

GOING the EXTRA MILE

Epsom Coaches Group Summer News 2016

A word from Steve...

This is a timely point in the year to be publishing our Staff Newsletter as so much has happened since the last edition, there is plenty to report!

An optimistic start - We started the year with optimism for 2016 and up until May we were broadly on target financially, although the exceptional performance from coach is covering up a disappointing result to date from TfL buses and holidays. One of the major reasons is the low level of contract inflation from TfL (less than 0.5%) combined with our QIC results, with several strong routes, offset by poorer results from others. This, along with continued heavy engineering costs particularly on buses, erodes much of the hard work put in to increase revenue elsewhere and our success in reducing costs. The good news is we are doing better than we were this time last year! Holidays have been hit by the poorer weather; bookings are very reliant on good weather, even if that is only at the time of booking!

Contract wins - On a more positive note, our success in winning route 413 is great news, as is the additional contracts won from the NHS. Both have added to our critical mass and should enable us to increase profitability, essential for future investment in our people and fleet.



Investing in the future - Investment this year has included new coaches for National Express and replacement buses for 463, along with refurbishment of many other buses. Next year will see more fleet replacements including expansion with a further nine buses for route 413. I am particularly pleased we can buy Mercedes-Benz Citaro buses for this route, a very high quality vehicle that will be a pleasure to drive.

The coach division will also benefit with delivery of four new Mercedes Turismo coaches, replacing older Setras. We will be able to operate the majority of our holidays with this fleet in 2017 and with a 3 year replacement cycle planned in future, this will reduce service costs.

Epsom Coaches



Fond farewells - We are sorry to lose Mick Scruton and Graham Lumley, who have retired. Both have served us very well over many years and I was delighted to pay tribute to them over a celebratory lunch. It is always nice to reminisce and it is difficult to do justice to their long careers except to say a heartfelt thank you and to wish Mick and Graham all the best for the future.

The passing of Peter Duke was so sad, he was a real gentleman and the celebration of his life at his funeral service, was testament to Peter's popularity. We will keep in touch with Peter's family and he will certainly never be forgotten.



The EU referendum has been controversial, but the electorate have decided we will be leaving the EU and we all need to work towards that. However, nothing has changed at the moment. I don't see any change to our business, which is mainly concentrated in the UK.

Those of you who are not UK citizens are very much a valued part of our staff family and in my view your right to live and work in this country will not be affected by Brexit. Indeed, the UK depends on you so you will always be welcome and I expect the new Prime Minister to confirm that now she is in office.

I hope you enjoy reading about everything that is going on at the moment, it is a busy time and we are well placed to take advantages of opportunities as they arise. Most important, is the quality of what we do, we need to stand out in this competitive world and will reap the benefit accordingly. Everyone can play their part in that aim, what you do as an individual really does make a difference.

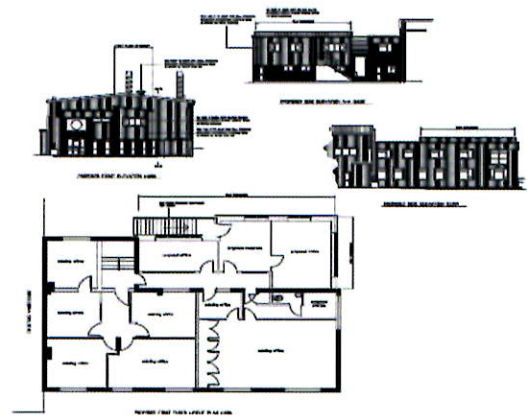
My thanks to you all for your hard work and application over the past few months which have really put us all under pressure, I look forward to continuing to work together in the challenging times ahead.

Best wishes - Steve

Building for the Future

The final part of the rebuilding of our site will see the disused patio area turned into much needed office space. The flat roof and staircase required replacement anyway, so this has proven to be a very cost effective project. The extension will provide additional meeting space and a new office for Steve Whiteway; with the famous counselling couch still an important part of the furniture!

Steve's PA Clare Dann will be close by but in a separate office to provide more privacy. Huw Barrington will finally be able to move out of the control room and work more efficiently from Steve's old office. The extra space will also give Jayne Cracknell a new home and provide, for the first time, a dedicated area for the theory testing facility, freeing up the main training room. The project will be finished in mid September and will involve some disruption to the cycle shelter area for safety improvement work.



Alternative arrangements will be made for bike storage during the works.

Also now in the planning stage is a new vehicle lift for safety inspections. This will replace worn out equipment and speed up the inspection process with a fixed lift. Given the present lifts are used 6 times a day; the new equipment will certainly aid efficiency and be cost effective.

QUALITY LINE NEWS

TENDER TIME

This is a busy time with tenders recently submitted for X26 and S3 along with a new route 455. We will also shortly be re-tendering for our route 465. There is a lot of work involved in tendering for routes, even those we already operate; in fact, it takes several weeks culminating in the all-important pricing. Things are very competitive in London and we can't afford to get it wrong. That said, we are generally right and have one of the best success rates in London. We have put together some innovative plans for the X26 and S3 including a much needed new schedule for X26 with new double deck buses planned, or as an alternative, refurbishment of the existing single deck fleet along with some additional new vehicles. The S3 will also benefit from new vehicles. We should know the result in August.



ROYAL MARSDEN

Also out to tender is the Royal Marsden contract. The RMH team do a great job and we have yet to hear what RMH will want to do in the future. We have put several options to them and are confident our excellent work to date will hold us in good stead.

We are always looking at new business opportunities, so watch this space!

413 Starts in December

Following a competitive bid against the present operators London General, we will be operating the 413 route from Sutton to Morden from Saturday 3rd December. Nine brand new Mercedes-Benz Citaro K buses are on order and will be delivered in November ready for the big launch!



These will be the best buses in London with lots of driver and passenger friendly features and a pleasure to drive. We will start actively recruiting in September, but internal applications are also welcome. This is a welcome new addition to our portfolio of London routes and reflects not only in the price offered, but also the quality of our operation.

TfL COMPLAINTS AND COMMENDATIONS

Good progress has been made in reducing the number of complaints about our driving team on TfL services. Mike Burnham investigates every complaint and is very vigilant in arguing with TfL where complaints are not justified and sometimes not even about our services! We aim to have no more than 25 complaints about drivers a month, which is still far too many, but much better than the peak of over 45! Enhanced CCTV with wireless download at base makes the investigation easier.

It is so important to handle difficult situations with diplomacy and courtesy, particularly as given our large percentage of hail and ride and low frequency services, there is more to complain about! It is pleasing to see an increase in commendations coming through, so well done to all those who have gone the extra mile to please our customers.

FLEET NEWS

Apart from the already confirmed order for 9 new Mercedes Citaros for the 413 services, 4 new Mercedes Tourismo coaches will be arriving in early spring, replacing the four oldest Setras. We aim to operate most of our holidays with the new fleet next year, with another batch arriving in 2018/19, with the aim that all coaches in the frontline fleet will be no more than three years old. Some of this is driven by the new emission zones in London which may well be extended across the whole of greater London. Thereafter, anything less than Euro 6 will not be allowed to enter the zone unless they pay £100 a day. We expect those operators who have not made the necessary investment in their fleets to be at a severe disadvantage and that should auger well for us.



12 new double deckers may also be required for the X26 and up to 9 new buses for S3, although more likely the oldest buses on the route will be cascaded and replaced with new to complement the buses replaced in 2014.

Newer buses have been introduced on to our Silver Service routes, cascaded and refurbished from the 413.

K5 has also benefited from a refurbished fleet of buses, all of which have also had a full engine overhaul for improved reliability. The double deckers for 467 are next, along with the school double decker on route 413.



lytx DriveCam.

Following a presentation to the Driver Committees, Drive Cam is being rolled out across the fleet over the next few months. This system will already be familiar to those who drive National Express services, as it is standard fit on the National Express network. The system provides a snap shot video of poor driving and also has a GPS tracking system built in.

The beauty of the system is it requires no driver input; it is entirely automatic and will protect the driver in the event of third party fault. The system has been trialled over the past three months on several vehicles across the bus and coach fleet and works well. It will do much to enhance the safety of drivers and passengers alike. Drive Cam will replace the present Green Road Telematics system.



Light-bulb Moment!

Our care for the environment extends beyond our modern vehicle fleet, with replacement bulbs for flood lights now LED, also making for a significant electricity saving as well as providing improved light output. Additional floodlights have also been installed at the far end of the garage, to improve night visibility.

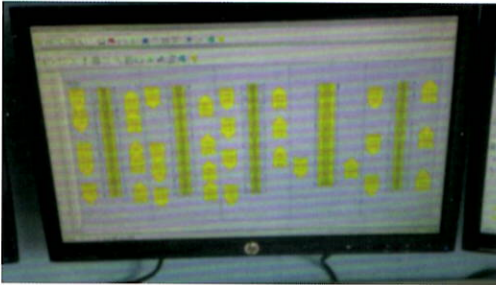
All this is gearing up for the fleet to increase by a further 9 units in December, space is at a premium but careful planning makes best use of our assets.

You may have noticed two containers have appeared at the end of the workshop. These are used for storage of tyres and the top deck for pre-prepared body panels. This will enable body repairs to be carried out far quicker, using panels prepared earlier. The containers will be painted and will provide much needed additional storage capacity at reasonable cost.

COMMERCIAL NEWS by Huw Barrington

The first six months of the year as ever, has been challenging and has seen several contract changes as we pleasingly continue to expand our business in all departments.

TfL routes continue to suffer heavily from excessive amounts of roadworks and diversions, the likes I have never seen in my 30 years of operating buses in the Capital. Well done to you all for keeping abreast of the many NOEs, some posted unfortunately retrospectively, as the first knowledge of the incident comes from our drivers. Perhaps we need either larger notice boards and a longer corridor or smaller NOEs, but let us hope for fewer notices in the coming months. Saying all this, we are fortunate we operate in the genteel suburbs, as most of the other bus operators are suffering more, although I understand it might not feel that way. The network lost mileage attributed to traffic congestion on all TfL routes has been over 2% of the total scheduled mileage; Epsom luckily has only lost consistently around 1%. This still means many of our buses are firstly, not passing their various timing points as they have been curtailed and secondly, as they were running late (more than 5 minutes behind time) our reliability is compromised.



The seven I-Bus Controllers ably assisted by two Relief Controllers have the unenviable task of juggling resources on the road to achieve not only all the TfL standards, but also our own targets on our 14 routes, soon to be 15. Looking after up to 45 buses at any one time over several routes, regulating them, so that they are 'on time' and yellow on their screens is no easy feat. As a team we do achieve this as can be seen by the picture to the left. Those that have either forgotten or not had the opportunity to visit the ibus

control room, early running buses go **RED**, with buses running more than 5 minutes late in **GREEN**.

Therefore, please do not question their instructions when given, as there will be a good reason behind their decisions, remembering they are looking at the bigger picture. By all means seek clarification when you return to base by either speaking to one of the operations team or Jayne Cracknell your Driver Manager.

So your continued efforts to keep departing from the terminus on time and then maintaining the schedule would be greatly appreciated and that will ensure we not only achieve TfL standards, but more importantly improve our potential of receiving valuable performance bonuses.

The displaced 2009 Optare Solos have been refurbished and have now found homes on commercial services in Surrey and K5. The K5 requiring three more buses as another route expands. As can be seen on the right, OP27 was all ready to go from Ham on 2nd July, the first day of the new five year contract. Again the new improved timetable has greatly assisted this route to now being the best in the garage. We were overwhelmed by the number of applicants wishing to join this team and the successful seven drivers will take up their residency on this route alongside the previous drivers on 15th August.



“Good luck and we trust you will enjoy your chosen route”

COMMERCIAL NEWS by Huw Barrington

Our small team on the commercial services in the deregulated market of Surrey which started 30 years ago, continue to fair well and upgrading the fleet with 2009 Solos means we only have two 2004 vehicles left and this should assist reliability. September will see the launch of many new double deck school services by Excetra, so we need to be on our game to protect our revenues. I know from previous experience we can count on your response to give them a run for their money. On the 30 year anniversary day itself - Thursday 26th October - we are planning some celebrations, so watch this space.

It has also been a very hectic six months on the coaching side. Three new National Express coaches joined the fleet, allowing 2011/2 models to be cascaded onto the very lucrative Terravision airport service. However the requirements were scaled down, as the company took over the whole operation in house from April.



The NHS contract increased from two vehicles to six as we operate three separate services and two new 16 seater Transits joined the fleet alongside the Vitos and two existing Solos. We are also the preferred operators of Legal and General, now providing a coach daily to transfer their staff from Kingswood to Brighton and return, making 15 coaches that are employed on guaranteed contract work.

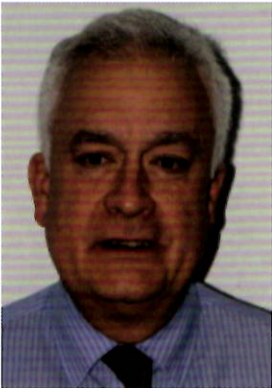
The remainder of the fleet has been kept extremely busy covering the numerous private hire customers and our own extensive Holiday and Day Trip business. So far this year, we have carried over 8,000 customers on our 94 holidays and 87 day trips and although we were expecting slightly more passengers, hopefully the improvement in the weather will encourage more to travel with us.

With 57 day trips alone planned in August we can soon make up the deficit, so any assistance in keeping all the brochure racks on our buses full would be much appreciated.



“All that leaves me to say is, enjoy the rest of the summer, keep up the good work and let’s finish the year off with a flourish as we continue to expand with more long term contracts”.

COACH NEWS by John Fowler



Well, what wasn't to like about the first half of the season?

Brexit (like it or not), Brits winning the Tour de France, Wimbledon and British GP and then on top of England doing so well in the Euros and test Cricket, there is 'Coach' having a bumper season:-

An increase in all areas of our regular work with dupe services on service A1 London to Luton Airport on a daily basis for National Express and then our Birmingham daily service being converted to a daily Bradford 560 from August 8th.

We recently expanded our business with **Epsom & St Helier NHS Trust**, with an extension of our existing service operated with two Optare Solos. In addition and for a trial period of one year, a new service from Epsom & Ashted is being operated with our two existing Mercedes Vito 7 seaters.



We have also hired two brand new Ford transit 16 seaters to service a new route serving a park and ride between **Sutton Hospital and St Helier**. In all, some very welcome new work, which needs regular and dedicated drivers able to look after the demands of our clients and build a rapport with them. This well paid work is long hours, but Monday to Friday duties have proven popular with over 60 applicants. We hope to continue beyond the initial years experiment, but that will depend on how we perform, as well as the usage by staff from the Trust.

The additional service for **Legal & General** from Kingswood to Hove Monday – Friday has been building up since June as more employees are transferred to the Hove site.

Atkins Upgrade -The daily service we provide for the staff of Atkins in Epsom is about to be upgraded, with a dedicated and brand new Optare Solo on its way to service a new 5 year contract from September. The bus will be to the latest Euro 6 emission standard and will provide full disability access. The 25 seat coach will return to private hire, where there is high demand for this vehicle size, increasing our revenue from private groups and welcome expansion of the coach fleet.



Our **National Express** contracts change in late July with the withdrawal of the present London-Birmingham for a London-Bradford service which will start in early August. This will create an additional daily driver duty as two drivers will be required. This will also increase the revenue from this contract.

It is a shame that the nationwide driver shortage actually slowed our progress in 2016, but this is now being approached from different angles. I hope that this will be a thing of the past for Epsom Coaches at least, there is no shortage of potential recruits, but we only want the best!

Several coaches from different manufacturers have visited the company during the year in our quest to find the vehicle that will take us forward to the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) when all heavy vehicles will need to be of Euro 6 standard. Some of you will know that the implementation of this will likely be brought forward a year by the Mayor of London to 2019 causing more than a little consternation in the industry.

“Coach having a bumper season!”

People have come and gone. Sadly Mick Scruton had to retire on health grounds after many, many, many years of service and Malcolm Skingle is going to zero hours from the end of this season, along with Steve Aston, who also hasn't been too well.

HOLIDAYS by Melanie Cox



We have had a busy first half of the year.

Our **Day Excursion Brochure** was launched at our Reunion Break in February and our **Autumn and Spring Brochure** was launched in June.

Great new trips within the day trips brochure include The British Airways Brighton i360, Dreamland Margate, London's Burning Tour and last but not least, Teapots and Windmills, a fascinating tour of over 7,000 teapots which includes a two course lunch at a 4 star hotel and a scenic drive through the North Downs scenery of Windmill Way. We have also introduced a selection of **Swiftbreaks**, affordable one night breaks staying at comfortable hotels.



In our Autumn and Spring Brochure, we are offering some fantastic new tours including A Mystery Christmas Tour, Devon Cosy Break, Jewels, Canals and Middle Earth and Skipton and the Yorkshire Dales. We are also offering a selection of cruises with Fred Olsen and Cruise and Maritime Voyages.

In April **Jennifer Sutton** joined us and is concentrating on our **Marketing and PR**, including looking at our digital marketing, meeting with organisations and taking the lead on the new website design. One of her first "jobs" was to represent us at The Ashted Village Day which gave her a great chance to meet many of our regular customers.

Jen and I also went out "on the buses" last week handing out flyers and brochures to our passengers, we had lots of good feedback from customers and hopefully attracted a few new ones too! Please remember, if you see your brochure racks on the buses running low, you can grab some new ones from the store room – it would be a great help and assist us in spreading the word about our fantastic holidays and day trips.



Peter, Alistair and I exhibited at this year's **Great for Groups Exhibition** which hosts over 120 of the top attractions and destinations, promoting everything from simple day trips to short breaks or longer excursions.

Peter Minette and I were also delighted to be chosen as marshals at the prestigious **62nd UK Coach Rally** in Blackpool earlier in the year.



Some of you may know **Marilyn Donovan**. Marilyn has been one of our Tour Managers for many years and is well liked by staff and passengers. Marilyn is retiring from being a Tour Manager but you might still see her on one of our day trips or airport transfers. We wish Marilyn all the best and thank her for her kind help over the years.

"Please remember that we offer you and your family discounts on our tours and day trips, please speak to any of the sales team regarding this."

STAFF NEWS by Jayne Cracknell

Hello Everyone

It has been a really busy half year with drivers retiring, leaving to take on new adventures and relocating. I would like to wish them all the very best and maybe we might see them again? They have threatened to come back!

I have had quite a few staff on long term sick leave and I am sure like me, you would like to wish them all a speedy recovery. I am keeping in touch with them and can pass messages on for you.

CONGRATULATIONS

I have a few congratulations I would like to share with you all; quite a few of our staff have passed their NVQ Level 2 in: Intermediate Level Apprenticeship in Customer Service and Intermediate Level Apprenticeship in Team Leading.

We would therefore like to congratulate:

Jennifer Manington: Jennifer has worked for Epsom Coaches Group for over 5 years and is such a likable person, popular with all of her colleagues and peers, adored by her customers and deserves the recognition. Congratulations!

Simon Paines: Simon has worked for Epsom Coaches Group for over 5 years, Simon is one of our quietest members of staff and is like a whippet when he comes in to work.

Jorge Silva: Jorge has worked for Epsom Coaches Group exactly 2 years. Although, he did break his service with us to work nearer home and then he came back. What can I say about our Jorge, he's a gentleman. WELL DONE!

John Monk: John has worked for Epsom Coaches Group over 2 years. His Weir Training mentor said, it was hard work getting him to do his work, but it was worth it in the end! Congratulations John, WELL DONE!

Abdellah Baba: Baba (as he is known) has worked for Epsom Coaches Group over 4 years. Another gentleman and a lovely smile. WELL DONE!

Simon McHardy: Simon has worked for Epsom Coaches Group over 4 years. I could say a lot about this member of staff, but I think I will just sum him up as, so CHEEKY!!!! WELL DONE!

Celebrating Long Service



A great time was had by all at our annual celebration of long service, with all those completing 10 years or more service and their partners invited. Great weather, a wonderful cruise down the Thames in London, with a BBQ and a free bar made for a perfect day.

Steve Whiteway summed it up when he thanked everyone for their loyalty and hard work. With over 100 of us on the cruise, long service is evidently popular and long may that continue.

STAFF NEWS by Jayne Cracknell

Now for our wonderful Engineers..

Paul McGlennon: Paul has worked for Epsom Coaches Group for over 2 years. However, Paul did break service to go on an adventure to Canada, but decided it wasn't for him and returned to England. Congratulations Paul for passing your NVQ.

Now to the baby of the team: **Richard Walkiden** (known as Rick to most of his friends and colleagues). Rick has worked for Epsom Coaches group for over 11 years after starting here working as an apprentice bodyshop sprayer and now works full time in the bodyshop department. A great achievement Rick, well done.

I would also like to congratulate one of my immediate team members **Phil Allport** for passing his Business Administration NVQ Level 2. Phil works closely alongside me and supports and assists with a mixture of duties as well as being our own Dedicated Examiner. I would personally like to say thank you for all your hard work and support since I have taken over the running of the training department.

Carrying on that theme, **Gary Bishop**, our Driver Trainer has done an amazing job with new candidates and I have attached two photos of new drivers who have recently passed their PCV test, due to Gary's hard work.

Mikulas Vira:
passed his PCV test
on 20th July 2016



Richard Nyatsungo:
passed his PCV on
6th July 2016

We can't fit everyone on to this page, but congratulations to all those who have passed the PCV test and now have that coveted licence.

I would like to also say a big thank you to **all our drivers** for their dedication and hard work over the last few months. I am sure you are aware that the Operations Department has been busy trying to cover bus and coach allocation and without your help and support we wouldn't have done it, so THANK YOU, you have all been amazing. I would also like to congratulate you all on a job well done and single out Mike Burnham for all his hard work with the Customer Complaints, which we have reduced considerably over the last couple of months, thank you Mike.

Take care out there

Best wishes

Jayne



"Customer complaints are down, with some wonderful compliments coming through, keep up the good work!"

STAFF NEWS

We say some fond goodbyes and welcome new faces...

Mick Scruton retires

Mick worked with Epsom Coaches from 1970 so can rightly claim to have long service. Starting full-time, he more recently worked on a zero hours basis. We celebrated Mick's long service and his retirement with a lunch at the Chalk Lane Hotel followed by a well-attended summer social with friends and colleagues old and new. We presented Mick with a gas powered BBQ as a retirement gift but he will be staying in touch as a member of our retirement club and will be popping in from time to time. We all wish Mick every happiness and a long and healthy retirement as he enjoys a well-earned rest having also recently reached his 80th birthday.



Graham Lumley (almost) retires



We were delighted to celebrate Graham's retirement with a lunch at the Chalk Lane Hotel before he departs to his new home in the West Country. Graham has been with us for many years and remembers the early days of Epsom Buses. Prior to working with Epsom Coaches, Graham travelled with his own haulage business all over Europe working very long hours and although recently working part-time here, will now be able to enjoy a well deserved rest (although, in the best traditions, he has been helping out before he leaves), you can't keep a good man down! Our very best wishes to Graham for a long and happy retirement, we will be keeping in touch through the retirement club.

In fond memory of Peter Duke

We were all very sad to hear of Peter Duke's passing after a brave battle with lung cancer. Peter worked with us in various roles for 14 years, previously having had a long career with London Country Buses and later Arriva. His funeral was so well attended that not all the attendees could get into the chapel at Leatherhead, a measure of how popular he was. Well over £300 was raised by the staff towards the Roy Castle Cancer charity and a floral tribute in the shape of a 418 bus was sent by the firm. A fitting tribute for a well-respected man who will be sorely missed by us all.



Welcome to Jennifer...

We are delighted to welcome Jennifer Sutton to the team as our Marketing & PR Manager. Jenny brings with her many years' experience and has hit the ground running with her expertise and passion for marketing our superb range of products more effectively. Increased exposure on social media, attendance at local events and plenty of press attention demonstrates the effectiveness of Jenny's approach even at this early stage. A new website is also on its way.

Steve Whiteway said: "I am delighted to have Jenny on board with us; her expertise will be invaluable as we aim to increase our coach related business in the future, she is already well established and very much part of the team."



STAFF NEWS

BENEFITS APP



Our popular benefits package just gets better, with a new app coming which means you can instantly take advantage of the many discounts and services available, directly from your smart phone. Many of you will have met Vicky from Personal Group who administers the scheme on our behalf. She reported that those she saw were amazed how much they could save and the process is very simple. Many also received cash back from medical and dental appointments. Please take full advantage, the benefits are there for you, the average benefit amounts to over £3,000 a year.

STAFF MOVES

We have recently reorganised the Operations team, with Gareth Stanton helping out with the TfL mileage recording and looking at route performance. It is vital we earn bonuses on routes and Gareth will be helping with this. Matt Chappin has taken up the role of Base Controller with Nigel Thomas moving to stand in as Operations Manager. These positions are in place for the rest of the year and will be reviewed for 2017. We wish Gareth, Matt and Nigel every success in their new roles.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

We are delighted to be recognised as an Investor in People, an internationally recognised accreditation that is a huge tribute to our staff team. Feedback was so positive about the open nature of our way of working and the real family feel that is evident even to casual visitors who often remark on that special atmosphere and the great working conditions. We will be working hard to continue that good progress as we work to the next stage of IIP.



“Feedback was so positive about the open nature of our way of working and the real family feel...”

NEC SCHEME REWARDS CAREFUL DRIVERS

The “no extra cost” scheme was rolled out for Coach Drivers from 1st May. The scheme aims to reward those drivers who do not incur extra cost for the business. This mainly but not only concerns accident damage. The “savings” are passed on to the individual drivers in the form of an NEC payment. Over 50% of the coach and local bus driving team are already eligible for NEC and as a result they are enjoying a considerable uplift in earnings. The scheme is still being fine-tuned, but certainly is having the desired effect, to reduce cost and use that money to increase wages for those who take a little more care. We are looking to roll out this scheme further in 2017.

The damage in the photograph will cost almost £2,000 to put right, so it is vital we all play our part in keeping costs down.

SOCIAL CLUB and STAFF ASSOCIATION NEWS

The Inns and Outs Club has been out and about this year, with fantastic well-attended trips to Goodwood Festival of Speed, Epsom Ladies Day and a weekend in Dublin.



We have a great selection of trips coming up so don't forget to take a look and book!

- **Country File Live at Blenheim Palace in August**
- **Day trip to Brighton in August**
- **Aladdin in September**
- **Steam Railway trip with lunch in September**
- **The Bodyguard in October**
- **Longleat Festival of Light in November**
- **Christmas lunch Cruise in December**

Epsom Staff Association – Your Chance to Join the Board



The Epsom Staff Association is now two years old and it is time to select a new board to run the association and its social programme.

The Staff Association is “run by the staff for the staff” and also has a big say in the running of the firm. The present board automatically retire, but can nominate themselves again. Therefore, the association is now looking for self-nominations from those interested in joining the board.

A nomination form is included with this newsletter.

The board meet monthly, usually at 18.00 on a weekday and an attendance allowance is payable if you are otherwise not on duty. This is a great chance to get involved and help run a unique staff organisation that is envied across the industry.

Some of the Staff Association successes include:

****A significantly improved benefits package***

****More social trips and variety***

****Annual children's Christmas Party***

****Staff suggestion scheme***

****Improved refreshment facilities***



MARKETING AND PR by Jennifer Sutton

My first three months at Epsom Coaches have been great; I look forward to helping Epsom Coaches build on their fantastic name and reputation and hopefully encourage some new customers to step on-board!



We were happy to support Ashted Village Day in June by taking one of our coaches along to the event and we also managed to raise £65 for our chosen charity Macmillan Cancer.

The annual event, organised by Ashted Rotary was very well attended with around 7,000 visitors and boasted a wide range of stalls and entertainment for young and old with, thankfully, no rain!

Norman and Laura Anderson from Ashted were the lucky winners of our raffle and won a day trip for two and a box of delicious branded cupcakes by yours truly!



Epsom Coaches was pleased to sponsor and to provide transport for this year's "Europe in Harmony" event - a 4 day festival of choral music around the borough of Epsom and Ewell, welcoming 3 European choirs to the borough. Performances included a diverse mix of music from folk through to church music, taking place at a variety of venues around Epsom and Ewell, both outdoors and indoors.

The organisers commented: "Epsom Coaches generous and flexible assistance throughout was a significant contribution to our guests being able to focus on performing and enjoying, and to the tremendous success of the events overall."

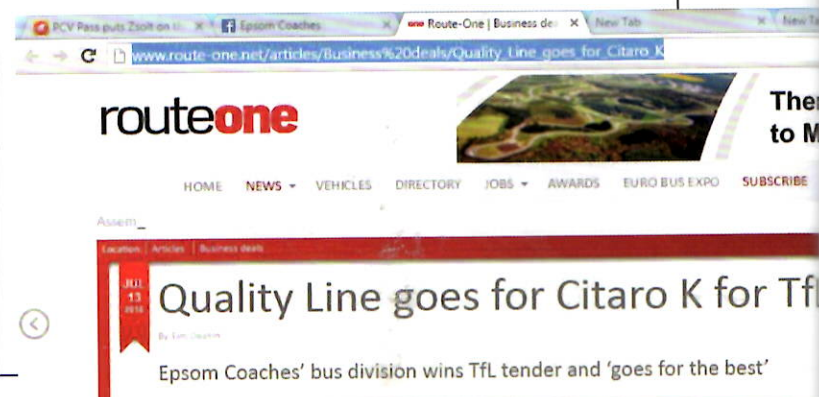
ON THE ROAD... JEN

The world may have gone digital but there's nothing like a bit of traditional face-to-face marketing sometimes. I have been on the road with our new brochures visiting garden centres, golf clubs, leisure clubs, in fact anywhere which fits the demographic of our current customers as well as our target market (slightly younger!). So far, our brochures can be seen in a number of venues such as Silvermere and Sandown Golf Clubs and, most importantly, it was agreed that we could use the racks in Sainsbury's superstore in Epsom to show off our product. (If you're in there and you see stocks running low, let me know!)



IN THE NEWS...

Route One magazine featured us in a story this month on our success in acquiring the 413 route between Morden and Sutton...
http://www.route-one.net/articles/Quality_Line_goes_for_Citaro_K



"Remember, if you have any news at any time, please send it through to me and let me spread the word..."

...level experience," says Epsom Coaches Commercial
 ...Barrington.
 "We trialled a demonstrator Citaro K in 2013 and were most impressed with it, but since then there have been limited opportunities in the TfL



A Day in the Life of Jenny Sutton



A day in the life of... our Marketing & PR Manager

Describe your typical day: It varies but day-to-day I update our social media; design emailers for our customer mailing list; add stories to the website; send news stories to the press; look at advertising opportunities; on-the-road marketing and lately working on our new website and this staff newsletter

Who's the one person you'd like to swap roles with for a day: Steve W to see what it's like to run a company like Epsom Coaches...but only for one day, I think that would be enough!

Describe Epsom Coaches in three words: Family; traditional; respected

What's your favourite holiday destination: It has to be Scotland, my favourite place in the world

If you were shipwrecked, what 3 things would you bring: Books, teabags, more books (or perhaps my partner?)

Name something(s) people won't know about you: I'm a published poet; I was once an elected Borough Councillor; I once counted the hairs on comedian Ernie Wise's short, fat, hairy legs 😊



Roy Richmond

Epsom Buses Celebrate 30 Years

Its gone very fast, but in October we will be celebrating 30 years of bus services. From those small beginnings with what we now call E5, we have established our bus division as the Best Medium sized Bus Operator in the UK. This all started with an idea from Roy Richmond, our late Chairman and son of the founder. We had a problem, tourists had stopped coming to London due to terrorism (a familiar theme) so Roy deployed our older coaches on local bus services. Imagine taking a 12 metre bus down Watersedge, we did for years! Gradually purpose built buses were introduced and the concept of the hopper bus running down local roads was invented right here in Epsom. We were the first to put A/C in our drivers' cabs and we also had the first hybrid bus in London, along with low floors for easy access. We will be marking this anniversary with a special news flyer and are looking to charge the same fares on the anniversary date as we did all those years ago. The trouble is, they haven't gone up! The fares today are barely higher than those of 30 years ago, a sign of tough competition and that our customers get a very good deal!



GOOD NEWS

It's always good to end on a high note! We have seen many successes in the past 6 months, from all sides of the business, here's just a few...

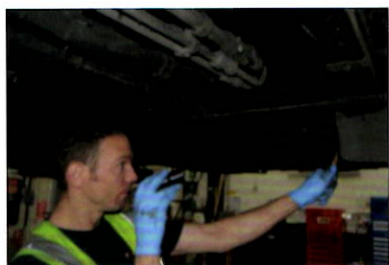
Industry first for Epsom Coaches



✦ We became the first operator to have staff achieve all three of CPT's professionally recognised Bus and Coach Industry Manager Accreditations – Bus Operations Manager, Coach Manager and Engineering Manager. Following Peter Mabbott and Ian Thompson achieving the prestigious Engineering Manager Accreditation in 2015, last month saw Peter Minnette and Lee Coleman receive the Coach Operations Manager title and Gareth Stanton awarded Bus Operations Manager from Traffic Commissioner Nick Denton. Steve commented: "I am proud of my team who went

through an exacting process to demonstrate their expertise in the huge variety of skills required in this challenging industry, these accreditations are well deserved"

IRTEC Accreditation



In a continuing process of accreditation, more Epsom Coaches engineers have recently passed their IRTEC vehicle safety inspection accreditation. Lawrence Hayward-Brown commented: "Engineering standards for passenger vehicles are rightly required to be at a high level but that can only be achieved by ensuring our engineers are highly skilled. We have the best in the industry and the IRTEC accreditation register confirms their status. I am very proud of the high standard we achieve here and of my team; this independent verification emphasises the huge responsibility they have and brings well-deserved recognition for the important work they do."



Epsom Coaches Scoops "Best Coach Operator for Groups" at Group Travel Awards

We beat thirteen other shortlisted companies to scoop the *Best Coach Operator for Groups (Small Fleet)* at The Group Travel Awards in June. The award was presented to Mel Cox by Christopher Biggins at a ceremony held in London. Each year the readers of GTO (Group Travel Organiser) magazine are asked to



vote for who they think are the best suppliers in more than 20 categories taking into account all aspects of putting together group trips including pre-visit information, transport to accommodation and itinerary. Holiday Sales Manager Mel said: "It's always fantastic to win awards such as this but even more so when it is an award voted for by the public as it is confirmation that we are doing something right!" comments Melanie. "After being a runner-up previously, it is especially gratifying to gain the top spot, especially against such stiff competition."

Ps.... Epsom Coaches has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Route One Awards: Innovation of the Year and Medium Bus Operator of the Year so watch this space....