

Inn's and Out Social Club Update: Clare Dann

The Inns and Out Social Club has arranged a variety of exciting trips throughout 2015 for all the family and is looking forward to planning lots of new events for 2016. Our trip to Disneyland Paris in November was a great success. We hope to go back in 2016.

Here are just some of the recent highlights.....

2015

Pantomime at the Epsom Playhouse



Christmas Markets in Metz



Disney on Ice at the O2 featuring Frozen



My best wishes to you and your family for Christmas and a happy New Year.

2016

For 2016 we have already booked theatre trips to see **The Lion King**, **Kinky Boots** and **Motown**. Others to follow later in the year. Plus:

Brighton i360 – an exciting new viewing platform on Brighton seafront



Ladies Day at Epsom Racecourse
Places still available



Weekend in Dublin
Places still available



However, we need your help. We welcome your input with new ideas and suggestions.



Clare

Ride and Drive Day

Over 120 staff and family enjoyed the opportunity to have a leisurely drive around Kempton Park in a variety of old and new buses and coaches, together with our MD's two classic cars! A unique day and one we intend to repeat. With thanks to **John Huxford** and **Steve Whiteway** for the loan of their vehicles (very brave)!



10 Year Luncheon

In July, all those with 10 or more years service and their partners were invited to celebrate their long service and loyalty at a luncheon laid on at Doggetts Coat and Badge in London, overlooking the Thames with wonderful views of the city. With over 120 attending and glorious weather, the combination made for a very special day. We are looking to make this an annual event, with a boat trip planned in 2016.



EPSOM COACHES GROUP NEWS



2015 - A Year to Remember

December 2015



Mince Pies for all on Wednesday 23rd December!

A tradition started by Roddy Richmond the founder of Epsom Coaches, way back in 1920, when the firm had just two staff! Mr Richmond bought the mince pies for his staff and we continue that tradition today, with rather a lot more pies!





A Year to Remember

MD's Message: Steve Whiteway

Welcome to our 95th anniversary special newsletter, looking back over a momentous and memorable year, of which I am delighted you were all part.

This is a time of year to reflect and to look back, none more so than in 2015 as we come to the end of our celebratory year and so many special occasions involving staff and their families, our clients and suppliers and the wider public. I am pleased that those occasions were captured on camera, but you had to be there to really appreciate the special atmosphere and unique Epsom spirit that runs through this business. The highlight for me was our Open Day, held every 5 years, but this was the most successful and best attended, with over 4,000 people enjoying seeing what we do and confirmation of the special place this business has in the community it serves. I doubt any other operator could lay on such a show and get such a fantastic attendance, a tribute to everyone involved. That wasn't the only event, our Ride and Drive Day proved to be a unique occasion and one we will repeat, as was the 10 year lunch for our longer serving staff and their guests, held on a beautiful day in London. We already have plans to make this an annual event. Other events included my getting back behind the wheel for a charity day out to Bruges, and prior to that when Peter Minnette and I dressed up in 1920's style uniform and entertained our guests on route to Brighton. In all we raised over £1,400 for our favoured charity this year from these two events, rather proving I still have the ability to get the tips in!

A round up of our "Year to Remember" is contained within this newsletter.

Along with our celebratory events it has been very much business as usual and in truth it has been a tough year financially, especially for our London bus business. Very low inflation payments from TfL, coupled with exceptional engineering costs, explain much of it, but our claims and liabilities for accidents has gone through the roof as well, all adding to our expenses and giving us less to play with. However, our coach and holidays business has done reasonably well, proving the benefit of having a diverse portfolio of work. What is encouraging is our ability to win new business, although in a tough economic cycle, we have to be inventive with the pricing and judging that is a fine art in which we have become much practiced.

I would judge that 2015 has been one of the toughest financially in our long history and indeed the last five years, especially given reduced external funding, but I am proud that we have maintained investment with the garage rebuilding in 2010, continued pay reviews, investment in new vehicles and an industry leading benefits package. All of this will pay dividends in the future and there are positive signs that we are starting to reap the benefits of that investment. However, we can never afford to relax, we are only as good as our last journey and as we move into 2016, with higher hopes, we will need to maintain the strictest control on costs, maximise our considerable assets and ensure the customer is king. By that method we can only succeed.

In planning for 2016, I am making a number of changes to the management structure, to ensure there is more focus on our key functions of sales, contract management, operations, engineering and most importantly, our people. The latter has always been a key focus with our staff our greatest asset. For that reason I am delighted that Jayne Cracknell has agreed to take up the new post of Driver Manager, with her entire focus on looking after our driving team, ensuring their welfare and high standards are maintained. Jayne was recognised for her contribution to 100 Years of Women in Transport as the very worthy recipient of the ultimate award from TfL, one that only comes around every 100 years! We should all be very proud, I know I was seeing her face when they made the announcement!

worthwhile asset to our business in the future.

Another new addition to the engineering family is a little too young to grab the spanners just yet, but a warm welcome and congratulations to baby **Lilly** and her mum, **Emily Johnson**, currently enjoying the first months of motherhood before returning to the fold.

Body Beautiful



We have been busy trying to improve the standard of our vehicles over the last few months and make best use of our facilities. Not only have we improved the appearance of our own fleet whether it be bus, coach or commercial, we have regularly assisted the Group by repairing and repainting buses from London United

or coaches from United Motor Coaches. This not only improves their standard of presentation, it acts as a source of revenue for Epsom Coaches. In addition, we recently completed a full repaint on a vintage



RF bus from Cobham Bus Museum. I am immensely proud of the high standard of work that we can deliver as a department which is held in high regard across the whole Group.

New Vehicles

We have now taken delivery of three new Volvo coaches which will upgrade the vehicle fleet for our National Express contracts. The displaced vehicles will be used on our Terravision contracts which have kept Fleetcare very busy recently with extra miles being run and

increased maintenance requirements as a result. December will see us receiving ten 2015 Wrights manufactured 'Streetlite' buses for route 463. These will need to be commissioned and made ready for service in the New Year. Expect to see them in the yard at Epsom soon.

Changes in 2020

Plans are being made for vehicle cascades due to the emission control laws changing from April 2016. This means older Euro 3 vehicles will not be able to operate in the London area so there will be changes to the fleet as a result. Older Solos are to be sold and as a result 'newer' Solos moved onto commercial routes following refurbishment/repaint. So as we move into 2016 after a busy 2015, on behalf of all Fleetcare staff may I take this opportunity to wish all of you a very Happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Rob



Benefits for All

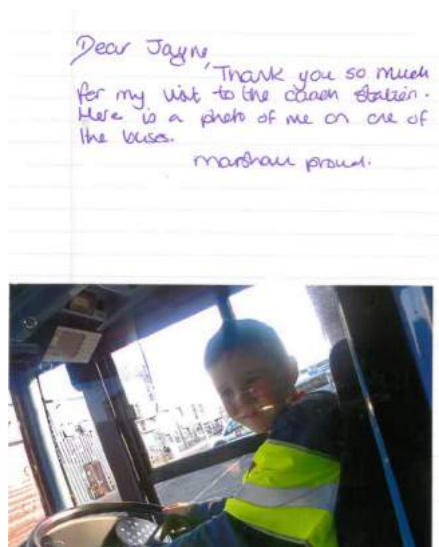
The newly launched benefits package has enjoyed an excellent uptake, with some saving over £3,000 a year by taking full advantage of it. Remember you have free legal advice including an independent employment solicitor if you need one (we hope you won't), free gym and swim, thousands of discount offers and healthcare benefits when you visit the dentist, are hospitalised or as an out patient. It also covers alternative treatments such as aromatherapy. Don't miss out because all these benefits are free of charge to Staff Association Members, who are staff that pay their Social Club subs of just 25p a week or £1 a month.

Check it out on line.....

www.personnelgroupbenefits/epsom.com

For the love of Buses: Marshall Proud

I would like to introduce you all to **Marshall Proud** who is 11 years old and bus mad!!! He also drives his mum mad with his obsession. I invited Marshall to come and spend some time with us on 29th August 2015. Marshall thoroughly enjoyed his time at Epsom Coaches Group where he tried all our layover buses, sitting in the bus and pretending he was driving in service, it was really great fun! Marshall wrote a lovely letter after his visit with an amazing drawing of DD17 which you can see here along with a photo of Marshall in the driving seat. Thank you Marshall for making this a special day for me too and you are welcome to come again. **Jayne Cracknell**



Fleetcare News: Rob Garrard



I started working as Fleet Engineer for Epsom Coaches earlier in June this year and share responsibilities for both Epsom Coaches and Tolworth garage, which is part of London United. My induction started straight away with the in-depth preparations for the 95th Anniversary Open Day which proved to be a very successful day. Being the new guy,

this event highlighted that Epsom Coaches is a well-respected employer within the local community, the staff are proud to work here and are very well looked after. The investment in the staff, vehicles, property and facilities is way in excess of rival operators.

New Structure

It has been a busy few months for the Fleetcare team and as we move into 2016 we are reorganising our structure so we can work more closely with the Operations Team, our primary customer. The key players in this new structure will be **Ron Gent**, who will lead the engineering function as Workshop Manager. In addition **Peter Minnette** will lead the new operations team as

Senior Operations Manager. We are all looking forward to working closely together to deliver a better service over the coming months.

Staffing

We are currently recruiting for Engineering staff as we've had three departures recently, some returning abroad to family and a career change and some moving on to pastures new for promotion reasons. We wish all our ex-Fleetcare staff all the best in their future careers. In addition, our new engineering apprentice **Brandon Gibson** has been recruited this year and is settling in well. We plan to keep him very busy with a variety of engineering work that will give him the experience necessary to become a proficient engineer and a

The setting up of a dedicated Operations Team for both bus and coach is also a significant step forward, freeing up our Sales Managers, Melanie Cox and John Fowler to maximise our considerable reputation in the market, with ambitious plans to grow the coach related business. Operations will be joining forces with Fleetcare, making for an integrated Engineering and Operations department who will have common goals. This section will be led by Rob Garrard who in his six months with us to date, has proven to be an effective and integral part of our team bringing the benefit of his experience in other industries whilst recognising the values we hold dear at Epsom Coaches, an effective combination.

Our success in retaining contracts for routes 463, 467 and K5 and those routes expansion, sets us up for 2016 and offsets the loss of our very first London route S4, this time last year. The return of Terravision whom many of you will remember we operated from way back in 2003 until 2012, is very welcome, with initially, operation using hired in coaches on Stansted airport services and more recently on a new Gatwick service. We presently operate five coaches a day on this route, two internally and the rest hired in. Our intention is to operate all five longer term, with liveried vehicles and we currently are in negotiation with Terravision. With all this will come further investment in new vehicles and for the first time, buying buses from WrightBus. Our London fleet is the most modern in London, this investment comes along with a refurbishment programme for a further 14 buses. Coaches will have the benefit of three new National Express vehicles as the last of our Setra 315's leave the fleet, a model that was first introduced in 2002 and has set the standard for the quality of Epsom Coaches ever since. We will now be operating an all tri-axle large Epsom liveried fleet. The displaced National Express coaches will move onto the Terravision Gatwick services. We expect our fleet strength to increase to 120 in the year ahead, with approaching 400 staff, proving the benefits of our investment back in 2010 to cater for future expansion, with now 30 more vehicles in the fleet.

The changes to the management structure will enable me more time to look at our long term planning and the future direction of the Company, not least for our valued staff. We are not far off our 100th anniversary which will come round all too fast and I want to make sure we remain at the top of our industry, a benchmark for excellence and a company that people enjoy working with. That means continuation of our unique open door style, not least to me, our open book policy, where everyone knows how much we have and can spend, treating everyone the same and most importantly, sharing our success and failures with you. In today's world these are rare values, but ones that are the bedrock of what we do here, those who come from elsewhere know that and just how unique the way we work together is.

I look forward to 2016 being a more prosperous year for the firm and in turn for you. We remember those who have had health problems, those who have sadly passed away and the happier occasions with family and friends, both at work and outside.

I wish you and your family, a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. I look forward to working with you in 2016.

My very best wishes

Steve



Coach News and Views: John Fowler



New Coach

After the slow and painful birth of 907 it did enter service eventually, some time after its appearance at the National Coach Rally at Alton Towers.

Sadly no awards came our way from the judges but that was not the only intention of entering this type of event. A great time was had by all the staff who volunteered to be marshals for the weekend.

Helping out!

During April **Gemma O'Neill** came into the holidays office while she was unable to drive and became a useful member of the team getting to the stage of booking daytrips into the system and dealing with customers; well-done Gemma and thank you.

Later **Kelly Ryall** joined us while she too was unable to drive.

Outside of work

It is quite interesting to consider what members of our team get up to when they are not driving buses and coaches or repairing/ servicing vehicles. I spent a very nice day on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, the weekend of their Beer Festival in May; that is what I get up to but two of the volunteers without whom the railway would not run, are **John Lemon** (National Express rota) and **Ian Whitlam** who is one of our occasional drivers. They both dedicate a lot of time and effort so that this great steam railway can continue operating and bringing in revenue which goes towards preserving more railway history.

Saying Goodbye

Two departing drivers; long standing part time driver and Morris Dancer **Eric Warren** goes off to concentrate on living life and **Bill Good** who has just gone off to concentrate. Both were characters that will be missed.

Welcome

Welcome to the new comers with **Steve Bedford**, also spending some time in stores while the workshop management was restructured. **Colin Smithies** passed his test with us earlier on in the year and is joined by

further new staff **Daniel Miguez Blanco** and **Jim Nicholls**. Later in the year came **Nigel Thomas** and **Les Heaton** while **Richard Clarke** transferred to the Silver Service network and **Simon Trundell** came from Quality Line to the National Express Rota.

Operational News

By the time you read this we will have completed our first visit for many years to Spain. **Barry King** took 904 to Cantabria for a Champagne Connoisseur group that we transport regularly. A new contract with an aircraft charter company will have started with transfers from Stansted Airport to Heathrow and Gatwick.

Contracts

Exciting news regarding Terravision that could change the face of the operation will all become clearer early next year. The long held Royal Marsden contract is now

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up for tender and we are working hard to retain it. The ever competitive market and the need for the NHS to reduce its costs, put more pressure on our ability to make it pay, but we are very good at coming up with imaginative solutions!

The Fleet

The coach replacement programme accelerates to take into account the Ultra Low Emission Zone in London from 2020, which will only allow Euro 6 vehicles into the central zone. One option is to look at regularly replacing the coach fleet on a three year cycle, with all the benefits of warranty and reduced operating costs. The proposals put to us by the various manufacturers have been interesting.

My new role will mean more concentration on getting the fleet out in 2016, with the new ops team looking after the driving team day to day. I wish them and you all the very best.

John



Views: Jayne Cracknell

You can imagine our surprise and delight when David won overall bus driver for RATP/DEV on the day. David was overjoyed by this and I was so proud of him. Unfortunately, David did not go on to win the bus driver of the year award in Blackpool, but I must say he did an amazing job in trying and had a nice weekend away.



Awards

We won another award as well this year and yes, I did have a good drink at this event in Birmingham (it has to be done sometimes)! On 30th September 2015 I was invited by **Steve Whiteway and Huw Barrington** along with the Senior Managers to the Bus Awards in Birmingham, it was a really good night and yes we **WON** the best **MEDIUM UK BUS OPERATOR** award. You can imagine how pleased I was



and it's all down to you guys. Thank you



Tea Party

On 25th September 2015 we held a tea party for our local residents and residents from Sutton. I was also pleased George Marcar (TFL Driver Communication Manager), Paul Small (TFL Mileage Monitoring Manager) and Winnie Lam with her guide dog Marble (he was so good) came along to join us on this very special occasion. I would also like to thank George for helping us with the raffle, it was very much appreciated and a good laugh. The tea party was in honour of the 95th Anniversary of Epsom Coaches Group, we had so much fun; it was even bigger than last year! The feedback from the residents was amazing and I would love to carry on with this tradition every year if we can? I would like to thank everyone for coming and making it a very special day. A big thank you of course to all the people that helped make it possible, **Ben Mitchell, Tracie Gul, Gareth Stanton, Les Aitken, Geoff Lupton, Simon McHardy, Paul Morey, Clare Dann,**



Sally Newnham, Keith Beams, Mark Hyatt and **Krystal** from Weir Training who helped out as well.

Departmental Changes

As you know there are a few changes in the Bus Operations Department and I just want to reassure you my position really hasn't changed. I am now working from Jon Ball's old office next to the drivers rest room. My main responsibility will be looking after all bus and coach drivers, which I spent most of my time doing anyway, but now I can dedicate my whole time to you! My door will always be open, other than when I need to deal with private issues, but come and see me if you have a problem or just want a chat, I am here to help.



It just leaves me to wish you and all your families a very Merry Christmas

Jayne



Quality Line News and

Promotions

It has been a busy year with Bus Operations and Drivers, but such a pleasure. We have had a couple of new members join our office team with **Metin Ozmen** securing a position as a relief iBus Controller. Metz has settled quite nicely into this position and I have given him no time to breath since joining us, as I have been keeping him busy covering for the Bus Operations team.

Nigel Thomas was on sabbatical for a short while from coaches, but now has a permanent place within the Base Controllers team from December and I am sure you will welcome him into the fold.

Gareth Stanton is now doing our lost mileage, as this has taken on a bigger requirement and warrants a full time position.

Peter Duke

I am sure you are all aware, **Peter Duke** has not been around so much over the last three months. Unfortunately, in the early part of the year Peter was diagnosed with lung cancer and needed to take some time off to receive treatment. Peter is now back with us on shorter hours



and is working within the engineers' department making sure all defects from the defect sheets are entered on the system correctly.

Clive Hooper

I would like to say a big thank you to **Clive Hooper** who has been helping engineers over the last 6 months with logging defect sheets onto the system. Clive has now received his car licence back and will be helping coaches out three days a week doing the NHS duty. Clive cannot wait to have his PCV licence returned, so he can go back out driving. Not long now Clive! I would also like to welcome back our drivers who have been off work long term this year, and we are so pleased you are back with us fit and well.

Baby Boom!

We have had a baby boom year with lots of boys being born and just the one girl. I would like to take this opportunity to wish the following babies and their families a very Merry Christmas and I am sure Santa will spoil you rotten this year!!!

Shaun and Beve Ball: **Mason Ball**

born on 17th February 2015,

Matthew and Leanne Hooper:

Stanley Hooper born on 1st March,

2015 Svetoslav and Elina Jan:

Alexander Jan born on 24th March

2015 Anderson and Linda Danso:

Papa Anderson born 23rd March

2015, Gemma and Terry O'Neill:

Dylan O'Neill born on 17th July 2015,

Nerijus and Raimanda Ausmanas:

Lukas Ausmanas born on 19th

September 2015, William and

Stephanie Coombe: **Amber Rose**

born on 20th October.

Congratulations to all of you.



Retired

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Frank Maynard and Ron Briggs all the best, as they have now retired from bus driving. We will all miss you very much and I would also like to wish all the drivers who have left, to follow their dreams, all the best for the future too, I hope you will keep in touch and let us know how you are getting on.

Bus Driver of the Year

David Irwin was Epsom Coaches Group/Quality Line's nominee for the Bus Driver of the Year awards this year in Blackpool. David and I were asked by London United to come along to Kempton Park, so David could join in the events of the day, as London United were choosing their 3 best drivers to attend the awards in Blackpool. There were 13 drivers including David who had to undertake a variety of events to achieve the honour of representing their Company.

Training and Compliance: Jon Ball



Christmas.... Already!
Where has the year gone?

Now that the X-Factor is finally out of the way we can all look forward to next years show!

Training Team

Since last writing to you, we have had some very good news. **Phil Allport**, as you will remember, spent 5 weeks in Cardington learning to become our Delegated Driving Examiner. Well, I am pleased to report he passed with flying colours and to date has examined over 50 candidates. You will also recall that **Gary Bishop** started his new career as our training instructor and to date Gary has got 37 new drivers through their driving test.

We are fully accredited to deliver all aspects of training and testing, with our dedicated area for theory testing now set up.

Training Courses

In August, we passed our 1st Jaupt centre audit with flying colours and are now putting the finishing touches to your courses for next year. There will very much be an emphasis on "back to basics", with particular focus on customer care, something that will be re-enforced with Tfl's 2 day customer care course, which will be attended at a central point in London by all 28,000 bus drivers in the London bus network. More about that once the details are known.

We now know the fate of the Btec qualification, this is to be finished as of the 31st December 2015 and replaced with a new City & Guilds qualification for all new drivers. For those of you that hold a Btec qualification, don't worry, you will not have to do this new course!

Audits

You may be surprised how many audits we are subject to each year. National Express, TfL, The Guild of British Coach Operators, BUSK as well as the statutory authorities. We also voluntarily undertake audits from external consultants and our legal advisors.

All of this is absolutely vital, as compliance is our number one priority, particularly in respect of vehicle condition and drivers hours. Our biggest potential failing (in common with other operators) is the inadequate checking of vehicles on the walk round check! However, overall we do very well on these audits, with mostly 100% pass rates, far in excess of those of our competitor companies. This is certainly a safe place to work.

Accreditation

We are currently working towards and are well on the way to achieving Investors in People status, along with ISO accreditation in various aspects of what we do, most notably management systems and health and safety. The latter is a longer term process, which will take around 18 months. Investors in People however is very much quicker and is a very apt title for our ethos as a business.

Well, that's it from me, all that I can say now is have a wonderful Christmas and an even better New Year.

Regards

Jon

Management Changes

Following meetings with the various staff committees and a presentation to the Staff Association Board, changes to the management structure will take place from 1st January 2016. The process has already started however in preparation with the setting up of a dedicated Operations Team leaving sales to concentrate on getting the fleet out and increasing individual seat bookings with ambitious targets set for growth in 2016.

Fleetcare will be no more as it joins forces with Operations and becomes Operations - Engineering, under the overall leadership of **Rob Garrard**. This innovative approach, is designed to improve communication in two vital departments, whose overall aims should be the same.

The other major change is the new role of Driver Manager, ably taken up by **Jayne Cracknell**. Jayne has a vital role to play in looking after our driving team.

Full details of the changes have been advised in a letter sent to everyone from **Steve Whiteway**.

A Year in the Life of Epsy: A Day to Remember

January

Grand Reunion Break



We were pleased to hold our Annual Reunion Break at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea in January. **Steve Whiteway** and family, office staff, tour managers and drivers were joined by a good number of our regular customers for a fun packed weekend.

Sunday saw everyone up bright and early eager to set off on the annual treasure hunt, this time the hunt took us to The Isle of Wight. A fun filled day stopping at Isle of Wight Pearl for lunch.

On Sunday we enjoyed a race night after another delicious dinner.



The festivities kicked off with a sherry reception, followed by a delicious dinner. Afterwards there was a fancy dress competition which was won by a bag lady, the invisible man and some Morris dancers.

Epsom staff performed 'Snow Whiteway and the Seven Coach Drivers' much to the amusement of all watching. Afterwards we danced to the sounds of Cloud 9 Revival, thanks to **Peter Minnette** and **Jay Coombe**.

April

Easter

We had three tours go away for Easter. Durham, Swansea and Harrogate. Keeping with tradition everyone received an Easter egg, compliments of Epsom Coaches.

May

National Coach Tourism Awards and Coach Tourism Council

On Saturday morning we launched our much anticipated day excursion brochure along with a surprise! A large cake was presented to mark the start of our 95th anniversary celebrations.

On Saturday evening we put on our glad rags for our charity gala evening. We raised over £800.00 for The Epsom and Ewell Community Fund.



The National Coach Tourism Awards are widely recognised as the most prestigious awards in the tourism industry. This year the awards ceremony was held at West Midland Safari Park, hosted by comedienne Helen Lederer. **Melanie Cox** and **Alistair Scott** attended the event. We were thrilled to win the Best Brochure. The brochure is written by Alistair, designed by Wylie Design and 15,000 copies are printed by Summit Print.

At the end of the month **Melanie Cox** was delighted to be re-elected to the board of the Coach Tourism Council.

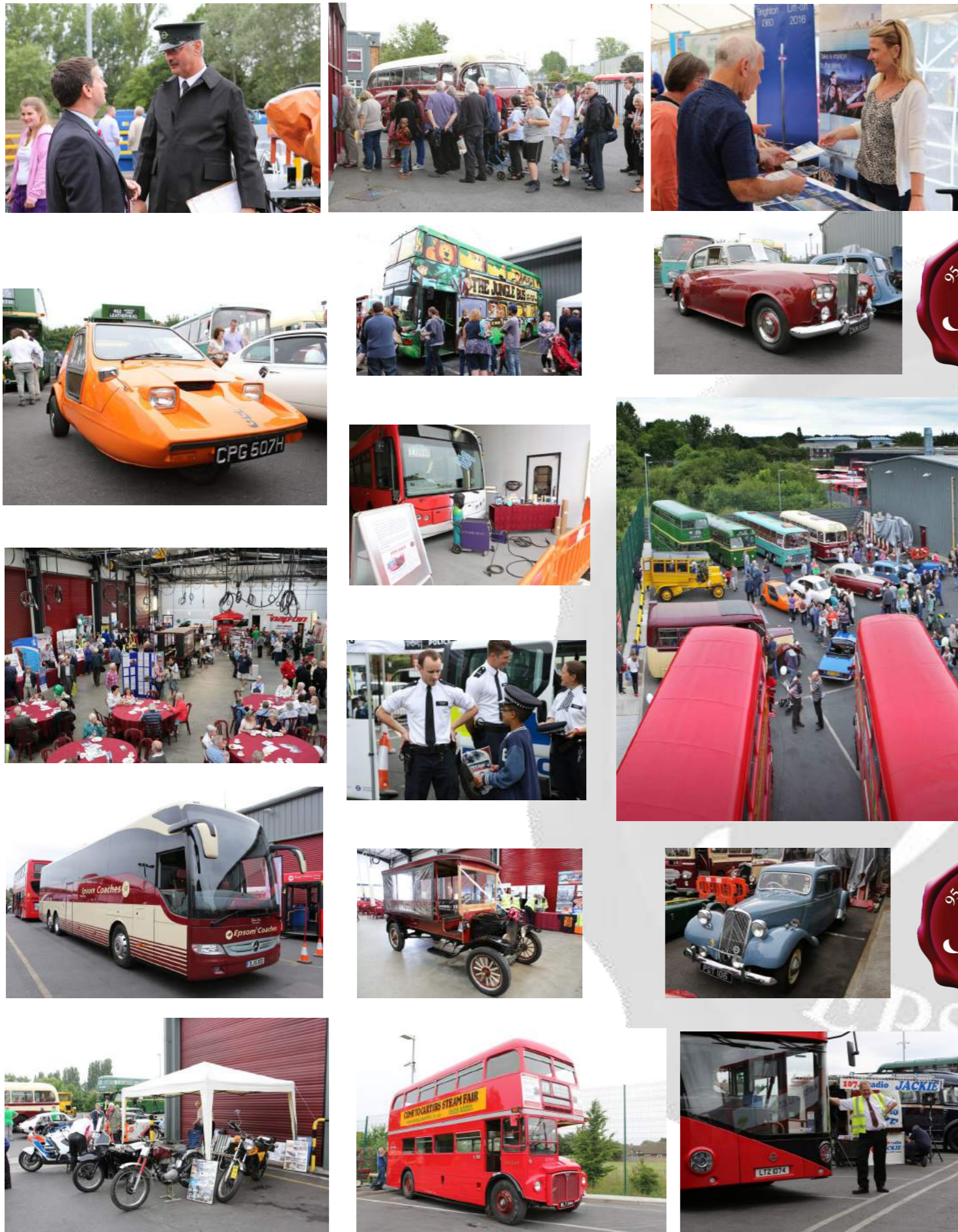
June

Open Day

A lot of hard work went into planning the 95th Anniversary Open Day. We were pleased to host a travel trade pavilion and were joined by Visit Flanders, Best Western Hotels, The Guild of British Coach Operators, Greatdays, CPT, Brighton i360, Marriott Hotels and the Epsom and Ewell Community Fund. The Staff Association also had a stand in the pavilion showcasing the benefits offered to staff.



95th Anniversary Open Day and Holidays: Melanie Cox



July

Day Trip to Brighton



July saw the first of our Anniversary Day Excursions. **Steve Whiteway** and **Peter Minnette** dressed in 1920's style uniform to take passengers to Brighton for the day. Our first ever day excursion was re-created with passengers being charged just £1.00 enjoying an informative and fun day out with Steve and Peter.

We raised over £500 for the Epsom and Ewell Community Fund.

September

Day Trip to Bruges

The second of our day excursions celebrating our 95th anniversary. This time Steve and Peter dressed in 1980's style uniform to re-create our Steve's first ever day trip to the continent. Passengers were charged just £20.00, the same as they would have paid 35 years ago. Everyone was very generous donating to the Epsom and Ewell Community Fund.

October

Brochure Launch.

Our very popular brochure launch was held at Epsom Downs Racecourse. Attended by over 400 people, ALL eager to be the first to see the new brochure and book for 2016. Bookings are up on the same time in 2015 which is good news for all concerned.

December

Christmas

We have five departures at Christmas and everyone will receive a gift from Epsom Coaches. Customers have the choice of Bournemouth, Shrewsbury, Hastings, Stratford Upon Avon and Sidmouth. There are also two New Year Holidays to choose from.

After a very special year, with bookings up year on year by around 3%, it would have been more but we were severely affected by the Calais migrant crisis in mid summer, one of our peak months. Despite this, we are aiming to increase our bookings by a full 10% in 2016 and will be working hard to achieve this challenging target.

My very best wishes

Melanie

Don't forget we are pleased to offer you and your friends and relatives discounts on our holidays and day excursions



Contract and Tenders Update: Huw Barrington

Well where has 2015 gone? It does not seem almost 12 months ago that we replaced most of the S3 buses with 6 new ADL Euro 6 Enviro 200's having secured a 2 year contract extension to April 2017, due to our good performance on this route



Traffic Delays

The mild winter, was quickly followed with very challenging road traffic conditions. The extra volume of vehicles appearing on the roads and the excessive amounts of road-works/diversions, which regrettably continues today, affected our ability to provide the level of service we desire and indeed our customers expect. Nowhere was this seen more than with the Malden Rushett junction improvement closures, that for 6 months affected the whole area. TfL appreciated all our efforts and finally understood that there

was little else we could do to achieve a reliable service on 465 & 467 routes with our current resources. New schedules were eventually approved, with an additional bus on 465 and since July, these two routes are regularly performing well, with generally good on time departures from all timing points.

Collectively for the first time ever, all 12 TfL contracts exceeded their on time departure target in one 4 week period in the summer, a feat we financially would love to achieve again and again! However, with some buses continuing to depart early from timing points we are hampered from achieving this goal and indeed this practice recently prevented us from obtaining £55,000 in valuable bonuses from TfL.

Coaches

Summer and autumn have also been interesting on the coach side. At short notice we came to the rescue of National Express and covered another daily run, on a temporary contract to Bradford. As well as renewing our relationship

with Terravision and becoming their approved coach partner. The latter has involved us in providing vehicles for them initially on their already established London to Stansted service, but more recently supplying 5 coaches daily on their new London to Gatwick Service.

Lastly to complete the year, we pleasingly were re-awarded TfL 463, K5 & 467 contracts for another 5 years. Securing this work at least until 2021, with an extra bus on 463 to assist reliability and 3 more on K5, which will have an increased frequency of every 30 minutes from July 2016.

A busy time in our celebratory 95th year of existence, which has continued to keep the year's theme of fleet replacement and further expansion.

Bring on 2016, where I am sure we will meet just as many challenging circumstances. But before then have a great Christmas.

Huw



Out With The Old, In With The New

Although 2015 was a quieter year for new vehicles coming into the fleet after almost 30 in 2014, the introduction of the first Mercedes Benz Tourismo coach was a significant milestone. The decision of Setra to no longer import their product meant we had to do something. The Tourismo is very similar and highly specified has proven to be a hit with clients and drivers alike. The new look interior has also gone down well and the change to a torque converter auto gearbox provides a smoother drive and reduced maintenance cost. This option was not available to us on the Setra.

In early 2016, we will be introducing three new Euro 6 National Express coaches, to cater for renewed National Express contracts to Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Liverpool. Running every day, these coaches rack up considerable mileage, so a refresh was needed. The existing vehicles remain in the feet and will be used on the Terravision Gatwick contract, something of a retirement mileage wise after their long distance career!

Also arriving for service from January are 10 Wright's Streetlite buses, for use on our new 463 contract.

This is a first with Wrightbus and we look forward to a good relationship and reliable service from these innovative 8.8 metre long buses. The existing 463 buses will be split between the expanded K5 service and the spare pool, with all the K5 buses being refurbished.

The double deckers on both 467 and 463 will also be refurbished, with 8 of our older Optare Solos leaving the fleet. From January, our fleet will be a minimum Euro 4 compliant, with one of the largest percentage of Euro 6 in the UK. As ever we lead in the environmental field.



Mercedes-Benz Tourismo



Volvo B9R - National Express



Wright's Streetlite for 413

