

IN BRIEF

Ken Goodson retires Associate Director of UVModular Ken Goodson has retired with his sales role being taken on by Hazel Chesworth, Director of Bus Sales. "I have been very lucky and privileged to have had a job that is so rewarding and can say with honesty that I have enjoyed every day of that time," says Ken. "I hope that my contribution in moving the industry forward by providing quality products and value for money has raised the standards of accessible vehicles and it will continue to move forward after my departure."

Concessionary fares funding 'correct' Transport Minister Sadiq Khan has reconfirmed that the financial support for free concessionary fares is the right amount. He was responding to a question in the House of Commons from Vale of York Conservative MP Anne McIntosh, who asked "what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of provision of free bus travel for the elderly." Mr Khan said the Government is now providing around £1bn each year to support the statutory minimum concession in England and that "the Government is very confident in the adequacy of this statutory minimum."

First hit by strikes Pay disputes at three First UK Bus companies, all with the Unite union, could lead to a summer of disruptions. First South Yorkshire drivers are holding a one-day strike on Friday (10 July) after 605 (44%) of 1,366 drivers voted in favour. At First Essex, 76% of Unite members who voted, agreed to strike. The outcome of a ballot at First Aberdeen (which went on strike last year) was awaited as route one closed for press.

Dekkaman closes Blaydon-based band bus specialist Dekkaman has gone into voluntary insolvency. The firm, with an O-licence for three vehicles, but latterly with five decker coaches and a single decker coach in possession, was started by John Craiggs and Sue Matthews as a joint venture to supply the middle stream of the music industry with cost-effective travel. The Tyne and Wear company had recently advertised its vehicles for sale, before ceasing to trade.

Baker's loyalty scheme Staffordshire-based Bakerbus has launched a Bus Miles loyalty scheme that offers money off the firm's day trips and holidays. Each ticket purchased represents a number of miles, depending on the type of journey undertaken. These are collated on a special leaflet and when 50 miles are reached travellers can redeem them for a discount on the trip of their choice. One way to earn Bus Miles, says the company, is to look at its Baker's Dozen list of top events and attractions in the area this summer, all of which are accessible using the Bakerbus network.

Benny bus Clarkes of London provided a Scania OmniExpress to carry former ABBA member Benny Andersson and his band to an open air concert in London leading to the inevitable comment that the coach had become London's first 'benny bus'. The OmniExpress took the band from its Marylebone base to Parliament Hill on Hampstead Heath where the Sweden on Stage concert was taking place.

Jones invests in Digital Digital Transport Solutions has completed an equity investment and strategic partnership with Phones International Group owned by entrepreneur Peter Jones. The partnership between the two companies will enable the further development of innovative services within the PSV industry, as it brings new dynamics for customers wishing to make use of both CCTV linked to wireless technology and mobile data communications, says the company.

Bus Éireann talks Talks aimed at avoiding strikes at Bus Éireann were underway at the Labour Relations Commission as route one closed for press. SIPTU is threatening strikes over a €30m cost-cutting plan, with 320 redundancies, changes to work practices and service cuts.

Key workshop at NEC show

Live show floor demonstrations by VOSA in 'working together' initiative

By Mike Morgan

A key attraction for coach tour operators visiting this year's Coach & Bus Live exhibition taking place in October at the NEC is the 'Working Together' initiative, which amongst other things, will include a series of live show floor demonstrations to be presented by the Vehicle and Operator

Service Agency (VOSA).

Branded 'Workshop Live', the VOSA team will deliver six 15 to 20 minute practical presentations at one hour intervals throughout the course of the show, with vehicles as an integral part of their demonstrations.

Show Director Mark Griffin and Barry Ricks, Head of Customer Guidance and Education at VOSA, have announced three separate presentations covering the following areas:

- Basic errors in preparation for annual test
- Pre-use vehicle inspections
- In-use compliance

Mark Griffin is delighted that VOSA have agreed to participate at Coach & Bus Live and fulfill this important educational role. He

believes that visitors will really benefit from attending the Workshop Live presentations and will leave the show armed with handy tips on how best to ensure compliance with the latest road traffic legislation and on how to maintain the roadworthiness of their vehicles.

Mark says: "Workshop Live is an exact embodiment of what this year's show is all about.

"It is at times like this, when trading conditions are at their most challenging, we need to be offering as much help and support to operators as possible. The fact we are able, through our partnership with VOSA, to offer expert practical guidance on how to avoid unnecessary prohibitions and fixed penalties and keep

operating costs to a minimum has to be of valuable assistance to our visitors."

This is a view shared by Barry Ricks who says: "We are only too pleased to be involved in this initiative. By providing hands-on advice, in what we hope will be a both informative and entertaining manner, we aim to highlight the most common compliance, inspection and annual test related issues and to help operators and drivers overcome them."

Mark added: "As the industry's main event of the year we are delighted that VOSA are using our show as an opportunity to engage with operators. It sends out a very positive message to the marketplace and I'm sure it will provide another compelling



Coach & Bus Live is at the NEC, 7-8 October

reason for people to come along and see for themselves what Coach & Bus Live has to offer."

● The organisers report that sales for Coach & Bus Live continue to make good progress with over 120 exhibiting

companies and 90% of all available stand space sold. Those interested in the few remaining stands should contact the Coach & Bus Live sales team quickly on 01926 833052, email: info@coachandbuslive.com or visit www.coachandbuslive.com

SMMT anticipates PCV registrations downturn

Manufacturer	June		Year to date	
	2009	2008	2009	2008
Alexander Dennis	116	72	620	379
BMC	1	5	2	17
Irisbus	16	33	110	151
MAN/Neoplan	21	46	214	246
Mercedes-Benz	7	9	53	131
Optare	42	54	294	255
Scania	76	42	383	268
Van Hool	1	3	27	34
VDL Bova	11	3	34	73
VDL Bus	14	5	94	29
Volvo	86	82	609	688
Other British	0	0	0	0
Other imports	10	17	87	90
Grand Total	401	371	2,527	2,361

SMMT coach and bus data covers all vehicles over 8.5 tonnes gvw. Some vehicles are also included in the separate vans and truck registration figures.

"Big bus registrations may have peaked, buoyed-up by last year's strong orders," says Paul Everitt, SMMT Chief Executive. "The immediate outlook is less rosy as the lagged effect of recession hits the sector.

"Manufacturers are very cautious, seeing falling activity and orders across the sector. Coach registrations are still falling but we hope for some stability over the coming quarter. By contrast, the minibus sector is feeling harsh economic

pressures," he added.

June saw another strong performance from Alexander Dennis (ADL) with registrations up 61.11% to 116 units while Scania achieved an 80.95% improvement - 76 vehicles compared with 42 in June 2008. VDL Bus was also up 180% with 14 registrations. However, looking at the year to date only ADL, Scania and VDL have shown strong growth. ADL is up 63.59%, Scania 42.91% and VDL 224.14%. Volvo is down 11.48%.

EYMS takes another 10 'deckers in £1.7m Hull order

Another 10 new EYMS double-deck buses, worth £1.7m, went on the roads in the Hull area last weekend as part of the East Yorkshire company's continued fleet renewal.

Eight are replacing older single-deck buses, to upgrade a busy group of routes from Hull city centre, to the Wold Road area and Willerby. The other two will work mainly on another of EYMS' most popular routes, the 105, between the city centre and Cottingham.

EYMS chairman Peter Shipp says: "These are the second 10 of 20 new double-decks delivered to us this year. They mark a major step forward for the Willerby Road routes, particularly since increasing passenger numbers mean the

single-decks used for the last 10 years are no longer big enough.

"To make the public aware of the improvements and to try and encourage more people to try the bus we are mounting a major marketing campaign in the next few weeks, including leaflets which will be going to every home in that area.

"We know through surveys that people who use buses regularly have a far higher opinion of them than those who never use public transport, and we are hoping to persuade some local people who never use buses that our bus services in Hull are far better than they may think."

The deliveries bring new bus investment to £53m since 1987 when EYMS came under local



Peter Shipp (left) with Arthur Argyle of Volvo Bus

private ownership.

The Wrightbus Eclipse 'new look' Gemini Volvo B9TL buses

have more comfortable seats, wheelchair access, internal and external CCTV.

Butters Coaches suddenly closes

Butters Coaches Ltd of Market Drayton went into voluntary liquidation last Wednesday (2 July). Staff were told that the firm had "gone bust" just after midday and all coaches were back in the yard by 1400hrs.

Shropshire Council's spokeswoman Laura Owen said: "Butters Coaches went into liquidation on Wednesday at around 12.30hrs. Four companies (Longmynd Travel of Shrewsbury,

Bennetts Travel of Cotes Heath, NCB Motors of Wem and Ultimate Taxis, Newport) are covering the routes to schools including the Grove School and Market Drayton Junior School and will continue to do so until a permanent replacement is found.

"Shropshire Council will go out to tender for a replacement operator in September and should award a new five-year contract by January 2010."

Butters was founded almost 80 years ago by Charles Hamilton Butter, a blacksmith who set-up a taxi business in Market Drayton after World War One. Lesley and Erica Mackintosh are listed as directors of the business along with Barry Managh. Incorporated in 2003, Butters had an O-licence for 10 vehicles, mostly DAF Van Hools from the late 1980s and early 1990s although there was also a Volvo B10M and Javelin.



Royal Tiger back in service

Recently returned to service was a Van Hool-bodied Leyland Royal Tiger and an LDV Convoy had also just been refurbished. According to Companies House financial returns were up-to-date.