

Fleet Digest

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Bumper
22 page
Issue!

*Seasons Greetings
from*

S STEVEN KNIGHT
— MEDIA — **T**



On the Cover



New buses for Go North East's X84 and X85 routes. Full story see page 19. © Go North East

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In the paint shop at Hull's Anlaby Road depot at the start of December 2020 was Volvo B5TL/MCV 798 with 799 in the body shop. Both are from the Withernsea allocation.

Volvo B9R 81 has received the EastRider livery, which we understand will also be applied to the Volvo B5TL/MCVs at Withernsea with the repainting of 798 already done.



Images: © Ben Gilligan/Twitter

Stagecoach North East

A surprise repaint into the new Stagecoach 'Local' livery here is Walkergate-allocated MAN/ALX300 22348. Also repainted into the 'Local' livery is Enviro 300 27172.



Stagecoach Oxfordshire

To expand on our report in Fleet Digest 13, new Volvo B11RLE/Plaxton Panorama coaches 50421-31 had been accepted for service here by the end of the first week of December 2020, with a further three examples, 50432-34 being delivered on 4th December 2020 and had all entered service by the end of the following week.

Delivered to Oxford depot on 10th December 2020 were 50435-38, which are now being prepared for service.

Further Van Hool Astromegas transferred to Scotland have been 50266-69. We understand that vehicles moved north are initially being taken to Stagecoach West Scotland's Kilmarnock depot, although some are due to be allocated to

Stagecoach East Scotland at Perth depot.

Scania/Enviro 400 15533 is due to be taken out of service here next week and is then due to finally transfer to Stagecoach Cumbria & North Lancashire between the Christmas and New Year period.

Stagecoach South East

The four Canterbury Park & Ride-branded Enviro 400s (10063-66) had been returned to Dover from Stagecoach Midlands, where they had been on loan, by early December.

Volvo B9R 53704 was parked at Stagecoach East's Bedford depot on 11th December 2020 and it is confirmed that it is currently 'on loan' there to assist with the X5 and 99 services..

Stagecoach Midlands

Enviro 400 80073, which has been on loan from **Ensign Bus** and in use at Northampton, was returned to Ensign Bus on 9th December 2020.

Go North East

Repaints during week ending 6th December 2020 included Wright Streetlite DF Max Micro-Hybrid 5418 (and Optare Versa V1110 8316 into the 2019 fleet livery; as well as Optare Versas 5380/81/into the new 'Quaycity' livery, marking the completion of the latter batch.

Following its repaint, Optare Versa V1110 8316 has now returned to service at Riverside, with Scania OmniDekka 9065 being taken out of service in lieu. The batch of four OmniDekkas on loan from Brighton & Hove will now remain in the fleet permanently, although the three coaches on loan to Brighton & Hove will eventually return here. All four OmniDekkas will be repainted and have their seats re-trimmed.

Following completion of engine repairs and repaint; Wright Streetlite DF Max Micro-Hybrid 5418 has now transferred from Consett Depot to Deptford, together with former 'Red Kite' branded sisters 5416 and 5417 from Riverside.

Wright Streetlite DFs 8339/40/41/42/43 have all transferred from Riverside Depot to Deptford, following the entry into service of the new Yutong E10 vehicles on 'Saltwell Park' services 53/54. They will be allocated to service 9 (Sunderland-Lukes Lane via Jarrow), and are will to be fitted with free Wi-Fi and 'next stop' audio-visual announcements.

Ex Go South Coast Mercedes Citaros 5337 and 5338 have transferred from Deptford to Riverside, while native Citaros 5306/07/08 have all been taken out of service from Deptford (though remain

available to be reinstated if required for extra duplicate services in operation in the lead up to Christmas). Similar 5309 and 5310 have both transferred from Deptford to Percy Main, allowing 5311 to be taken out of service and similar 5312 to be withdrawn from service. 5312 did not enter service at Percy Main as planned due to requiring major engine repairs.

Wright Streetlite DFs 8344/45/46 have all transferred from Riverside Depot to Chester-le-Street, for use on service 34. This has displaced Scania Omnicity 5272/73/74 from Chester-le-Street Depot to Percy Main, for temporary allocation to 'Cobalt & Coast' service 311, due to low passenger numbers on this service, which will in turn allow the displacement of double-decks to be more appropriately used.

Scania OmniDekka 6132 has transferred from Percy Main Depot to Riverside, displacing Volvo B9TL/Wright Eclipse Gemini 2 6099 to Deptford.

Scania N94UD OmniDekkas 6134 and 6135 have transferred from Percy Main Depot to Washington, allowing one running board on services 5/50 to be upgraded to double-deck which will allow better social distancing, as well as allowing the transfer of Volvo B9TL/Wright Eclipse Gemini 2 6050 to Deptford.

Scania Omnicity 5250 has transferred from Washington to Riverside, displacing dual-door Volvo B7TL/Plaxton President 6934 to Hexham for use on the 680S scholars duplicate service, in turn allowing the release and re-allocation of Volvo B9TL/Wright Eclipse Gemini 2 6043 to Deptford.

The inward transfer of the three Volvo B9TL/Wright Eclipse Gemini 2 to Deptford has displaced similar 'Fab Fifty Six' branded examples 6091/92/93 to be taken out of service for repaint and seat re-trim at Bus & Coach World, Blackburn.

Midland Red's Nuneaton Fleetlines



Nuneaton garage received its first Daimler Fleetlines, designated DD12, in April 1967 with the allocation new of 6043 and 6044. Then in January 1968 5992 was transferred from Leamington with 6086 arriving from Swadlincote and 6100 from Leamington in December 1970. Next came the first dual door Fleetlines, DD13, with 6193 and 6194 new in September 1969 and 6185 arriving from Leamington in November 1980. Four examples, 6274-77, were allocated new in December 1970.

Top: DD12 6044 (JHA44E) in Nuneaton Bus Station with a 747 service for Coventry.

Centre: One of the last repaints at Nuneaton into National Bus livery was DD13 6274 (YHA274J)

Left: The first batch of DD13 had front dash panels of a similar design to the earlier DD12s. This is 6100 (LHA600F) with a Saturdays working on the 740 to Gun Hill. Images © Steven Knight Media or Steven Knight Media Collection



Above: With the later style of front dash panel is DD13 6274 (YHA274J) with a Grove Farm N40 working. It was not unusual at the time for drivers to keep the front doors open when in service provide additional ventilation on hot days. © Steven Knight Media Collection

DD13 6276 (YHA276J) heads back towards Nuneaton with the then Nuneaton Borough FC ground in the background. Although the DD13s were fitted with centre exit doors they were rarely used. © Steven Knight Media





Left : DD13 6185 (SHA885G) was new in August 1969 to Hereford garage transferring to Ludlow in July 1970. It spent a few weeks on loan to Southdown in June 1977 before returning to Ludlow. Transfer to Nuneaton came in July 1980. It then spent time being allocated between Nuneaton and Leamington before its withdrawal in March 1986.

© Steven Knight Media



Centre: DD13 6275 (YHA275) in St Margaret's Bus Station in Leicester awaiting return to Coventry with a 658 service. At the time the 658 was generally Leyland National-worked and the DD13 had been used as a 'change bus' following a failure earlier in the day. It was withdrawn in December 1984.

© Steven Knight Media



Below: With just a handful of passengers DD13 6277 (YHA277) works one of the cross town service in Nuneaton.

© Steven Knight Media



During 1985 Midland Red South was suffering from a vehicle shortage and turned to fellow National Bus company West Riding who had a number of Northern Counties Daimler Fleetlines surplus. © Steven Knight Media

They certainly looked 'down at heel' upon arrival as shown (bottom) by West Riding 722 (BHL622K) which was to become 955 in the Midland Red South fleet. Fleet preparation was minimal and externally a trip through the wash and Midland Red South fleet names were added before it was put into service (centre). © Steven Knight Media



Bodywork attention and a full repaint did, however, improve the appearance of these vehicles as shown (top) by former West Riding 717 (BHL617K), which became Midland Red South's 954. © Steven Knight Media

You couldn't miss WMPTE's East (Coventry) Division appearance at the 1979 Showbus Rally



The WMPTE East Division trio of vehicles at the 1979 Showbus Rally at Hillingdon. CKV2D is a Daimler Fleetline with Neepsend bodywork, delivered in 1966 whilst YVC114K is an East Lancs-bodied Daimler Fleetline which was new in 1972. They are joined by the second prototype MCW Metrobus SDA632S which was delivered to Harnall Lane garage in Coventry in 1978.

© Steven Knight Media

By Steven Knight

My bus industry career started in July 1974 when I joined the West Midlands PTE's newly formed East Division. The East Division had come into existence a few months earlier when the PTE absorbed the Coventry Transport undertaking. I

Two years into my time in the Schedules department, and with the support of colleague Kevin Williams, I plucked up the courage to make my way to Jim Stokes, the Operations Managers', office. The OM was effectively the former municipal General Manager's position. Having navigated his Secretary Elsie McGuckian, not without difficulty as she would filter requests to see her boss and send most visitors away on the grounds she would pass any requests

on, I was allowed in and asked Jim Stokes if I could hire a bus and take to the Rykneld Run rally between Burton-on-Trent and Derby with buses then displayed in Derby City Transport's garage.

The response was not what I expected. Yes, I could take a bus as staff hire rates which was, I recall, 50p to cover insurance. Not only that a repainted bus would be identified and my immediate boss, Jim Nixon the Traffic Assistant (Schedules) would find a volunteer driver. In the end Rose Bradley and Vince Standen volunteered.

As for the bus, it would be Daimler CVG 239Y, which was surprisingly in the Paint Shop at Harnall Lane receiving a repaint in Coventry Marshall Red and Ivory livery

rather than the expected PTE blue and cream. We were located many miles from the PTE's head office at Pitmaston in Birmingham so perhaps they wouldn't notice.

The Friday before the rally 239Y stood in Harnall Lane garage gleaming. The Paint Shop team had even provided an information panel. So June 1976 started what was to become eight years of taking East Division buses to rallies.

I left Coventry in July 1978 to join the PTE's technical engineering department in Birmingham but was assured on my last day in Coventry that I could still have access to buses to take to rallies.

Rykneid Run (Burton on Trent - Derby)
June 1976 Daimler CVG VWK239

Showbus 1977 Hillingdon June 1977
Daimler CVG 239Y VWK239

Showbus 1978 Hillingdon June 1978
Daimler CVG VWK239, Fleetline SDA759S

WMPTE Wolverhampton Garage open day Wolverhampton Sep 1978 Daimler CVG VWK239

I recall that in 1977 the West Midlands PTE with its combined entries into Showbus from Coventry and Birmingham had won the 'Premier Operator Award'.

Jim Stokes was proud that his East Division had played a part in the PTE getting the award and insisted in taking me over to Birmingham to meet the PTE's Director General Fred Lloyd. Fred was impressed with the award and said he was happy for buses to continue to be taken to rallies.

I had a plan. I had an expectation. For Showbus in 1979 I twisted a few arms and managed to get approval to take THREE buses, which I am sure was probably against the views of the Chief Engineer Brent Abbott at the time!

Showbus 1979 Hillingdon June 1979
Fleetline CKV2D, Fleetline YVCI 14K and
MCW Metrobus SDA832S.



A large amount of car polish was applied to ECW-bodied Fleetline KWK30F together with tyre black for its 1980 rally appearance, pictured at the end of the day in Meriden © Steven Knight Media



Refreshment stop in Gloucester on the way back to Coventry from the Bristol Bus Rally in August 1980. Behind is former Birmingham City Transport Guy Arab 3009. The bus would return to Harnall Lane Garage in Coventry via a set down in Nuneaton! © Steven Knight Media

I recall that YVC114K picked up an award that year and that CKV2D got a little 'bogged down' on soft ground. We ensured that it was as clean as possible on return to the garage but couldn't do anything about the mud and grass underneath - that was spotted the following morning by the Garage Engineer.

London Bus Rally

Lambeth Aug 1979 YVC119K

1980 was the year when four rallies were attended

Sandwell 1980 West Bromwich May 1980
Fleetline KWK30F

Rotherham Rally Rotherham June 1980
Fleetline KWK36F

Bristol Bus Rally Bristol August 1980
Fleetline GWK126L

Bristol was an interesting day. A hot day. On the return a diversion was made in the

Gloucester area for refreshments for the passengers, joining those who had gone to the rally from the Birmingham area on preserved Birmingham City Transport Guy Arab 3009, which was then owned by fellow PTE employee Peter Wigley.

On the return journey to Coventry, recalls driver Kevin Williams "alas the dreaded blue light started to appear near Worcester for low oil pressure, but we got home. I was asked to see the Harnall Lane garage engineer to explain the next day... as the engine had just been rebuilt! I think I played the 'Jim Stokes has approved this personally' approach to get out of it.!"

Showbus 1980 Thorpe Park Sep 1980
Fleetline PDU133M

Thorpe Park was an interesting journey. We stopped in Stained High Street looking at a low bridge. The decision was to reverse and take an alternative route when having held

the traffic up a London Transport Metrobus came in the opposite direction at speed and went under the bridge with height to spare. So it was back to the original plan.

There was just one rally a year between 1981 and 1983, although I also recall taking a vehicle to an open day at Leicester City Transport's depot, as well as 'borrowing' numerous vehicles for Sunday afternoon 'photo shoots'

Sandwell 1981 West Bromwich
May 1981 Fleetline TOE466N

Showbus 1982 Woburn Abbey
Sep 1982 MCW Metrobus
NOA455X

Sandwell 1983 West Bromwich
May 1983 MCW Metrobus 2
GOG167W

By the end of 1983 there was less of an appetite to head off to rallies, as well as a reluctance for vehicles to be released.



The location is Burton on Trent, but Kevin Williams decided that for the run between Nuneaton and Burton on Trent it would be fun for the Rykneld Run/Derby event to display 'Burton Green' on the blind and watch the reaction on intending passengers on the A444. The 'shine' on the repainted and polished vehicle is clearly evident as is the information board specially made by the Harnall Lane paint shop. This was the first rally I attended with a Coventry vehicle. © Steven Knight Media



A year later and Fleetline 1133 (PDU133M) took the best modern bus award despite being up against newer Metrobus and Leyland Titans. The local paper again showed interest and the staff from the paint shop at Harnall Lane were pictured with the award winning bus.
© Steven Knight Media

Showbus 1979 resulted in a Best Modern Vehicle award for the WMPTE's former Coventry Transport East Lancs Daimler Fleetline 114 (YVC114K). The win was picked up by the local paper, The Coventry Telegraph, and a photo opportunity was arranged with 114Y in Coventry's Pool Meadow Bus Station. Holding the cup are John Fallon, the PTE's Assistant Admin Officer (Coventry) and Steven Knight.
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