennis Trident 2 appears on service 10 on schooldays, then operates a journey on 653 followed by a journey on SD4, as demonstrated by 32765 on 5/4/17 and 32763 on 7/4/17.

Easter 2017.

Sunday service was operated on Good Friday 14/4/17 and Easter Monday 17/4/17

The end of April and a cold winter's day greeted me. The arriving children mostly gave the impression of it being the Summer term but this was leading to the night of frosted up cars! Some surprise route tweaking had taken place in Chichester since 2015 with double deckers replacing a Solo. It was the sort of change which gives these surveys added interest as the vehicles seem to have settled down since the last survey. Yet again the oldest bus of the day was ex London with Emsworth and District's ex Go Ahead short Pointer Dart taking the honours. Lest we didn't know with its M3KFC registration it is still in London red. No doubt the drivers manages a sponsored lunch for displaying this registration.

The 700 coast service between Portsmouth and Brighton is now in three sections, two of which serve Chichester. The one between Bognor and Portsmouth is predominately double decked with an exciting exception, whilst Chichester's sizable fleet of Enviro 300s serve the Chichester to Littlehampton section. Both sections run every 20 minutes. The Portsmouth Bognor section produced seven buses because of layover time in the bus Station. These were three Enviro 400s 10001/8/19887, two of the Enviro 400 bodied Scania's 15586/804 (the former was new to the through 700 route and the latter spent its earlier years at Andover) an older Trident with Alexander body, 18080, an 04 model which hailed from Exeter retaining its large fleet number which Devon based buses seem to produce. The last bus was a gold liveried Enviro 300, 27840 which normally goes to and from Selsey but was off to Portsmouth.

The Chichester city centre to Littlehampton section is mainly run by E300s. 10 registered 27653/4/61 are from Chichester's significant stock of E300s. E300s are the source of long saloons over the last few years, the model having taken over from substantial numbers of M.A.Ns nationally. Following withdrawal of M.A.Ns the E300s are now the more numerous.

The 60 service from either the Summersdale area of Chichester or Midhurst half hourly to create a 15 minute services to Bognor Regis has been heavily changed into three distinct routes. All three run half hourly. They are the 50 from Chichester to Summersdale via Graylingwell, the 60 from Chichester to Midhurst and the 600 runs from Chichester to Bognor. Double deck buses are on the 50 and 60, with the 600 being halved in both vehicle size and frequency. Buses on the 50 were 11 registered Enviro 400s 19881/2, 19884/5 from the same batch were on the 60. These buses have been painted in South Downs green and are route branded. The 600 saw three very different saloons. They were Enviro 300 27742 with 11 registration, Pointer Dart 53 registered 34454 and 36017 an Enviro 200 bodied Dart which spent most of its life on Winchester's city services. It was one the first Enviro 200s and has an 07 registration although the bus is registered 417DCD. Route 600 saw three buses in the hour because of an early arrival.

Routes 51-53 serve the city centre after leaving the bus station and return past the bus station for their out of city journey to the coast. The 52/3 route serves the road outside the bus station on the return journey. Passengers have to pass through the bus station. On route 51 to Selsey, the buses are Gold standard Enviro 300s which were 13 registered 27838/9/41/2. Ironically they were the same four as seen two years before. There are seven in the batch to choose from

Route 52/3, the same route to East and West Wittering but either clockwise on anti-clockwise there, has a combined frequency of every 15 minutes, Recently acquired for the route is a batch of E20Ds which have mostly been route branded. The 64 registered branded buses in use were 37271/2/3, but the fourth was 36015, a sister vehicle to 36017 described under the 600 above.

The 55 to Tangmere is a half hourly service requiring two buses. E300 27837 was joined by Optare Solo 47648. No standard type of vehicle here, just like the 600.

Route 56 is a subsidised service locally in Chichester and out to Bosham, Subsidised routes tend to be hourly and in Chichester operated by a small batch of 58 registered Optare Solos Also subsidised are the 46/47 local routes, one of which runs clockwise and the other anti-clockwise which are both hourly. On this day 47646 ran the 46/47 routes.

The new housing development on the site of Graylingwell hospital still has a 30 minute service but it has now been incorporated into route 50. The late Sunday evening service has been discontinued.

Route 54 neatly fits into the Chichester route numbers Stagecoach use, and indicate it should be a Stagecoach service but Emsworth and District has a contract to run the route. This service to Petersfield is roughly two hourly, serving Chichester in the survey hour. The bus used was short MPD Dart M3KFC which started life with Go Ahead in London as Y831TGH.

The only other route was the 99 from Petworth which is operated by Compass Bus. The bus is shown on the timetable as being able to serve isolated communities. Despite this an Enviro E20D was on the journey, There are several modern such vehicles, the one on the survey day being GX13FSS, the same one as seen in 2015.

Again the 665 to Oving passed through the bus station. The journey was not timetabled for the bus station and the bus, as in 2015, was Chichester University liveried Trident, 11 registered 19900.

There is a National Express route 206 which operates between Poole and Gatwick. Road conditions seem to affect this route and in seems pot luck how many coaches are seen, This year new coach 7831 of Go Ahead South was seen on its way to Gatwick, The coach has a 66 registration and is a Volvo B11RT with Caetano coachwork and became the newest vehicle of the day,

One other vehicle, apparently a private school contract, was an aging Compass Bus coach WV52HSX acquired from Scotland's Gibson Direct in 2015. I say aging but it wasn't built when this series started! The coach is a Plaxton bodied Volvo B12M.

This year's visit to Chichester has found relatively little change from the previous one. The situation was probably to be expected following the huge acquisition of new buses locally, recently, and is likely to be seen in many venues in the future. Nevertheless the oddities make a visit to Chichester highly worthwhile. Give it a go. Better weather must be guaranteed in the next few months.

Facts and Figures (2017, 2015, 2012, 2010, 2008, 2006, 2004 in order).

Venue...Chichester Bus Station

Date.....Wednesday 26 April 2017, Tuesday 3 March 2015, Tuesday 11 December 2012, Monday 1 November 2010, Friday 4 July 2008, Wednesday 8 March 2006, Wednesday 11 February 2004

Time...1500-1600 Number of Journeys ...37, 43, 38, 35, 36, 38, 30. Number of different buses...33, 35, 35, 32, 32, 33, 26.

Median Age...July 2011 (5years 9 months), April 2011 (3 years 11 months), February 2009 (3 years 10 months), July 2004 (6 years 4 months), July 1997 (11 years), June 1996 (9 years 9 months), October 1994 (9 years 4 months).

Oldest Bus....Emsworth and District Dennis Dart M3KCF (originally Y831TGH), Stagecoach Trident 17425 LX51FJZ, Stagecoach Volvo Olympian 16281 P281VPN, Stagecoach Volvo Olympian 16281 P281VPN, Stagecoach Leyland Olympian 14975 G705TCD, Stagecoach Volvo Citybus 15207 F307MYJ, Stagecoach Leyland Olympian 14372 C122CHM.

Newest Bus .Go South Coast Volvo B11RT 7831 (BV66WO), Stagecoach E20D 37274 SL64HXJ, Stagecoach Enviro E40D 10008 GX12DXP, Stagecoach Enviro 300 27658 GX10KZL, Stagecoach Dart SLF 35251 GX06OGB, Stagecoach Dart SLF 34529 GX04EYB, Stagecoach Volvo Olympian 16309 S309CCD.

Number of liveries...8, 6, 5, 6, 4, 4, 5.

Percentage of low floor...100%, 100%, 97.1%, 96.9%, 37.5%, 18.2%, 0%.

Most distant destination.....Gatwick Airport, Portsmouth, Poole,, Brighton,, Worthing,, Brighton,, Brighton.

Analysis of Buses

Chassis

	No.	%	No.										
	2017		2015		2012		2010		2008		2006		2004

Enviro 300	10	30.3	11	31.4	7	20.0	4	12.5					
Trident and its successor	9	27.3	12	34.3	6	17.1	2	6.3	5	15.6			
Dart and its successors	8	24.3	9	25.7	13	37.1	18	56.3	12	37.5	11	33.3	6
Optare Solo	3	9.1	2	5.7	3	8.6	2	6.3					
Scania N230	2	6.1	1	2.9	3	8.6	5	15.6					
Volvo B11RT	1	3.0											
Volvo B9R					2	5.7							
Volvo Olympian					1	2.9	1	3.1	2	6.3	4	12.1	4
Volvo B10M									8	25.0	10	30.3	7
Mercedes 709D									2	6.3	4	12.1	4
Leyland Olympian									1	3.1	1	3.0	3
Mercedees Sprinter									1	3.1	1	3.0	
Mercedes Vario									1	3.1			
Bluebird											1	3.0	1
Volvo Citybus									1	3.0	1	3.8	

Bodies

Enviro	26	78.8	28	80.0	16	45.7	8	25.0					
Optare	3	9.1	2	5.7	3	8.6	2	6.3					
Plaxton Pointer	2	6.1	3	8.6	13	37.1	13	40.6	8	25.0			
Alexander	1	3.0	2	5.7	1	2.9	8	25.0	21	65.6	20	60.6	19
Caetano	1	3.0			2	5.7							
East Lancs.							1	3.1					
Northern Counties									2	6.3	4	12.1	4
Mercedes									1	3.1	1	3.0	
Bluebird										1	3.0	1	3.8
ECW											1	3.8	

Operators

Stagecoach	30	90.9	33	94.3	31	88.6	29	90.6	28	87.5	30	90.9	25
Compass Bus	1	3.0	1	2.9	1	2.9	1	3.1	3	9.4	2	6.1	
Emsworth and District	1	3.0	1	2.9	1	2.9							
Go South Coast	1	3.0											
Excelsior					2	5.7							
Countryliner							1	3.1	1	3.1			
Lucketts							1	3.1					
Minerva Accord (WSCC)											1	3.0	1

Type of Vehicle

Single Deck	18	54.5	20	57.1	20	57.1	22	68.8	20	62.5	22	66.7	14
Double Decker	11	33.3	13	37.1	10	28.6	8	25.0	8	25.0	6	18.2	8
Minibus	3	9.1	2	5.7	3	8.6	2	6.3	4	12.5	5	15.2	4
Coach	1	3.0			2	5.7							

Type of Vehicle



14 VICTORIA COACH STATION 85th ANNIVERSARY TRIP - SUNDAY, 12 MARCH 2017 David Welsher

My only misgiving about putting my name down for this trip was allayed very early on, and that was whether I could manage to be at the pick-up point at the appointed time, but considering that mine was the last pick-up and so others were facing a more extreme problem, I decided I ought to at least try. In the event I made it with several minutes to spare, but even so Bob and the others were already there - it being barely light and also raining I could see the coach's headlights shining through the murk from some distance away. Shaun's picture of the vehicle at the Cosham pick-up will hopefully illustrate the conditions at the time.



Our vehicle for the day - Bob's 1947 Leyland Tiger PS/1 arriving for the Cosham pickup in the rain.

Once under way, the route was via the A3 direct to Wandsworth, then Battersea Bridge, and the last mile or so to Victoria Coach Station. At Wandsworth several of us recognised the former London Transport garage (address - Jew's Row, SW18, which always struck me as controversial as a boy and I've often wondered since whether a road would be given such a name nowadays) which has been used by Arriva for the Round London Sightseeing Tour since 1987/88, but I didn't hear anyone comment on the site of the former Battersea garage in Hester Road, immediately south of Battersea Bridge, as we passed that. I'd known where it was because this had been my "turf" as a young spotter in the mid-late 1960s. Battersea garage had opened in 1906 in pre-LGOC days and lasted until 1986 in traditional "route" use, then until 1988 for the Round London Sightseeing Tour, and then again from 1993 as an outstation of Stockwell, until it closed its doors for the last time in 1998. Part of the parking area backed right on to the Thames (sight of which, incidentally, was the sole high point for me when, much against my better judgement I allowed myself to be talked into going on a Thames river disco cruise one spring evening in 1983) and it was said before closure that this was in danger of collapsing into the river, but I was never convinced of this and tend to put it down to the fertile imagination of the press. Nowadays the area has been completely redeveloped, and apart from the "Hester Road" street name sign, which I noted was also new, no trace remains.

Victoria Coach Station was built in the splendid art deco style, and was opened by the consortium London Coastal Coaches in 1932. In 1970 the coach operators' association which managed it became a subsidiary of the National Bus Company, then in 1988 ownership of the facility passed to London Transport, and in 2000 to Transport for London. The freeholder of the site is the Grosvenor Group, and they announced in 2013 that they wanted to redevelop the site and so relocate the coach station, but English Heritage listed the building Grade II in 2014 and so produced a stymie. I don't know how the situation has changed since (if at all). Currently it sees around 13.4 million passengers a year.

Our arrival there was at 10:50, after a journey during which the

weather had improved - or at least it had stopped raining. Four departure bays had been given over to the event on each of the three days it was held, and there was provision for 11 historic coaches and two modern ones on each of the days. Conditions for the display were cramped, but then conditions for the whole coach operation there have become more cramped over the years so this further temporary strain on things was probably fairly generous by comparison. Once we had parked and disembarked we set about inspecting the other vehicles there, and most of these are covered in the accompanying photos.

All of the historic vehicles today had been single-deckers, but I understand that on other days there had been a 1966 Thames Valley Bristol FLF, and a 1968 Eastern National FLF fitted with 55-seat ECW coach body, both of which visited Victoria Coach Station when in service, and neither of which I would have minded seeing in detail - the latter especially as I couldn't help wondering whether it was a sort of Bristol equivalent of London Transport's RCL and if so how it compared.

Both of the modern vehicles there on the day of our visit were Stagecoach "Megabus" ones, of which I was interested to see the "Megabus Gold" one, a Van Hool TDX29 with Van Hool Astromega bodywork. As will be seen in Shaun's pictures they have beds installed, and this quickly became preferred transport mode for coach travel of any distance in the future (say, anywhere further than Petersfield), and I was disappointed therefore to learn that the London - Scotland service on which they had been used has now been withdrawn.



YJ64AUP
Stagecoach
Midlands Megabus
Gold 50312, a Van
Hool TDX29 with
Van Hool
Astromega
bodywork.

There were also a few stalls indoors, including a good display of model vehicles.

Then most of us had our own plans for the remaining time. I had arranged to meet an old school pal of mine who was travelling down from the Midlands. He was keen to see the coaches, and to the coach station itself again because, as a lad growing up in Finsbury Park he remembers it in the 1960s as a significant part

(being a bus enthusiast) of the annual journey on holiday to Bournemouth. So we seized the opportunity of a not-frequent-enough-these-days get-together.

While I was waiting for him I wandered over to the main line railway station in search for coffee as much as anything, and noted that there were a couple of class 442 "Wessex" units there about to depart on a "Farewell to the Wessex Units" rail tour.

When I had met Ian I did another circuit of the coaches with him, and eventually we went in search of dinner. We decided in favour of Wetherspoons in Wilton Road, just the other side of the main line station and short distance from LT's Victoria garage, opened in 1940 but closed in 1993, and of which like Battersea there is now nothing to indicate its existence. Victoria was unique among LT garages in having basement parking, reached by a ramp inside the garage.

It was at Wetherspoons that I discovered the full force of "regional pricing". Deciding on the old favourite of snake & pygmy pie, chips and peas (I know, not very adventurous but at least you know you're not going to go away hungry) it surprised me to have to pay £7.15 for it. "Forsooth," I cried when I returned to our table, "Methinks that victuals in this establishment are not of the cheapest!". "Verily it is so", replied Ian, "but forget not that thou art in London now." And so it was, because I happened to check W's menu at the Parchment Makers in Havant afterwards, and not only is S&PP, C & P there only £5.55, but you can have two for £8.19! Presumably that's with a friend, although I expect you could get away with having them both yourself.

It had started to rain again by the time we had finished, so we sat around for longer than perhaps we might otherwise have done, after which we returned to the coach station and watched the comings and goings at the arrivals part of it. Then to the railway station for a cup of tea and another chat, when it was time to go our separate ways, him to the Underground and me back to the coach station - until the next time.

Other people had spent their time doing other things. Roger and Marion Watts for example had set off on a walking tour of central London, and from what he told me on the way home seemed to have covered most of it. And thinking about it this was probably a better use of the time than sitting in the pub moaning about the prices.



Roger attempts to start group singing on the way home.

Our route home was via Chelsea Bridge and past Battersea Park, to regain the A3 at Wandsworth, and the traffic was noticeably more dense than it had been in the morning. It didn't clear to any significant extent until we reached the Kingston by-pass, by which time and having been a gloomy day anyway, it was mostly dark. Clive Wilkin took over the wheel at the Wisley comfort stop, and

Roger, influenced no doubt by a lifetime spent organising school coach trips attempted to start us with group singing of "The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round". But we weren't having any of that, and all made out that we didn't know the words. I alighted at Farlington just before 7:00 after an enjoyable day out.

With my thanks to John Bulman, Shaun Daniels, Kevin Kitcher, Robert Smith, Roger Watts and James Woodcock in alphabetical order for providing the photographs, and especially to Bob for allowing me to make the trip on his excellent coach.



ABO145B,
Western Welsh
1964 AEC
Reliance
Harrington
Grenadier.



CVL850D,
Lincolnshire
1431.
1966 Bristol
RELH6G ECW



EMW284, Wilts
& Dorset 729.
1949 Bristol L6B
Beadle



KDL885F, Southern
Vectis 301. 1968
Bristol RESH6G
Duple Commander
Note: This is one
of only 11 such

Continued on page 16 >>>

16 VICTORIA COACH STATION *continued*



<< MOD973 Southern National(Royal Blue)
1952 Bristol LS6G ECW
Note: This was originally a SNOC bus when new, and converted to a coach in 1960.



NAE3 Bristol Tramways 1950 Bristol L6B ECW >>



MSF750P Eastern Scottish
XS750A Seddon Pennine Alexander M



<< PPF492 Surrey Motors
1951 AEC Regal III
Harrington half-cab.

YX66WNM Stagecoach
Midlands 54280 Volvo
B11RT Plaxton Elite-I
Note: This vehicle also cropped up at the Stagecoach depot visit on 7 May. >>



Re-opening of The Hard Interchange ~ Roger Watts & Robert Smith



services 23 (to Leigh Park) and 700 (to Chichester and beyond) do use the Interchange.

Work continues on the taxi rank and 24-hour toilets outside of the terminal building. The temporary one-way traffic system using Wickham Street and Clock Street is still in force.

First Hampshire & Dorset's temporary Travel Centre in a Portakabin near the entrance to the Interchange closed on Saturday 6 May 2017.

The terminal building of the new Interchange opened on Sunday 7 May 2017. Its facilities include a new First Hampshire & Dorset travel office, Visitor Information Centre (which also sells waterfront gifts), public toilets, self-service refreshment vending machines, seating areas, real time information for bus and coach services, and an interactive panel for making enquiries.

Buses and coaches did not start using the Interchange until Sunday 14 May 2017. However, First Hampshire & Dorset service 1 (anticlockwise) and Stagecoach (South) services 23 and 700 (to Southsea) do not enter the Interchange, and continue to use a bus stop near *The Kepel's Head* on the north side of The Hard, with First Hampshire & Dorset service 1 (clockwise) and Hoverbus still use a bus stop on the south side of The Hard. Stagecoach (South)



ACQUIRED VEHICLES – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

33056-33058 Dennis Trident 2 Plaxton President H39/24F

Fleet No.	Registration	Chassis	Body	First licensed
33056	LN51 GKP	SFD136BR21GX21804	7597	12/12/01
33057	LN51 GJJ	SFD136BR21GX21814	7598	12/12/01
33058	LN51 GJK	SFD136BR21GX21812	7599	12/12/01

33056: New 12/01 as H39/20D in London red livery to First Capital East Limited, Paddington, London (TN1056). Allocated to Dagenham 12/01 and Rainham 23/3/02. Renumbered TN33056 on 1/11/03. Acquired 6/05 by CentreWest London Buses Limited, Paddington, London (TN33056). Allocated to Acton 6/05. Acquired 12/05 by First Capital East limited, Paddington, London (TN33056). Allocated to Rainham 12/05 and Dagenham 17/12/15. Converted to H39/24F and painted in First UK Bus Primary Livery 6/09. Acquired 6/09 by First Eastern Counties Buses Limited, Norwich, Norfolk (33056). Allocated to Norwich (Vulcan Road) 6/09. Given Norwich Network Yellow Line branding 9/12. Withdrawn 10/16. Norwich Network branding removed 10/16. Acquired 11/16 by First Hampshire & Dorset Limited (33056).

33057: New 12/01 as H39/20D in London red livery to First Capital East Limited, Paddington, London (TN1057). Allocated to Dagenham 12/01 and Rainham 23/3/02. Renumbered TN33057 on 1/11/03. Allocated to Dagenham 17/12/15. Converted to H39/24F and painted in First UK Bus Primary Livery 4/09. Acquired 4/09 by First Eastern Counties Buses Limited, Norwich, Norfolk (33057). Allocated to Norwich (Vulcan Road) 4/09. Withdrawn 10/16. Acquired 11/16 by First Hampshire & Dorset Limited (33057).

33058: New 12/01 as H39/20D in London red livery to First Capital East Limited, Paddington, London (TN1058). Allocated to Dagenham 12/01 and Rainham 23/3/02. Renumbered TN33058 on 1/11/03. Allocated to Dagenham 17/12/15. Converted to H39/24F and painted in First UK Bus Primary Livery 4/09. Acquired 4/09 by First Eastern Counties Buses Limited, Norwich, Norfolk (33058). Allocated to Norwich (Vulcan Road) 4/09. Withdrawn 12/10.

Reinstated and allocated to Norwich (Vulcan Road) 6/12. Given Norwich Network branding with white base but no route specific details 9/12. Withdrawn 10/16. Norwich Network branding removed 10/16. Acquired 11/16 by First Hampshire & Dorset Limited (33058).

62200 Volvo B10BLE Wright Renown B43F

Fleet No.	Registration	Chassis	Body	First licensed
62200	X695 ADK	YV3R4A51XY1006690	D74	1/11/00

New 11/00 in First UK Bus Primary Livery to First Manchester Limited, Oldham, Greater Manchester (695). Allocated to Wigan 11/00. Acquired 4/01 by First Aberdeen Limited, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire (651). Renumbered 62200 in 7/03. Given route branding for Blue Line 17 in 9/04. Route branding removed 6/08. Withdrawn 8/14. Acquired 8/14 by Midland Bluebird Limited, Larbert, Falkirk (62200). Allocated to Larbert 8/14. Withdrawn 1/15. Reinstated and allocated to Balfron 2/15. Withdrawn later in 2/15. Acquired 2/05 by First Bristol Limited, Bristol (62200). Allocated to Reserve 2/15 and Lawrence Hill 4/15. Acquired 8/15 by First Cymru Buses Limited, Swansea (62200). Allocated to Ravenhill 9/15. Re-acquired 11/15 by First Bristol Buses Limited, Bristol (62200). Allocated to Reserve 11/15. Acquired 6/16 by First Hampshire & Dorset Limited (62200).

63109-10 Wrightbus StreetLite Max DF DP41F

Fleet No.	Registration	Chassis	Body	First licensed
63109	SM13 NCU	SA9DSRXXX13141263	AH961	1/8/13
63110	SM13 NCV	SA9DSRXXX13141264	AH962	1/8/13

63109: New 8/13 in First UK Bus Urban Livery to First Manchester Limited, Oldham, Greater Manchester (63109). Allocated to Reserve 8/13, Rusholme 3/14, Cheetham 8/14 and Rusholme 7/15. Withdrawn 7/16. Acquired 8/16 by First Bristol Limited, Bristol (63109). Allocated to Hengrove 8/16. Acquired 9/16 by First Somerset & Avon Limited, Bristol (63109). Allocated to Bath 9/16. Acquired 7/11/16 by First Hampshire & Dorset Limited (63109). 63110: New 8/13 in First UK Bus Urban Livery to First Manchester Limited, Oldham, Greater Manchester (63110). Allocated to Reserve 8/13, Rusholme 3/14, Cheetham 6/14 and Rusholme 7/15. Withdrawn 7/16. Acquired 8/16 by First Bristol Limited, Bristol (63110). Allocated to Hengrove 8/16. Acquired 24/11/16 by First Hampshire & Dorset Limited (63110).

RE-ACQUIRED VEHICLE.

64001 (OIG 6941 originally LT02 NTV) re-acquired on 16/5/17 by First Hampshire & Dorset Limited (64001) from First Beeline Buses Limited, Southampton (64001).

33058 arrived at Southampton in 11/16, where it was not operated. It was moved to Weymouth in 12/16, where it is being used as a source of spare parts.

ALLOCATIONS.

Fleet No.	Date	From	To	Note
32701	31/12/16	Hoeford	Reserve	
32809	-/4/17	Southampton	Weymouth	
33056	-/11/16	Acquired	Southampton	
33056	-/12/16	Southampton	Weymouth	
33057	-/11/16	Acquired	Southampton	
33057	-/12/16	Southampton	Weymouth	
33058	-/11/16	Acquired	Southampton	
33058	-/12/16	Southampton	Weymouth	
47578	20/3/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47578	22/3/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	
47578	5/4/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47578	7/4/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	
47578	12/4/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47578	14/4/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	

47578	17/4/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47588	23/3/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47588	24/3/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	
47588	27/3/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47588	31/3/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	
47588	3/4/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47588	8/4/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	
47588	10/4/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47588	14/4/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	
62200	-/6/16	Acquired	Reserve	
62200	-/1/17	Reserve	Southampton	As driver trainer
63109	7/11/16	Acquired	Hoeford	
63109	9/11/16	Hoeford	Hilsea	
63110	24/11/16	Acquired	Hoeford	
63110	24/11/16	Hoeford	Hilsea	Later same day
32703	31/12/16	Hoeford	Reserve	
32707	31/12/16	Hoeford	Reserve	
32849	-/4/17	Hoeford	Weymouth	
32855	-/4/17	Hoeford	Weymouth	
33058	-/11/16	Acquired	Reserve	Correction
47411	16/5/17	Hilsea	Weymouth	
47588	24/4/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47588	28/4/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	
47588	1/5/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47588	5/5/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	
47588	15/5/17	Hoeford	Hilsea	
47588	19/5/17	Hilsea	Hoeford	
47670	-/10/16	Weymouth	Southampton	
64001	16/5/17	Re-acquired	Southampton	

60299 Moved from Hoeford to Southampton 3/17. **66164** Transferred to Ancillary Fleet and allocated to Hoeford 1/17. **66176** Allocated to Hoeford 1/17 and Southampton 3/17. **66181** Allocated to Hoeford 5/16 and Weymouth 4/17.

REPAINTED VEHICLE.

32809 painted white with dark blue skirt and cantrail band in 4/17, before transfer to Weymouth.

60299 Painted red and named *Claudia's Bus* in honour of Claudia Murg (of We Make Southampton) in 3/17.

Painted yellow (front two thirds) and red (rear third) with no lettering in 5/17: 33146. Painted yellow (front two thirds) and red (rear third) with no lettering in 4/17: 33156

MODIFIED AND REPAINTED VEHICLE.

62200 was converted to a driver trainer and repainted in the new livery for such a vehicle in 1/17. Both sides are Washed Out Olympia with Red Olympia skirt, above which is a thin Pantone Rhodamine Red stripe surmounted by a Light Olympia Band, and emblazoned with "DRIVER TRAINING" L" in very large letters. Front and rear ends are covered by thick dark blue and deep pink chevrons. The bus was allocated to Southampton as an ancillary vehicle in 1/17.

Converted to PO49/29F+14 and painted in red, cream and blue livery in 5/17: 32033

Converted to driver training vehicle and painted in First UK Bus Driver Training Livery (the livery used on previous conversions) in 1/17: 66164

ROUTE BRANDING.

Route branding for service 2 (Portsmouth - Paulsgrove) removed in early 5/17: 47411. CITY RED route branding amended to generic Southampton City Services in 1/17: 47602

NAMED VEHICLE.

63302 Named *Chrissie B* in 3/17 to honour Chrissie Bainbridge on her retirement as General Manager of FirstSouthampton.

Vehicle on Loan.

60299 Long term loan to Passion for Portsmouth ceased in 3/17. On long term loan from 3/17 to We Make Southampton, Southampton, (community group) as community bus and mobile display unit.

INITIAL DISPOSAL – CORRECTION.

66201 (S801 RWG) Bristol Bus & Coach Sales, Bristol (dealer), 1/16. Delete reference to Alpha Recovery Limited, Dudley.

INITIAL DISPOSALS.

42113 (R613 YCR) Unidentified dealer, unknown location, 3/6/16.

66202 (S802 RWG) Unidentified dealer, unknown location, 11/5/16.

42953 (WX06 OMK) First South West Limited, Camborne, Cornwall (42953), 3/17. Allocated to Taunton 3/17. Note: This bus was previously on loan to First South West Limited.

62200 (X695 ADK) First Beeline Buses Limited, Southampton, Hampshire (62200) as driver trainer, 3/17. Allocated to Slough 3/17.

Fleet News from Andy Warton

Fleet No.	Registration	Vehicle	From	To	Notes
17425	LX51 FJZ	Trident 2		Portsmouth	For disposal
18074	WA04 CSY		Andover	Chichester	
27652	GX10 KZE		Basingstoke	Portsmouth	
27844	GX13 AOG		Chichester	Reserve	For painting
27844	GX13 AOG		Chichester	Worthing	
34448	GX53 MWO		Portsmouth	Reserve	
34454	GX53 MWZ		Chichester	Reserve	
34524	GX04 EXU	Dart SLF		Chichester	In reserve
40655	N655 VSS	Mercedes Sprinter			For disposal

Stagecoach has agreed the sale Winchester Bus Station to Winchester City Council for £4m. Stagecoach originally agreed to include the site as part of the Silver Hill, city centre development back in the late 1990s, but numinous planning errors, court cases and a report from the Planning Inspector accusing the City Council of incompetence, has put the whole development back many years. Recently the fascia over the exit arch has received a face lift, but the remainder of the site is in a poor condition.

New Bus Times from 30 April 2017 in Winchester.

New timetables for services 69, 85 & 86 from 30th April 2017, to improve punctuality. There are also changes to Peter Symonds College services; Service 68: Littleton & Crawley will no longer be served by some journeys. The Salisbury journeys are retimed.

Services 691, 692, 693: Following a change of transport contract for pupils of Westgate School, service 693 will be withdrawn. Service 692 will divert at Botley to run via Hedge End (Broad Oak), Horton Heath and Fair Oak . The second morning journey on service 691 will be replaced by an additional journey on service 69. Service 851, 852: Revised times. Service 862: The afternoon journey will now operate via Penwood and Newbury to finish at Kingsclere.

Left: The driver of 407 DCD made a quick reversing manoeuvre into the 'exit' of the Kingsworth coach park. Thinking he was on 'The Spring' rather than the 7, he needed to get back onto Andover Road and head towards Sparsholt.



SOC Sunday visit to the Stagecoach Farlington depot. Full report and photographs on the next page.

It was yet another of those cold spring days we have endured this year, when four early attendees saw the arrival of Trident/Alexander AX400 18073 with a healthy number of passengers prior to the Club visit to Stagecoach Depot, Portsmouth. A route incorporating Fareham, Portchester, Havant and Farlington had been arranged and driven by our day's host, Colin Ashcroft. After the obligatory donning of High Viz jackets, we were invited to roam the depot yard. As it was a Sunday morning, the majority of the 75 buses were at home. Apart from the 700 service to Bognor and a route to Petersfield most of the buses are route branded from individual, discrete batches. All buses would have been described in my hour at series and the exceptions are worthy of note.

Mercedes minibus K8790DY is a privately owned minibus stored at the back of the depot in a parking area. Likewise ex Southdown RUF186 a Beadle bodied Leyland PD2, which is probably similarly owned as it is not on the Stagecoach preserved vehicle list. The yellow tree lopper seen is ex bus 16527, P527EFL, a Northern Counties bodied Volvo Olympian, which had ended its service life at Stratford upon Avon. The really big surprise was Megabus 54277, a 66 registered Plaxton bodied Volvo B11R which is 15m long and bears a twin deck body, where 71 passengers are on a well raised top deck. It was awaiting some repairs to be completed, it having some nearside panel damage by the rear wheels.

We were then welcomed into the workshops, the quiet workshops that a Sunday brings. The surprise here is that the number of spaces for double deckers is very restricted by the roof height. This would preclude the use of double deckers on a large route, as is happening elsewhere, including in Aldershot last year on the Yateley service. There are currently some 20 such vehicles at Portsmouth. It also explained the reason for the decision to replace the oldest route dedicated buses, the 58 registered E300s on the 23, with 11.8m Enviro 200s and not double decks. It is the normal length of time for 58 registered buses to be replaced, and

the earmarked batch of twenty is provisionally numbered 26146-65. The depot sees an overall allocation of 75 with a peak turnout of 65.

Despite this double deck restriction, a double deck Stagecoach Gold model 15843 VX62GTU was receiving attention. The bus is from Gloucester where its livery marks it as being normally one on the Cheltenham service. A number of buses were in the workshops, one of the Enviro 300s having suffered some panel and window damage to the nearside rear. Included "indoors" was UF4813 a Stagecoach preserved vehicle, the Brush bodied Leyland TD1.

We then gravitated towards the offices where the unexpected were two cash counting machines for drivers paying in and a real time information screen giving the whereabouts of every bus, with alternative colours for late running buses. There was some late running near South Parade Pier, undoubtedly caused by the mass gathering of football fans on Southsea Common celebrating Portsmouth's promotion. Hopefully the day's takings were enhanced!

Colin happily answered countless questions. After receiving a pen and a ticket wallet, we assembled for a group photograph. Colin happily moved buses, so a bus from each route branded route formed our backdrop.

After nearly three hours, it was time to bid farewell, as Colin drove off to return the happy passengers. A really great morning was had by all with Colin being a real star.

This event was made possible by Shaun Daniels, who enabled the membership to have a first rate morning, the likes of which the Club has not had for very many years. Well done Shaun! Thanks also go to those members who made the effort and showed that the Club can muster a good turnout to support such an event.



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