

Virgin Rail Link to Luton Airport upgraded in 2003...

The Virgin Trains' Rail Links were introduced in 1998 when Stagecoach Holdings became a partner in Virgin Rail Group. Their introduction was a requirement of the Office of Passenger rail Franchisor's approval for Stagecoach's involvement. The Milton Keynes-Luton Airport service was operated by Stagecoach East's Bedford depot initially with cascaded Berkhof-bodied coaches from the Oxford Tube. In 2003 four Volvo B10M/Plaxton Expressliner 2s were transferred from Stagecoach's Cumbria operation. A revised livery was designed by Ray Stenning's Best Impressions agency using the Virgin Trains' Pendolino style. First done was 52332, which was originally registered NI30VAO but gained cherished registration 6253VC. © Steven Knight Media



... and gets upgraded again in 2006

The Luton Airport Rail Link received new vehicles in 2006 with the arrival of six Volvo B7R/Plaxton Profile coaches and also gained the route number VT99. These vehicles carried slightly modified branding and omitted the yellow front. An experimental increase in frequency was not successful and two coaches were transferred away. The 'VC' cherished registrations were not transferred to these vehicles. Pictured is 53273 (KX56JZL). When Virgin Trains ceased sponsorship for the service Stagecoach operated it commercially and repainted the coaches into its 'Beachball' livery. © Steven Knight Media



WMPTe (and Midland Red) Days Out

Following our historic WMPTe bus rally feature in FDI4 we have had several requests to feature a selection of images from the 'Sunday Afternoon Photoshoots' and we are pleased to oblige. Enjoy a tour of the Midlands (and a little further afield.....)

Former Coventry Transport Daimler Fleetline/East Lancs 22Y (CKV22D) escaped repainting in the WMPTe's blue and cream. It is seen in Berkeswell just a few days before its eventual withdrawal from service.

© Steven Knight Media



Now in WMPTe blue and cream colours is former Midland Red BMMO D9 5417 (EHA417D), one of 413 Midland Red vehicles that passed to the PTE in December 1973. Whilst it was allocated to Sutton Coldfield it was taken for a tour around Birmingham and the Black Country and is pictured on the then forecourt of Stourbridge Town railway station. It was operated from Sutton Coldfield garage between June 1975 and August 1977 and would not have operated on the 101 Birmingham Centrebus route.

© Steven Knight Media





Just days before its withdrawal from service in 1979, former Coventry Transport Metro Cammell-bodied Daimler CVG 333y (333CRW) was taken for a tour around Coventry and Nuneaton. It is pictured in Galley Common, Nuneaton with a Coventry Transport fleetname in the bulkhead window. © Steven Knight Media

Leyland Fleetline 6759 (SDA759S) has the WMPTE-specified version of the East Lancs bodywork but was ordered by Coventry Transport prior to its absorption into the PTE on 1st April 1974. It is pictured in the village of Twycross on the A444 north of Nuneaton. © Steven Knight Media





BMMO S23 5973 (UHA973) was at Oldbury depot when taken over by the WMPTE. However, at the time of its tour of Birmingham, Coventry and Nuneaton it was a Stourbridge bus, where it was allocated between January 1978 and its withdrawal in October 1980. Following withdrawal it operated with Evans Buses of Shifnal. It is pictured in Washwood Heath Road, Birmingham. © Steven Knight Media

Leyland Nationals were not a first choice for tours but 6854 (TVP854S) was new and it was one of just three dual-purpose Leyland Nationals which were allocated by the West Midlands PTE to Coventry. A further three were bus seated. It is pictured on the A5 to the west of Tamworth during a trip that took in Nuneaton, Tamworth and Lichfield. © Steven Knight Media





Tamworth depot's BMMO D9 5355 (6355HA) pictured en-route from Birmingham to Worcester. Just a few weeks after the trip 5355 was transferred from Tamworth to Southgates Street garage in Leicester.

© Steven Knight Media



Passengers onboard BMMO D9 5299 (6299HA) would have probably liked a trip to Norwich! The bus was from Southgates Street, Leicester and did a tour of Nuneaton, Coventry and the Leamington Spa area.

© Steven Knight Media



A long distance day out was had with BMMO S22 5890 (MHA890F), which went from Nuneaton and Leamington to Brighton. The S22s had dual-purpose seats which were suitable for the long distance run. The bus is in London Country's Staines garage where attention was given to a loose fuel injector. Otherwise the trip was without major incident.

© Steven Knight Media



Stagecoach East Scotland

Arbroath-allocated Enviro 300 27550 has been destroyed by fire, Local media report that the incident happened on 23rd December 2020 shortly after 14:30 on the A92 between Arbroath and Salmond's Muir..

East Yorkshire

Withernsea-based MCV-bodied Volvo B5TLs undergoing refurbishment and repaint at Hull at 800 (bodyshop), 799 (paint) and 798 (internal refurbishment).

East Yorkshire Coaches Volvo B9R 81 is now back at Hull having been replaced at Scarborough by 82.

Delicensed from Hull just before Christmas 2020 were a further two Volvo B7TLs 681 and 682.



Go Ahead Volvo B5LH 6064 has received a prototype Euro 6 direct drive modification. © Martijn Gilbert/Twitter

Go North East

The company is pioneering the conversion of Volvo B5LH 6064 to Euro 6 direct drive in what will be a UK First.



The only MAN/ALX300 in the Stagecoach UK fleet to have received the 'Local;' livery is Stagecoach North East's 22348.
© Ian Hardie



Stagecoach North East has been one of the companies which repainted a large number of vehicles during 2020 into the new Stagecoach 'Local' livery. One of the most recent repaints is Enviro 300 27733.
© Ian Hardie

Late News

Stagecoach Midlands

The five Gold-spec Scania/Enviro 400s on loan at Northampton from **Stagecoach West**, 15857/58 and 15968/69/70, are being returned to Swindon with four examples leaving Northampton on 30th December 2020. The remaining vehicle will follow

after servicing. They are being replaced at Northampton by Canterbury Park & Ride-liveried Enviro 400s 10063-66 from **Stagecoach South East**. These four Enviro 400s had previously been on loan here.

Now at Kettering, and we understand being prepared for service, is former **Stagecoach East** Dart SLF 34422, which had latterly been stored at Rugby.

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Breathe in...

Stagecoach's heritage open top FLF 19952 (JAH552D) negotiates the narrow bridge in Alconbury Village whilst on a photographic day out in 2010. © Steven Knight Media

