



Fleet Digest

www.stevenknightmedia.com

No. 10

19-11-2020



Oxford Tube allocation of new Volvo B11R coaches is cut

Optare Solo SR 47949 finally reaches Stagecoach South Wales

'Heritage' Feature: Stagecoach's early years in Banbury

On the Cover



New Oxford Tube Volvo B11RLE/Plaxton Panorama 50422. © Malcolm Crowe

© Steven Knight Media 2020

Steven Knight Media
PO Box 1299
Peterborough
PE2 2NX

The results of a vandal attack on a Stagecoach South East vehicle © Matthew Arnold/Twitter

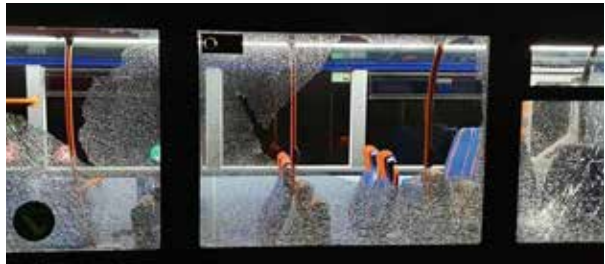
Editorial

We are hearing that instances of vandalism to buses is again on the rise in some areas. Stagecoach South East has been forced to divert its 'Triangle' buses away from the Westbrook Farm area of Herne Bay during the evenings after a spate of bus windows being smashed.

In Peterborough the local Police are appealing for information after seven instances of windows on buses operated by Stagecoach East being smashed last week, six of the instances in the same area but most occurred during the mid and late afternoon periods.

Bus operators are working hard to ensure their buses are cleaned to the highest standards to meet COVID-19 cleaning requirements. The last thing engineers need now is to have to take buses out of service and divert staff to clean up broken glass.

We really hope that onboard CCTV will help catch the culprits.



Stagecoach East's Fenstanton-allocated Dart SLF 34827 had an outing on 16th November 2020 when it was used as a staff shuttle vehicle between Fenstanton depot and Huntingdon Bus Station. © Brandon Fitzgibbon





New coaches for Oxford Tube to be cut: some to be diverted elsewhere

The number of new Volvo B11RLE/Plaxton Panorama coaches being delivered to Stagecoach Oxfordshire for the Oxford Tube service is to be cut, Stagecoach has confirmed.

The displaced coaches will be diverted for use elsewhere within Stagecoach.

34 new coaches to upgrade the Oxford Tube operation were ordered earlier this year. At the start of the COVID-19 'Lockdown' in March 2020 the investment in common with most Stagecoach capital investment was deferred.

The order was recently reinstated and the first new coaches have already been delivered to Oxford and driver training has already started.

A Stagecoach spokesperson confirmed to *Steven Knight Media* that: "we still have a number of the coaches going to Oxford Tube and the rest will be going elsewhere in the group".

It is understood reduced loadings on the Oxford Tube are the reason behind the move.

No details have been provided on how many coaches will be diverted or where they will operate.

It is believed that up to a third of the 34 coaches could be diverted with some of the existing Oxford Tube Van Hool Astromega coaches remaining at Oxford as cover.

The Van Hool Astromegas displaced by the arrival of the new Plaxton Panorama coaches are expected to be cascaded for further use within Stagecoach UK.



New Oxford Tube Volvo B11RLE/Plaxton Panorama 50422 pictured by Malcolm Crowe of the OCBP in Stokenchurch whilst on driver training duties. © Malcolm Crowe



The first vehicle in the Stagecoach East fleet to receive Stagecoach 'Local' livery is ADL Enviro 200MMC 37437, which was pictured outside Bedford depot on 12th November 2020:

© David Beddall

Stagecoach East Midlands

A further Skegness Seaside Open Top Trident to be parked up for the winter at Grimsby depot is 17677, meanwhile, Volvo B7RLE 21274 had returned to Grimsby from Skegness, where it had been on loan, by 16th November 2020.

Further Stagecoach 'Local' repaints reported are Scania/Enviro 300 28614 at Worksop and MAN/Enviro 200 39678 at Mansfield.

Stagecoach Cumbria & North Lancashire

Now sold are former training bus, Volvo B10M/Alexander PS 20983 and Optare Solo 47057.

Now taken out of service here and being prepared for disposal are Optare Solos 47004/07/55 from Kendal and 47453 from West Cumbria. Also being prepared for disposal are Dart SLFs 35246 and 35248 from West Cumbria and 35249, which

had been delicensed. Dart SLFs now at Morecambe are 34719 from Kendal and 35192 from Barrow.

Mercedes-Benz Sprinters, 44008/50/51/52/54 have been relicensed and allocated to West Cumbria.

Transferred from West Cumbria to Carlisle are Enviro 200 36422 and Volvo B10M/Alexander PS Schoolrunner 20710.

Vehicles out of the paintshop in the last seven days are Barrow-allocated Optare Solo 47239 in Stagecoach 'Local' livery and similar Kendal-based 47237, which has received Lakes Connection livery. Next up for repaint is Scania/Enviro 400 15681.

Stagecoach Manchester

The return to service of Enviro 400 19622 at Stockport has seen Trident 18361 move to Sharston where it has displaced 18357 into the Reserve Fleet. Also now in the Reserve Fleet are Enviro 400s 19190 and 19191 from Middleton.

From our archives: Stagecoach's Banbury outpost

In Fleet Digest No 8 we featured Stagecoach in Nuneaton. The Stagecoach Midland Red operation also included an outpost at Banbury. Our latest archive offering takes a trip to Banbury in March 1998.

The Stagecoach Midland Red fleet included a number of coaches that were frequently used on local bus work. 6 (RNV445V) is a Leyland Leopard with Plaxton Supreme bodywork new to Midland Red as its 788. It carried registration BVP788V when new and has also been registered 3273AC.

© Steven Knight Media



Still carrying the privatised Midland Red South livery which has a weather beaten appearance is Leyland National 577 (NOE577R). New to Midland Red at Hinckley it had transferred to Nuneaton garage when Hinckley garage was closed in 1979.

© Steven Knight Media



The privatised Midland Red South turned to Wright to body a fleet of Mercedes-Benz 81 ID midibuses.. Looking smart having gained Stagecoach 'stripes' livery is 422 (K422ARW). © Steven Knight Media

Having been pictured in Nuneaton (Fleet Digest No. 8) Leyland National (GOL426N) which was new to Midland Red as its 426 had become 595 in the Stagecoach Midland Red fleet by the time it was based at Banbury. © Steven Knight Media

In full Stagecoach 'stripes' livery is Leyland National 621 (PUK621R), which was new to Midland Red. It is pictured in Banbury with a 480 service bound for Sibford Gower. © Steven Knight Media





The exterior condition of Reeve Burgess Beaver-bodied Mercedes 709D has nothing to promote the image of Stagecoach. Now numbered 375 (F310EJO) was transferred to the Stagecoach Midland Red fleet from the Stagecoach operation in Oxford. Whilst initially a Stagecoach Midland Red depot, operations at Banbury are now part of Stagecoach Oxfordshire.
© Steven Knight Media

Stagecoach took deliveries of the Alexander Dash bodywork on both Dennis Dart and Volvo B6 chassis. Volvo B6 example 452 (L452YAC) is pictured with a B8 local Banbury service. The bus was later transferred to the former United Counties operation at Bedford. © Steven Knight Media



Blands, Stamford

The two Volvo B9R/Plaxton Panther coaches that were sold to **Blands** near Stamford, 53601/02, have been re-registered from KX58NBJ/K to XIL7321 and HIL9272.



Former Stagecoach East Midlands Volvo B9R/Plaxton Panther now with Blands. © Blands

Stagecoach South Wales

Dart SLFs on the move here include 34746 from Blackwood to Caerphilly with 34670 and 34748 at Cwmbran being allocated to the Brynmawr outstation. Optare Solos 47629 and 47635 are also at the Brynmawr outstation with 47528 and 47640 moving to the main Cwmbran allocation.

Enviro 200 36773 has moved from Caerphilly to Blackwood in exchange for similar 36776. Also transferred from Blackwood to Caerphilly are 37172/74. 36795 has moved from Merthyr to Blackwood.

Optare Solo 47203 has transferred from Blackwood to Caerphilly where it joins recently transferred 47197. 47315 is a transfer from Blackwood to Aberdare.

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 44003 has returned to service at Porth following gearbox repairs.

Optare Solo SR 47949 has finally arrived here. It was transferred from **Stagecoach Cumbria & North Lancashire** but went direct to VOSA for emissions testing. Now allocated to Caerphilly it carries the Stagecoach 'Local' livery. Also in the new Stagecoach 'Local' livery here is Scania/Enviro 300 28642.

Stagecoach South East

ADL Enviro 400MMC 10701 has transferred from Hastings to Herne Bay in exchange for Scania/Enviro 400MMC 15290

whilst in a similar exchange 10713 has transferred from Folkestone to Herne Bay in exchange for 15289.

Former **Stagecoach East** Trident 18412 has transferred from the Reserve Fleet at Thanet to the main fleet at Herne Bay where it has ousted 17587 to the Reserve Fleet. Another Reserve Fleet vehicle transferred to the main fleet is Dart SLF 34732 at Hastings.

Dart SLF training vehicle 34660 is currently at Eastbourne, from Thanet.

Stagecoach Merseyside & South Lancashire

Now delicensed, at Chester, are open top Tridents, 17470, 17479 and 17502

Stagecoach Oxfordshire

Vehicles authorised for disposal here during October/November are former training bus Volvo B10M/Alexander PS 20933 along with Dart SLF 34468 and Optare Solo 47736.

Driver training MAN/ALX300 22418 is currently delicensed.

Stagecoach East

Scania/Enviro 400MMC 15291 is back at Fenstanton depot as cover for Enviro 400XLB 13912 which suffered extensive damage in a low bridge collision last week.

Stagecoach gets enquiries for engineering services

Stagecoach UK has confirmed that it has received a number of enquiries following the opening up of its engineering expertise and facilities to external companies earlier this year.

The company has placed adverts in the Bus and Coach Trade press to promote the services.

Stagecoach Bus & Coach Engineering Services offers operators a range of services including

preventative maintenance inspections and MOT preparation and testing facilities. Also available are small bodywork repairs as well as full vehicle repaints. Vehicle cleaning services are also offered.

Stagecoach says many of the services it is offering are provided at a fixed price.

In response to a press enquiry from Steven

Knight Media, Stagecoach

Group has said: "We've had a number of enquiries so far about our engineering services and we are working through the detail of these".



An unusual visitor to Spalding Bus Station is Stagecoach East Midlands, formerly Road Car, Volvo B7TL/Wright Eclipse Gemini 16941, which has worked through on a 57 service from Skegness. © Kai Turner



“Good take up’ for Rewards scheme says Stagecoach



To take advantage of the offers passengers have to register and also have a valid bus ticket on the date they claim the discount.

A Stagecoach spokesperson told Steven Knight Media that: “On the Stagecoach Rewards scheme, we’ve had a good take up so far with over 3,000

Stagecoach UK says it is has had a ‘good take up’ for its new Stagecoach Rewards scheme, which has a ‘soft launch’ in August. Under the promotion passengers can use their bus ticket to get discounts on Food and Drink, Fashion and Retail, Travel and Hotels and much more.

subscriptions since launch - many of which are new Stagecoach customers.

“We’ve obviously paused the promotional activity on this for the moment, given the current lockdown, but it will resume again as soon as we’re able to”.

Stagecoach Midlands

The company has reported that Dart SLFs 34771/73 are being returned to **Stagecoach East** without being returned here.

We understand that Optare Solo 47408 could be returned to service but requires a major component exchange and remains parked at the former Corby outstation.

Three of the MAN/Enviro 300s are still out of service here for repairs - 22839/39 at Leamington and 22835 at Northampton.

Following the removal of the WiFi-logos on the ADL Enviro 400MMC ‘Stagecoach Gold’ vehicles at Kettering depot, they have been replaced by ‘Leather Seats’ branding.



Stagecoach East

Reserve Fleet Dart SLF 34827 was in use from Fenstanton depot as a staff shuttle vehicle between the depot and Huntingdon bus station on 16th November 2020.

Following its return from **Stagecoach Oxfordshire**, where it was unused, Dart SLF 34537 has been allocated to Fenstanton.

Also at Fenstanton, for return to service preparations, are Dart SLFs 34771 and 34773 which have been returned here from **Stagecoach Midlands** where they were also unused.

Enviro 300 27642 remains at Bedford and did not transfer to Cambridge last month.

Roof-damaged Volvo B8L/Enviro 400XLB has been taken to **ADL Harlow**.

Also out of service here with accident damage is Bedford-allocated Volvo BI I/R/Plaxton elite 54304.



Cumbrian Colours



Two Stagecoach Cumbria & North Lancashire Optare Solos have received different liveries here during recent repaints. Kendal-allocated 47237 has been finished in the attractive Best Impressions-designed Lakes Connection scheme whilst Barrow's 47239 is the latest repaint here into Stagecoach 'Local' colours. Next up for attention in the Carlisle paint shop is Morecambe's Scania/Enviro 400 15681.
© Lee Wardle



Take a step INSIDE Midland Red

What was it like to work for the massive Midland Red business that dominated bus operations in the Midlands of England for most of the 20th century?

In this part autobiographical, part historical book, the Midland Red historian Ashley Wakelin tells of Midland Red's spread from Birmingham across 12,000 square miles, and the designing and building of its unique trendsetting fleet of home made buses and coaches.

He also tells entertaining stories of his working life from office lad, conductor and driver to management in Midland Red.

Hard back, 128 quality pages with over 250 photographs, many not previously published.

INSIDE Midland Red

An entertaining historical and autobiographical book of tales recounting the author's working life with the legendary Midland Red.

Launched 26th November - Pre-Order NOW!

The plan is that all pre-orders will be ready for despatch on launch day.

The price is £39.95 which includes UK mainland delivery

For more details and to order visit midlandred.co.uk

We have known Ashley for over 45 years and he has a wealth of knowledge, on Midland Red, much gained from his time working for the company.

He has seen the bus and coach industry evolve over fifty years of change. He has worked in manual and managerial roles, has been an enthusiast, preservationist and operator, and has worked in both the private and public sectors with national and small independent operators.

Besides having a collection of Midland Red memorabilia and models, Ashley has had over sixty full sized buses and coaches, some passing through his hands and others staying for either work or pleasure - all between his sixteenth and sixtieth birthdays.

He was instrumental in purchasing and saving

two significant BMMO Midland Red buses - the only running Midland Red CM6T motorway express coach (surely the swansong of their coach production), and the last built Midland Red S16 single-decker service bus.

But it was his passionate enthusiasm for, and his career with Midland Red, and the association he had with staff at all levels which has provided the content for this book as he takes you, **INSIDE Midland Red**.



Transdev

The company has advised that a some vehicles will be renumbered from 22nd November 2020.

The company says the change will allow it: “to standardise our fleet number series and prepare for a new fleet management system”.

Current Fleet Number	From 22nd Nov
103	1301
109	1302
115	1303
117	1304
402	2402
403	2403
404	2404
421	2421
438	2438
439	2439
440	2440
450	1750
451	1751
452	1752
453	1753
454	1754

Current Fleet Number	From 22nd Nov
531	1331
540	1332
541	1333
543	1334
544	1335
557	1336
561	1337
562	1338
1001	1339
1021	1340
1024	1341
1028	1342
1029	1343
1030	1344

Current Fleet Number	From 22nd November
566	1061
567	1062
573	1063
574	1064
1107	1201
1108	1202
2011	2806
2012	2807
2014	2808
455	1755
422	2422
423	2423
424	2424
425	2425
426	2426
427	2427
428	2428
429	2429



Stagecoach North Scotland [Bluebird] operates 24 buses and coaches from its Macduff depot. These include 15 ADL Enviro 400MMC SmartHybrids, three Enviro 200s, one MAN/Enviro 300, one Optare Solo and three Volvo B9R coaches. Pictured at the depot (above) are Enviro 400MMC SmartHybrids 11166 and 11175 along with Volvo B9R/Plaxton Panther 53632. (Left) is ADL Enviro 400MMC SmartHybrid 11161 working the 35 service for which they carry branding.. Both Images: © Peter Knight/Twitter

East Yorkshire

Volvo B7TL 671 was relicensed on 16th November 2020 and is allocated to Scarborough.

Stagecoach Bluebird

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 44024 has transferred from Macduff to Aberdeen whilst Volvo B10M training coach 52621 is now out of use and awaiting disposal.

The company has confirmed that all three Volvo B12B training coaches, 53107/10/12, are allocated to Peterhead for maintenance.

Stagecoach Yorkshire

Scania/Enviro 400 15660 has returned to Barnsley from Holbrook whilst now delicensed are Scania/Enviro 400 15662 at Ecclesfield and MAN/Enviro 300 22615 at Rawmarsh with similar 22537 returned to service at Rawmarsh. Reserve Fleet Dart SLF 35108 is now for disposal here.

Stagecoach South

Following the withdrawal of Optare Solo 47536 at Aldershot, Dart SLF 35117 has been transferred from Portsmouth as a replacements.

Enviro 200s 36438, 36837 and 36838 have transferred from the main fleet to the Reserve Fleet at Guildford.

Enviro 400 19079 has transferred from Andover to Winchester.

Stagecoach Oxfordshire

Courtesy of the Oxford & Chiltern Bus Page the re-registrations for the Van Hool Astromegas are:

50261 to OWI4LJZ
50262 to OWI4LKA
50263 to OWI4LKC

Return to Fenstanton



Following the damage to Busway Enviro 400XLB 13912, Scania/Enviro 400MMC 15291 has returned to Fenstanton from Cambridge. © Brandon Fitzgibbon

50264 to OWI4LKD

50265 to OWI4LKE

Further Volvo B11RLE/Plaxton Panorama deliveries from ADL/Plaxton at Scarborough to Oxford depot have been 50424/25 on 13th November 2020.

Specialist Trident



AXX400-Trident 18420 is the first of three with Stagecoach West to receive the new 'Specialist' livery.

© Joe Beckley

