



## MD's Message

Christmas 2013

As we approach the end of 2013, I reflect on the challenges we have all faced over the past months, financial, operational and most importantly our people who have faced the challenge of ill health, some of whom are not going to be able to return to work. At times like this, we do everything we can to look after our "family" outside the workplace, with visits, financial support and whatever we can do for them in a practical way, it is what we are known for, but of course we wish it wasn't necessary and look forward to a speedy return to health and send the best wishes of everyone in the firm.



Looking forward to a New Year, inevitably means looking back and I go back a long way with Epsom Coaches! I can therefore chart the changes along the way, most of which I have been involved with. Of course change is inevitable, just taking investment in new vehicles as an example, I am sometimes asked "why buy a new coach when the old one was doing a perfectly good job, isn't that taking the money away for potential pay rises"? The answer is of course, that we have to renew vehicles at some point or we would still be running around with a model T Ford! I doubt our customers or drivers for that matter would consider even a 20 year old bus or coach acceptable and therefore forward investment is absolutely vital, if we are to retain existing business and gain new customers. As for investment, diverting money for pay increases, nothing could be further from the truth, generally investment reduces running costs so makes for an operating saving, the cost of the vehicle is spread over a long period, so it doesn't affect day to day spending. Much the same applies with improvements to our working conditions. Long term redevelopment and refurbishment costs are spread over a 70 year period, so the affect on day to day financial affairs is minimal and the benefits of improved working conditions are there for everyone to enjoy. I am a great believer in providing good working conditions and ours compare with the very best in any business, which is as it should be, but not all employers see it that way.

The other change over the years is in our social scene, those going back far enough, will recall our annual dinner dance held at the Burford Bridge hotel in Dorking, most staff attended and a good night was had by all. Over the years we have organised similar events, but the support despite growing staff numbers, dwindled to the extent that the last event around four years ago had to be dropped through lack of interest. At the request of departments we will still support individual celebrations particularly with transport, but as times change the emphasis has very much been on social events for the family, organised through the Inns and Out Social Club. Literally thousands of staff and family have enjoyed the numerous events laid on during 2013 and a exciting programme is prepared for the New Year. At this point I must pay tribute to Clare Dann, Trudie Garner and Mona Cameron, who work very hard to organise these events, often at the request of individual staff. As a result our social club has never been more successful and so well supported. If you have ideas for an event or place to visit and you would like us to organise something, please let Clare know, we are happy to support in whatever way we can.

Change therefore is inevitable, our mix of business is completely different from what it was even 10 years ago, that is our key strength, able to change what we do to accommodate the circumstances at the time. Not least in these challenging times, with public money in short supply, we have suffered reductions in funding amounting to over £600,000 in the past three years alone, we have therefore had to find ways around that and achieve savings wherever possible. What hasn't changed however, is the core foundation of this Company it's staff, who wherever possible have been shielded from the effects of the economic storm outside, which more recently has severely affected the bus industry in particular. However, our diverse range of work has ensured that each part of the business supports each other, a winning formula. You can therefore look forward with confidence as we enter our 94th year of operation, that we will continue to change as necessary to provide long term security, with the best possible care and opportunities for our staff and their families.

*My very best wishes for a Merry Christmas  
and a happy and healthy New Year*

*Steve Whiteway*







## Holidays News

We launched our 2014 brochure at the end of September. The event was held at Epsom Downs Racecourse and was attended by over 500 people. New destinations for next year include Tours of the First World War Battle-

fields, Edinburgh with a trip to see the Giant Pandas, Wonders of Worcester, Brussels Carpet of Flowers and a new Connoisseur Holiday to Saunton Sands. Office staff were on hand to answer queries and to make new bookings and we were joined by some of our Tour Managers. Bookings for 2014 are ahead by over £50,000 at the moment so it is looking like next year will be another successful one, although profits are harder to achieve.

We have been out and about during the year with stands at The Ashley Centre and The Epsom and Ewell Fun Day. We also had a coach at the turning on of the Epsom Christmas lights. This was overseen by our very own 'Elf and Safety' Officer! We always enjoy meeting existing clients and chatting to new ones at these events.

Advertising continues on board our buses and we find that this is the most productive way of getting our message across. Please, always ensure your bus is well stocked with our brochures, extra business is good for us all.

Don't forget that we offer you, your friends and relatives discounts on all our trips and we look forward to talking to you soon.

*Wishing you all a very Merry  
Christmas and a happy New Year.*

*Melanie Cox*

## New Coach Brochure

**A new "corporate" brochure is being produced with a brand new portfolio of stunning photographs which will be used to illustrate our coach services.**

**The new brochure both in hard format and electronically will spearhead a major marketing campaign for our coach services from March 2014, which will be backed up from our new Coach Centre.**

## Coaching News

What a busy season this has been, a situation recorded at many coach operators around our catchment area.



Regaining the National Express Liverpool diagram assisted with filling in some of the gap following the loss of the Terravision contract which brought a spin off in the form of valuable National Express 'dupe work'.

The coach fleet has actually expanded again which was not an expected result two or three years ago.

Our two latest touring specification Setras have settled in and the repainting of EP01 into corporate livery has given us a private hire fleet of fifteen full size coaches including the Cheetahs which will be replaced during 2014 as planned.

A major factor in the better preparation of the coach fleet was the move to 'coachtech', a pair of technicians by way of Matt and Steve prioritise keeping the machines to the standards we and our customers expect.

As noted to you all, Grahame Wernham has now moved on but I want to thank him sincerely for his input into such a busy season which proved that the coaches division is still a buoyant business given a lot of imagination and 'blue sky thinking'. We have had many Quality Line drivers on ad hoc coach duties during this period and at present we have London Taxis on hire operating an NHS shuttle on our behalf, so all is possible.

In the New Year a replacement Coach Operations Manager will be in place, within our new coach centre, but until then please give Peter Minnette your usual support.

A lot is consistently said that our coaches are not always up to the mark when it comes to detail cleanliness; can I appeal to you all to pay more attention in this area. We know that it is sometimes not feasible within the constraints of drivers hours and fluctuating work patterns for you to keep to your allocated coach day after day, but it makes no difference if you have to clean your own one day or tidy up someone else's the next. A lot of work has been done with Nationwide to bring their standards back to what they were, including replacing a lot of the supervisory staff so let's follow up with this, PLEASE!

There is a lot of coach work already on the books for the Christmas and New Year period so have a happy, but busy, festive season!

*Best wishes for 2014  
John Fowler*





## Fleet News



2014 looks to be a bumper year for fleet renewal and expansion, with potentially 29 new buses and coaches joining the fleet, of which 21 are already confirmed.

September 2014 saw the delivery of the last two Setra Coaches for the fleet, as this model will no longer be available in the UK. This enhanced our front line tri-axle fleet to nine vehicles, a formidable presence and with undoubted quality. Future large coaches are likely to be Mercedes-Benz, but we are examining the market at present, as no further additions are planned until early 2015. At the same time a new bus for route 404 was delivered, John and Joe are taking great care to look after "their" bus.



Arriving in February and March 2014, will be two new Mercedes-Benz Cheetah 25 seat coaches. These will replace similar vehicles but are much improved. These small coaches are increasingly popular and will be undertaking tours all over Britain and Europe as well as being available for local hire.

March is going to be a busy month, as 12 new Optare Metrocity buses are due to be delivered ready for service on the S1. These will replace the existing nine buses which will be part exchanged. For the first time in over three years, we will have dedicated spare bus for the S1. In the meantime, we have hired in 5 London United buses to provide cover and some additional spare capacity. These will be with us until the new buses arrive. The new buses will be the first Euro 6 vehicles in London.

We are awaiting news on the renewal of our long running NHS contract, with a change of vehicles, likely to see an upgrade, with two bespoke 30 seat buses to operate the service.



Following up in June, will be a further delivery of 5 new double deck buses for use on route 418, catering for its increase in frequency along with 406. The manufacturer has yet to be selected, and we are talking to both ADL and Optare. We look forward to the route leader and engineers playing a full part in the selection of the new vehicles, including a factory visit.

Finally and depending on our success in winning the S4 again, we will need a further 6 to 8 Optare Solo buses to operate the service. These are expected in November.

## Bus News

Christmas again and another New Year, doesn't time fly!

What a busy year, but in some ways so frustrating for us all, with increasing traffic congestion making the achievement of our targets more difficult, especially as they keep moving ever upwards as we have done so well in the past!



Not only our targets, but our income as well, with a reduction in our grant for fuel duty, chipping away at our income, all this coupled with reduced inflation payments from our bus clients, doesn't make for good reading.

The bad news continues with so many of our driving team poorly for long periods, but we have been keeping in touch and doing everything we can to support them during their absence. Providing a support network has always been a key part of my job and one that I take very seriously.

On more positive notes, it was great to re-gain the S1 route and with an increased frequency, plus the bonus of an all new fleet. Tracei and her team have done a fantastic job on the S1 so congratulations and sincere thanks to you all.

More recently we have learned that we will be continuing to operate the 418 and as a bonus the 406 will also be enhanced, so more new buses with 5 new double deckers due to arrive in June next year. Again, Adrian and his team have done a great job, despite the best efforts of the Tolworth Broadway road works and the infamous "fatberg" lurking in a sewer in Kingston!

Looking ahead to 2014, we will be seeking to successfully re-tender for the S4, this was our original TfL route, so very precious, we are doing a good job, so hopefully we will win it again. Another set of new buses there as well.

We have certainly had our challenges in 2013 and I know 2014 will bring more of the same. We should always remember we are only as good as our last journey, so every day is a chance to start again. In particular I want to concentrate on reducing the number of complaints about our drivers, from the travelling public. We are right at the bottom of the league for this and I don't think it accurately reflects our great team. However, we need to ensure we get the right message out there, I look forward to working with you all in 2014 and to achieving that aim.

*Have a great Christmas and  
a happy and healthy New Year.*

*Jayne Cracknell*





## Year of the Bus

The year 2014 has been designated "Year of the Bus" in London, following on from the hugely successful 150th anniversary celebrations of the underground. As part of RATP Group, we have signed up as corporate partners and there will be a number of London wide events as well as our own in garage activities, with the emphasis very much on participation.

The aim is to draw the public's attention to the bus network and the hard work that goes into operating over 8,000 buses day in day out. The historical aspect will be an important part as well, with a cavalcade of historic buses through the centre of London in the summer and the refurbishment of an original "B" type bus as used in the first world war, forming a central part of the celebrations. We are hoping to get the B Type here in Epsom with the help of the London Transport Museum, who are organising the events.

We will keep you informed, with further news as it happens.

## Training & Safety News

It is difficult to believe that a full 5 years have passed since we started our CPC courses, designed to ensure everyone who holds a PCV licence was fully qualified and able to continue in their job after September 2013.



This legislation is legally the responsibility of the individual not their employer. Not all employers took the view we did, in providing free training and paying staff to attend. We arranged several courses for the staff of other operators, whose drivers were expected to pay for their own courses and do it in their own time. At a cost of over £70 per day, this wasn't cheap, but was a necessity if they wanted to retain their livelihood. As a result we have a number of driver applications!

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read about our Telematics project, the biggest single drive to improve driving standards we have ever undertaken, leading to a reduction in accident damage and claims, together with lower fuel consumption. This really is a win, win situation for us all and I look forward to working with the driving team to maximise its benefits.

Finally, I am delighted to welcome Phil Allport to my little team, Phil and I will be working closely together to ensure everyone gets the best possible training and support.

*Very best wishes for  
Christmas and the year ahead*

*Jon Ball*



## Building for the Future

You may have noticed the builders have been in with a new look training facility now in place. This has included much needed refurbishment of the facilities, with new toilet and kitchen facilities, together with an office now separated from the main conference room. This ensures training is undisturbed and gives us the opportunity to provide more commercially operated courses for outsiders adding to our income.

Coupled with the refurbishment of the training centre are alterations to provide an additional small meeting room on the first floor. Places to have a private word are sadly lacking and this will help address that problem. At the same time, the management team will be giving the area a fresh lick of paint over Christmas to complete the job.

Early in January, the builders will be here again to extend the present sales office to provide a new coach centre bringing all our coach related business under one roof. This will ensure savings and synergies between holidays and coach hire, together with provision of a further ground floor meeting room, which will bring us in line for disability access. The work is expected to be completed by the end of January.

Following ongoing problems with the fuel systems on site, a brand new system has been installed, with a new storage tank replacing the existing and complicated three tank system, with the 40 year old underground tanks being sealed off. The new system, includes fuel "polishing", a device that ensure the bio fuel does not grow fungi, an increasing problem with modern high tech engines and fuels!

Having secured planning permission, we are looking to acquire the car park and service road to the side of our premises, to further expand the main site. We hope to have this in place for June.

## Staff Handbook

After two years work, we finally published the new format Staff Handbook which has received wide praise for its easy to read and comprehensive format. It is very much a one stop shop for information about all aspects of employment with the firm. Remember, you can access the handbook from any Company PC, just click on the handbook icon. Once inside you can either flip the pages like a book or click on any index item and the system will take you straight to that page.

In addition to the Staff Handbook, the file also contains our Environmental and Health and Safety Policy, together with risk assessments.



## Between Friends

The past year has been difficult for many of our team, with a large number off long term with various medical problems. Thankfully, most have now returned to health. We wish everyone a healthy 2014!



We were all devastated to hear that **Tony Mockett** had suffered a bleed in his brain and although now physically recovered, Tony will not be able to return to work. We have been to see Tony in hospital and will continue to keep in touch along with all his many friends.

**John Brown** has now returned to work following kidney disease, whilst **Joshy Sebastian** has been off for some time, following surgery for an eye tumour but is making steady progress. **Martin Jolley** is back to work after an operation, which laid him up for quite a while and we are pleased to see **Jeff Harwood** back after a hernia operation. **Twaha Shaaban** has been off following an assault in Kingston, but hopes to return to work shortly.

On the coach front, **Ken Moore** is back after a long period away with for treatment of cancer.

In the office, earlier this year **Ian Matthews** had an operation on his spine to alleviate severe back pain, Ian has fully recovered and is now back at work. **Gill Hughes** who looks after our marketing, has lung cancer, but is bravely working when she can in between chemotherapy treatments.

## New Arrivals

Joining our larger family this year are daughters for Shaun Ball and Chris Fastnedge and sons for Emma Ball, Adam Piaskowski, Daniel O'Donnell and Heidi Pearson. We warmly welcome these new arrivals and wish them and their families a very happy 2014.

## New Appointment

Phil Allport will be taking up the position of Training Instructor from 1st January and will bring his considerable expertise and experience to assist with training and assessment in 2014. We wish Phil every success in his new role.

## Route Watch

2013 has been a busy year with a constant process of re-scheduling bus services to ensure they run as reliably as possible, with ever changing traffic conditions, not always easy to achieve given we often don't get any more money to run them, often the complete opposite as it is become increasingly difficult to earn bonuses.



Scheduling bus services in London certainly isn't easy as any changes even if it doesn't affect the timetable, have to go through TfL. Restrictions on bus stands and strict rules regarding gaps between buses mean more complexity than might be immediately apparent. Our success in winning the S1 again is a case in point, as we have three different versions of the schedules to cater for the move to Lavender Fields in March 2014, coupled with the introduction of new buses, something we worked very hard to achieve as the original proposal was to refurbish the ones we have.

It was good to win the initial E10 contract for a 12 month period. This will be for 5 year contract from August 2014, possibly with a brand new bus if we are successful!

We are now working on S4, ready to get the tender in for early January, we should know by March, ready (we hope) for a new contract from November. A new fleet will be in place for this, as the old buses have reached their sell by date, they will be celebrating their 12th birthday, but will go on in service somewhere else.

My work isn't just restricted to buses, we have tendered for several National Express diagrams this year, but our location isn't ideal, so we still await the big opportunity. We have earned an excellent reputation and hope to expand our existing coach workings, so we are quite happy with that.

A major boost was the November rail replacement to Heathrow, 50 controllers, 100 coaches and 30 baggage handlers came together to bring 2013 to a successful end.

*Merry Christmas and  
best wishes for 2014  
Haw Barrington*



## Auto Enrolment

From 1st May 2013, it will be a legal requirement to be "auto enrolled" into a company pension scheme, we have written to everyone regarding this and there will be more details in the New Year.



## Inns and Out Social Club News



The Inns and Out Social Club has had a very successful year with various trips arranged for staff and their families. For example during the summer we arranged visits to Canterbury, the seaside, Chatham Historic Dockyard, Churchill War Rooms, Diggerland and the

Coronation Festival, celebrating the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. Our winter trips include:

- ♦ Three nights in Disneyland Paris to celebrate Bonfire Night
- ♦ Stomp
- ♦ Dirty Dancing
- ♦ Puss in Boots at the Hackney Empire
- ♦ Victorian Christmas Festival in Portsmouth
- ♦ Christmas at Kew Gardens
- ♦ Ice Skating at Westfield Shepherds Bush and Christmas shopping
- ♦ Let it Be at the Savoy Theatre celebrating 50 years of the Beatles

We have reserved tickets for Priscilla Queen of the Desert at the Wimbledon Theatre in March 2014 and there are already very few tickets left. If you have any ideas for future trips, functions or for any occasions for 2014, please do not hesitate to come and see me.

*Best wishes for Christmas  
and the New Year*

*Clare Dann*



## A Seasonal Celebration

**Monday 23rd December, 15.30 onward....**

**You and your family are welcome to our celebration of Christmas in the Departure Lounge, food, drink and the premiere of our long awaited film taking a light hearted look at life at Epsom Coaches.**

**Please join friends old and new, you will be very welcome.**

**For those not able to be there due to work commitments, there will be repeat showings of the film throughout the evening and on Christmas Eve, along with refreshments.**

## Mince Pies

A tradition started by Roddy Richmond in 1920, mince pies will be served to all staff on Christmas Eve, all 360 of you, there were only 2 in 1920!

**Enjoy.....**



## Fleetcare News

This year has been a tough one for Fleetcare with many of our contractors and suppliers feeling the pinch and struggling to offer parts or service at the previous year's price. We have driven some hard bargains to make sure we are still receiving good value for money across the board.



We have seen some changes to the engineering team with engineers leaving us for pastures new, to be replaced by new faces. We have also welcomed James Martin back into the fold after a period of illness and are delighted he is on the mend. We also lost John Huxford for a while due to a serious operation, but again happily he is on the mend and back with the team.

We have also introduced the "coach tech" team. This has been a great success and we look forward to developing the concept. Steve Clark is joined on the team by Matt Mutter. Matt is a newly qualified apprentice whose attitude and can do approach belays his young age.

We have also got the Fleetcare committee back on track and I would like to thank all members for their valued input this year. A particular mention needs to go to the committee Chairman Derek Smith who I would like to thank for his help and advice over the year.

We have had some problems this year, in particular with the fuel system. But we have not sat still and will be future proofing the company with a new fuel system being installed by the end of 2013. This will ensure we do not have any repeats of the problems of 2013 in the future.

Although it has been a challenging year with lots of pressure put on all parts of the business, we have managed to hold our own and have learnt from any mistakes we have made. We are constantly evolving the engineering department to best meet the needs of both bus and coach operations. We have already put some ideas together for 2014 and there will be on-going changes to further improve the service we can provide.

I would like to wish you all the very best for 2014 and thank you for the patience and support you have shown in 2013

*Best wishes  
Steve Appleby*







# The Christmas Quiz 2013

**Our famous quiz is back once again, something to tackle after your Christmas Day festivities perhaps. Completed entries will be pulled at random on Monday 6th January 2014 and the winner be the first all correct entry drawn.**

1. What red-blooming Christmas plant came originally from Mexico?
2. Which famous comedy double-act partner made the first ever UK mobile phone call, New Year's Day, 1985?
3. Choirboy Peter Auty sang the film version of which song later recorded as a hit record by Aled Jones?
4. In which Christmas carol does this line feature: "Bring me flesh, and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hither"?
5. What is the birth sign of people born on 25 December?
6. Christmas Crackers was the first Christmas edition of which popular UK comedy series?
7. Born Christmas day 1908, by what name was gay icon author of The Naked Civil Servant popularly known?
8. Gwyl San Steffan is the name for 26th December (St Stephen's Day or Boxing Day) in which country?
9. What did Scottish students take from Westminster Abbey on Christmas day in 1950?
10. Who wrote the songs for the 1954 film White Christmas?
11. In Charles Dickens' novel A Christmas Carol, who was Scrooge's dead business partner?
12. Name the original eight reindeer from the 'Twas the night Before Christmas' poem?
13. What are the names of the three wise men said to have brought gifts to the baby Jesus?
14. What Christmas item was invented by London baker and wedding-cake specialist Tom Smith in 1847?
15. What is the name of the cake traditionally eaten in Italy at Christmas?



**Please place your completed entry in the box provided in the Control reception area.**