



Hants & Dorset on tour at Glen Coe in the days when we could take holidays.

In this edition:

Martin Kingsnorth looks at Southampton fleet numbering ~ Adrian Willats has his camera in Southampton ~ Roger Watts remembers Trowbridge ~ Chris Drew looks back at Cobham ~ Barry T visits Cuba in 2020 ~ Michael Dryhurst and Roy Jetten look at Provincial 19 ~ David Lindsell roams around Andover ~ Robert Martin and Phil Savin raid their photo collections.

Plus the latest news from around the area.



Editorial

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Coming out of lockdown and a return to normality appears to be the topic on most people's agenda with the reopening of schools being at the forefront. The question is: what is normality? Was it our life before lockdown or that previous life plus other preventative measures? Perhaps a simple way to answer is to first ask the question: would I want to travel on public transport if it returned to pre-lockdown service and standards?

Operators of school contracts could be at the forefront of seeking a resolution to what is the new normal: should children be temperature checked before boarding; how close should they sit to each other; will drivers need face masks and eye protection; should all vehicles be fitted with screens around the drivers' cab (interesting for coach operators); will vehicles need to be fully disinfected between each journey; where school routes are registered, should they still be available to the general public? Many of these questions will translate across to bus and coach operations for the wider general public.

No doubt staff training for coronavirus/infectious diseases will be picked up through CPC training days, but what is the likely effect for corporate responsibility and how will the insurance industry react? Sending a member of staff out into a working environment which might result in their hospitalisation, long term respiratory issues and possible permanent lung damage must be a legal nightmare and will require stringent health & safety measures. Just think back to asbestosis which has similar symptoms and the corporate liabilities still being fought in the courts.

The bigger issue will be the way in which the wider general public perceive public transport. Social distancing may finally put paid to strangers being willing to share a confined space, or even reuse a space previously occupied by a stranger before it has been cleaned. It is hard at the moment to imagine travelling by National Express, say from Southampton to Glasgow - twelve hours with an ever-revolving group of forty-eight strangers, stale air and no on-route cleaning. What state is a bus in after an eighteen-hour duty? Those beautiful double-deckers that Transdev ply between Yorkshire towns and cities with their two and one seating might well become standard.

The potential challenges facing the bus industry are immense. It might take years before the situation stabilises and public transport will suffer the consequences in the meantime as passengers seek alternatives. There will be cost implications regardless of the outcome. National Express and Megabus will easily resolve these with their dynamic pricing, but far more difficult for bus operators with fixed fare structures and coach operators already on thin margins. If I were a gambling man and had money to invest, would I bet on Stagecoach or Brompton Bikes?

Thank you to those who took the time to reply regarding the format size of the printed news sheet. The overwhelming majority preferred the A5 size. I will look at how we might achieve this over the coming months.

With a newssheet coming out every month, I need articles more than ever. I have plenty of photographic items but I am lacking words (illustrated articles). If you can, please put pen –to–paper (figures-to-keyboard), long or short, ancient or modern, one line or one page. All are welcome.

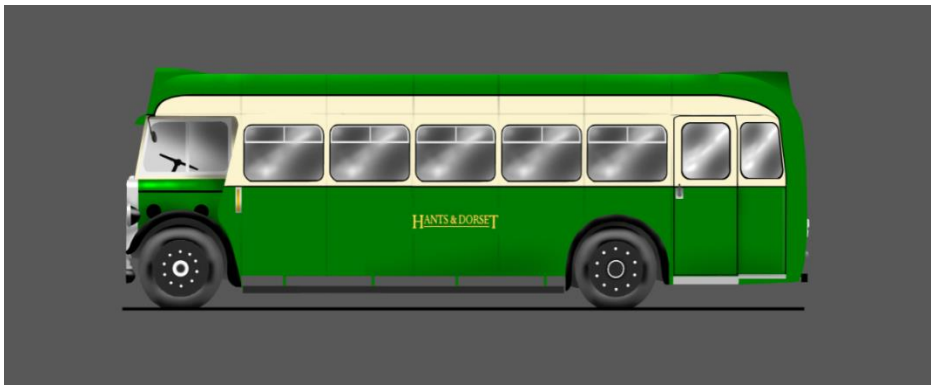


Hants & Sussex AML 80H © John Bulman

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

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May meeting.

The second of our virtual meetings: this time featuring Stagecoach livery. Thank you to all those who took part in contributing to the meeting and voting for your favourite livery. Coming top in the livery vote was the current style, followed by the new livery, with the original corporate livery in third.

For June the virtual meeting will have the title 'Favourite childhood trips'. All being well, this will be released on Friday 5th June.



Sheffield bus station on 18th May 1996. Stagecoach East Midland No. 428 (B628 DWF), Leyland Tiger with Alexander P-type bodywork.
© Adrian Willats

Can anybody assist John Wilkinson. (Reply via Barry T please)

I'm trying to discover any information about Hursley Coaches, a small independent operator in the 1950s and early sixties. Particularly any pictures of their fleet which included a Seddon, reg HOU37 and a Daimler CVD6, reg JLI3 - formerly owned by Excelsior of Bournemouth.

Hursley Coaches were, I believe, originally owned by the Jones family. Harry and Doug Jones were brothers with Harry having the business in Hursley and Doug a similar coaching business at Pitt nearer Winchester. Both outfits operated second-hand coaches including Bedford OBs and the aforementioned Seddon and Daimler. Doug Jones also had a CVD6 Daimler (reg FDL66) bought from Shotters of Brighstone on the Isle of Wight but it is the Daimler reg JLI3 and Seddon reg HOU37 that I am most interested in. Should any of your members have information about their subsequent ownership or demise, I'd be very grateful. Any photos would be a real bonus.

HOU 37 ©NA3T



Club News & Diary

2020 Diary

**All meetings 7.45pm at Portchester
unless stated otherwise.**

3rd July

Special guest. David Lee Kong head of Go Ahead Swindon.

7th August.

Members evening. A Portrait of Buses - photos of buses in portrayer layout.

10th August

Invitation to a summer barbecue with S&DTHT at Bursledon Brickworks Museum at 1830h.

4th September.

Trip out on Local Open Top Buses. Ian Manning to say that the Ex Brighton and Hove open top Bristol FLF will be available.

2nd October.

Members Meeting - 3x30 minutes.

6th November.

TBC

6th December.

Quiz Night.

A saga of trying to match fleet and registration numbers in Southampton ~ Martin Kingsnorth



Hants & Dorset MLJ 141 © Paul Redmond (Flickr)

Throughout my schooldays Dad worked for Mullards at Mitcham (Surrey), and occasionally had to attend meetings at their Southampton (Millbrook) plant. At last (Easter 1961) one of these trips coincided with school holidays, and so it was that a younger brother and I had an opportunity to travel down with him for our first ever visit to the town.

Apart from exploring a new place, a voyage to Hythe and back, and the chance to indulge in bus, train and ship spotting, I have distinct memories of seeing my first H&D and SCT buses en route. Near Winchester, I saw a green H&D Bristol LS (MLJ 141), and close to the top of Hill Lane, Southampton a very shiny new cherry red SCT Leyland PD2, no. 301 (301 TR). I quickly realised this was not typical as most SCT buses were Guy Arabs which did not have matching fleet and registration numbers.

Very soon after this excursion I was able to buy a copy of the new Ian Allan British Bus Fleets - South Central book in which I could record my day's spottings, but, to my amazement, neither of these first sightings was to be found therein!

This I eventually found was not quite true, H&D's 789 being incorrectly shown as having registration number MLJ 1, whereas SCT's new Leylands were listed as 259-270 without registration numbers given. (These fleet numbers - either guesswork or result of a late change of plan - logically followed on from the latest previous deliveries of the three Albion Nimbus buses of 1956/7). However, at more-or-less the same time as the book's publication, these buses entered service as 301 - 312, but registered 301-309 and 311-313 TR.

This 'mismatch' was quite a mystery and not impressive. In London, apart from the 4 prototypes, there were already hundreds of Routemasters running, with fleet and registration numbers in accord.

Five years on, Mullards indulged in a bit of re-organisation, with a consequence being Dad transferring to Southampton - hence a family move to that city (as it was by then). In due course events led to my introduction to (what is now) Solent Omnibus Club, of which I'm still a member, despite my moving to London in 1974 when I got a job with LT.

This meant I had plenty of chance to keep an eye on SCT (and H&D of course) and see the results of their unlucky attempts to match fleet and registration numbers.

I never found out why 310 TR was not issued to SCT. Maybe an individual procured it as a 'cherished number'? It was also suggested that this was to avoid a future visual clash with 31 OTR - does anyone know?

Anyway, things settled down, and 313-342 (the first 10 AEC's and 20 more Leyland's) had arrived in 1962/3 as 313 -342 AOW. Then, another mystery, as the next AEC's 343-357, came as 363-377 FCR. Perhaps a 'slip of the pen' in expressing numbers required?

Another 'spanner in the works' followed in 1964/1965 with yet more AEC's 358-372 neatly allocated BTR 358-372 B. However, delivery straddled the year end, and, to comply with the (newish) year suffix letter regime, 362/4/6/8-72 were altered to BOW 502/1/3-8 C. Not only an enforced change, but a most untidy one.

At just about the same time as moving to Southampton, the first 30ft AEC, 373, arrived, and, maybe another bit of ill-fortune, bore registration number FOW 378D. Perhaps SCT now temporarily 'threw in the towel', as the next arrivals, 374-80, carried HCR 131-7 D.

Good order was resumed briefly in early 1967, with JCR 381-92 E being the registration numbers given to the next batch 381-92. However, at this point, SCT seemed to give up in disgust - the first AEC Swift (fleet no. 1) was JOW 499E, and the last AEC deckers 393-402 came as KOW 901-10F. It was to be 10 years, more Swifts, a hundred Atlanteans and a handful of Seddon RU's before they tried again - more successfully.

Even so, it got off to a bad start. Atlanteans 202-219 were evidently intended to be MCR 202-219R, but 217/9 had to take ORV 90 and 89 S because they came after the (then) August suffix letter change date in 1977. Shades of 1964/5-though not quite as bad.

There I'll pause, the buses coming into the fleet over the next 10 years are well documented, except to mention one small 'bonus'. In 1978, after delivery of Atlanteans 220-231 (PBP 220-231 S), a Dominator came on loan. This was either in, or destined for, the Leicester City Transport fleet, and, very neatly, was their 232 (UFP 232 S)! Southampton's own 232 came in 1979 - as one of the Atlanteans 232-246 (UPO 232-246T).



304 TR outside Shirley depot. © Barry T.

50 Years Ago~Roger Watts

Southdown Motor Services Ltd. Following the acquisition of GFOC by the National Bus Company, the former's preserved Leyland G7, CD 7045, which was originally Southdown 135, was returned to the company for restoration. This bus started life in 1921 with a Harrington 27-seat charabanc body and received a Short Bros. open top double-deck body in 1928. It was sold to GFOC in 1934. Twenty new touring coaches started to arrive, details being: 1800-19 (RUF 800-19H) Leyland PSU3A/4R with Duple Commander IV C32F bodies. Number 1803 (RUF 803H) was entered into the British Coach Rally at Brighton over the weekend of 18/19th April and won the Associated weavers trophy for the best interior, and was the highest placed Duple-bodied coach.

"Firstbus in Southampton" - a pictorial feature from 2013 to 2017
by Adrian Willats



A selection for our younger members and those of any age who study current bus operations. Of course, as seen here, it doesn't take long for 'current' to become 'recent' - then it's but a short step to 'history'!





THE LONG AND WINDING (OR WYLYE) ROAD ~ ROGER WATTS



When responsibility for Trowbridge depot passed from Western National (WNOC) to Bristol Omnibus (BOC) on 1/1/70, one of the routes operated was the 241 from Trowbridge to Salisbury, run by one vehicle all day - normally an FLF Lodekka - and a morning peak working. It was joint with Wilts & Dorset (W&D) whose Warminster outstation provided three all-day vehicles - also an FLF Lodekka - plus a spread over vehicle. W&D numbered the service 24. Their Salisbury depot provided only peak hour changeovers and one afternoon journey. In February 1971 the route became single-deck one-man-operated (OMO), this was usually operated by BOC RE no. 1279 (EHU 380K). For their part W&D usually put RE no. 607 (MMW 357G) on it, which was regularly allocated to W&D's Warminster outstation, but Warminster also had one more RE and one of the former Maidstone & District Leyland Panthers on allocation, so that would make an appearance on the 24 as well. A significant change occurred in October 1972 when W&D was fully absorbed into Hants & Dorset (H&D) and henceforth carried that fleetname, and the new broom renumbered the 24 to become the 241 - now common to both operators. From this time also, both companies gradually adopted NBC shades of green and red. On 1/7/73 the RE was assured of dominance, after the service was re-routed under a very low bridge in Churchfields, Salisbury which precluded the use of the new Leyland Nationals which were entering service from 1972-73 onwards.

The large NBC Market Analysis Project of January 1980 did not have much effect on service 241, however, in 1982 BOC revised the Trowbridge services, cutting evening and Sunday services, and no longer working through to Salisbury, stopping instead at Warminster. This meant that BOC could now use the more modern Leyland Nationals when desired. April 1983 was quite a momentous month for the service, because BOC's partner became W&D again on 1/4/83 at the split of H&D into four smaller units, and the 241 came to an end ten days later, to be renumbered X41, and extended back on a limited stop basis to Bristol. The new X41 now became Bristol - Bath - Trowbridge - Warminster - Salisbury from 11/4/83, and was still a joint operation. To work the service BOC sent five Leyland National 2s nos. 3518-20 (AAE 662-4) 3532/3 (BOU 7/8V) which had just been reseated to DP49F by Willowbrook at Loughborough and repainted into dual purpose livery. Also, Trowbridge depot was closed at this time (10/4/83) so vehicles were provided by Bristol (Marlborough Street), Bath and Warminster. W&D used vehicles from Warminster and Salisbury depots. The Bristol -Warminster section was hourly, and BOC worked through to Salisbury again only on every other hour. Later the route became the X4, and from April 1985 BOC traded as Badgerline, splitting it off to form as separate company as from 1/1/86. The route was altered to serve Bath to Salisbury only in 1992.

Subsequent changes were to the operators, with the operations and vehicles being transferred to BOC (once again) from January 1996. However, the Badgerline name and livery remained. From March 1999 Wiltshire County Council used rural bus grant money to pay for an enhancement of the X4, the headway being doubled to half hourly between Bath and Warminster, and hourly between Warminster and Salisbury. Subsequently, W&D provided two vehicles from Warminster and one from Salisbury using Duple-bodied Leyland coaches. Things almost went full-circle, when Badgerline vehicles were once again operated from Trowbridge - but not from the former depot - only from a council car park.



50 YEARS AGO ~ Roger Watts

Gosport and Fareham Omnibus Company Ltd. Mr. I. Morton, formerly area superintendent, Exeter for Devon General took up the post of manager of the company on 1.2.70.

Hants & Dorset Motor Services Ltd. Open top Bristol K6A 1111 (FRU 308) was acquired by David Fereday-Glenn for preservation. The open top fleet is now down to four Bristol K5Gs: nos. 1121/8/37/43.

2011 the year Cobham stepped up a gear ~ Chris Drew



The Stig's daytime job.

A few shots from 2011, the year that the Cobham rally moved from a desolate windy airfield beside the A3 to a desolate windy airfield at Dunsfold, for one time only.



Good ventilation is everything!



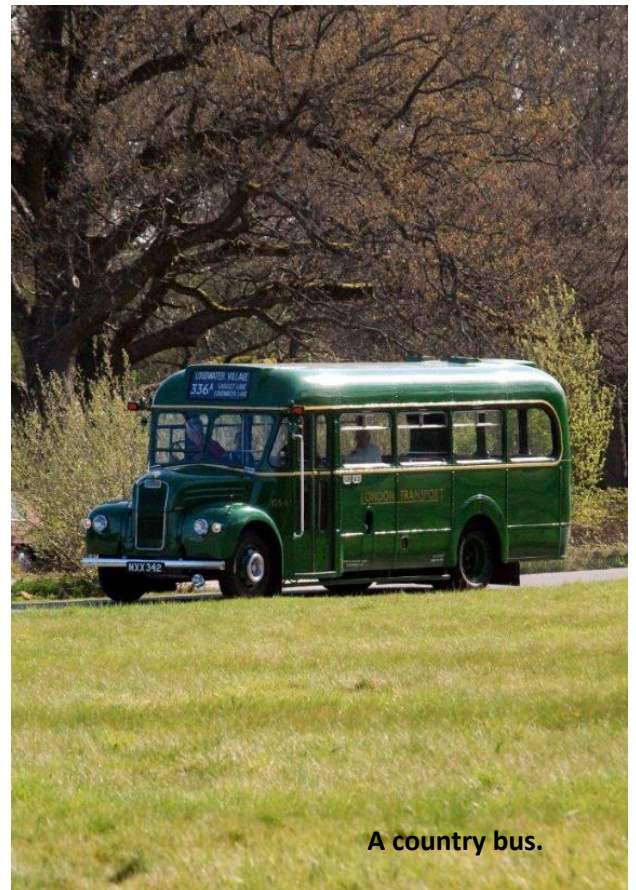
Long way from home.



A bit less than 6 degrees of separation.



Home James.



A country bus.



Being the home of 'Top Gear', it was worth the money to take one of these round 'Hammerhead'.



A time to compare.



No excuse to get the details of that one wrong then.

30 YEARS AGO (First published in news sheet No.7 Jan 1979)

The austere Bedford OWBs were beginning to change hands. Skylark of Lymington acquired EWR 703 a bus of 1943 vintage from A. Wray & Son of Summerbridge, Yorks. (I wonder what happened to it - Ed.)

End to End - Cuba 2020 by Barry T.



Empresa Provincial de Transporte de La Habana, Yutong ZK6180HGC.

The country

The Republic of Cuba is an island nation located 90 miles off the south coast of North America with the north shore on the Atlantic Ocean and the south shore on the Caribbean Sea. A socialist country with a land mass of 110,860 square kilometres, it is 1,250 km (780 miles) long and 191 km (119 miles) across its widest point and 31 km (19 miles) across its narrowest point with a population of 11.5 million. The capital is Havana with 2,130,081 residents: Santiago de Cuba and Camaguey are the other two major centres of population.

The country is supported financially by Russia and China; however since early 2020 has been suffering severe hardship with a shortage of basic food, medicine, fuel and gas due to a blockade of shipping by the American Coastguard. This situation is most obvious to tourists travelling by road as coaches and buses are not exempt from queues at filling stations or lack of fuel.

The journey

Havana, located on the north western coast, is the starting place and this journey goes initially west then crosses to the east of the long and narrow country, eventually returning to Havana.

The Omnibus National coach station is on the outskirts of Havana, and is on route to the national highway which provides the only sighting of the ubiquitous "camelo" articulated truck/trailer buses, once a common sight on the streets of Cuba, looking forlorn and abandoned on the roadside.

Viñales which is a small settlement in an area of mogotes, caves, mountains and tobacco plantations, is the most westerly point of the journey. The town contains a small bus depot with a fleet of Diana vehicles in Omnibus Escolares and standard service livery. A double-decker sightseeing service connects all the major landmarks around the town.

The long journey east starts by retracing the outward route towards Havana before circumventing the city via the southern ring road. Eventually the shores of the Caribbean Sea are reached at a place known in modern history as the 'Bay of Pigs' before arriving in the small city of Cienfuegos. Cienfuegos is set around a bay with a grid style road system, and public transport consists of a small fleet of buses from 9m up to 12m in length. The centre of operations is focused on Pasado El Prado, the longest boulevard in Cuba, although a popular mode of transport is the eight-seater horse & cart taxi. Set five blocks back, the Terminal de Ómnibus on Calle 49 provides a basic building and small yard for express services provided by Omnibus National.

Highway 12 provides the next short leg of the journey to Trinidad, a small city with narrow streets and a large pedestrianised historical centre. The limited town bus service is provided by elderly Diana models and a Yutong double-decker sightseeing bus. To the east of the centre, at the junction of Calle Chanzoneta and Calle Amistad, operators use a site which functions both as a terminus and yard. Services operated by TransMetro and heading west start here, and travel through the centre using roadside bus stops for picking up. Omnibus National use the second coach station in the city centre on Calle Gloria, known as Terminal Viazul & Astro, which is a rundown site with booking office and undercover waiting area, on a narrow street not suited to modern day coaches.

The national highway again provides the main route for a journey down the spine of the country. Departing Trinidad, skirting Sancti Spiritus and on to Camagüey. Once again, Camaguey is a town with narrow streets in the historical quarter and only one route for a midi bus service. The newer outskirts that are around the inner southern ring road are served by conventional buses, and slightly further to the south on the road out of the town is a terminus for Omnibus National and for several routes served by the popular

trucks with seats in the back. The Provincial Transport Company for Camagüey district transports 110,000 people daily; the operation was expanded in 2016 when 23 new two-door Diana buses were added to urban routes, along with another 15 large buses each capable of carrying between 150 and 160 passengers.

Continuing ever eastward, the uninspiring town of Las Tunas provides the next bus interest. Local services are provided by a mix of vehicles including single decker articulated buses. The main interests are the large Omnibus National depot and, next door, the slightly smaller Transtur depot which are located on the ring road. Moving on to Holguin, the next town of any size, as you enter the town there is yet another large Omnibus National depot and immediately next door, an even larger depot of Omnibus Holguin. From here the route turns south via the birth place of Castro at Biran to Santiago de Cuba, the second largest city in Cuba. A day excursion continues the journey east via the highest view point on the island at Gran Piedra and close to the infamous Guantanamo Bay.

Starting the long return journey, the first major town is Bayamo with a small intercity bus terminus on the outskirts. The journey now resumes the route taken on the way out, bypassing Camaguey before overnighing in Sancti Spiritus which is a beautiful small city with a smart fleet of Dianas that are operated by EPT Taxibus. Tourist express routes 16 and 25 operated by Viazul bus from Trinidad serve the city which is home to a new inter-provincial coach station for over 2 million passengers a year. Finally, on to the provincial capital, Santa Clara, that is home to the Monumento Ernesto Che Guevara and scene of the famous train bombing during the civil war. Bus services are provided by green and white liveried Cubanicay Omnibus. Just the long drive back to Havana remains.

Cubans drive on the right, however they use the left hand (centre) lane of dual carriageways as the default lane, moving over to allow overtaking. The standard of driving is very high: speed limits are obeyed; indicators appropriately used; potholes dodged and full awareness of all other road users, eg bikes, pedestrians, tractors, horse/oxon & carts and roaming cattle. It is the law that any road vehicle with spare seats must stop and offer a lift to residents standing on the roadside with the exemption of coaches carrying tourists and cars with 'T' registration plates. Hitchhiking is a way of life, either using thumb & finger or holding out a few Pesos to indicate a willingness to pay. At major gathering points, marshals are deployed to halt vehicles and control loadings.

The Vehicle Manufacturers

CAISA

Evelio Prieto Guillama Bus Production Company (CAISA), located a few miles west of Havana in Guanajay, manufactures the popular Diana bus which is assembled from imported CKD kits and locally produced GRP panels. The factory currently employs 400 workers and in 2018 built 480 Diana buses.

The origins of the factory can be traced back to the Soviet era with production peaking in the 1980s. Between 1970 and 1980, approximately 15,000 Giron buses based on a Paz 672 chassis were produced. Production ceased in the 'Special Period' which is the time in the early 1990s when the Russians departed and left the entire Cuban economy in tatters. Production resumed at the end of 2012 when the Diana bus was launched.

Since 2014 Yutong has jointly developed the 7.5 metre Diana with CAISA, with seating for 25 and room for 18 standees, although, as in the case of all buses operating in Cuba, this is a conservative

figure because no bus is ever too full and no one is left standing at a stop. In total, it has produced 1,475 Dianas since 2014.

In 2019 an agreement was signed with the Russian manufacturing group PAZ, a subsidiary of Gaz, to assemble 250 PAZ-32053 chassis with euro 4 engine from imported parts. The finished product will seat 26 with a total capacity of 45. The final product will also be badged 'Diana'.



Even the buses have to queue for fuel. This Diana still had passengers on board as it eventually made it to the pump.

Yutong

The modern PSV transport scene is dominated by Zhengzhou Yutong Group Co., Ltd. (Yutong). Cuba has been one of its main overseas markets. In 2005, 400 Yutong buses were imported which made it the largest export order in Chinese bus history at that time. By March 2006, the 1000th Yutong bus had arrived and by May 2007, the total ordered had risen to 5348, earning a place in the Guinness Book of Records for Export. Over twenty bus models have been introduced to the island since 2005.

In 2008 Yutong agreed to deliver 200 coach knock-down kits for assembly by CAISA. In 2015 a further order for 1,833 units was received. By 2017 Yutong had launched the first hybrid bus in Cuba and during 2018, 40 hybrids were imported.



Transmetro (Empresa de Transporte de Trabajadores), Yutong ZK6107HA makes a tight turn from Calle Gutiérrez in the historic centre of Trinidad.

Marcopolo

At an economic summit in 2012 the Brazilian bus manufacturer expressed an interest, with CAISA as a partner, to develop a production site within the Mariel special development zone (ZDE). By 2014 the technical development was well advanced but the project faltered over the availability of international loans.

Hino

The remnants of the once large Hino fleets can still be found throughout the island, or at least purporting to be Hino if the badges are to be believed. In the 1970s, batches of 500 and 550 were delivered and by the mid-1980s most public transport consisted of Hino, a company revered by the Cuban transport industry.

The Operators

Buses appeared in Havana in the 1920s and by 1952 transport in the capital had already consolidated under two large companies: La Cooperativa de Ómnibus Aliados (COA) and Autobuses Modernos S.A. (AMSA). Transport was nationalized in 1959 and both companies came under state control in 1961. The extensive city network continued to expand and by 1984 accounted for nearly 4 million daily journeys. The start of the "special period" in the early 1990s caused havoc with most operators and services disappearing, but eventually led to the introduction in 1994 of the camelos. It was only in 2011 that a gradual recovery of the extensive network began. All operators are under state control and in general, operate identical vehicle types. Some individual companies are only for the Cuban population or a particular profession whilst others provide visitor services.

Empresa Provincial de Transporte de La Habana oversees passenger services in Havana using a fleet of over 900 buses from 16 depots with 1.1m passengers a day. There are fifteen bus terminals, five of them for the main routes and ten for secondary and feeder routes.



Metrobus de La Havana, Yutong ZK6180HGC in Calle Industria.

Metrobus (Metrobus de La Havana) currently operates 17 main routes in Havana, identified by the letter P (P1 – P16 + PC), using a fleet of single-deck articulated vehicles with a standard fare of 5CUC. This is the successor to the "camelo" network. The company began life in 1994 created from Ómnibus Urbanos de la Habana and used camelos until 2005 when the first articulated buses arrived. The network underwent further consolidation in 2007. Secondary (Guaguas) routes, little changed in decades, use numbers, 1- 490 not in a continuous sequence. Feeder routes begin with the letter A (A1 – A97) whilst local services connecting neighbourhoods begin with the letter C (C1 – C7 + CF9 and CF114).

Transmetro, Empresa de Transporte de Trabajadores (Workers Transportation Company), was created in 2007 and provides services for tourism employees and associated government organizations across the country. It operates a total of 998 buses from over 21 bases including 23 routes in the capital and carries over 30,000 passengers per day. The company supports local services in the province of Santiago de Cuba, where reliable public transport is an issue, using a fleet of fifty 44 seat buses.

National Omnibus Company (Ómnibus Nacionales) (EON) formerly known as Astros, operates 828 coaches reserved exclusively for Cubans. The nationwide network of express services uses a fleet of Yutong coaches in blue livery, less luxurious and often a lot older than those used on tourist express services.



Ómnibus Nacionales depot in Las Tunas.

Transgaviota. This company has its origins in the transportation of Soviet advisors in the 1960s. The current board of directors is headed by senior military personnel. The company describes itself as offering a wide range of tourist services although the most visible element is the coach fleet which operates across the country and the (green) open-top sightseeing buses in Cayo Santa Maria and Varadero. As the website no longer functions, gaining an insight to routes and timetables is impossible, but a troll through the Twitter feed gives some indication of the services on offer.



Transgaviota Yutong ZK6831HE

Viazul Transporte por Omnibus has provided intercity services throughout the country for nationals and tourists since 1996 with more than 20 daily departures from Havana. Its coaches tend to be acquired second hand and kept for many years. Some of the Mercedes used until recently were twenty plus years old whilst the oldest Yutong dates back thirteen years.

Empresa Transtur S.A., formed on October 13th 1980, is a multi-faceted travel and freight company. The company specialises in incoming tour groups but also provides a nationwide network of express services which are focused around tourist hotels. To the visitor, it is the most visual of all the companies. Its blue & white livery can be seen on over 1500 coaches and open-top buses that operate from fourteen depots with support from a further seventeen branches and 200 sales offices. Open-top sightseeing buses operate in Guardalavaca, Havana, Jardines Del Rey, Santiago De Cuba and Varadero.



Transtur 3694. A Yutong ZK6122H9 on tourist duties in Viñales.

Whilst many may mourn the loss of variety and the mix of curios that once operated on the streets of Cuba, it is fair to say that the Island still holds much interest for the PSV enthusiast. It just requires seeking out. The island is in something of a time warp and, whilst the locals might not agree as they struggle daily with the difficulties that international sanctions bring, the architecture and natural beauty make this a traveller's haven.



Motor Coach Industries (MCI) MC-9. Several were donated and are used by sports teams with baseball being a national sport.



Now that will be a Daewoo.



Above: Competition for business in Santiago de Cuba rush hour.

Left: Giron XII-Pegaso operating a school excursion to Castillo De Los Tres Reyes Del Morro.





Provincial 19 ~ Photograph Michael Dryhurst, Words Roy Jetten.

19 and the others acquired at the same time in 1940. As it happens, most have an interesting history.

Ex City of Oxford 4/40

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|-----------------------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 53 | JO 1626 | AEC Regent 1 (petrol) | Park Royal | H26/22R | new 3/31 |
| 52 | JO 1628 | AEC Regent 1 (petrol) | Park Royal | H26/22R | new 4/31 |
| 19 | JO 5403 | AEC Regent 1 | Brush | H28/26R | new 8/32 |
| 20 | JO 5404 | AEC Regent 1 | Weymann | H28/24R | new 7/32 |
| 21 | JO 5405 | AEC Regent 1 | Weymann | H28/24R | new 7/32 |
| 22 | JO 5406 | AEC Regent 1 | Weymann | H28/24R | new 7/32 |
| 42 | DAA 848 | AEC Regent 1 | Park Royal | H30/26R | new 11/38 |

The chassis of 52 and 53 after being sold to Provincial were dispatched from Oxford to Park Royal London, where they were re-bodied. Delays in delivery were experienced owing to blast damage through enemy action during their construction.

During the Thirties AEC had in production the AEC Regal 4 supplied with a A165 four cylinder engine, which in 1934 Provincial acquired eight with Harrington DP32R bodies.

In 1937 AEC in partnership Birmingham City Transport, fitted a chassis ordered by them with an AEC A168 four-cylinder oil engine with a preselective gearbox and fitted with a Short Brothers body from an Birmingham Regent temporary taken out of service, retaining its number and also receiving its matching registration number DOB 483. After its trial in Birmingham, one suspects not successfully, the chassis was returned to AEC, rebuilt with a 7.7 engine and crash gearbox and sold to Provincial a few months later with a new Park Royal body and re-registered DAA 848.

That should have been the end of the Regent 4 experiment. The then manager, Mr Orme White, must have been aware this experiment and with the two Regents 52 and 53 on order decided to specify Regal 4 A165 engines to be fitted, the result was that both were delivered from Park Royal as H24/24R during November 1940. It is not known how long they remained as such, both 52 & 53 were later fitted with AEC 7.7 engines and re-seated to H30/26R, likely during wartime. As a result only three AEC Regents were ever fitted with four cylinder engines and Provincial had two and also owned the chassis involved with the original.

19 JO 5403 was one of six Regent 1 ordered by City of Oxford, the body order split between Brush and Weymann. The chassis was the earliest to be fitted with a fluid coupling and preselective epicyclic gearbox, which had been developed by Walter Wilson, he was much involved with Daimler at the time. Once delivered to Oxford, they were to be received with such a lack of enthusiasm by the management that no further fluid transmission Regents were ordered by the company. BET to which Oxford belonged, were reluctant for any of its operators to acquire this transmission, certainly pre-war.

Despite Oxford's misgivings, London Transport, with its close working with AEC, received its first example by being fitted to STL 50 in March 1933, the last of that batch, over six months after Oxford. The newly formed London Transport were obviously impressed, not only having it supplied as standard on future new orders but having it retro fitted as well.

19, along with the other three were withdrawn by early 1949. Mr Orme White must have had thoughts at the time on operating an open top service to Stokes Bay during the summer months. 19 was taken into the body shop and converted to open top in the spring of 1951, as such it entered service from Gosport Ferry to Stokes Bay on Whit Sunday 1951.

19 continued this seasonal work for many years until its last summer season of operation ended in August 1964. It was sold to a preservationist in January 1965, it now currently resides at the Oxford Bus Museum. Plans are to restore it to its original double deck condition, to date this has not yet been achieved, though it has been restored to City of Oxford livery.

David Lindsell ~ Andover Diary



Stagecoach 37415 (YX65PYL) a Alexander Dennis E20D/Enviro 200 MMC noted at Andover Bus Station and leaving on service one at 09.05 on the 7 May 2020.



Left: 37410 (YX65PYD) a Alexander Dennis E20D/Enviro 200MMC in Kings Country livery and normally based in Winchester, overtakes static 27830 (GX62BTU) a Alexander Dennis E30D/Enviro 300 in Western Avenue, Andover during the afternoon of the 1 May 2020.

Right: 27829 GX62BPZ) a Alexander Dennis/Enviro 300 seen in Western Avenue, Andover on the afternoon of the 2 May 2020.



Operator News



Bluestar



Bluestar has unveiled a special rainbow bus in tribute to NHS staff in Hampshire.

Hants & Dorset

KRU 856W and UFX 857S now withdrawn by Big Bus, Philadelphia and awaiting sale.

Hythe & Waterside

WA13 DWW, new to Amport & District now with Wood, Buckfastleigh.

Meteor Parking (Eastleigh Airport)

AE57 FBJ now JMQ 690 with Uzabus, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Princess

YN15 EMK sold to Garden of Eden, Malta, re-registered APY 078.

QV Education Ltd., Fareham

PH1136975/3 Operating between Boundary Oak School and Funtington, service No. EAST from 08 June 2020, amended route and timetable.

Solent Blueline

Leyland Olympian A702 DDL now the O Snacking Bus in Poitiers, France.

Southampton Citybus

FTR 271X now the L'Imperiale de Pomono restaurant in Aubergenville, France.

Southampton Council

From Southampton 2040: Southampton's bus network carried 21.2m people in 2017 an increase of 11% from 2011. People in Southampton made 84 journeys per head in 2017

the 6th highest outside London and major cities. The busiest corridors for bus services are Shirley Road, Itchen Bridge and Bitterne Road.

Southdown

UWV 618S with McCloskey's Engineering, Philadelphia.

Stagecoach

10893, 10967, 15988, 19885 operated at Cheltenham Races in March.

Wheeler's

Re-registrations P3 WTL reverted to T670 KPU and P6 WTL to T669 KPU. Sold: B16 WTL (WA60 DZH), P6 WTL (T669 KPU), P3 WTL (T670 KPU), MX59 AWC, YY66 PFD.

National News Roundup

The DfT are in talks with operators outside of London, to commence higher levels of service from 25th May 2020. The industry is requesting additional funding above the £167m already agreed.

National Express plan a limited operation between 'core' destinations from 1st July 2020.

Just as I was about to hit the publish button on Friday 22nd May, it was announced that the parent group of Shearings and National Holidays has filed for bankruptcy.

30 YEARS AGO (First published in news sheet No.7 Jan 1979)

Hants & Dorset were still rebodilying apace. Several TD 2 s in the 958-968 batch were receiving attention from ECW. The treatment extended the lives of these vehicles to some 20 years with H & D. Many of them then went on to independent operators for a further 8 or 9 years.

City of Portsmouth's Crossley deckers were coming into service complete with their Salerni Turbotransmitters. 15 and 28, which went into service in Jan 1949 kept theirs throughout their life. By a strange coincidence some of the 1932 Crossley Condors were being scrapped by the Corporation.

Covid19's effect on the Solent Bus Network.

Part 2 19th April to 24th May.



David Etheridge

This has been a fairly static period with minimal changes to services and with the slight loosening of the stay at home restrictions and the Government starting to promote the return to work for those who cannot work at home there have been the first signs of an increase in bus frequencies.

The problem for operators is now how to manage an increase in people travelling to work and possibly school in the next month and still maintaining social distancing. It appears that vehicle seating capacity will be reduced by 75% to 80% with on average only one in four seats being used and standing passengers no longer permitted so that a double deck bus will have a capacity of around 20 and an Optare Solo 7! This is why the official Government advice is to avoid public transport at present as the bus service will not be able to cope if passenger numbers rise to anywhere near the number using them before social isolation was introduced. Although overall it appears numbers travelling are still low but there have been reports of reliefs being required on some journeys. Social distancing at busy bus stops and bus stations is also presenting problems.

Operators are looking to start reverting to pre-Covid-19 levels of service over the next couple of months, the buses are being fitted with safety screens for the driver, a number of seats marked as out of use and with many notices on social distancing and extra cleaning and disinfecting has been introduced. It also appears that it will be expected for passengers to wear a face mask while on board.

Buses will display bus full in the destination screen when they have reached capacity, with the driver then operating a one off – one on policy. The operators plan to monitor loadings to add reliefs to busy journeys which may mean some lesser services will be reduced to release capacity to operate reliefs on busy routes.

One area not mentioned so far is school services as to cover a full eighty seat double decker five double deck buses will be needed to maintain social distancing, then you need to manage loading and seating on board.

This time I have only listed services that have had a change since the first instalment.

First Bus Portsmouth / Fareham.

2 The Hard – Paulsgrove = 26/4 am peak increased to 15min frequency and retiming of late evening journeys.

3 Fareham – Portsmouth = 26/4 last bus ex Fareham hour earlier at 20.30 but later buses between Southsea and QA Hospital.

X4 Portsmouth – Southampton = 26/4 first bus Fareham to Southampton 30mins earlier but last bus from the Hard an hour earlier at 18.02.

7 Portsmouth – Wecock Farm = 03/5 rerouted via QA Hospital and reduced to every 30min.

8 Southsea – Clanfield = 26/4 rerouted via QA Hospital with 30min service to Horndean and Hourly to Clanfield.

9, 9A Fareham – Gosport = 26/4 reduced to hourly (2 hourly each route) and last bus from Gosport 30 mins earlier at 18.27. 03/5 increased to every 45min (90min each route).

First Bus Southampton.

2 Southampton – Millbrook = 17/5 increased to every 10mins.

6 Southampton – Hamble = 27/4 relief added to 06.10 Southampton to Hamble and 06.45

Hamble to Southampton Monday to Friday to allow social distancing.

11 Southampton – Weston = 17/5 increased to every 10mins.

Go South Coast Bluestar.

17 Weston – Adanac Park = 11/5 increased to every 15mins.

18 Hightown – Millbrook = 11/5 increased to every 15 mins.

Go South Coast Unilink. – No changes.

Go South Coast Salisbury Reds. – No changes.

Go South Coast morebus. – No changes.

Stagecoach Havant & Chichester.

23 Leigh Park – Southsea = 26/4 late Sunday journeys withdrawn to bring service in line with Monday to Saturday timetable.

Hoverbus = 18/4 reduced to seven journeys.

Stagecoach Winchester.

Services 1, 4, 5, 46, 63, 66, E1, E2 and P&R were diverted via Stockbridge Road and Chilbolton Avenue between the 4th and 17th May as Sussex Street and Romsey Road were closed for gas main replacement, this meant buses were unable to stop outside the Hospital and were using temporary stops at the end of Chilbolton Avenue.

Xelabus – All services remained suspended.

Robert Martin in Nottingham.



Nottingham City Transport Scania/
Alexander G362SRB new in 1990.



Lynx E725BVO new in 1988.



Nottingham bus fleet number 449



Lynx MK2 J759DAU new in 1991.



Mercedes-Benz 811d H732LOL new in 1990.



National B MK2 New to Midland Red in
1980 also of Roadcar.

Phil Savin with Southampton City Transport



64 advertising Bugs Bunny! Love the flares.



71 and 64 sandwich with a Bournemouth filling.



Left: BOW 507C
in Portswood.

Right: Two likely
lads in front of
400.

