



Newsletter No. 251

October 2021



Topless at Stokes Bay – Matt Forbes



Southdown 409 DCD

Southern Transit LDX 76G

Portsmouth LRV 996

Southern Coachlines SN03 DZM



As summer 2021 slowly comes to a close, the local bus network appears to be settling back into pre-pandemic levels as David Etheridge's report on page 16 shows. The major changes have come with the new school term and what appears to be a revised policy by Hampshire County Council to reduce the number of operators at each educational establishment. If this is true, it might bring into question the tendering policy and the ability of new entrants to enter the market, which in turn will drive up cost.

One of the major beneficiaries is Xelabus: their website advertises 61 educational services in addition to their normal service routes. With a fleet authorisation for 40 vehicles, this shows either some deft scheduling or major sub-contracting. From local observations, it appears the latter, with Mortons and Cresta being replaced not by Xelabus as its website shows, but mainly by Poole Bay Travel Ltd (Pegasus) from Curdridge, with limited input from Xelabus. Writing this editorial two weeks earlier than normal due to other commitments, I have not had the opportunity to visit many of the educational establishments listed.

What this highlights is the extensive network that exists to feed young people into educational establishments. David Etheridge recently brought to my attention the network of 22 routes provided by Bluestar on behalf of Barton Peveril, supported by a further seven from Xelabus. Other major networks exist for Sparsholt College, Kings School, King Edwards School, Brockenhurst College (17 routes plus three service routes), to name but a few. An interesting observation, these establishments are all in the west of our area with their various networks stretching as-far-afield as Wiltshire, Dorset and Portsmouth. When you look at large educational establishments in the east of our area like in Fareham, Portsmouth etc, they rely almost entirely upon rail and service buses to feed in their pupils. I wonder why the disparity?

An article in a national newspaper this week said that young people had high anxiety levels caused by climate change. I wonder if those travelling up to three hours a day on vehicles which may be past their prime, sit there pondering their educational choice.

Club News

Whilst the virtual meetings continue with mixed success, a small band of members meet on a sunny Sunday afternoon at the invitation of Sue Gray, enjoying a cup of tea, chocolate biscuit and good old natter in her garden. Thanks once again to Sue.

From David Etheridge

Back to Portchester.

A date for your diary, 8pm to 10pm Friday 3rd December.

It is planned to hold a trial meeting at Portchester on Friday 3rd December more details will follow in the next news sheet"

I have booked the room from 7.30pm and started the meeting at 8pm to give me 30 minutes to prepare any Covid-19 requirements before people arrive. For those that were at the outside meeting recently, I stated the kitchen was out of bounds, but it appears it will be available for access to hot water if we can work out a way of supplying 'safe' drinks.

Please let me know your thoughts.

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

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Correspondence

From David Hutchings

One point though to be made about the FoKAB service on the first Sunday of July which was described as being a joint service with the MHR. This is not quite how it is.

The Medstead Depot Omnibus Group are fully responsible for this free bus link based on Alresford MHR Station which normally occurs on the first Sunday of May to October inclusive. Usually this is run by Medstead based vehicles. It is normally operated by one bus and due to the low trees around Alresford it is necessary to run on the B3047 (former A31) where the trees are cut back to some extent whereas the minor roads are not.

Very kindly FoKAB "filled in" for MDOG with the two buses on 4th. July. MDOG will be taking up the challenge once more for August to October inclusive.

MHR do advertise this service on behalf of MDOG but their input is little else; Malcolm Spalding of MDOG organizes this free bus link each year.

John Williams writes:

Following on from the operator list in edition 250.

Probably in the late 1980's there was a coach operator set up to run an express service to London which failed to get off blocks due to mechanical failures. The name Felix comes to mind, but not sure it's right, I know they had two Setra's.

Dane line of either Horndean or Petersfield. They had a Seddon /Plaxton with Perkins engine at the front and a Bedford SB Plaxton. I think this would have been in the late 70's?

In the 90's ? Tristar Travel with 2 AEC Reliance / Plaxtons the legal address was in the Wecock area of Waterlooville with an operating base at Plant Farm Waterlooville now part of the new Berewood estate.

Also, Jason Raynor ran Portsmouth Coachlines with a red DAF/Duple 320 for about a year must have been late 1990's.

John Viner, Hart Plain Ave, Cowplain, Bedford Vam5 Plaxton C45FDOU211D? (white and blue), Bedford VAS /Duple Dominant C29F white and red, Bedford YRT /Duple Dominant 111 (slant windows) C53F.

Bonadventure travel White Hart Lane Portchester 2 Leyland Leopard PSU 5/Plaxton C57F.

Finally, Everyman's Westhampnett, Chichester. Garage still exists next to Rolls-Royce factory.

From Chris Drew

The latest news-sheet has proved very useful. The last few pages showing local companies has let me know how little I do know about the local fleets past & present especially liveries. One I did come across purely by chance that's not in those pages was the British Radio Corporation in Fareham Road Gosport who seemed to operate a contract service for workers. The fleet at various times consisted of ex West Yorkshire Bristol's, a Bedford SB with a lone ex Lancashire United Guy Arab IV and carried a blue and white/cream livery and the name 'Ultra.' There are a few shots taken by Fred York but apart from that, no real details. Do you know anything else about this lot?



Stagecoach South at Stokes Bay 2021.

© Matt Forbes

FINDING MY ROUTES.

FROM SOUTHAMPTON TO BATH.

Chris Drew



This was a pleasant surprise. East Lancs bodied Scania 1019 meandering through the Wiltshire countryside. It was one of two buses painted to commemorate a century of Wilts & Dorset buses.

The arrival of a pensioners bus pass can put big ideas in someone's head. Several months before the first lockdown, I decided that it might be possible to get from Southampton to Bath and return in one day. It meant an early start so I had to pay for my first journey and I thought I was going to have to pay for my second. After that it was all free but more by luck than good judgment!

My Bluestar X7 started from Southampton Central at 9.15am but it didn't make an appearance until 9.23am. By the time the driver had fiddled about with checking for anything that had been left behind by previous passengers, then fossicking about his cab as only drivers can, he opened the doors and beckoned the queue to board, time was getting on. There were about a dozen people in front of me so when it was my turn to climb on it was 9.29am and he waved me through on my pass and I chose a seat in which to spend the next hour and a quarter. Originally there was thirty minute gap built in at Salisbury for me to find my bus onwards but this had been cut in half....did I make it?

At a minute past 11.00am the autumnal liveried D1 headed north-west. From Salisbury, only half of the buses are scheduled to go through to Bath there being a change over point at Warminster. I had chosen well, mine was going all the way and it was going to take about two and a half hours to do it. There were going to be no time for photographs on this day so I had to make notes of favourable positions to come back to at a future date, little did I know it would be a gap of eighteen months before I would get the chance to fill in the missing bits.

Oh and in case anybody was worried, I caught all the buses at around the times advertised which meant on the way home, I even managed to catch the last X5 from Southampton that went all the way through to Stubbington.

I went back on the 14th July 16, 2021 to take the shots.

The A36 down into Salisbury affords some great views of the Cathedral especially from the top deck. I was lucky with the sun being out over the city enough to pick out the spire. Bluestar supplied the ADL 400 1527 (Scott Beeching).





Right:

On the southern half of the D1, the route sticks to the A36 with a few deviations into villages the old trunk road used to pass through. One such is Steeple Longford. A cutting was made in the hillside for the new A36 which made a suitable place to sit and wait for Volvo 69501 to re-appear from the village.



Above: Salisbury Red Scania 1136 pulls into the triangle at Whiteparish. It still carries the early version of the dark red livery which although interesting when new, as soon as the luster goes off it, it's very dull indeed.

Below:

Salisbury Red 1996 seen in Whiteparish heading south at the end of the day. It's a Plaxton bodied Volvo B7TL and was transferred in from Southern Vectis in 2020.



Above: One of the features on the D1 route is the narrow railway bridge at Limpley Stoke. This was well worth a look at for a shot or two and as the service is hourly north of Warminster, not too much time to wait either. The Volvo B7RLE 69501 in Discover livery was once used on one of the services from the centre of Bristol to the airport.

Right: I also undertook an earlier journey from Bath to Salisbury in the early 1980s. Of the few things I can remember about it was the journey started from the station, hence the photo. I think there was rebuilding work in the bus station at the time... anybody help with that? I also remember thinking that a Leyland National was a huge bus to going down some of those country roads. Nowadays, the vehicles working the D1 have got a few more metres on Hants & Dorset 3466.



Goodbye, old bus ...



● The last Gosport and Fareham Bristol R.E. bus is pictured at Gosport Ferry station, before leaving on its final journey. Bus enthusiasts Christopher Richardsen, of Walton Road, Gosport, and David Shilling, from Ash Close, are pictured with driver Peter Batty of Bridgemary before boarding for the trip. — Picture 5793-1

BUS PASSENGERS at Gosport took a ride to nostalgia when they boarded the town's last Bristol Rear-Engined single-decker for the final time.

The 44-seater was withdrawn from service on Saturday ... 15 years after Bristol R.E. buses were introduced in the Gosport and Fareham area.

Nostalgia fans anxious to use the vehicle one last time were at Gosport bus station to see it begin its final day.

Among the first to arrive were Gosport schoolboys Christopher Richardsen, of Walton Road, and David Shilling, of Ash Close.

Passengers buying a £1.50 souvenir timetable could ride on the bus for as long as they wanted.

The driver, Mr. Peter Batty (35), of Brading Avenue, Bridgemary, kept up the nostalgia theme by donning an old-style Provincial uniform.

The company tried to limit the passengers to enthusiasts only by allowing people to get on or off only at Gosport or Fareham bus stations.

Bristol R.E.s have been withdrawn from service over the past few months to make way for a standardized fleet of Leyland National buses.

*By
Keith Morton*

I did not get involved with preserved buses until 1981 when, it all rather happened unexpectedly, whilst walking the track bed of the Chichester to Medstead railway line on its centenary – but that is another story, which I am sure most of you have all heard before.

This occasion was in March 1984 and, being very new to bus preservation, I was rather dragged along by the late Bob Grey who worked for Provincial. I was rather unsure of what was going on or why – but it was a fun thing to do on a Saturday. Bristol RE's were progressively being withdrawn on the introduction of the new Leyland Nationals. So on this day, it was the occasion of the last Bristol RE running in service, with Gosport Provincial.

A souvenir programme had been produced and, if you bought one of these, then you could ride on the bus all day. As primarily, only bus enthusiasts would be riding, it had been arranged that passengers could only board at the Bus Station adjacent to Gosport Ferry or at the Fareham Bus Station. The driver for the day was Peter Batty and, he entered into the spirit of the day by wearing an old style Provincial uniform. The Portsmouth News was invited along to the event and took the picture seen in the newspaper cutting. Two school boys, namely Christopher Richardson and David Shilling, joined in the fun and also, the Provincial Workshop Manager, Wally Corney, can be seen second from the right in the back row.

After this event, this particular Bristol RE, reg ECG 112K, was sold to the Royal Marine Cadets in Gosport and repainted in their colours. ECG 112K still frequented the Provincial workshops at Hoeford, mid-way between Gosport and Fareham, as Provincial had been contracted to service and maintain the vehicle on behalf of the Royal Marine Cadets, who were the owners for the next 11 years.

By 1994 the Royal Marine Cadets were deciding to move on ECG 112K and Terry Lawson saw her in Barton Park and asked Colin Batton, if she was a 'good' un' ! In March 1995, Terry Lawson bought ECG 112K for preservation and returned her into Provincial colours.



August 1994 - ECG 112K seen in Barton Park
in Royal Marine Cadets colours

Jess Wilson



ECG 112K - Back in provincial colours
Attending the Alton Rally in 2017

Keith Morton

Other Bristol RE's were still about and in August 1994, TCD 49J was spotted by Terry Lawson in Chichester, being operated by Blue Lake Coaches. Several other Bristol RE's were seen at Alresford in November 2019 at a mini running day.



Former Southdown MS 490 [TCD 490J] with Marshal body
working with Blue Lake Coaches in Chichester in August 1994
Terry Lawson



Former Hants & Dorset 1651 [XLI 726K] is followed by
Southern Vectis 808, out of Station Road, Alresford on
3rd November 2019.

Terry Lawson



On the 3rd November 2019 there was a Bristol RE Running Day centred on Alresford Station
Ex Crosville RELL6G ERG 53 and Ex Hants and Dorset 1651 XLI 726K are seen turning out off Station Road

Terry Lawson



Croeso i Eryri Barry T.



Situated at the top of Llanberis Pass is Pen-y-Pass bus interchange at an elevation of 359 metres (1,178 ft) – maybe the highest in Britain. Located in the Snowdonia National Park, which covers an area of 823 square miles and is home to over 26,000 people, Pen-y-Pass is the starting point for most walkers attempting to reach the summit of Snowdon (1,085 metres or 3,560 ft). The area is hugely popular and, consequently, parking and traffic congestion are major problems, more so in 2021 with staycations being the order of the day. To help placate the situation, the National Park and Gwynedd Council have, for many decades, supported a small network of bus routes known as the Snowdon Sherpa. Over the years, many operators have been involved: Express Motors, KMP, Padarn Bus, Arriva, GHA, O R Williams who traded as Whiteways, Crosville, and Alpine.

Geographically, the Snowdon Sherpa covers just a small area in the north west of the national park with the remainder of the park being covered by conventional bus and Traws Cymru services provided by operators such as Arriva, Llew Jones and Lloyds. In 2021 the entire Sherpa network is operated by Gwynfor Coaches of Gaerwen on the Isle of Anglesey, using a local base in Caernarfon. The network consists of six routes with five operating daily and the S6 operating weekends and bank holidays. The most popular route being the S1 between Llanberis and Pen-y-Pass, a relatively short journey of 5.5 miles. This route also acts as a park-and-ride service from Nant Peris, a small village five minutes outside Llanberis which has a large pay-and-display car park. From Monday to Friday this service operates on an hourly headway between 7.30am and 5pm, whilst on weekends and bank holidays the operation becomes far more intensive, starting at 6.45am and finishing at 6.50pm. On weekends and bank holidays, the hourly service from Llanberis is supplemented by two additional short workings per hour from the Nant Peris park-and-ride. Also departing Llanberis is the S2 on an hourly headway, giving this stretch of road to Pen-y-Pass a service every thirty-minutes. Unlike the S1, the S2 continues over the pass for another 11 miles to Betws-y-Coed and twice a day beyond that to Llanrwst.

The third daily service, the S4, approaches Pen-y-Pass from the east by climbing the A489, having commenced in Caernarfon, but, unlike the S1 and S2 which are worked by double-deckers, uses Optare Solo's to comply with width restrictions near the summit. Rather confusingly the S4, whilst marketed as part of the Sherpa network, is aimed more towards locals wanting to travel between Beddgelert and Caernarfon. To add further confusion for the visitor, some journeys on the S4 weekday timetable are shown as short workings, whereas in reality they continue to/from Beddgelert as S97 to Porthmadog. Sundays and bank holidays are made easier as both the S4 and S97 are shown on one timetable as a coordinated service. Beddgelert is a tourist destination in its own right and is a traditional village set beside two rivers, the Glaslyn and the Colwyn which meet at a picturesque bridge in the centre of the village. The Welsh Highland Railway coming from Porthmadog has a station in the village making it an ideal interchange with the bus, especially in 2021 as the station is also the terminus for the railway, the line onward to Caernarfon being out of action.

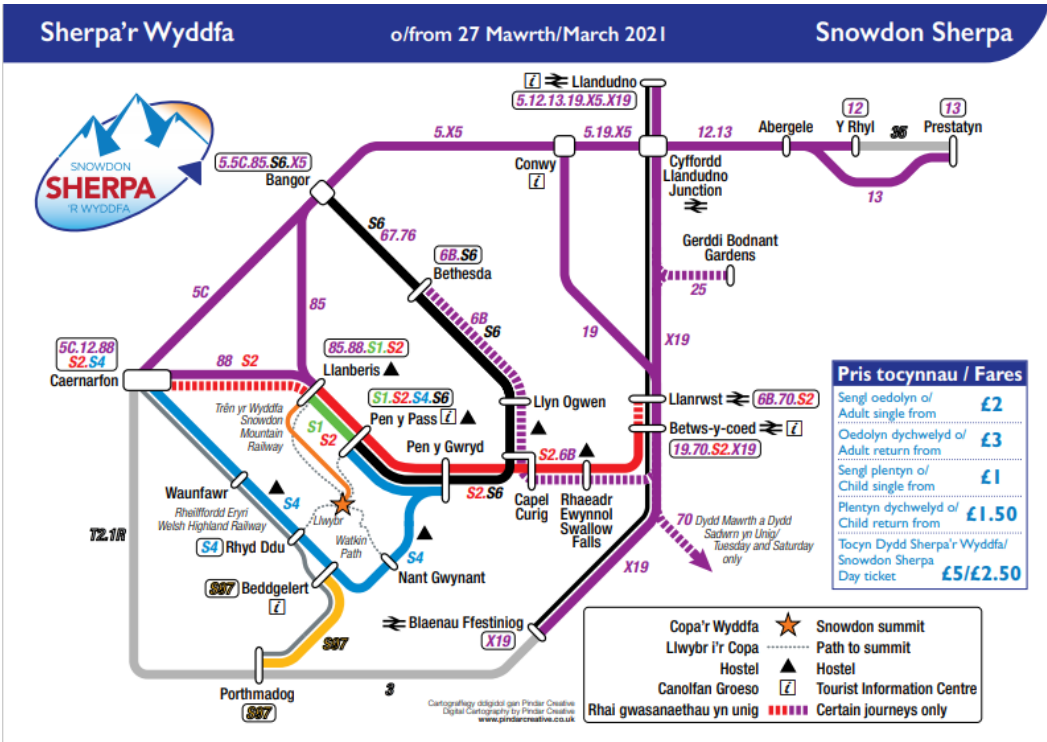


Left: Gwynfor Coaches KX15 BMV, an Optare Solo M710SE B19F which was new to Courtney ascends the A489 on service S4.



Right: Gwynfor Coaches YJ10 MBO an Optare Solo M780SE B27F, new to Heyfordian descends from Pen-y-Pass on service S4.

Many bus routes in Britain contest the accolade of ‘most scenic’ but there can only be one winner of the ‘most scenic network’ - the Snowdon Sherpa. Dramatic landscapes viewed from the top deck of a bus as it clings to the mountain side and travels through lush, lake filled valleys take some beating. If you also factor in the ease of access by public transport into the network and the availability of several different good value travel cards from both rail and bus companies, Snowdonia National Park can be an enjoyable car free holiday.



Left: Sherpa network map.

Below left: Gwynfor Coaches, on loan from Dawson Rentals, LK04 NME, a Volvo B7TL with Alexander H43/24D body, new to Metroline London Northern as VPL583. Seen loading at Llanberis interchange on the 12-noon departure of service S2 for Betws-y-Coed.

Below right: Gwynfor Coaches LG52 DBU, DAF SDB250/Alexander H45/20D, new to Arriva London sits at the High Street lay-over point of service S1. The timetable shows the service starting from the interchange but on this journey the bus continued on a one-way loop along the A4086 and turning left into the High Street.



Gwynfor Coaches operating service 88 from Caernarfon with YJ61 JHV, an Optare Solo M780SE B27F which was new to Connect Transport. The service has just entered the High Street from the A4086 which runs parallel to the High Street acting as a by-pass. Gwynfor Coaches also operate the 85/86 from Bangor to Llanberis. All three services are frequent but have irregular headways. A more limited timetable operates on Sunday but has better clockface timings.

Llanberis, population 1,844, sits on the twin lakes of Llyn Padarn and Llyn Peris, and the national park boundary dissects the town that today counts tourism as its main industry. Most of the attractions are centred on the southern end of the town: Snowdonia Mountain Railway, Llanberis lake railway, the wonderful Electric Mountain, and the National Slate Museum amongst others.

Stokes Bay 2021 – Chris Drew



A pair of Panthers, a rare pair of Panthers.

The one thing about working at a bus rally is that your photo ops during the day are reduced by quite a chunk. On the other hand, by the end of the day when the punters have gone home, opportunities and sight-lines arise that just weren't possible until that point in time.



Deserted for the first time during the day.



Caught passing The Hovercraft Museum in Lee on a quick trip home, ex Southern Vectis Olympian 686 has a good load for an outing to Stubbington and back.



RM848 with accompanying tanker.



The driver shows how much room is needed to turn one of these around. New to City of Cardiff, it's now with Portsmouth City Coaches.



Streetlite 63061 freshly re-painted into Southampton 'CityRed' livery.



Couldn't resist a Maidstone & District AEC with consecutive numbers 3456!

July 1958

A bus conductor told Gosport magistrates, last week, that on instructions from his company he posed as a civilian employee from H.M.S. Collingwood to spy on a man running rival coach services. The conductor, Ernest New, was giving evidence against Thomas Goodman, coach proprietor, Ferrol Road, Gosport, who faced 12 charges of running two unlicensed coach services between Gosport and Bristol. Mr. New said he worked for Southdown Motor Services, Ltd., who owned Triumph Saloon Coaches, Ltd: This subsidiary operated a rival service to Goodman for Servicemen going on weekend leave. He travelled on Goodman's coaches three times posing as a civilian from H.M.S. Collingwood. Cross-examined by Mr. D. Wise, defending, he said his area manager had instructed him "to spy on Goodman." In evidence, Goodman claimed that some witnesses had not told the truth because Southdown were trying to get a monopoly.

He was fined £39, with £15 15s. costs.

VICTORIOUS 2021 ~ Matt Forbes



545 - J18 XEL (DX61 EOO), Volvo B5LH, Wright Gemini 2 (H41/27F), Xelabus, Eastleigh.
Pier Road, Southsea, 27 August 2021.

Quick rundown of Victorious. Xelabus were in charge of all routes. These were X27 (Portsmouth Harbour/Hard Interchange to Clarence Pier) – mainly E200 operated at a 15 min interval (big fail on Saturday, when all buses I noted after 12 noon until around 1600 were full and standing – 67 passengers were seen alighting at the Festival terminus on one arrival from the station). Social distancing clearly a thing of the past to some people. One or two services were boosted by use of one of the B5LH hybrids, but this was seen as the exception rather than the norm.

The other two – and the “main” routes - were those from the Park & Ride site at Northharbour (X28) and the campsite near Farlington (X29) which were fully double-decked, and were operated on an “as full or every 10 mins” basis through the day, and loadings on many of those seemed healthy but not overloaded.

Xelabus handled everything themselves on Friday, but hired in a mixed batch of E400s from Stagecoach on the Saturday and Sunday – all from Farlington except 19099 which (I thought was a) Winchester bus, but had a yellow ticket machine on board, so appears to have transferred to Chichester at some point. At the time, I had wondered if the Sat/Sun allocation had been cunningly planned by the allocations person at PM, as there were examples of every livery – group standard “swoops”, old (and much nicer) 2014 Coastliner, and of course, the new “schoolbus” (sorry – “distance”) yellow and the utterly awful “local” livery. Free advertising and cash for hiring buses out? Why not!



Left: SK52 OGY, Dennis Trident, Plaxton President (H51/32F), Xelabus, Eastleigh. Clarence Pier, Southsea, 27 August 2021.

Right: J17 XEL (YN04 UJV), Scania N94UD, East Lancs Omnidekka (H51/39F), Xelabus, Eastleigh. Clarence Pier, Southsea, 27 August 2021.



Incidentally – on Saturday, I think the first recorded workings for the “yellow coastliners” NOT on the 700 occurred when two were out on the 23 – which despite the loans to Xelabus were *entirely* double-deck on Sunday.

This list is only from my own observations – there may well have been a few other vehicles involved that were parked up on standby somewhere, but I can only take so much hanging around per day!

ADL Enviro 200 436/438, Trident / EL Myllennium Lolyne 522/523/524, Trident / ALX400 525/526/527/528, Trident / President 539/543, B5LH / Wright Gemini 2 544/545, N94UD / EL Omnidekka 548/549/552/553/554, Stagecoach (Sat/Sun only) Trident / ALX400 18516/18518/18523, Trident / E400 19034/19077/19090/19099, N230UD / E400 15987/15990/15992/15993.



Left: N321 KES (YN05 WFG), Scania N94UD, East Lancs Omnidekka (H51/39F). Xelabus, Eastleigh. Pier Road, Southsea, 28 August 2021.

Right: G7 XEL (YY67 HBE), Alexander Dennis E20D, ADL Enviro 200 (B39F). Xelabus, Eastleigh. Gordon Road, Southsea, 28 August 2021.



One thing of note – over the weekend, not only did Clarence Pier see the most frequent bus service since 2019, but was served by routes 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29, which *has* to be a first. And speaking of First – don't forget the PR3, which was lying through its teeth when it arrived showing a destination of “D-Day Story” ... as the esplanade was closed, it terminated and sat at Clarence for 20 mins before heading back out of town – twice an hour.



19090 - 405 DCD (MX56 FUM), Alexander Dennis Trident, ADL Enviro 400 (H47/33F), Stagecoach South (PM). Pier Road, Southsea, 28 August 2021.



15987 - YN64 XSP, Scania N230UD, Alexander Dennis Enviro 400 (H47/28F), Stagecoach South (PM). Pier Road, Southsea, 28 August 2021.



Left: 33734 - SN12 AMX, Alexander Dennis Enviro 400 (H45/30F), First Solent (HD). Pier Road, Southsea, 28 August 2021.



CPPTD - WICOR DEPOT OPEN DAY

September 2021

David Lindsell



189 in the depot.



These pictures were taken at Wicor and Cranleigh Road, Porchester. The free bus services were being provided by Leyland Titans number 4 (LRV996) and 123 (STP126).



Yee Olde Tower Wagon and the line up on the grass outside.

The Back to School running day, Chris Drew

This really was an odd one. I can't for the life of me remember where I saw the original announcement but I can recall the gist of it. It was called the 'Back to School running day' and it was happening in the Chippenham area on the 30th September. I sent off for a timetable to the strangely named 'An Exercise in Oddity' and by return was sent a rather professionally finished combined map and timetable showing the routes that school buses take transferring children from home to their place of education. This was all going to happen before the term started which meant it was safe to photograph the vehicle.....no kids involved.

As usual I ransacked 'Streetview' to find places with half decent backgrounds and set off at break of sparrow-fart to see the first vehicle through. This turned out to be Chandler's Bova WJ52MTE which was operating the C5 feeder service from Westbury to Chippenham. It was photographed in Semington near Melksham crossing the Kennet & Avon canal.

M131UWY once of Wallace Arnold picks its way across the single carriage way bridge over the River Avon and connected flood meadows near Laycock on the 1401 to Bowden Hill.

The same coach again, a theme was beginning to appear, this time seen in delightful surroundings of Monk's Lane in Corsham. I saw it again on two other routes and in fact only saw one more bus in the day. That was ADL

Enviro 300 run by Whites in Windsor and running out to Hullavington. I was set to see three more vehicles after this and I was in good time for all of them, but none arrived. I don't know if the organisers were let down by the vehicle providers or whether it was just a bit ambitious. I've tried contacting them by email but as yet, haven't had an answer. Oh well, these things happen.



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

The Traffic Commissioners issued updated advice for operators on 9th August, but there is no change to bus service registering with the current Covid-19 emergency procedure expected to remain in place until 31st December 2021 and all services expected to return the registered timetable on 1st January 2022.

From the official Dft report bus usage outside London had climbed from just under 60% at the end of July to just over 60% by the end of August but jumped to 70% on the first day of the new school term. In London bus usage had climbed to just below 70% by the end of August, but only jumped to just over 70% on the first day of school. National Rail usage had recovered to around 60% on the first day of school and the tube 50%. It should be noted that all modes were giving higher results at weekends than on Mondays to Fridays. Cycling appears to have settled at a slightly lower rate (around 90%) of pre-Covid usage Mon to Fri but tended be up around 25% at weekends. By the start of school in September overall traffic levels were back to pre-Covid levels Mon to Fri and up around 10% at weekends.

By monitoring web sites, Traveline and other information that came my way here is a list of changes to all Solent area bus services between the 26th July and 19th September.

First Bus Portsmouth / Fareham.

1 Southsea – The Hard: 1/8 Mon to Fri frequency reduced from every 10min to every 12min. 5/9 Mon to Fri frequency increased from every 12min to every 10min.

2 The Hard – Paulsgrove: 19/9 Sat frequency reduced from 12min to 15min and Sun from 15min to 20 min.

3 Fareham – Portsmouth: 1/8 Mon to Fri frequency reduced from every 10min to every 12min. 5/9 = Mon to Fri frequency increased from every 12min to every 10min.

7 Portsmouth – Wecock Farm: 19/9 additional am 7A journey.

8 Southsea – Clanfield: 19/9 Mon to Sat frequency reduced from 15min to 20min, Sun from 20min to 30 min.

25 Hard – Hayling Ferry: 19/9 service end three hours earlier.

First Bus Southampton.

2 Southampton – Millbrook: 1/8 Mon to Fri peaks reduced from every 8min to every 10min.

7 Southampton – Townhill Park: 1/8 Mon to Sat frequency reduced from every 10min to every 12min.

Go South Coast Bluestar.

1 Southampton – Winchester: 6/9 Mon to Fri peak journeys retimed for new school year.

2 Southampton – Fair Oak: 6/9 Mon to Fri peak journeys retimed for new school year.

4 Southampton – Romsey: 6/9 Mon to Fri peak journeys retimed for new school year.

5 Romsey – Boyatt Wood: 6/9 minor timing changes Mon to Sat.

6 Southampton – Lymington: 6/9 Mon to Fri 15.30 ex Southampton will now follow normal route instead of missing Foxhills.

7 Sholing – Lordswood: 6/9 service retimed to better suit Hospital shift pattern.

9 Southampton – Langley / Fawley: 6/9 Mon to Fri peak journeys retimed for new school year and earlier bus from Southampton on Sundays.

16 Southampton – Townhill Park: 6/9 Mon to Fri peak journeys retimed for new school year.

17 Weston – Adanac Park: 6/9 Mon to Fri pm buses retimed and later bus from Adanac Park Mon to Sun and earlier bus from Weston on Sunday mornings.

Go South Coast Unilink.

Quay Connect Southampton Rail Station – Town Quay: 21/8 Mon to Fri increased from 10 journey to 15, Sat increased from 10 journey to 21, Sun reduced from 10 journeys to 9 with service start 90min later.

Go South Coast Salisbury Reds.

X7/X7R Salisbury to Southampton = 29/8 16.45 ex Salisbury to no longer serve Paultons Park.



New livery for the Salisbury Reds X7, Robert Winkworth.

Go South Coast morebus.

X1/X2 Lymington – Bournemouth: 31/8 rerouted in Bournemouth due to Holdenhurst Road closure.

X6 Poole – Ringwood – Bournemouth: 31/8 rerouted in Bournemouth due to Holdenhurst Road closure.

National Express.

030 Fareham – Victoria: 1/9 six journeys daily.

032 Southampton – Victoria: 1/9 ten to twelve journeys daily.

033 Bournemouth – Salisbury – Victoria: Cancelled by 20th August.

035 Poole – Victoria: 1/9 fourteen to eighteen journeys daily.

103 Poole – Salisbury – Birmingham: 1/9 one journey daily.

160 Poole – Southampton – Birmingham: 1/9 one journey daily.

161 Southsea – Birmingham: Cancelled by 20th August.

190 Portsmouth – Plymouth: Cancelled by 20th August.

203 Portsmouth – Heathrow: 1/9 six journeys daily.

205 Poole – Heathrow: 1/9 = six journeys daily.

Stagecoach Havant & Chichester.

30/31 Havant – Hayling Island: 5/9 school journeys reinstated.

37 Havant – Petersfield: 5/9 school journeys reinstated.

38 Petersfield – Alton: 5/9 school journeys reinstated and minor retiming.

91/92/93 Midhurst – Petersfield: 5/9 additional Fri schooldays journey removed.

700 Portsmouth – Bognor Regis: 5/9 school journeys reinstated.

Stagecoach Winchester.

3 Winchester – Harestock: 29/8 Mon to Fri minor changes in am peak.

5 Winchester – Badger Farm: 29/8 Mon to Fri minor changes in am peak.

46 Winchester – North Baddesley: 29/8 minor timing changes.

64 Winchester – Alton: 29/8 64X college journeys reinstated.

68 Winchester – Salisbury: 29/8 this college days service reinstated to revised times.

69 Winchester – Fareham: 29/8 minor retiming and reverts to using Quay Street in Fareham.

Xelabus.

No Changes to public routes but new school routes added.

CITY OF SOUTHAMPTON - TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

226 Portswood Road, Southampton SO9 4XS.

Ref: JO/PBD/N.3/2475.

30th September, 1971.

NOTICE TO O.M.O. DRIVERS

Services 4/6 - Conversion to One-man-operation

As from Sunday, 3rd October, Services 4/6 will become one-man operated, and lists have already been posted of drivers who will be on the O.M.O. schedule. Although the maximum amount of publicity has been put out to the travelling public, the success or failure of this extension of one-man operation depends ultimately on the drivers operating the service. To offset the slight disadvantages of one-man operation to the public when compared with two-man operation, it is necessary for a high standard of efficiency, courtesy and good driving to be exercised by all one-man operators. I am sure that I can rely on all staff to work together to ensure that this conversion is the smoothest yet.

In common with the practice on the previous service O.M.O. conversions, conductors will be available on 4/6 route workings for the first three days to help members of the public become familiar with the new system. They are not there to collect fares except in extreme emergency.

The routing of the 4/6 Service (except for Hospital journeys) remains unaltered, although during daytime Monday to Saturday, an extra minute running-time in each direction has been added between Portswood and Shirley; and between Midanbury and Bitterne Park Triangle. Because of this, although basic frequencies remain unaltered, 'bus times throughout the week have been altered.

An additional hourly service on Sunday mornings will be operated between Shirley and City via Midanbury and Bitterne.

Journeys diverted via the General Hospital will, in future, leave the normal 4 route at Hill Lane Roundabout and then run via the 5 route (Sports Centre, Lordswood Road, Coxford Road, Tremona Road, Dale Road) to re-join normal route in Winchester Road at the junction with Dale Road. Route 6 journeys will operate to this routing in reverse, and a special note has been added to the 4/6 route fares-chart to cover people using these journeys over the Service 5 section of route.

At Pound Tree Road, the terminus for Service 6 will be moved to the shelter alongside the Regulators' Office. This point will continue to be used by Service 17 (to Shirley).

Until they can be altered at some points, e.g. Tobacco Factory, Bitterne Brewery, Central Station, it may be necessary for drivers to pull partly past the 'bus stops to avoid causing congestion.



OPERATOR NEWS

Company and fleet news always welcome from operators, members & enthusiasts,
email barry.barnessoc@gmail.com

COACH EVENTS SERVICES LTD

PH2041919 Variation. 5 NEWCLIFFE GARDENS, HEDGE END, SOUTHAMPTON, SO30 4AH. New operating centre: THE AGEAS BOWL, BOTLEY ROAD, WEST END, SOUTHAMPTON, SO30 3XH. New authorisation at this operating centre will be 3 vehicles.

Clearing up the question posed in the last edition. Coach Event Services are using the Mayflower name and have two ex Wheelers vehicles. YN08 HYM (9195 PU) re-registered S28 MBC, YN08 HYU (9423 RU) re-registered S29 MBC, both Scania N230UD/East Lancs H79F.

They have taken over the link from Southampton Airport Parkway to the Ageas Bowl from Wheelers (the Wheelers service never operated in 2020 due to Covid-19).

David Etheridge

FIRST BUS

The IoW rail replacement thing has been extended yet again – and First have removed themselves. Whether this is a sub-contract (presumably, but ...) or a withdrawal is a mystery, but there's currently four Xelabus deckers and a single E200 doing the duties of seven First 'deckers'.

The five E400MMCs from Bristol, and the two supplemental Trident/EL Myllenniums are back on the mainland being de-salinised (the Trident underframe being a bit of a rust-monster) and it appears that the two Tt/ALX400s that were drafted into Hoeford to replace the EIs are not to be heading back to Lawrence Road, but will be kept on the 'cabbage patch' at Empress until they sink into the soil.

This whole operation has always seemed a bit odd, and despite prodding questions in the right direction, I've yet to come up with any real answers. Granted – First/MTR own the franchise for the Island Line, and as they have a (pseudo-)in-house operation ("First Transport Solutions?" – whatever they set up for the 2012 Olympics that now concentrates on rail reps and special contracts), the choice of using Bristol-based vehicles (presumably as they are newer than anything FHDB could release) for the original contract was odd – and then to send a couple of 15/16-yr old Tridents to supplement them – and then withdraw their participation completely is ... puzzling.

Matt Forbes

GARD (Southampton Minilink)

PH1146678/6 From SOUTHAMPTON CITY CENTRE, VINCENTS WALK, to HAREFIELD ESTATE, BENTLEY GREEN Via WOOLSTON & BITTERNE, No. 13A. Effective from 3 October 2021. SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAY ONLY (NO SERVICE CHRISTMAS DAY OR BOXING DAY).

Southampton mini link was established in 2021 to provide local bus services in Southampton & the surrounding area

using smaller buses over routes which may not be commercially viable for larger vehicles. Our aim is to build a small network of routes to complement existing operators services rather than operate in direct competition with them.

Our first route the 13A launches on the 3rd October 2021 operating up to every hour between the City Centre & Harefield on Sundays & Public Holidays.

From the 25th October 2021 our service 5 will operate 4 return journeys Monday to Friday between the City Centre & Ringwood via Cadnam. (*Company website*)

GOSPORT

Hampshire County Council held a 'have your say' after funding has been secured to make changes to the Gosport Bus Interchange. Gosport residents had one week to share their views on the iconic bus station and their opinions on the proposals, which could see the bus station and the taxi rank swapping places and a new link to make busses more accessible on the high street.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

A joint submission has been made to the Department for Transport by Portsmouth City Council, Hampshire County Council and First Hampshire Dorset and Berkshire for 34 new, zero-emission electric buses.

Costing £6.4m, the money will come from the Zero Emission Buses Regional Areas Fund.

If the funding bid is successful, 26 of the buses will be used on the First Solent routes 1 and 3 and eight buses would operate on the 9/9A routes.

JET CONNECT

Neoplan N2216SHD Tourliner PK62 VUL (formerly R600 ACL with Angela, Lowford) has been re-registered J600 NEO by current owners Jet Connect of Drayton. *Matt Forbes*

LUCKETTS

National Express has announced the creation of a new business focusing on the UK holiday and leisure travel market.

The transport provider is to bring together a number of existing businesses and brands, including Fareham based Lucketts and Woods Coaches of Leicester, under the single banner of 'National Express Leisure' with effect from this month.

PH0007057 SOLENT COACHES LTD

Directors: Mark Jordan, Anthony Lawman, Arthur Carter, Thomas Stables. Increase at existing operating centre: 72 Basepoint usiness entre, Hurn Airport. New authorisation will be 44 vehicles.

PORTSMOUTH

5/8/21. There was significant disruption to services running from Portsmouth after a train came off the track and blocked a rail depot.

The incident, which occurred in the early hours of Thursday morning, took place at Fratton, with services running through the station cancelled, delayed or revised.

Train tickets were accepted on Stagecoach buses 23 between Portsmouth Harbour and Havant and 70/71/72 between Guildford and Haslemere for no extra charge. Great Western Railway customer's tickets were usable on First Buses on the following routes: 1, 3, X4, X5, 8, 13, 18.

Details of the work proposed at Portsbridge Roundabout, including changes to give buses greater priority, were outlined recently. The overhaul of the roundabout is part of the latest phase of the South East Hampshire Rapid Transit scheme – the partnership between the city council, Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council. Together with Rudmore Roundabout, Portsbridge is one of the main focuses of the project. It is focused on increasing the speed at which buses traverse it with new priority measures included for Hilsea Lido and its northern and southern approaches.

SOUTHDOWN



GNJ 573N for sale £4,500.

STAGECOACH

Enviro 200 36840 (GX62 BNZ) has transferred from Basingstoke to Farlington – reason unknown, as there's been nothing transferred in the opposite direction, but it could be to release the remaining Dart/Pointer (35118).



News and photo Matt Forbes.

WINCHESTER

ONE of the very first buses to run in Winchester returned to the city. The 1913 Ford Model T, which had been converted by a firm in Barton Stacey in that year for use as a bus, was on display as part of Heritage Open Days. It is understood that a service between Owslebury and Winchester was started in 1921 by a Mr Dovey. Eventually it ran regularly before being taken over by another operator, and from 1955 by King Alfred.

Remarkably, the original Ford Model T still survives in a roadworthy condition with the present owner coming from Buckinghamshire.

XELABUS

John Williams reports, Xelabus have taken over the QA Hospital staff parking transport using double-deckers.

PH1098723/132 From Portsmouth Hard Interchange (Stand N) to Clarence Pier, Southsea. No. X27 Limited Stop Effective date 27 August 2021, end date 29 August 2021.

Friday 27th August to Sunday 29th August, only.

PH1098723/133 From Lakeside Park & Ride Site to Clarence Pier, Southsea No. X28 Limited Stop. Effective date: 27 August 2021, end date 19 August 2021. Friday 27th August to Sunday 29th August, only.

Acquired, PO59 KGG, Volvo B9TL/Optare H61/39F new to Imperial Southall. Y667 DRA, Dennis Trident/East Lancs H57/37F. New to Nottingham, acquired Tyrers.

David Etheridge



Above: PO59 KGG Below: Y667 DRA © Phil Savin



Also acquired LJ58 GCK, Volvo B9TL/East Lancs CH61/39F.
New to Tellings Golden Miller, acquired from Swans Travel.



© Robert Winkworth



Above: HK21 YSX, Ford Transit. Below: T278 BPR, Dennis Trident/East Lancs, new to Bournemouth acquired from Lodge's. *Phil Savin*



XELACOACH LIMITED

PH2047345 New Applications Received.

Director: GARETH BLAIR.

Unit 6 Barton Park, Eastleigh, Hants, Eastleigh, SO50 6RR

Authorisation 2 vehicles. Transport Managers: DANIEL RAYNER, GARETH BLAIR.

Applications Withdrawn Prior to Determination PH2047345

XELACOACH LIMITED



Matt Forbes and Graham Starke both captured First Bus MIG 3864 (YN06 CGZ, VJT 738), Scania K114EB4, Irizar PB (C51Ft) in Eastleigh.



Above: Stagecoach, Portsmouth GX54 DVZ on the 21.

Below: GX10 KZO on the 37.

© Shaun Daniels



Picture roundup



Xelabus line up at IBM North Harbour ready for the Victorious Festival. © Phil Savin



L8 PCV, 2 Start Ltd at Curdrige industrial estate and Poole Bay Trading Ltd (Pegasus) just around the corner. © Phil Savin



Here is my coach of the season - Edinburgh Coach Lines PSU 698 a Mercedes Benz Tourismo in the new Shearings livery at North Baddesley on 24th July.

© David Etheridge



Seen in a slide that I took in London on 24th April 2004 is A17 FLT, a Van Hool bodied Scania of Flygt Travel. Behind the rear of the coach is the well-known Foyle's bookshop at 113-119, Charing Cross Road. They moved to this site in 1929, remaining there until 2014 when they moved to a new shop, a short distance away at No. 107. © Adrian Willats

John Bulman out & about.



BF12 FVX on rail replacement.



SN67 WVY in Havant bus station.



YN06 XSV on the 23.



Damory NW62 CVF on rail replacement.



SN67 WWK on the 37.



Pete's Airlink YD63 UKB.



MX56 FTP on the 39.



XSU 612 approaches the Broadway.



Community First BX56 YHH.