



MIDLAND BRANCH

1947 – 2022

75th Anniversary Year

Branch Bulletin

No.599 February 2022



Comprehensive Diary Updates

Survival of The National Bus Strategy

Industry Funding Ups and Downs

Front Cover: PC Coaches of Lincoln now operate this Scania Fencer F1 ex-demonstrator. 46 (PC71 PCC) is seen at Nettleham on their service 4 to Lincoln. It is 10 years since Scania launched a new single deck model and the Fencer is designed and built in partnership with Chinese bus manufacturer Higer. (photo: Gary Nolan)

Midland Branch Officers

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Diary- Meetings and Visits

Saturday 19 February 2022 at 1345 for 1400 at The Friends Meeting House, St Helen's St, Derby DE1 3GY. Branch AGM followed by a slide presentation by Richard Morgan of official photographs from the library of Strachans (Coachbuilders) Ltd.

Saturday 5 March 2022 (EMBEG) Speaker meeting at Beeston Methodist Church

Tuesday 15 March 2022 at 1900. Zoom Talk by Julian Peddle, Omnibus Society Director and bus entrepreneur who will present his thoughts on the Current Developments in the Bus Industry. if you wish to join us you must inform Geoff Fisk at osmb.zoom@gmail.com

Saturday 2 April 2022 (EMBEG) Speaker meeting at Derby, Friends Meeting House

Saturday 23 April 2022 Visit to Cambridge. Travel on the Busway, depot visits and address by Darren Roe, Managing Director, Stagecoach East. Pick-ups will be Derby, Full Street (0800), Stapleford (0815 on road adjacent to car park) and Birmingham International (0915). Return to Derby will be by 2000. Full details being agreed but advance booking is necessary and the details for booking are below.

Wednesday 18 May 2022 Joint visit with North West and Yorkshire Branch to East Yorkshire Buses in Hull, including depot visits, a talk by Managing Director Ben Gilligan and a trip to Beverley on preserved AEC Regent no. 644. Pick up points – Birmingham Colmore Row Stop SH1 0830; Derby, Rail Station 0930.

Saturday 18 June 2022 Joint visit with North West and Yorkshire Branch to Leicester including depot visits to First, Confidence and Centrebus; Stonegate Tram Depot museum visit and time in Leicester city centre.

Saturday 23 July 2022 Visit to Roger Burdett collection. The visit will be restricted to a maximum of 40 attendees. Pick-ups will be Derby, Full Street (0900), Stapleford (0915 on road adjacent to car park) and Birmingham International (1015) to the Roger Burdett Collection, near Coventry with trips on one or two of his preserved fleet, then to Coventry Pool Meadow for lunch break followed by a visit to National Express Coventry Garage with a demonstration of electric bus re-charging and a trip on one of their electric fleet. Return to Derby by 1830. See below for booking details.

Saturday 20 August 2022 Staffordshire area Route Tour with a Tamworth start

Saturday 10 September 2022 Leicestershire Route Tour

Friday 30 September - Monday 3 October 2022. Note correct dates. Presidential Weekend in Lytham St Annes.

Saturday 15 October 2022 Talk by Jane Cole, Managing Director, Blackpool Transport and OS President 2022 in Birmingham and we hope to celebrate our 75th Anniversary.

Bookings for all Midland Branch visits should be sent to the Visits Secretary, Richard Morgan at staff10@btinternet.com, by post to 14 Rosedale Close, Sundon Park, LUTON, Beds., LU3 3AP or by telephone to [07889 357392](tel:07889357392). Preferably a Booking Form should be used. You can download one from our website [here](#) but if not please ensure the following details are given:

Full name, address (including postcode), 'phone number, email, Branch and membership number, where and time you will be joining. In addition, for H&S reasons/obligations, please give name, relationship and 'phone number of an emergency contact for use during the visit.



The Midland Branch holds meetings where disabled access and facilities are available for members and their guests. On visits using coaches and heritage vehicles access may be problematical and you are advised to contact the bookings organiser for specific information.

Unless stated otherwise meetings held in Derby are at The Friends Meeting House, St. Helen's St., DERBY, DE1 3GY and those in Birmingham are at the Priory Rooms, 40 Bull St, Birmingham B4 6AF.

*Unless specified otherwise, **meetings are at 13.45 for a prompt 14.00 start.***

*Events marked **EMBEG** are organised by the East Midlands Bus Enthusiast Group. Your contact for Group meetings and visits is John Curtis, 8 Waterton Close, Stretton, Burton on Trent DE13 0RL, email harrogate4@hotmail.com. Mobile 07941 372329 Tel. 01283 543224.*

From The Chairman . . .

It is always good to open my notes with positive news, and the addition of three new members to Midland Branch is certainly that. This month we welcome:

Barry Henson 22012 of Sutton in Ashfield
 Brian Slamo 22014 of Quinton, Birmingham
 Tim Deakin 22020 of Newcastle-under-Lyme

I look forward to meeting up at one of our events and hope you find your OS membership good value.

As so often the case, there is a debit side, and it is sad to record the passing of members Dennis Johnson of Alfreton in June and Robin Hannay in December. Our condolences go to Dennis's daughter Sue and family. Robin joined the Omnibus Society back in 1950 and was a long-time member of Midland Branch. His death deprives us of probably the greatest source of information on the history of Guy Motors. How fortunate that so much survives him in the form of books and letters to trade journals. Our sympathy goes out to his wife Jean and family.

You will have noticed that we have re-designed the front cover of our Branch Bulletin and I hope you all approve! December's cover featured Allan Field's excellent photo in Ludlow, and I think the portrait format enhanced the overall attractiveness of this cover. In January, a slight re-design occurred due to the lack of a suitable portrait format picture as I am sure that the vast majority of bus photos taken are landscape format. So, here's an opportunity to possibly get your photo on our front cover by taking a portrait format shot and sending to our Bulletin co-ordinator, Gary Nolan, with of course a suitable caption. You have been challenged!

The next Bulletin will be issue no. 600 and we intend to celebrate this milestone with an enhanced issue containing some special features. Extra printed copies could be made available if you do not normally receive same, but we need to know by 21 February and there will be a charge to cover the additional costs.

The summer programme of visits is slowly taking shape as you will see in the diary section. We must be very grateful to operators for allowing us to visit their premises when so many other priorities are on their agenda, so please support our visits programme this year. In particular, we are experimenting with a mid-week visit in May, and I would welcome your views on having an occasional change from our traditional Saturdays.

Geoff Lusher

Recent Books

Listed below are books published since the last Bulletin. Ken Jubb can continue to obtain these for OS members, and they can be despatched post-free at the cover prices listed. Cheques should be made payable to Ken Jubb although all proceeds will be shared between the Bus Archive and the Midland Branch. It may be possible for pre-ordered books to be made available for collection at some of the proposed winter meetings. Please note that it will no longer be practicable for the large selection of recent books to be available for perusal at these meetings. Contact Ken at 1 Foredrift Close, REDDITCH B98 7NP (01527 544908)

CURRENT FLEET LISTS - PSV Circle

G 776 Durham & Northumberland £9

G 797 Northern Ireland £9

This completes the 8th series of G lists; the one below is the first of the 9th series - note PSV Circle have increased prices for new items published from January 2022

G 831 Devon £12

FLEET HISTORIES - PSV Circle

PB 35 West Yorkshire Road Car Co Part 2 (1954-1989)

168 pp £16

SLO 1 Pre-war independent operators in Midlothian (including Edinburgh) and West Lothian

179 pp £16

HISTORIC JOURNAL 983 - PSV Circle £5 (includes fleet histories for several Lincolnshire independents, Croydon registrations and London Transport Craven RTs)

2022 FIRST BUS HANDBOOK British Bus Publishing

112 pp soft back £19.25

WEST MIDLANDS BUSES, TROLLEYBUSES AND COACHES IN THE 1960s (Jim Blake) Visions International

94 pp soft back £15.95

Ken Jubb

The Survival of The National Bus Strategy

For the first face-to-face talk for over 20 months, we welcomed Nigel Eggleton, National Chairman of the OS but here in his capacity as Managing Director of First South Yorkshire and the Midlands. Nigel was making a much-appreciated return to Midland Branch following his presentation with Philip Kirk in 2012 on Go West Midlands.

Nigel opened by showing us slides of earlier route promotions in his Midlands area, featuring Nimrod and The Salt Road at Worcester with the development of this process in the Potteries with a fleet of StreetLites destined for the Mainline with eye-catching interior branding featuring Minton mosaic patterns. Not to be outdone, Leicester was

shown next with the recent branding of Frequent Fourteens, achieving a revenue uplift of 10%, which, Nigel reminded us, was the whole point of these exercises.

Nigel's more recent extension of responsibilities brought First South Yorkshire under his control. This was a significant challenge with a poor standard of fleet, challenging relationships with the PTE and lost mileage hitting 10%. A great deal of senior management time had to be devoted to a recovery programme, but Nigel had stressed at the beginning that this was not to be at the expense of the Midlands operations.

The poor political perception of First's image was improved by the adoption of a specific Sheffield livery, with a predominance of blue recalling the era of municipal transport in the City and a compelling strapline – "Proud to be part of Sheffield, our city of steel". There followed other marketing initiatives designed to emphasise First's roots in the local community – The Full Monty (Buses that go all the way); Henderson's Relish (Strong and Northern buses); and Bertie Bassett (Buses to all sorts of places in Sheffield).



First South Yorkshire has limited operation into the Midland Branch area, including the 272 service between Sheffield and Castleton which is jointly operated with Hulleys of Baslow. First South Yorkshire Volvo B7 37493 (YN08 PLF) is seen at Hope and carries the Bertie Bassett brand that Nigel referred to in his talk. (photo: Bob Telfer)

Sheffield is the largest but not the only operating centre for First in South Yorkshire and Doncaster was not to be forgotten in the process of identifying more closely with the local community. Here a livery of red with hints of purple was adopted, hinting back to the town's proud municipal operation. Rotherham, located between Sheffield and Doncaster, no longer had its own First depot and Nigel is working on the creation of a local identity for this important town.

Having summarised his efforts to improve the image of bus operation across his patch, Nigel turned to the issues affecting the day-to-day provision of services in these troubled times. The number of drivers leaving the industry is causing major problems in covering scheduled mileage. Driving being a front-line job with constant interface with the public, some drivers had opted for early retirement to avoid the potential health risks, others had left for more lucrative jobs in road haulage and yet others had unfortunately succumbed to Covid-19. Initially a number of drivers

had been placed on furlough, had started to become accustomed to regular hours and no shifts and consequently sought alternative work with more congenial hours. This critical shortage is now compounded by short term absences of staff who require enforced isolation, and strenuous efforts are in hand to speed up the recruitment of driving staff. Nigel indicated that the most serious shortages at First's operations were currently in West of England (Bristol, Bath and Weston) and Glasgow.

The loss of patronage during the pandemic has been a major issue for First as well as for the rest of the industry. During the first three weeks of lockdown in March 2020, passenger levels fell to well below 20% of pre-Covid levels, and there have been many subsequent peaks and troughs related to the various changes in personal freedom caused by changing Government regulations. Whilst patronage levels have now reached almost 80% of pre-Covid levels, there is little sign of this improving, and this overall average figure hides significant geographical variances with Nigel quoting Rotherham local services as recovering more slowly than Leicester and Worcester. A further worry was that concessionary fare usage had only recovered to 60% of pre-Covid as the elderly were still showing reluctance to return to bus travel.

The publication of the National Bus Strategy – *Buses Back Better* had pre-dated the pandemic and was a welcome sign that the Government had recognised the importance of the bus in being part of the solution to the impending environmental crisis. The Strategy had placed a requirement on local authorities to work with operators to produce Bus Service Improvement Plans and considerable variances in quality had been apparent once these Plans had appeared. Nigel quoted Leicester's BSIP as a shining example of what could be achieved, with proposals for significant bus priorities and zero-emission buses. Regrettably the ambitions of local authorities, in submitting bids amounting to £8 billion in total across England, are certain to be crushed when this total is matched to the reported sum available from Government funds of £1.4 billion. Furthermore, the timescale for the implementation of Enhanced Partnerships, by which the draft proposals contained in the BSIPs would be submitted, has now slipped back to the end of April 2022.

Fortunately, HM Government has supported the bus industry with revenue grants during the pandemic to date, initially with Covid-19 Bus Service Support Grant continuing as Bus Recovery Grant which will expire at end-March 2022. Thus, without an extension of grant, and with revenues still likely to be well short of pre-Covid levels, operators will have little choice but to implement cost savings through reductions of service which action would be very much contrary to *Buses Back Better*. Nigel predicted nervous times ahead.

At the conclusion of his talk, Nigel ably fielded a range of questions, the answers to many requiring a look into a murky crystal ball! A vote of thanks was proposed by Gary Nolan resulting in a resounding burst of applause in appreciation of a most enjoyable and informative talk.

Geoff Lusher

Bus Industry Funding – The Ups and Downs

Before the initial effects of Coronavirus in March 2020, buses were beginning to get the political recognition that had been missing for many years before. Buses outside of London were underfunded and unloved with operations impacted by growing and unpredictable traffic congestion, declining patronage, and consequential increases in pricing. There were pockets of success where operators and their Local Authorities recognised these challenges and worked together in partnership to bring some improvement for bus users by each using what little funding was available.

In some political corridors funding for buses corridors is considered to be excessive, with the misconception that operators are being subsidised through the Concessionary Fares Schemes, through Bus Service Operators Grant, and through the funding by Local Authorities for the provision of supported services. The facts are that concessionary reimbursement is a subsidy to the passenger and not the operator who in effect should be no better or no worse off by the scheme: BSOG is a partial (not full) rebate on the tax paid on fuel and the funding for supported services is exactly that, a payment for the provision of a service.

There is no doubt that numerous factors were causing bus use to be in decline and in October 2019 the Government finally recognised this and announced a package of funding under the title of A Better Deal For Bus Users. Updated in February 2020, just prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, the package recognised the importance of buses to society and promised extra funding of £220m including £20m for express bus lanes in the West Midlands and £30m to help LAs restore lost bus services and improve current services. The package also included the intention of creating an all-electric bus town.

In the same document was the Government's ambition to secure a long term, sustained improvement in bus services to be underpinned by a National Bus Strategy for England. The strategy would focus on the needs of passengers so that more people would want to use the bus and set out how national and local government and the private sector would come together to meet the needs of local communities.

The long-term vision for buses was to be accompanied by an equally long-term funding commitment through a review of funding for buses, including the existing grant funding (BSOG) to operators to ensure that investment will be focussed on meeting the needs of passengers, and provide an associated settlement.

In March 2021 that National Bus Strategy (NBS) was launched as Bus Back Better. It recognised the issues that are mentioned above: *For governments of all colours before this one, the bus has been last in the queue, with a fraction of the investment and political attention given to other, shinier things. Traffic has increased, but bus priority has stagnated, and some councils are actually taking bus lanes out. As services get slower, they become more expensive to run and less attractive to passengers. It is a classic vicious circle, which we intend to break.*

Recognising the impact Covid-19 had on bus use, the Strategy promised a *committed £3bn of new money during the current Parliament (as part of the levelling up fund) to improve buses outside London. Armed with that transformational funding, this National Bus Strategy will build back better. Its central aim is to get more people travelling by bus – first, to get overall patronage back to its pre-COVID-19 level, and then to exceed it. We will only achieve this if we can make buses a practical and attractive alternative to the car for more people.*

This was great news; however, the devil was in the detail and involved the creation of Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs: see Bulletin 597 12) and did not suggest anywhere that part of the £3bn funding would be used to maintain reasonable service levels during the pandemic.

The timescale for BSIPs seemed to be rushed and gave Local Transport Authorities (of which there are 79) and bus operators little time to develop and agree their plans and funding bids, with the intention of using the Enhanced Partnership legislation (or Franchising as an alternative for Elected Mayoral Combined Authorities) to deliver their plans.

At this present time, we are awaiting an announcement from DfT about the bids, however there is no doubt that the scheme is oversubscribed with the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) claiming the bids exceed £9bn when there is only £1.4bn of funding available. This has been confirmed by the DfT who wrote to LTAs on 11 January 2022 advising that:

Long-term Funding

Thank you for submitting your Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and for committing to the development of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) and/or beginning the statutory process of implementing bus franchising. We are pleased to see that all Local Transport Authorities are engaging with the Bus Back Better strategy, and we look forward to working with you to support the delivery of these plans. We continue to review and assess the BSIPs covering all 79 LTAs and expect to provide details of indicative funding by February 2022. This will recognise that the budget available for transformation, including for Zero Emission Buses, is around £1.4bn for the next three years and that prioritisation is inevitable, given the scale of the ambition across the country greatly exceeds this amount

The letter also advised that instead of LTAs submitting their Enhanced Partnership Scheme proposals by April 2022 they should now submit **draft** Plans but should progress with their plans to:

- *Commit the relevant authority or authorities to continue providing existing bus priority measures*
- *Implement low or no cost improvements including Bus Passenger Charters (as referenced in para 99 of the BSIP guidance) and high-quality information for all passengers (as referenced in para one of the BSIP guidance).*
- *Be flexible to incorporate further enhancements through variation if funding becomes available*

Just when the industry needed a significant boost, this delay could not have come at a worse time for both LTAs and operators. The impact of further Covid restrictions introduced by the Government in December last year in response to the outbreak of the Omicron variant has been that bus patronage fell again and as more cases became reported, so did the increase in staff absence with a detrimental effect on service reliability. The situation in some parts of the country has been so bad that temporary reduced timetables have been introduced – Route News has picked up on those in our Branch area. At a time when the industry is attempting to woo passengers back to buses with attractive fare offers and Covid safe measures, being unable to provide a full, and more importantly reliable service might be the straw that breaks the camel’s back.

In these circumstances, accurate customer information is essential and having endured many months of short notice timetable changes, staff safety concerns about social distancing and more working from home, customer information at the points of contact (bus stops and bus stations) has been almost non-existent with a greater use of online and social media channels. Those operators who expect customers to check online for updates every time before they travel will struggle and sadly this is becoming all too common. The staffing issue will no doubt recover but the practice of neglecting attention to customer information is within the control of the operator and LTA and must cease.

A Look Back at the Funding Lifelines.

It’s worth looking back at the various funding streams that have been in place during the pandemic to ensure that a reasonable level of service was maintained for key workers as patronage levels fell well below economic levels.

- In late March 2020 and to provide support to businesses, including bus operators to maintain some level of service for key workers despite seeing overall passenger numbers around 10% of normal levels, The Cabinet Office issued a Procurement Policy Note PPN 02/20 titled Supplier Relief due to COVID -19. This note set out guidance to public bodies on payment to their suppliers to ensure service continuity during and after the current COVID -19 outbreak. Local Transport Authorities therefore continued to pay concessionary reimbursement, tender payments and where applicable BSOG payments at pre COVID-19 levels. This meant bus operators did not see a falloff in these areas of income.
- A second lifeline came from the DfT on 6 April 2020 which recognised the importance of bus services during the outbreak and in wanting to maintain a good level of service despite limited demand, provided an ongoing payment of COVID-19 Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG). The grant was effective from 17 March 2020 and was expected to run for three months being capped at £166.8m. The funding was to ensure that bus services continued to operate in the right places at the right time during the outbreak. All bus operators who received the grant were expected to run 50% of scheduled commercial mileage, to engage with their LA on service levels and network coverage and to accept ENCTS passes prior to 0930 - something which most operators and LAs had agreed and introduced very early on in the outbreak.
- On Saturday 23 May 2020, the Transport Secretary announced a further £254m of funding to help protect and increase services allowing people travelling to hospitals, supermarkets, or their place of work to get there quickly and safely while helping to ensure there was enough space to enable them to observe social distancing guidelines. The aim was to get full service up and running as quickly as possible.

- A further update to the CBSSG terms was published on Saturday 8 August 2020 as a follow on to the previous scheme which ran out on 3 August 2020. Bus services across the country were to receive up to £218.4m of support over the next eight weeks, with rolling funding at up to £27.3m per week afterwards, until a time when the funding is no longer needed.
- A joint concern was raised by Operators and Local Authorities following the announcement that children would return to school in September and social distancing on Local Buses would still apply. As there would be a requirement for additional vehicles to be contracted in to provide duplicates, in early August the Government announced that £43,999,868 would be allocated to 79 councils, combined authorities, unitary authorities and Transport for London (TfL) to cover the requirement for additional dedicated transport up to the October 2020 half term. In early October, the DfE announced that the funding would continue to the end of the Autumn term. It was subsequently extended to the February 2021 half term.
- To coincide with the ending of CBSSG planned for 31 August 2021, the Government announced that a total of £226.4m under the name of Bus Recovery Grant would be made available to the UK bus industry for the period to 31 March 2022 paid again directly to each operator rather than via the local authority. There were some changes to the terms and conditions including being able to make limited changes to fares and mileage compared to pre covid levels should be close to 90% with reduced payments for miles more than that. Operators were expected to complete a raft of schedules detailing costs and revenue to support their claim.

As explained above, BRG is expected to cease at the end of March this year and at the time of writing, no firm replacement funding has been announced. It is rumoured that it is likely to be continuing until July however this is not confirmed but would be seen as a reasonable alternative to the cliff edge that will be faced otherwise. In the absence of any certainty, some operators are making plans for service cuts to match the current patronage levels, and it is more likely that concessionary reimbursement reductions will be phased in from April 2022 at a 10% reduction each two months until the reimbursement to operators matches that due on a per passenger basis.

With Government's plan B advice issued just after Christmas to work from home, along with the mandatory use of face coverings on public transport creating a further decline in the demand for buses together with an increase in staff absence, the hope of EP funding being a positive solution from April was the bright light near the end of the tunnel. That light has gone back to being a flicker.

Gary Nolan

ROUTE NEWS

Acknowledgments: Thanks for contributions from ME, PIH, DAJ, GN, AP, KS, JS, MCT, MW, RAW.

ARRIVA Group

ARRIVA MIDLANDS (Arriva Midlands Ltd), Leicester

2 January 2022

5/5A DERBY - Royal Derby Hospital - Normanton - Littleover - ROSEHILL Circulars (20' M-Sa, 30' Su on each route). Sa reduced to 30' on each route.

F1 DERBY - Alvaston - BOULTON ESTATE (M-F 30', no SaSu service). Sa service reinstated (also 30').

CENTREBUS Group

CENTREBUS (Centrebus North Ltd), Leicester

8 January 2022 until further notice

9 SUNNINGDALE - Grantham - WOOLSTHORPE (M-Sa). Due to driver shortages Saturday services are suspended.

55/56 MELTON MOWBRAY - Grantham (M-Sa daytime). Due to driver shortages Saturday services are suspended "for the foreseeable Saturdays".

31 January 2022

1 GRANTHAM - Alma Park (M-Sa daytime) **and**

1 GRANTHAM - Earlesfield (M-Sa daytime). M-F frequency reduced from 20' to 30'. Sa remains 30'.

6B/X6A/X6C GRANTHAM - Radcliffe (Sch). X6A withdrawn, covered by extension of 6B from Bingham to Radcliffe and diversion of X6C via Aslockton and Orston.

5 February 2022

8 GRANTHAM - Melton Mowbray - LOUGHBOROUGH (M-Sa daytime 60'). The Sa frequency is reduced from 60' to 120', although it remains mainly 60' until approx 0930 and after approx 1600; however, the first and last journeys from Melton to Loughborough (0645 and 1749), the two return journeys from Loughborough to Melton (0732 and 1832) and the final journey from Melton to Grantham (1917) are withdrawn.

RF1 MELTON MOWBRAY - Oakham - Uppingham - CORBY (M-Sa daytime 60'). The Sa frequency is reduced from 60' to 120'; also, starts slightly later towards Corby - the first journey from Oakham is at 0800 instead of 0655 and first through journey from Melton is at 0925 instead of 0835; the final journey from Corby to Oakham is at 1725 instead of 1820.

RF2 MELTON MOWBRAY - Saxby - Market Overton - Cottesmore - OAKHAM (M-Sa daytime). The Sa service is reduced from approx 135' to every 2-3 hours with the first and last journeys only operating between Oakham and Market Overton. The through service to/from Melton is reduced from 7 inward and 6 outward journeys to 3 journeys in each direction, from Oakham at 0900, 1100 and 1400 and from Melton at 1000, 1300 and 1500. From Market Overton, a short journey to Oakham runs at 0820; from Oakham, short journeys to Market Overton run at 1600 and 1705 - the 1600 journey runs direct via Langham to Market Overton, returning via the normal route.

D&G BUS LTD, Adderley Green24 January 2022

108 ASHBOURNE - Waterhouses - LEEK (M-Sa). The timetable was revised with most journeys serving Caudon Lowe diverted to operate via the main road between Ashbourne and Leek with just a short double run in Waterhouses to Breech Close at off peak times. The school time journeys serving Leek High School and Westwood College still serve Caudon Lowe as does their school vacation variant. At other times passengers for Caudon Lowe are referred to Moorlands Connect (on which previously free ENCTS passes are valid only on payment of £2.00 single, £3.50 return). Sa service is extended from Leek to Buxton providing a belated replacement for the Leek to Buxton journeys withdrawn from service **16** on 22 November 2021. Good connections are made with the 16 on all journeys. The timetable carries a warning that the A53 from Buxton to Leek is subject to closure because of adverse weather, in which case the extension to Buxton will not run.

5 February 2022

1/1A PARK SITE/WOOD LANE - Newcastle - RSUH - Stoke - Longton - MEIR (M-Sa). Slight retiming of Sa afternoon journeys to make connections with Stoke City football buses more convenient.

FIRST Group**FIRST POTTERIES LTD, Adderley Green**10 January 2022

Due to increasing levels of staff sickness all M-F service levels were replaced by Sa timetables with slight improvements mainly in the early mornings on some services.

FIRST WORCESTERSHIRE (First Midland Red Buses Ltd), Worcester2 January 2021

Most of the company's M-F timetables had minor revisions from this date, mainly retimings and minor frequency changes. Sa and Su services appear unchanged, except for Su X50 detailed below.

30 WORCESTER - Dines Green (D, no late evening service). This service continues to have different M-F school term and school holiday timetables, with the general school term off-peak service frequency increased to 20'.

38/X38 WORCESTER - Worcestershire Royal Hospital (M-Sa, no late evening service). X38 was a peak hour service omitting the Canterbury Road loop, running from City in the morning peak, and to City in the evening peak. It replaced 38 at these times, but the service has not run since 25 March 2020. It is now reinstated.

X50 WORCESTER - Pershore - EVESHAM (M-Sa, no late evening service, plus Su Worcester - Pershore only). Su operates to Pershore direct via Pershore High Street, with Three Springs Road served on the return journey. The turning movement in Pershore is easier with this change.

10 January 2022

363 WORCESTER - Callow End - Hanley Swan - Welland - Upton-on-Severn - RIPPLE/TEWKESBURY (M-F daytime). The Monday only journey which extends to Tewkesbury is withdrawn (all Mondays are Bank Holidays after 20 December, so l.d.o. uncertain). This journey had operated via Ripple Village Hall with effect from 27 September 2021.

675/676 LEDBURY - Malvern. Diverted away from West Malvern via Wyche Road B4218 because of long term road works.

NATIONAL EXPRESS Group

NATIONAL EXPRESS WEST MIDLANDS (West Midlands Travel Ltd)

30 January 2022

81 WOLVERHAMPTON - Woodcross - Coseley - DUDLEY (D). M-Sa commercial daytime service discontinued, taken over by **Banga buses**. Tendered ESu service (hourly) continues with NXWM and is rerouted in Wolverhampton via Silver Birch Road and Pond Lane instead of Birmingham Road and Derry Street.



As recorded in Bulletin 597, National Express West Midlands Service 77, Sutton Coldfield to Walsall, has been curtailed at Streetly for most of the day and diverted to a new terminus at Streetly, Hardwick Arms. M-F peak and Sunday journeys continue to Walsall as Service 77A. Operation remains with Walsall Garage and buses interwork at Sutton Coldfield with Service 6, Walsall to Sutton Coldfield via Aldridge. Here is Wright StreetDeck 3304 (SL16 YPO) Alicia Lillian, one of only five of this type, in the turning circle at Hardwick Arms. The pub is out of picture on the left, and the building on the right is the national centre for select car registrations!

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

NOTTINGHAM CITY TRANSPORT

10 January 2022

To improve reliability service levels will be adjusted to match staff availability by temporary implementation of Saturday timetables on M-F, with a few additions, on all services, and the suspension of all **Nxx Nightbus** services. The M-F additions are:

South Notts 1/1A/1B/1E NOTTINGHAM - Loughborough. 0730 M-Sa Nottingham - Loughborough diverts in East Leake to serve the East Leake Academy. Additional journeys operate Sch from Trent Bridge to East Leake Academy at 0740 and from East Leake Academy at 1515 to Clifton. Additional journeys operating as **1B** leave the city at 0752 and 0810 M-Sa to serve the Emmanuel & Becket Schools on Wilford Lane. The 0700 Nottingham - Loughborough diverts M-Sa via the Loughborough Endowed Schools and an additional journey operates Sch from the Endowed Schools at 1610 to Nottingham.

4 NTU CITY CAMPUS - NTU Clifton Campus (M-F term time). Operates normal M-F timetable.

5 CITY - Gamston. Additional journey City - Gamston at 0530 M-F serving the Lings Bar Hospital.

6 CITY - Edwalton. Additional journeys at 0505 & 0603 M-F from Edwalton.

8 CITY - Compton Acres. Additional journeys at 0620 & 0720 M-F ex Wilford Hill and 0655 & 0755 M-F ex City to Rushcliffe Academy.



BYD ADL Enviro200EV demonstrator (LC71 EFE) spent a short period on loan to Nottingham City Transport and was allocated fleet number 999, It is seen here on 24 January at the newly designed junction of Canal Street and Carrington Street. (photo: Geoff Girling)

10/10C CITY - Ruddington. Journeys ex-City at 0635, 0705, 0725, 0805, 0845 & 0905 M-Sa extend as **10C** to Ruddington Business Park. Operating as **10X** buses will leave the Business Park at 1610, 1711 & 1818 M-F.

Pathfinder 26 NOTTINGHAM - Southwell. 0740 Nottingham - Southwell will call Sch within the Minster School grounds, with a 1514 M-F journey from the School to Nottingham. Additional journey at 0755 M-F ex city to the Carlton-le-Willows School, with a journey at 1510 from Linden Grove to Nottingham.

28 CITY - Bilborough. To facilitate Bilborough College students the 0755 and 0815 ex city will operate with two buses. Additional journey from Trinity School (Beechdale Road) at 1535 Sch to city.

34 CITY - University Park Campus (currently operating Holiday Time timetable 30' D). Operates 15' during M-F peak hours.

35/35B CITY - Bilborough - BULWELL. Additional journey Strelley - QMC at 0505 M-F and ex Bulwell Bus Station to Bilborough for Samworth Academy and Bilborough College at 0757 M-F.

44 CITY - Gedling. Journeys ex-City at 0532, 0602, 0632, 0702, 0732, 0802 & 0832 M-Sa divert via Colwick Industrial Estate as **44A**, with return journeys at 1610, 1640, 1710, 1740 and 1810 M-Sa from the Industrial Estate.

49/49A/49B/49X CITY - Boots Site. Operates normal M-F timetable.

53 ARNOLD - QMC - CLIFTON. Additional journeys Arnold - Clifton Bridge at 0510 and 0610 M-F as **53B**, Arnold - Clifton at 0745 M-F, and QMC - Arnold at 1508 Sch. The 0721 departure from Arnold will operate with two buses (for Bluecoat School).

57 CITY - Plains Estate. Additional journeys 0758 M-F ex city (for Christ the King School) and 1524 Sch Ramsey Drive - City (for Arnold Hill School) as **57X**.

59 CITY - Arnold - KILLISICK. Additional journey 1518 Sch Kiddier Avenue - City (for Christ the King School).

77 CITY - Strelley. Additional journeys 0754 M-F ex city (for Bluecoat Academy, Nottingham Girls' Academy and Trinity School), 1525 Sch Nottingham Girls' Academy - City and 1535 Sch Trinity School (Beechdale Road) - City.

87 CITY - City Hospital - ARNOLD. Additional journey 0801 Sch Redcliffe Road - Redhill Academy. The 1513 ex Arnold will operate with a double deck bus (for Redhill Academy).

88 CITY - City Hospital - TOP VALLEY. The 1501 ex Top Valley will operate with a double deck bus (for Oakwood Academy).

89 CITY - City Hospital - RISE PARK. The 0750 M-Sa ex City will divert via Bewcastle Road as **89A** to serve Oakwood Academy.

STAGECOACH Group

STAGECOACH EAST (Cambus Ltd), Cambridge

23 January 2022

41 BEDFORD - Olney - NORTHAMPTON (D). Frequency temporarily reduced NESu from 60' to 90'.

31 January 2022

37 PETERBOROUGH - Spalding. 0710 M-F ex Spalding retimed to operate at 0700 and arrive at Peterborough at 0823 not 0818. M-F evening journeys at 1945 ex Spalding and 2030 ex Peterborough no longer call in at Eye Garden Centre (they continue to on Sa).

STAGECOACH MIDLANDS (Midland Red (South) Ltd), Northampton

15 January 2022

86 COVENTRY - Wolston - Rugby (D) - DIRFT (M-Sa daytime) *and*

96 RUGBY - DIRFT - West Haddon - NORTHAMPTON (M-Sa daytime). Rerouted in Houlton via a new section of Houlton Way, instead of Station Avenue and Maine Street.

22 January 2022

U12 COVENTRY, Pool Meadow - UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK (D). Service suspended indefinitely due to driver shortages at Leamington garage in order that, the company advised, "we can provide a more reliable service across Leamington and Coventry". Competed with **National Express Coventry 12X**, which continues unchanged.

30 January 2022

2 PRIOR MEADOW - Corby - Oakley Vale - Kettering - TESCO (D Corby - Kettering, M-Sa interpeak Prior Meadow - Stephenson Way in Corby). The M-Sa daytime service, which was 30' to Kettering and 60' on to Tesco, is reduced to 60' throughout.

49 KETTERING - Irthlingborough - Higham Ferrers - Rushden - Irchester - WELLINGBOROUGH (NESu) *and*

50 KETTERING - Irthlingborough - Rushden Lakes - Rushden - BEDFORD (D). Route 49 is withdrawn between Rushden and Kettering, reducing the combined frequency from 30' to 60'. To cover 49's section through Higham Ferrers, 50 is diverted by its Su route between the A6/A45 roundabout and Rushden Lakes, via Higham Ferrers and Northampton Road, with Higham Road in Rushden now left to X46/47 (Northampton -Raunds). 50 also covers the double-runs in Irthlingborough on 49, to Nene Park Clinic and Bugby Drive.

X7 NORTHAMPTON - Market Harborough - LEICESTER (D). The M-Sa daytime service is reduced from 30' to 60'.

WELLGLADE Group

TRENT BARTON (Trent Motor Traction Co Ltd.) Derby

16 January 2022

swift DERBY - Ashbourne - Mayfield - UTTOXETER. Revised on SuBH. Now runs Derby - Ashbourne (rather than Derby - Mayfield) but 60' frequency retained.

23 January 2022

Two further frequency reductions due to shortage of drivers:

H1 DERBY - Heanor (- ALFRETON). M-Sa frequency Derby - Heanor section reduced from 10' to 15' (Su unchanged at 30'). Through journeys to Alfreton still 60' M-Sa.

two NOTTINGHAM - Ilkeston - COTMANHAY. M-Sa frequency reduced from 10' to 15' (Su unchanged at 30').

OTHER OPERATORS

ASHBOURNE LITTLE BUS (Ashbourne Community Transport), Ashbourne

25 October 2021

Moorlands Connect STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS RURAL AREA - Leek / Ashbourne / Cheadle / Buxton (M-F DRT). Availability was increased by the addition of a second vehicle with M-F operating hours extended to 07:00 to 19:00 and a Sa service was introduced between 08:00 and 18:00. A Su service is promised for the summer months.

BANGA BUSES (R. Banga), Wolverhampton

22 January 2022

545 WOLVERHAMPTON - Moseley Road - BILSTON (M-Sa daytime, 11 jnys). Withdrawn after operation on this date, probably related to the change below. Competed with **National Express West Midlands 82**, which continues unchanged.

30 January 2022

81 WOLVERHAMPTON - Woodcross - Coseley - DUDLEY (M-Sa daytime - 30' peak, 60' offpeak). New service, taken over from **National Express West Midlands**. Rerouted in Wolverhampton via Silver Birch Road and Pond Lane instead of Birmingham Road and Derry Street.

BRITANNIA BUS LTD, Northampton

20 December 2021

89 MILTON KEYNES - Stony Stratford - DEANSHANGER/YARDLEY GOBION loop (NESu). A startling reduction was imposed on this service, from five round trips M-Sa, to one trip MWThF mornings, giving just one hour in MK.

BRYLAINE TRAVEL LTD, Boston

18 January 2022

B13 BOSTON - Spalding. M-F timetable change. 1800 Spalding to Boston and 1845 and 1935 Boston to Kirton withdrawn. 1800 ex Boston only runs to Sutterton not Spalding.

CRESSWELLS (N.N. Creswell Coach Hire Ltd), Evesham

8 November 2021 (l.d.o.)

Rural 2 PERSHORE - Redditch (M). Service withdrawn.

12 November 2021

Rural 4 EVESHAM - Broadway - WILLERSEY (M - Sa). The deviation via Badsey on Schooldays is now operated by the school time duplicate. Sa service withdrawn, and there is no afternoon journey after the school time journeys.

582 EVESHAM Town Service (M-Sa). Sa service withdrawn, and there is no afternoon journey after the school time journeys.

HULLEYS OF BASLOW (Henry Hulley & Sons Ltd), Baslow

9 January 2022 (additional)

55 CHESTERFIELD - Wingerworth - Clay Cross - Pilsley - ALFRETON (D 60'). All journeys now serve Morton Sitwell Arms (double run from Corner Pin). Su **55A** renumbered 55 and uses M-Sa route via Clay Cross instead of running via Tupton to North Wingfield.

10 January 2022 (additional)

171 BAKEWELL - Middleton by Youlgreave (M-F 2 jnys inbound). Increased to M-Sa 120' following withdrawal of **X70** Buxton section.

KEV'S CARS & COACHES LTD, Lydiate Ash

10 January 2022

38 SELLY OAK - Cotteridge - NORTHFIELD (M-Sa offpeak 60'). To improve reliability, Selly Oak terminus moved from Bristol Road/Elliott Road to Harborne Lane (Access Self Storage - the former bus garage), then rerouted via Harborne Lane, Oak Tree Lane and Raddlebarn Road (both ways) instead of Bristol, Heeley, Exeter, and Dawlish Roads. Also extended in Northfield by one stop from Bell Lane to Lockwood Road.

SELECT BUS SERVICES (B P Brown Travel Ltd), Penkridge

4 January 2022 (additional)

242 STOURBRIDGE - Kinver (M-Sa days 60'). Route change is diversion away from Stourbridge Junction Station, Heath Lane, South Road, and High Park Avenue. Now leaves Stourbridge via Enville Street and Bridgnorth Road to existing route at Bridle Road. Also loops round Hyperion Road offpeak.

GENERAL

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

No decision has been reached on the submitted £113m Bus Service Improvement Plan, the DfT having indicated that a decision would be available in January/February, somewhat later than the original date of November/December. The County has decided to implement an Enhanced Partnership (EP) model from 1 April 2022, but this required the agreement of operators of a substantial number of services in the county. Objections to the scheme were received from D&G Bus Ltd., Midland Classic Ltd., and B P Brown Travel Ltd t/a Select Bus Services who between them operate more than 25% of qualifying local services in the county.

As a result, the county is now required to work through objections with each of the operators concerned and to revise the proposed EP agreement if appropriate before proceeding again with the formal steps for an EP, incorporating where necessary any changes that may be required when funding is announced.

The Council has committed to waiting for the funding announcement but working closely with all Staffordshire operators in the intervening period. As explained earlier, the DfT's 31 March 2022 deadline to have an Enhanced Partnership and a supporting Enhanced Partnership Scheme in place has been amended relieving what would potentially have been a very tight timetable for all parties involved.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Roadworks in Stratford-upon-Avon town centre have closed Wood Street from 16 January to 31 March 2022 and put Bridge Street off limits for bus services. All **Stagecoach Midlands** services, plus **Johnsons** Park & Ride are terminating at Windsor Street coach park for the duration. All other Johnsons services terminate in Guild Street. Warwickshire County Council notices state that **Pulhams 51** (Stratford - Moreton-in-Marsh) was also to terminate in Guild Street, but on 24 January it was still terminating in Bridge Street.

WOLVERHAMPTON CITY CENTRE

Salop Street is closed from 10 January to 31 July for public realm improvements. National Express West Midlands **2** (Bushbury Hill to Warstones) and **16** (to Stourbridge) are diverted via Peel Street and Pitt Street; **1** (Tettenhall Wood to Dudley), **3** (Castlecroft to Fordhouses), **4** (from i54), **10/10A/10B** (from Perton/Pattingham/Codsall), **15/15A** (from Merry Hill) and **61** (to Goldthorn Hill) are diverted via Peel Street, Pitt Street, Temple Street and Summer Row; while **5** (from Codsall) is diverted via Ring Road St Peters, Stafford Street and Broad Street.

Nigel Kavanagh – Brown

Claribels Bow Out

On 1 February it was announced that Diamond Bus Ltd, a subsidiary of Rotalla Plc, had agreed to acquire the bus business and certain specific assets (principally the vehicles used) from Claribel Coaches Ltd. The transaction would be concluded on 24 April 2022, after which all bus operating staff and 18 associated vehicles will transfer to Diamond Bus.

The current Directors of Claribel Coaches Limited have decided to focus on their ongoing coach business, Birmingham International Coaches, and are said to be grateful for the opportunity that this decision has presented to them.



Claribels 23 (YJ13 HJE) is one three Optare Versas owned and is seen in Solihull operating what seems to be its regular working on supported service S16 between Solihull and South Yardley via Lyndon.



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Produced by the Midland Branch of the Omnibus Society.

Submissions for next month's Bulletin should be made by 28 February 2022

The views expressed in the bulletin are not necessarily those either of the Midland Branch committee or of the Omnibus Society