

# HRR NEWS



May, 1987

The last News Letter was written prior to Christmas with our minds turning to the festive season and looking back over a year of changed fortunes. The travel side was able to consolidate its position, even with the onslaught of the multiples whose belief in discounting was not such a serious form of competition as was first thought, with personal service and proven staff experience paying off.

By diversifying into buses and using part of the coach fleet after deregulation the losses were restricted to a lower level by the year end. Seven new buses have taken to the road in the name of Epsom Buses and now we are established, Epsom Coaches is able to go back to a fleet of near equal size to deal with the increase in local coach hire and the return of overseas clients.

With the overall number of staff now above 100 it is so important for all of us to communicate with each other - it is nice to think this is being achieved and long may it continue.

## EPSOM TRAVEL

We wish Carmen all the best in her new environment - as she is still within the EEC we cannot say she has emigrated. Also, Eddy in his retirement who has given us sterling service and his business association with the Company goes back over 30 years. We are sorry to have lost Warden Miller and Martin Wells.

Coach hire is now back on course after a depressing 1986. Keith has settled in as a new member of the team and brought his good sense of humour with him, even if he is a "Payne". Bernard Kelly did a good job by looking up some old and new customers. In the office, Chris knows there is a different gender in the human race now!

## Detail

With the added work placed on this office now there are buses we think there is just enough room to squeeze Dave Gettings into there. Dave will spend most of his time on the coach side and reduce the midnight oil being burned.

## Buses

Pleased to say there are more compliments than complaints and hope it stays that way. The nice words are usually that the driver is friendly and even speaks to his passengers, helped with the shopping down the steps and the bus actually runs on time. The cleanliness also comes in for praise. The complaints are few - early running and the odd grumpy one. Points to note are that blind persons now have a yellow card with "BUS" written on it in large black letters - remembering the independence of some blind who prefer not to wave a white stick on the "hail and ride" service. Do not go beyond Greenacres - a well meaning driver can place the next one in difficulty if he does go down to Boxers. As from after the Spring Bank Holiday the 551 is to use Pixham Lane and not via the Punch Bowl. Routes 10 and 11 will come into operation at the end of July, to fit in with the Lombard contracts to Mitcham and East Croydon. Further development of routes is being considered.

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It was unfortunate that the Holiday Fair had to be postponed. However, attendance was quite good and, fortunately, our Tours programme had sold itself in the meantime. The day excursion programme was just ready in time and seems to have got off to quite a good start with its new attractive design. Obviously, day trips to France will need a lot of winning back.

We welcome back many of the old faces who have helped us out on driving part time. The 1986 slump did not call for much extra help. Recently, the amount of evening work has necessitated many relief drivers for the evening and with the new regulations last autumn, extra cover is needed for compulsory rest days.

The Bus & Coach Council is reminding everyone to observe the pledge signed by last year's coach drivers. Major accidents throughout the country have diminished and, hopefully, stay that way. Defensive driving is so important! Changing lanes indiscriminately and exceeding the 60 m.p.h. limit on dual carriageways and 70 m.p.h. on motorways gives the public the ammunition to fire at the industry. The opportunity for new staff to sign up will be available shortly. In the meantime, drive carefully.

## WORKSHOP

The "annuals" have been completed on time and an increase in the number of other operator's vehicles being serviced, has all helped towards profitability. With the erratic work pattern it is no easy solution to bring the vehicles in for servicing at the correct time. Helping out with the driving is much appreciated.

Everyone is to be congratulated in their contribution to the success of the Company which will be under pressure during the coming months.

We were all very sad to hear of Stuart's death and our thoughts are with the Harding family in their great loss.

For those who are academics a quiz is attached to this News Letter.