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## POINT OF DEPARTURE Paul Hill, Chairman

After the excitement in the last issue of the prospective acquisition of Stagecoach by National Express, there is still no firm news of a conclusion, as National Express has twice been given more time to table a firm bid. This could be taken to mean that matters are progressing but somewhat slowly. We should know more by the time you are reading this.

Meanwhile, we have a first in Lincolnshire with the delivery to PC Coaches of the very first Scania K280 single decker in the UK with a Chinese Higer Fencer body. I wonder if this is the first time a Lincolnshire operator has had the distinction of being the very first to acquire a new type of vehicle. No doubt readers can enlighten me. I encountered Higer coaches in Jordan a couple of years ago, but have no experience of their service buses.

And so to the Groudle Glen Railway which lack of space prevented me describing in my last PoD. On our first visit to the Isle of Man five years ago, we had travelled on the Manx Electric, Snaefell Mountain and Isle of Man Railway lines, so this September we resolved to sample the Groudle Glen, and were lucky enough to be there for their steam gala. The 2 foot gauge line is only three quarters of a mile long and was built in 1896 as part of a Victorian pleasure garden, now long since disappeared. The approach from the main road is by a steep path down through woods, across a stream and up the other side, which made us wonder how rolling stock can be delivered to the line as there is no metalled road.

The line had closed in 1962, but some 20 years later, a group of enthusiasts got together and restored the railway to original condition and began operations once more which thankfully continue successfully.

One of the original locomotives, Sea Lion, is still in use along with a replica built much more recently and an assortment of other locos including one which a volunteer started building in his garage. When it outgrew its surroundings, he was able to complete it through the good offices of the IoM Steam Railway. We were made most welcome and there was a wonderful atmosphere and camaraderie among the volunteers. We made two round trips behind different locos each time, and on our final run, the wife and two young sons of the driver were in the open-sided carriage with us.

The proceedings of COP26 are still fresh in mind with the prospect of an end to coal production and use, so it must be hoped that a way can be found to sustain these important parts of our heritage for future generations.

◆ Was Cropley the recipient of the first Yutong TC12 coach? – Ed.

# COUNTY RAIL

## Lumo Lands

The UK's latest open access train operating company – Lumo – commenced operation on Thursday 21 October. Lumo is the operating name of East Coast Trains Limited, a subsidiary of FirstGroup, that was granted permission to run very limited stop services between London and Edinburgh along the ECML in May 2016. The name 'Lumo' was adopted as it conveys luminosity and motion. Of note is that the entire operation only offers Standard Class seating, with the average cost of an Anglo-Scottish single ticket being £25. An at-seat catering service is provided and additionally passengers can pre-order 'branded' food/snacks to be delivered to them en route. The company has just one walk-on fare: £69 single Edinburgh–London or vice versa that offers excellent value. As is the way of the world, the operator is heavily promoting Advance tickets (and corresponding seat reservation) but has said 40 seats on each service will be kept back for walk-on travel. Trains are DOO (Driver Only Operation), though a minimum number of 'Ambassadors' (restyled Hosts) are required on board for each train to operate.

A quintet of Hitachi AT300 trains are operated, given Class 803 status (803001-5), and maintained at Craigenlinny Depot, Scotland. To all intents and purposes they look no different to the Class 802 'Paragons' operated by Hull Trains, and Classes 800/801 'Azumas' operated by LNER, but unlike all others that have come before them, the '803s' are all-electric multiple units devoid of emergency auxiliary diesel engine, instead being only fitted with batteries to power on-board facilities, should an overhead line problem occur. During times of disruption, or planned engineering work, Lumo services will not be able to operate their full route and will call on assistance from their sister FirstGroup train operating companies Hull Trains and TransPennine Express. **LEYTR** understands an option being considered is to attach a Lumo '803' to a Hull Trains '802' to/from London when the electrified ECML is closed and a diversion is required via, say, the Joint Line.

The first northbound service departed London King's Cross at 1046 (one minute later than booked) and arrived Edinburgh one minute earlier than booked at 1516. The journey was unadvertised and ran for VIPs and members of the press. Passenger services commenced on 25 October and until 11 December Lumo is operating two return journeys Mon-Fri, one Sat and two on Sun. Below is a summary of the timetable and the passing times at locations in the **LEYTR** area. From 12 December, (i.e. when you read this) frequencies will have increased.

	Mon-Fri		Sat	Sun			Mon-Fri		Sat	Sun	
King's Cross	1045	1436	1025	1023	1624	Edinburgh	0911	1612	0849	1053	1545
Stevenage	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	Morpeth	1030	1726	1006	1203	1700
Tallington	1139	1533	1114	1113	1712	Newcastle	1051	1747	1022	1219	1716
Stoke Jn	1146	1540	1121	1120	1719	Claypole	1232	1931	1204	1350	1907
Grantham	1149	1546	1124	1125	1722	Grantham	1237	1936	1211	1355	1912
Claypole	1154	1553	1131	1130	1721	Stoke Jn	1240	1939	1215	1358	1915
Newcastle	1347	1749	1325	1316	1920	Tallington	1247	1946	1222	1405	1925
Morpeth	1359	1801	1337	-----	1932	Stevenage	-----	2021	-----	-----	1958
Edinburgh	1517	1915	1457	1440	2054	King's Cross	1348	2047	1317	1456	2021

## LNER Diagrams Dec 21 to May 22

The Editor has been given all train diagrams for LNER for the timetable period December 2021 to May 2022. In returning to the **LEYTR**'s roots as a provider of other printed transport matter, the seven-page file will be posted free of charge to anyone who sends the Editor an A5-

sized SAE with 2<sup>nd</sup> Class stamp affixed. Alternatively, **LEYTR** members can email the Editor to request the file that will be sent by reply as a pdf.

## Blocking Bridlington

The Big Bridlington Blockade commenced on 23 October. Immediately prior were a couple of midweek works trains that transported a minimum of 1,000 tonnes of scrap, long disused track away and others delivered ballast and components of the new signalling equipment. Some work was done on site before the blockade, with new signals noted. Overnight from 23-24



October no fewer than seven works trains were booked to pass through Beverley between 2300-0400. During the period of closure, tracklaying and commissioning of new signals took place and the line was handed back to operators by 0530 on Monday 1 November. An interesting aspect with the rail replacement bus operation between Driffield and Scarborough was that they omitted Nafferton, whose passengers were conveyed by East Yorkshire's Service 121. The image shows the former alignment and new track on the left, which formed the new alignment. In the distance is Bridlington South Signal Box, which at one time had 125 levers and which, since 1 November, was left with one tiny panel. Currently the Hull–Scarborough line is scheduled to pass to York Regional Operations Centre (ROC) in 2026. (Photo: John Nicholson)

◆ Full analysis of the Bridlington Blockade by John Nicholson will feature in the next **LEYTR**.

## New Humber Express Freight Route

A new rail freight service linking the Port of Immingham to a major inland logistics hub has launched, freeing up more than eighty HGV drivers a day to ease pressure on the industry. DFDS and iPort Rail in Doncaster have launched the 'Humber Express' – the first-ever intermodal service to leave the complex. Containers arrive at Immingham Dock from around the world and are loaded to trains before being transported to Doncaster. Two services began operating daily from 23 October 2021 with the potential to increase the frequency if demand rises. It's fascinating to read a press report that notes savings on a per lorry driver basis, rather than per lorry, but such are the times in which we live!

Tens of thousands of containers, trade vehicles and tank containers move in and out of the Port of Immingham each year and it's heartening to see that some of these are now being moved by rail. The 'Humber Express' aims to complement existing logistics to enable goods to reach Doncaster iPort – regarded as the UK's most advanced multimodal logistics hub, covering an 800-acre site adjacent to the M18 in South Yorkshire. Of interest is that a pair of Class 20s (20007+20205) was used work the first journey, but failed at Barnetby and thereafter Class 56s have been deployed. The services are timed as follows: 1017 Immingham–Doncaster iPort, 1448 Doncaster iPort–Immingham, 2214 Immingham–Doncaster iPort, 0243 Doncaster iPort–Immingham. Depending on availability, each train could haul between 34-36 wagons. Port of Immingham handled 10% of all containers coming to the UK by sea. Until now Immingham has only moved bulk or break-bulk products by rail, with coal and now biomass becoming popular, along with raw materials for steel manufacturing.

## Direct LNER Trains for Lincoln Xmas Market

There are precious few benefits of planned engineering work, yet thanks to a line blockade on the ECML over the weekend of the Lincoln Christmas Market, LNER's diversionary route was booked via the Joint Line and therefore through Lincoln. Rather than its services pass through non-stop using the through roads, arrangements were made for certain trains to call at Lincoln. This also mitigated the loss of the existing direct Lincoln–London service that the blockade brought about. A summary of these additional long-distance services is below:

### Saturday 4 December:

0903 1A13 Skipton–King's Cross  
 1103 1A20 Leeds–King's Cross  
 1245 1W16 King's Cross–Inverness  
 1323 1D15 King's Cross–Leeds  
 1521 1D19 King's Cross–Leeds  
 1603 1E15 Aberdeen–King's Cross  
 1816 1S28 King's Cross–Edinburgh  
 1903 1A45 Leeds–King's Cross  
 2046 1N33 King's Cross–Newcastle  
 2109 1E25 Aberdeen–King's Cross

### Sunday 5 December:

1047 1W11 King's Cross–Aberdeen  
 1105 1A21 Leeds–King's Cross  
 1207 1Y21 Newcastle–King's Cross  
 1245 1W16 King's Cross–Inverness  
 1548 1D19 King's Cross–Leeds  
 1719 1E17 Inverness–King's Cross  
 1859 1A45 Leeds–King's Cross  
 2049 1N33 King's Cross–Newcastle  
 2146 1D33 King's Cross–Leeds

➔ Significant disruption to EMR services occurred on 3 & 4 December, coinciding with the Lincoln Christmas Market, after the RMT union announced its Senior Conductor members would strike. A revised offer to settle the long-running harmonisation dispute was received 'late', according to the RMT, who accordingly suspended the strike action while the offer was scrutinised. The strikes were called off on 2 December but EMR claimed it was unable to resume the 'normal' timetable for 3 & 4 December at such short notice. This meant services were suspended completely between Grantham–Skegness, Peterborough–Lincoln, Lincoln–Doncaster, with road transport deputising. A near-normal service was provided on the Lincoln–Nottingham–Leicester route.

## Integrated Rail Plan for the North of England

On 18 November Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Transport Secretary Grant Shapps cancelled the eastern spur of HS2, from the East Midlands to Leeds. In a bid to quell the understandable uprising, they said that £96 billion would be invested in Britain's rail network – the largest ever single investment – yet it was roundly received with criticism. HS2's price tag has often been misunderstood as depriving rail investment from elsewhere, when that's not the case: the cost of building HS2 relied on an unrelated 'pot' of money. Clearly the saving made by ditching the eastern spur contributed the lion's share of the £96 billion being offered by government, but how much of this will directly affect the **LEYTR** area? In a small article entitled 'Damp Squib' that is summarised below, John Nicholson explains:

“The HS2 route is truncated to run between London and East Midlands Parkway thence into Derby and Nottingham Centres. Northern Powerhouse Rail is truncated to run between Manchester and “the east end of the Stanage Tunnels”. Nothing directly about Lincoln, though it does appear as a grey line on maps. But then Lincoln is not in the North. However, it is strongly implied that the Newark Flat Crossing will be replaced by grade separation as part of a project to increase line speeds on 'parts' of the ECML to 140mph. This will certainly have a positive impact because it will remove the constraint of that location that seriously impedes timetabling on the cross-country route between Grimsby, Nottingham and beyond.

“Hull is mentioned only tangentially, and electrification to the City seems to have receded even further back from the excitement generated by serious proposals during the

heady days of Patrick McLoughlin as Transport Secretary. This feels more like the Grayling days. Hull and Grimsby/Cleethorpes could well see improvements in journey times of TransPennine services to Manchester as outputs of major route improvements west of Micklefield and Sheffield respectively; similarly in respect of London services as an output of improvements on the ECML and there is vague reference to journey time improvements between Hull and Leeds/Sheffield. Nothing, however, about the painfully slow run westwards from Grimsby/Cleethorpes.

“Electrification to Hull is not entirely written off, but seems unlikely within the coming 30 years. The frustration with this is that the term ‘business case’ is used, rather than ‘operational case’, so that electrification for the sake of electrification (to clean up transport emissions) seems not to be applied.”

### **December Timetable Change Summary**

There are few significant alterations contained in the December timetable change, commencing Sunday 12 December, that haven’t already been previously mentioned in these pages. Of note, however, is the **LNER** Azuma working to Hull in the evening starts its day at Inverness. The morning southbound journey travels empty to Hull from Doncaster via Goole, and upon arrival at London travels empty to Bounds Green depot before forming a Middlesborough service, ending its day at Heaton depot. **Hull Trains** reinstated its ‘lodge turn’ working, where the crew of the last southbound service stays overnight in London and works the first northbound service the following morning, thus reinstating all seven journeys each way Mon-Fri. **TransPennine Express** maintains its hourly Cleethorpes/Hull–Manchester Piccadilly service, stabling three units at Cleethorpes and two at Hull each night. **EMR** guards began working the Cleethorpes–Barton-on-Humber route, as did Freightliner drivers, both relieving TPE crews from the service. It is hoped this new method of working, coupled with more reliable Class 156 DMUs, will bring much needed stability to the route. Skegness–Nottingham has lost two return journeys to save a train on this much less patronised service over the winter. As can be read on Page 170, **Northern’s** Brigg Line service remains largely unaltered, but its Saturday-only service has been tweaked to do nothing for an earlier arrival in Sheffield. The Doncaster–Scunthorpe ‘stopper’ service remains two-hourly and the Hull–Doncaster service maintains its reduced service that sees a train missing every third hour. Hull–Halifax is reinstated in full (hourly) and as reported in the last edition, Hull–Scarborough has been cut to ensure the reliable operation of the Hull–Leeds route. During the inter-peak evening periods, York–Bridlington is cut to run York–Hull. The Sheffield–Scarborough service continues, largely unaltered. Hull’s Botanic Gardens depot became a full traction maintenance depot in its own right, with the allocation of all Northern’s Class 155s and ‘170s’.

Work at Cleethorpes Carriage Sidings will be required to accommodate the Class 68 locomotives and Mk 5 coaches that will begin visiting the town for crew training ahead of their planned introduction of the formations to the Cleethorpes–Manchester Piccadilly service from May 2022.

### **175 Years of the ‘Castle Line’**

Opened on 4 August 1846 as a 33-mile extension to the Midland Railway’s Derby–Nottingham line, a new line joined Nottingham with Lincoln via Newark, whose viability was surveyed by George Stephenson. EMR celebrated the anniversary with a week-long series of events that included on-board entertainment and at stations, with singer Jayne Darling, plus re-enactors, dancing for passengers. The Lowdham signal box – closed in 2016 and physically moved into the back garden of its new owner, David Moore, was officially opened to the public as a museum, following an appeal to raise £20,000.

## NEWS SUMMARY

David Gibson was appointed the new Managing Director for **Hull Trains** from 1 October. Having served in the RAF, Mr Gibson's subsequent appointments included Hull City Council's Assistant Chief Executive; Director in Capita's Project and Project Management Practice; MD for DB Reigo Tyne & Wear Metro; and Service Delivery Director for Caledonian MacBrayne Ferries in Scotland.

Although having been dismissed at local authority level many times in the past, the possible re-opening of the **Beverley–York line** was one of just thirteen schemes that was successful in moving to Stage 3 of the Restoring Your Railway scheme. Indeed, it is the only scheme to feature in the **LEYTR** area after the controversial Barton–Gainsborough via Immingham Dock proposal by North Lincolnshire Council was finally turned down.

**Butlin's Monorail** vehicles, removed in the mid-90s (reported & photographed in these pages at the time), were stored in a field near Swinderby for the last eighteen years and have now been rescued and were on display at the Lost Village festival, that took place at Norton Disney over four days in August. They were new in 1965 as part of the UK's first monorail.

# RAIL FLEETS REVIEW

## EAST MIDLANDS RAILWAY (EMR)

**ACQUIRED TRAINS** (all from West Midlands Trains)

9/21 **170502**      10/21 **170512 170516**      11/21 **170514**      12/21 **170535**

**WITHDRAWN TRAINS** (to Northern)

10/21 **156922**      11/21 **156401**      12/21 **156415**

**REPAINTS** – all into EMR Regional livery

9/21 **170502 170507 170510**      10/21 **170512 170516**      12/21 **170514 170535**

## **GENERAL**

Class 222 liveries: EMR (full aubergine): **222104**; EMR Interim livery (with white): **222002/4/6/8-15/8/22/101-3**; East Midlands Trains livery (Stagecoach): **222001/3/5/7/16/7/9-21/3**.

**156412** (ex-156912) that passed to Northern and was then reported being loaned back to EMR in the last edition, hasn't materialised in Northern livery with EMR fleet names, unlike sister **156402** (see Page 162). **156402** returned to Northern on 30 November.

All acquisitions listed above were immediately loaned back to WMT. At the time of the December timetable change, **170502/4/6-10/2/4/6/7/33/5** (13) are operating on loan to WMT in EMR aubergine livery and **170501/5/13** (3) are still operating with WMT in their colours, yet to be transferred (on paper, at least) to EMR. This means EMR is expecting sixteen '170s' in due course, which will presumably see off all '156s' (bar a small few for the Barton service) and many '158s', when the remaining eleven '170s' arrive from Transport for Wales. At 40 units, this will be the largest single fleet of '170s' in the country.

## HULL TRAINS

### **GENERAL**

9/21 – Vinyls celebrating the operator's 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary were applied to **802305**.

## NORTHERN

### **GENERAL**

10/21 – **195109** was named *Pride of Cumbria*.

# BUS NEWS REVIEW

## RoadCar Depot Condemned

In March a large slab of concrete became dislodged from the roof for the former RoadCar depot at Garden Street in Grimsby, and fell to the floor. Grimsby College's fleet of coaches have been based here for many years and it is understood that the falling masonry didn't cause any damage to vehicles and no-one was in the depot at the time. Subsequent investigation has deemed considerable work required in order to make the structure safe. Since March the Grimsby College's fleet has been parked at the college, located at Fryston Corner.

## NX Finally Puts Lincolnshire Out Of Its Misery

In what is probably the most unsurprising piece you'll read in this edition, National Express finally announced in October that it had 'no plans' to re-introduce Services 447 & 449, operating from Hull to London via Lincoln/Grantham (447) and Grimsby, Louth, Mablethorpe, Skegness, Boston, Spalding (449). The 449 was an amalgam of the erstwhile Service 448, withdrawn from 25 November 2019; it previously terminated at Mablethorpe but was extended to/from Hull via Louth, Cleethorpes and Grimsby following the withdrawal of the 448 until it was suspended, along with all scheduled NX coach services, from 23 March 2020 at the start of the first 'lockdown'. A spokesman told **LEYTR** that the company appreciated "people would be disappointed by this news" and that the company is constantly reviewing its routes (*even those chopped?* – Ed) and that if demand is sufficient for a "viable service" they would re-introduce one. This, of course, means that rural Lincolnshire is wholly removed from the NX scheduled coach network; in fact, the only settlement in Lincolnshire to receive a daily, scheduled NX coach service is Lincoln. NX registered the official withdrawal of Service 339 (Grimsby–Westward Ho!) in October; this route had been similarly affected by 'lockdowns' and last operated in March 2020. Service 322 (Scarborough–Hull–Birmingham–Swansea) will also be withdrawn on 1 January 2022.

## Hunts Coaches's Armed Forces Award

Alford-based Hunts Coaches became one of a record 32 organisations in the East Midlands to receive the Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award 2021 for employing and supporting people who served in the forces, veterans and their families. Hunts Coaches is a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant and encourages other business to become involved. Commodore Rob Bellfield CBE ADC of the Royal Navy presented the company with the award at an event held at the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln at the end of October.

## NEWS SUMMARY

The UK is facing a **shortage of 4,000 bus drivers**, reports claimed in October. In addition, the 'perfect storm' continues, with shortages being exacerbated by continued delays to driving licence renewals at the DVLA, which it is understood to be in receipt of 56,000 licence renewal applications for PCVs and HGVs; a significant backlog of driving test slots exists, after the DVSA suspended them during 'lockdowns'. One operator told **LEYTR** that they had received zero applicants for a recent full-time bus driving position, which further hampers operators' abilities to run services as advertised.

The possible purchase of **Stagecoach by National Express** was extended to 16 November and then to 14 December. It is clear that NX is formulating a serious offer to acquire the Perth-based business and that Stagecoach is willing to consider a sale.

Although initially postponed from its planned date of 23 October, **Stagecoach Lincoln** bus driver Adam Wales plans to embark on a 'Tour de Depots' with his 13-year-old son, Joe.

They will pedal a 250-mile route between nine of the area's Stagecoach bus depots in eight days to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support. The route will comprise Skegness first then onto Grimsby, Hull, Scunthorpe, Gainsborough, Worksop and Mansfield, returning via Newark to Lincoln a week later. Donations will be added to the £21k already raised by Stagecoach for Macmillan. Stagecoach is dedicated to donating £30k over three years.

21 October marked the **centenary of Connor & Graham** of Easington. The company was founded by Robert Campbell Connor and James H Graham and ran their first service between Easington and Hull. Unlike other local independents, Connor & Graham resisted numerous approaches by EYMS to sell, but succumbed in 1994.

## LOCAL SERVICE ALTERATIONS

Since the COVID pandemic, operators have been able to temporarily amend their registered services with as little as a week's notice. However, from 1 April 2022 these temporary alterations need to revert to pre-COVID levels or be made permanent alterations by then. Short-notice alterations will not be permitted after 31 December 2021.

### LINCOLNSHIRE

From 3 August: **Kettlewells of Retford** reinstated Services 2 & 32 (Edwinstowe/Retford–Lincoln), following their suspension since March 2020.

From 29 August: **Centrebus** reinstated their normal timetable on Service 1 (Grantham–Alma Park/Earlsfield); the previously reported new schoolday Service X6B (Upper Saxondale /Bingham–Grantham Schools) is numbered 6B.

From 30 August: **Brylaine Travel** revised the times of Service B11 (Boston–Spilsby). A correction to the reported withdrawal on this date of **Centrebus** Service 47/R47 is that it operated Whissendine–Uppingham, Uppingham–Peterborough (i.e. not Stamford).

From 2 September: **Sleafordian Coaches** revised the times of school service SLE4 (Fernwood–Sleaford).

From 3 September: **JR Dent** revised the times of school service W27D (Middle Rasen–Caistor). **Coach of Langtoft** revised the times of school service S36C (Weston–Deeping St. James).

From 5 September: **Centrebus** has no break in service on Service 9 (Oakham–Stamford) as previously reported being 1325 ex-Stamford/1355 ex-Oakham).

From 6 September: **PC Coaches** revised the route and times of school service S153S (East Barkwith–Horncastle). **Grayscroft** revised the times of school services GR4/GR18/GR20 (Sutton/Mablethorpe–Alford School). **Vectare's** new Service 47 (replacing that previously operated by Centrebus and reported in the last edition) is registered in two sections with the split taking place at Uppingham, not Whissendine as previously reported.

From 20 September: **Brylaine Travel** revised the times of college service B75 (Alford–Boston). **Delaine Buses** made minor timings changes to Services 301/302 (Spalding–Bourne /Stamford) and revised the route and times of school service 403 (Wilthorpe–Bourne).

From 23 September: **Sleafordian Coaches** revised the times of school services SLE1-3/SLE5/SLE9 (Sleaford–Newark/Collingham/Newark/Stapleford/Witham St. Hughs).

From 27 September: **Bland's** revised the times of Service 12 (Stamford–Uppingham). **Coach of Langtoft** revised the times of school service S36S (Weston–Deeping St. James).

From 29 September: **AC Williams** withdrew school service VALE1 (Long Clawson–Grantham) which was replaced by two new services GS1/GS2, operated by **Sharpe & Sons**.

From 4 October: **Stagecoach** made seasonal timetable reductions to Services 1/3 (Skegness–Chapel St. Leonards/Ingoldmells Hardy's Farm) & 2 (Skegness–Southview Leisure Park);

introduced an additional departure at 1915 ex-Lincoln to Service 2 (Lincoln–Branston); reduced the times of Services 6/9 (Birchwood–Lincoln) to operate every 30 minutes Mon-Sat (X6 remains every 20 mins); and revised the times of Services 15/16 (Lincoln–North Hykeham) to operate every 30 mins Mon-Sat. **Brylaine Travel** revised the route and times of school service F41 (Wyberton–Old Leake).

From 11 October: **Sleafordian Coaches** revised the times of school services 6434 (RAF Cranwell–Sleaford) & 5954 (Billinghay–Ruskington).

From 12 October: **Hunts Coaches** introduced new **CallConnect** Service 5C (Coningsby).

From 17 October: **Centrebus** revised the 1710 ex-Grantham departure on Service 27 (Grantham–Sleaford) to 1725 and withdrew the 1720 ex-Grantham/1750 ex-Bottesford return journey on Service 6 (Grantham–Bottesford).

From 21 October: **Kettlewells of Retford** withdrew Service 2 (Edwinstowe–Lincoln).

From 24 October: **Stagecoach** revised the times of Service 36 (Peterborough–Holbeach Drove).

From 1 November: **Brylaine Travel** revised the 0635 ex-Coningsby/0750 ex-Lincoln on InterConnect 5 (Lincoln–Boston) to depart at 0620/0740 respectively; and revised the times of Services A7/A7X (Kirkstead–Boston) & 64 (Horncastle–Lincoln Bunkers Hill). **National Express** withdrew Service 339 (Grimsby–Westward Ho!), though this hadn't operated since 23 March 2020. **Stagecoach** introduced Winter timetables to Services 1/3 (Skegness–Chapel St. Leonards/Ingoldmells Hardy's Farm) & 2 (Skegness–Southview Leisure Park); revised the route and times of Services B1 (Boston–Old Leake Bakkavour) & B4 (Nottingham–Newark Bakkavour) extending the route within Nottingham to terminate at Hyson Green; withdrew the Sunday service on InterConnect 59 (Skegness–Mablethorpe); revised the times of school service 643 (Skellingthorpe–Priory LSST); and withdrew shopper service 161 (Market Rasen–Caistor, Caistor–Brigg, Brigg–Scunthorpe), which was replaced by **PC Coaches**. **Sleafordian Coaches** revised the times of school service SLE4/5/SLE9 (Sleaford–Fernwood/Stapleford/Witham St. Hughs). **Brylaine Travel** revised the route and times of Service 20 (Kirton–Old Leake) and withdrew school service E35 (Boston–Old Leake). **Hunts Coaches** introduced the Winter timetable to Service 7 (Skegness–Alford).

From 6 November: **Brylaine Travel** introduced reduced Saturday frequencies to Services B13/K59 (Boston–Spalding), G61 (Fishtoft–Boston), B11 (Spilsby–Boston), K58 (Boston–Kirton), A6/A8 (Horncastle–Boston), InterConnect 5 (Lincoln–Boston), InterConnect 7 (Boston–Skegness), Boston IntoTown & Spalding IntoTown, until 31 January 2022 due to driver shortages.

From 10 November: **Sleafordian Coaches** revised the departure times from Sleaford on school services SLE4 (Sleaford–Fernwood) to depart 15 mins later and 10 earlier later ex-Sleaford on school services SLE5/SLE9 (Sleaford–Stapleford/Witham St. Hughs).

From 1 January 2022: **National Express** will withdraw Services 447/449 (Hull–London), which had been withdrawn since 23 March 2020.

## **FORMER HUMBERSIDE AREA**

From 5 September: **Stagecoach** withdrew Service 123 (Beverley–Wilberforce College).

From 19 September: **East Yorkshire** revised the times of Services 54 (Hull–Willeby), 56/57 (Hull Wymersley Road–Longhill), 63 (Castle Hill Hospital–Hull), 66 (Hull–Hessle) & 102/105 (Castle Hill Hospital–Hull).

From 20 September: **East Yorkshire** withdrew Service 103 (Hull–University).

From 26 September: **Stagecoach** revised the times of Services 2 (Hull–Boothferry Estate), 3 (Greatfield–Orchard Park), 4 (Cleethorpes Pier–Morrisons), 5/5M/5S & 6 (Grimsby–

Immingham/Wybers Wood), 8 (Hull–Sutton Park–Sutton Ings), 12 (Hull–Bransholme), 16 (Hull–Bransholme) and revised the route and times of Service 4 (Greatfield–Orchard Park).

From 27 September: **Hornsbys** introduced new Service 94, operating between Brigg and Kirton Lindsey to an hourly frequency; withdrew Service 13 (Scunthorpe–Lakeside) and revised the times of Services 4 (Scunthorpe–Brigg), 9 (Scunthorpe–Hospital), 12/13 (Scunthorpe–Lakeside/Ashfield Mobile Homes), 91/92 (Brigg Town Services) & X4 (Scunthorpe–Kirmington).

From 4 October: **East Yorkshire** contracted operation of Service 18 (Holme-on-Spalding Moor–York) to Reliance of York, due to a shortage of drivers.

From 24 October: **Stagecoach** revised the times of Services 3 (Greatfield–Orchard Park), 5/6 (Hull–Kingswood), 7 (Hull–Bransholme) & 8 (Hull–Sutton Park–Sutton Ings).

From 1 November: **Stagecoach** re-registered Services 10 (Scunthorpe–Parklands) & 90 (Scunthorpe–Crowle) under a new registration number.

From 1 January 2022: **National Express** will withdraw Services 322 (Scarborough–Hull–Swansea), 447 (Hull–Lincoln–London) & 449 (Hull–Grimsby–London), though in effect none of the services have operated since 23 March 2020.

From 2 January 2022: **Stagecoach** withdrew Service X62 (Hull–Goole, Goole–Junction 32, Junction 32–Leeds), though in effect this service hadn't operated since 23 March 2020.

## BUS FLEETS REVIEW

### East Yorkshire

#### DEPOT/STATUS CODES:

HU–Hull, SC–Scarborough, WI–Withemsea, BR–Bridlington, PO–Pocklington, EL–Elloughton,  
HU\*– Hull Coaching, D/L–De-licensed, TR–Driver-Training Fleet

#### SOLD VEHICLES

10/21682 (YX53 AOH) Volvo B7TL/Plaxton President - to Ellie Rose Travel, Hull

#### TRANSFERS WITHIN EAST YORKSHIRE

10/21271 HU to D/L	10/21700 HU to SC	11/21383 SC to HU
“ 272 HU to D/L	“ 889 SC to D/L	“ 384 SC to HU
“ 273 HU to D/L	“ 890 SC to D/L	“ 385 SC to HU
“ 275 HU to D/L	“ 891 SC to D/L	“ 684 SC to D/L
“ 353 HU to D/L	“ 892 SC to D/L	“ 686 SC to D/L
“ 355 HU to D/L	“ 893 SC to D/L	“ 698 SC to D/L
“ 356 HU to D/L	“ 894 SC to D/L	“ 699 SC to HU
“ 357 HU to D/L	“ 895 SC to D/L	“ 700 SC to HU
“ 375 HU to D/L	“ 896 BR to D/L	“ 701 SC to HU
“ 377 HU to D/L	11/21284 SC to D/L	“ 702 SC to D/L
“ 396 PO to HU	“ 286 SC to D/L	“ 705 SC to D/L
“ 673 SC to D/L	“ 345 HU to TR	“ 711 SC to D/L
“ 681 SC to D/L	“ 346 HU to D/L	“ 793 HU to HU*
“ 682 D/L to sold	“ 347 HU to D/L	
“ 698 HU to SC	“ 348 HU to D/L	
“ 699 HU to SC	“ 382 SC to HU	

Although allocated to TR, **345** is still used in passenger service but can be called on for Training duties.

**TRANSFERS TO GO NORTH EAST**

11/21 367 (YX10 EYS) Volvo B7RLE/Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 2 - to Go North East (5509)  
 “ 368 (YX10 EYT) Volvo B7RLE/Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 2 - to Go North East (5510)

**REPAINTS** (into the new East Yorkshire livery unless otherwise stated)

10/21 362\* 509                      11/21 366\* 512 716 777                      12/12 361\* 747

(\* EasRider branding (with EY fleetnames on front) for ‘Hornsea to Hull, Beverley or Hessle’)

**GENERAL**

‘Heritage Bus’ 764, that depicts air-brushed images of Hull’s past, saw the addition of the face of Hull’s Bee Lady, Jean Bishop, during 11/21, to celebrate the extensive work she undertook.

At the time of their repaint, 361/2/6 were also internally refurbished.

## Stagecoach East Midlands

**DEPOT/STATUS CODES:**

MA–Mansfield, HU–Hull, GY–Grimsby, SK–Skegness, GA–Gainsborough, SC–Scunthorpe, LS–Long Sutton,  
 LI–Lincoln, WO–Worksop, RE–Operational Reserve, DL–De-licensed, TR–Driver-Training.

**NEW VEHICLES**

11/21 30016 (LG71 DJD) BYD D8UR LC04S24K1M4000001 ADL Enviro200EV L221/1  
 “ 30017 (LG71 DJE) BYD D8UR LC04S24K3M4000002 ADL Enviro200EV L221/2

30016/7 are B32F and are owned by Nottinghamshire County Council but are leased to Stagecoach East Midlands for use on NottsBus Connect contraction, operated by MA. Both wear a green and blue livery for NottsBus Connect and are fully electric buses – the first such vehicles to be operated by Stagecoach East Midlands.

**WITHDRAWN VEHICLES**

11/21 16915 (FX54 AOE) Volvo B7TL/East Lancs Vyking - from RE(SC)  
 “ 34573 (YN04 YXX) Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer - from RE(SC)

**DE-LICENSED VEHICLES**

11/21 16907 (FX53 TXA) Volvo B7TL/East Lancs Vyking - from SC  
 “ 18122 (YN04 KGF) Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 - from LI  
 “ 22869 (SF09 AEX) MAN 18.240/ADL Enviro300 - from SC  
 “ 35138 (YN56 HBG) Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer - from SC

**RE-INSTATED VEHICLES**

11/21 15616 (OU10 BGO) Scania N230UD/ADL Enviro400 - to SK  
 “ 15808 (FX12 BAV) Scania N230UD/ADL Enviro400 - to SK  
 “ 18042 (MX53 FMG) Dennis Trident/Plaxton President - to LI  
 “ 19210 (NK57 DWW) Dennis Trident/ADL Enviro400 - to SK

**DISPOSED VEHICLES** (all cannibalised by East Midlands & remains collected)

5/21 16905 (FT02 FFB) Volvo B7TL/East Lancs Vyking - to Hardwick, Barnsley  
 “ 16908 (FX53 TXB) Volvo B7TL/ELC Vyking - to Hardwick, Barnsley  
 “ 16909 (FX53 TXC) Volvo B7TL/ELC Vyking - to Hardwick, Barnsley  
 “ 16912 (FX54 AOB) Volvo B7TL/ELC Vyking - to Hardwick, Barnsley

**REPAINTS** (into the **Regional** version of the Stagecoach livery unless otherwise stated)

10/21 19060 19299 24197\* 27880 27882 36451 36523 39690+

11/21 24196\* 27881 35131 37202 37203 37205

\* Specialist livery + Green (Lincolnshire County Council COVID Testing Bus)

## TRANSFERS

10/21 18022 RE(LI) to LI	11/21 15511 RE(SK) to SK	11/21 18431 LI to RE(LI)
“ 18022 LI to RE(LI)	“ 16907 RE(SC) to SC	“ 18473 SK to RE(SK)*
“ 18023 RE(LI) to LI	“ 16964 SK to RE(SK)*	“ 19169 SK to RE(SK)*
“ 18122 LI to RE(LI)	“ 16966 SK to RE(SK)*	“ 27757 RE(HU) to SC
“ 18122 RE(LI) to LI	“ 17015 SK to RE(SK)*	“ 27882 RE(HU) to SC
“ 35137 RE(WO) to WO	“ 17016 SK to RE(SK)*	“ 34457 TR(MA) to TR(WO)
“ 36059 RE(LI) to LI	“ 17677 SK to RE(SK)*	“ 36058 RE(SC) to SC
“ 36706 LI to RE(LI)	“ 17678 SK to RE(SK)*	“ 39690 RE(HU) to RE(LI)
“ 39691 HU to RE(LI)	“ 18022 RE(LI) to LI	“ 39690 RE(LI) to LI
“ 39693 RE(LI) to HU	“ 18038 GA to RE(GA)	
11/21 15510 RE(SK) to SK	“ 18418 RE(GA) to GA	

## GENERAL

**39690** has been converted to a rapid COVID testing unit for Lincolnshire County Council, and has been repainted into an all-over green livery – including the wheels!

Loaned from other depots in the East Midlands group for the Hull Fair weekend were **27189/91/3/200/1/763-5/85/7**, all noted operating in passenger services on 12 October.

The first bus to be brought into the RoadCar fleet, following the sale of Traction Group to Stagecoach in December 2005, was reported in the last edition as being withdrawn; we thought it worthy of further details. **22365 (SV55 EEN)**, a MAN 18.220/Alexander ALX300 B42F, was new to Stagecoach's Bluebird Buses subsidiary in Aberdeen in 11/05 but not used, instead being moved to Lincoln in February 2006, where its fleet number was changed to one within the RoadCar fleet (811). The bus had a 15-year operational life with Stagecoach in Lincolnshire, latterly being based at Hull, but saw little service over the last year, being withdrawn and stored at Scunthorpe with others from the same and similar batched until its withdrawal.

# PHOTO FEATURE

Page 161 (top): Seen at the Acland Street lay-over point in Peterborough City Centre on 4 November 2021 is ex-Dublin Bus Volvo Olympian/Alexander RH **V320 NAL**, new in 1999 as 99-D-582. It passed to Sharpes of Nottingham (registered NBZ 301) before Fowler's. It is unusual in the fleet in having side advertisements. (Graham Lord)

Page 161 (bottom): Looking resplendent in Midland Pullman's Nankin Blue livery (albeit with some mandatory yellow at the front) is **43055**, which leads **43046** (both ex-EMR) on the 'Whitby Jet' railtour, from Finsbury Park to Whitby on 12 November. It is seen at Platform 4 in Grantham on its outward journey. (Photo: Peter Wombwell)

Pages 162 & 163: Loaned back to EMR following its transfer to Northern, and wearing Northern livery but with EMR fleet names, is **156402** (156902 in the EMR fleet), seen here at Skegness on 17 November. The train returned to Northern off loan on 30 November. (Graham Lord)

Page 164 (top): Stagecoach East Midlands is home to many older low-floor double-deckers, with **18338 (AE55 DJY)** being a good example. Ex-Stagecoach East, and initially loaned to Hull depot in 2019, this ADL Trident/ADL Enviro400 was an early recipient of the new-look Stagecoach livery and is currently based at Gainsborough. It was captured on St. Mary's Street, Lincoln on 3 August 2021. (Photo: Mick Whatmough)

Page 164 (bottom): Seen here are **B19 BCT "Bagpuss"**, a tri-axle Leyland Olympian/Alexander RH new to Hong Kong and **R666 BCT "Mustard"**, an ex-Brighton & Hove Dennis Trident/Plaxton President, at Black Cat Travel's depot, located partially on the site of the former Harmston station, during the company's Open Day on November 2021. (Steven Crombie) See article on Page 175.









# Centrebus Grantham Depot

## ACQUIRED VEHICLE

10/21 259 (YJ05 WDD) Optare M850SL SAB19000000001682 Optare Solo 191682 B27F  
**259** was new to Boorham, Blunham (Chiltern Travel) in 2/05 has transferred internally, from Stevenage Depot.

## LOANED VEHICLE

9/21 932 (PJZ 9452) Volvo B7TL/Plaxton President - returned to Leicester Depot

## WITHDRAWN VEHICLES

10/21 303 (FJ08 MBO) Optare M950/Optare Solo  
 “ 668 (YJ60 GGP) VDL SB180/MCV eVolution

**303** was withdrawn following an engine failure. **668** is due to transfer shortly to Chaserider, Cannock.

## DISPOSALS

10/21 603 (KE06 NZX) VDL SB120/Plaxton Centro - to Chaserider, Cannock  
 “ 605 (FJ56 YBV) VDL SB120/Plaxton Centro - to Chaserider, Cannock  
 “ 888 (LX04 FYZ) Dennis Trident 2/Alexander ALX400 - scrapped

## REPAINTS (into the new Centrebus livery)

10/21 **398 549 671**

# Independent Operators

**ACKLAMS COACHES, Beverley** – 5/21 acq: **YN15 YTD/E**, Irizar i6 integrals C55F, ex-Ellison, St. Helens, to whom new in 4/15. 7/21 re-registered: **YN15 YTD** (see above), to **W80 ACK**.

**AMVALE, Grimsby** – 4/21 acq: **YN09 AOK** (*K22 SBL, YN09 AOK, NSU 987, YN09 AOK*), Volvo B9R/Plaxton C49F, ex-Shiel Buses, Acharacle, new Stewarts, Grazeley Green in 7/14. 6/21 re-registered: **YM59 SWN** (*UXI 646, YM59 SWN, 10-MN-266*), Volvo B9R/Plaxton, to **WSV 317**.

**ANELAY, Scunthorpe (Black & White)** – 5/21 re-registered: **YN11 HXO**, Mercedes-Benz O816D/Plaxton, to **XJI 2964**.

**BALDRY, Holme-on-Spalding Moor** – 9/19 acq: **551 HHW**, Bedford SB3/Duple C41F, ex-Fowler, Holbeach Drove, in a preserved condition; new to Feltham, Bristol in 4/60. 1/21 acq: **MFS 444P** (*IIL 4595, MFS 444P*), Bedford YNQ/Plaxton C45F, ex-Lamsdale, Bilston, in a preserved condition; new to Reid & MacKay, Edinburgh in 10/75. 8/21 sold for preservation: **PIW 4788** (*D700 BJF*), Bedford YNV/Duple C57F; sold: **YC02 CFU** (*GDZ 539, YC02 CFU, 448 XUM, YC02 CFU*), Volvo B12M/Plaxton C47Ft, to Nesbit, Somerby.

**BARNETT, Hull** – 3/20 acq: **BV51 BPO**, Mercedes-Benz 641/Mellor B21FL, ex-CT Plus, Holbeck, new to London Borough of Tower Hamlets (19018) in 1/02.

**BLACK CAT TRAVEL, Lincoln** – 8/20 re-registered: **M111 BCT** (*PN52 YZF*), Ford Transit, to **PN52 YZF**. 11/20 re-registered: **P100 JJH** (*W576 RSG*), Dennis Trident/Plaxton, to **W576 RSG**; **Y111 BCT** (*FY55 ZSE*), Ford Transit, to **FY55 ZSE**. 1/21 re-registered: **YJ14**

**JFK (7 MCH, YJ14 JFK)**, Youtong ZK6129HQ integral, to **GO14 BCT**. [7/21] acq: **SF04 RHU**, TransBus Dart SLF/TransBus Pointer B37F, ex-Nu-Venutre, Aylesford, new to McColl, Balloch in 5/04. It was then re-registered to **Y111 BCT**.

**COOKE, South Witham (Abacus Coaches)** – [6/18] acq: **EY17 FVP**, Ford Transit M16, ex-Chief Van Rentals, Paignton, new 4/17. It was then re-registered to **AB64 CUS**.

**CURLEY, Langtoft (Coach of Langtoft)** - [6/21] acq: **YN53 GGY**, Scania C94UB integral B41F, ex-Newport Transport (64), to whom new in 9/03.

**DENT & HORSTWOOD, North Kelsey (J R Dent)** – [2/20] acq: **GW55 SON**, ADL Enviro300 integral B60F, ex-Goldstraw, Leek; new to Williams, Lower Tumble (178) in 1/06.

**DELAINE BUSES, Bourne** – [7/21] sold: **151 (SF55 HHD)**, Volvo B7RLE/Wrightbus Eclipse Urban B43F, to T Wigley (dismantler), Barnsley as expected. [9/21] new: reported as delivered in the July/August edition, **169 (AD71 DBL)**, an ADL E20D/ADL Enviro200MMC B43F, entered service on 1 September as expected. [10/21] sold: **147 (SF54 JUO)**, a Volvo B7RLE/Wrightbus Eclipse Urban B44F, to Fowler, Holbeach Drove. On order for 2022 is a fourth ADL E200MMC, **170 (AD22 DBL)**, to enter service in March.

**ELLIE ROSE TRAVEL, Hull** – [12/20] sold: **W659 CWX**, Volvo B7TL/Alexander ALX400 H47/28F, to Wigley (dealer), Carlton for scrap. [2/21] sold: **LX53 AYW**, Volvo B7TL/Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini H41/23D, to Wigley (dealer), Carlton. [3/21] sold: **X574 EGK**, Volvo B7TL/Plaxton H41/23D, to Wigley (dealer), Carlton. [8/21] acq: **YY52 LCL/O**, Volvo B7TL/Plaxton H47/28F, ex-EYMS, Hull (671/4), to whom new in 9/02 & 10/02 respectively.

**FOWLER, Holbeach Drove** – [7/21] sold to Wigley (dealer), Carlton for scrap: **T704 XUY** (*VUN 678, T704 XUY, GDZ 435, T704 XUY, 24 PAE, T704 XUY*), Scania L94IB/Van Hool C49Ft & **PN02 XBH**, Volvo B7TL/Plaxton H41/27F. [10/21] loan: **BU71 JCY**, a Mercedes-Benz Tourismo 'Access' integral C53FLt, from Evobus, which was evaluated for a few days.

**GHP TRADING, Ancaster (AC Williams, Lawton's)** – [3/21] sold: **N212 NNJ**, Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton C39F.

**GDS 2016, Long Sutton (GDS Travel)** – [3/19] acq: **EAZ 2576**, Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton C70F, ex-Thomas, West Ewell, new to Ulsterbus, Belfast (1576) in 7/94. [1/21] re-registered is **CN04 NFF**, Volvo B12M/TransBus Paragon, to **T300 GDS**. [7/21] re-registered is a significant number of the fleet as follows: **V424 MOA**, Volvo B7TL/Plaxton, to **K200 GDS**; **YX51 AYG**, Volvo B7TL/Plaxton, to **K300 GDS**; **W449 BCW**, Volvo B7TL/Plaxton, to **K400 GDS**; **YN53 EOL**, Volvo B7TL/TransBus ALX400, to **K500 GDS**; **X592 EGK**, Volvo B7TL/Plaxton, to **K600 GDS**; **LX54 GZH**, Volvo B7TL/Plaxton, to **K700 GDS**; **YU52 VYX**, Volvo B7TL/Alexander ALX400, to **K800 GDS**; **LX54 GZN**, Volvo B7TL/Plaxton, to **K900 GDS** & **Y413 CFX**, Volvo B7TL/East Lancs, to **Y100 GDS**;

**GRAYSCROFT, Mablethorpe** – [6/21] acq: **WU58 DGE (08-D-68909)**, VDL SBR4000/Berkhof CH59/19D, new to Irish Bus (LD220), Eire in 12/08. It is named *RAF Spilsby – Foam Range*.

**GREGORY & WILSON, Caistor (Johnsons Coaches)** – [3/21] sold: **L529 EHD (DSU 110, L529 EHD)**, DAF SB2700/Van Hool C51F, to Mayfield, Darfield. Re-registered: **RX10 BOV**,

Iveco 45C15, to **J15 EEG**. 5/21 re-registered: **J55 EEG** (*AA10 ALS, VX10 FEW, EC10 TTC*), Scania K380EB4/Lahden OmniExpress, to **VX10 FEW**. 6/21 acq: **YN12 BOF**, Mercedes-Benz O816D/Plaxton C29F, ex-Procter, Leeming Bar, new to Offord, Eastbourne in 5/12. Re-registered: **J44 EEG** (*PN10 AFZ*), MAN 18.360/Beulas, to **PN10 AFT**; **YN12 BOF** (see above), to **J44 EEG**. Sold **T444 GSM** (*J33 EEG, SUI 6772, T444 GSM, FNT 565, T444 GSM*), Dennis Javelin/Berkhof C51Ft; **PN10 AFZ** (*J44 EEG, PN10 AFZ*), (see above) to Scania (dealer), Worksop.

In the last edition we misleadingly stated AA10 ALS was sold; while this was correct, the vehicle was wearing registration **VX10 FEW** (*AA10 ALS, J55 EEG, AA10 ALS, VX10 FEW, EC10 TTC*), it has since passed to Journeyman, Stramshall.

**GRIMSBY COLLEGE, Grimsby (Grimsby Institute)** – 6/21 acq: **FN09 AOO** (*8 KWX, FN09 AOO*), Volvo B7R/Sunsundegui C57F, ex-Reays, Wigton, new to Turbostyle, Crawley in 7/09; **FJ59 CCO** (*9 HXN, FJ59 CCO*), Volvo B7R/Sunsundegui C57F, ex-Reays, Wigton, new to Turbostyle, Crawley in 9/09.

**HALTHAM TRAVEL, Haltham** – 4/21 acq: a third BMC 1100FE integral school bus, ex-First (this example last operating with First South West (68570)), being **BV57 MSY**, new to First in 11/07.

**HORNSBY, Ashby** – 6/18 – thanks to the PSV Circle, gone unreported is the acquisition of **LX03 BYR**, TransBus Trident/TransBus ALX400 H45/23D, ex-Glenvale (Stagecoach Merseyside 17839), new to East London (Stagecoach East London) in 4/03. 4/21 re-registered: **6053 RH** (*W397 RVO, 00-G-7144*), Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton, to **B10 HTS & FJ61 EVV**, Volvo B9R/Caetano, to **6053 RH**.

**HUNT, Alford** – 10/20 re-registered: **M3 (YN57 DVT)**, Mercedes-Benz 518CDI/KVC, to **9882 FH**. 11/20 re-numbered: **CC6 (YT68 UVM)** to **CC3**. 4/21 acq: **M1 (YN08 BWM)** (*S555 BUS, YN08 BWM*), VW Crafter/Excel M15, ex-Bus and Us, Briston; new in 6/08 & **BC07 NBC**, Volvo B12B/Van Hool C57F, ex-Bus and Us, new to New Bharat, Southall in 5/07. **YN08 BWM** was then re-registered to **DSZ 4768**, while **BC07 NBC** was re-registered to **DSZ 6468**.

**IDEAL BUS, Market Weighton** – 5/20 re-registered: **Y161 HRN**, Volvo B10BLE/Wrightbus, to **J4 CRC**.

**KING, Stickney** – 5/19 acq: **YN13 EHG** (*MCH 384, YN13 EHG*), Mercedes-Benz O816D/Irmãos Mota C33F, ex-Ferris, Taff's Well, new to MCH, Uxbridge in 3/13.

**LONGTHORNE, Leadenham (Loveden Travel)** – 10/18 sold: **PUI 3787** (*P929 KYC*), Bova FHD12 integral C49Ft. 2/20 acq: **AF05 EPY** (*743 RUR, AF05 FPY, K10 CBK*), Volvo B12B/Van Hool C57F, ex-Ingleby, York, new to Kenzie, Shepreth in 4/05.

**LORD, Hull** – 5/21 new Operating Centre: Ellie Rose Travel, Tower House Lane, Saltend, Hull, HU12 8EE, with a Vehicle Authorisation of 8; this replaces the existing Operating Centre at Yard One, Woodhouse Street, Hull, HU9 1RJ. 7/21 sold: **R200 MGS** (*R870 MDY*), DAF DB250/Optare H48/29F, to Wigley (dealer), Carlton. 8/21 Operator Licence (PB0002148) held at 5 Holmes Lane, Bilton, Hull, HU11 4EX was surrendered.

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL, Brigg** – 3/21 the authority has changed its Operator Licence to non-PCV status.

**OAKLAND, Immingham (Sherwood Travel)** – [6/21] re-registered: **B12 GOO** (*T711 UOS, HSK 642*), Volvo B10M-62/Jonckheere, to **T711 UOS**. [7/21] acq: **SW11 NMM** (*YE11 RGJ*), Mercedes-Benz O816D/Plaxton C33F, ex-Holmeswood Coaches, Holmeswood, new to Jamieson, Cullivoe in 8/11 & **SV08 DHP**, Volvo B7R/Plaxton C51FL, ex-Pat's Coaches, Southsea, new to Bluebird Buses, Aberdeen (53315) in 5/08; Sold: **YM03 EOL**, Mercedes-Benz O814D/Plaxton C33F, to Parnell (dealer), Honiton.

**PC COACHES, Lincoln** – [6/21] acq: **YN08 HYO/P**, Scania N30UD4/East Lancs H51/28F, ex-Newbury & District (852/3), new to Reading Buses in 3/08. [8/21] re-registered: **YO11 PYJ** (*FA60 ENG*), Scania K400EB6/Irizar, to **Y600 PMH** & **YT61 FEF**, Scania K400EB6/Irizar, to **Y700 PMH**; both then passed into the Step 1 Travel fleet (see below). [9/21] update: Scania Fencer f1 **PC71 PCC** is fitted with a Scania K230UB chassis and a Higer Fencer body. [10/21] Step 1 Travel fleet summary is shown below: (\* transferred from PC Coaches fleet.)

Registration	Chassis/Body & Seating Capacity	New	Previous Registration
F20 PMH	DAF SB3000/Van Hool Alizee HE C57F	4/99	(T183 AUA)
F9 PMH	DAF SB3000/Van Hool Alizee HE C52F	7/99	(T65 AUA)
F18 PMH	VDL SB4000/Van Hool Alizee T9 C49Ft	10/02	(NL52 XZX)
F10 PMH	DAF SB3000/Van Hool Alizee T9 C50Ft	4/04	(YJ04 HVU)
F1 PMH	DAF SB4000/Van Hool Alizee T9 C49Ft	3/05	(YJ05 PWN)
F19 PMH	DAB SB4000/Van Hool Alizee T9 C51Ft	6/05	(YJ05 PYL)
PH09 PMH	VDL SB4000/Van Hool Alizee T9 C51F	4/09	(YJ09 CWY)
PH60 ZRH	Mercedes-Benz 516CDI/Onyx M16	1/11	
*Y600 PMH	Scania K400EB6/Irizar PB C53F	5/11	(YO11 PYJ, FA60 ENG)
*Y700 PMH	Scania K400EB6/Irizar PB C49Ft	1/12	(YT61 FEF)
PH66 PMH	Mercedes-Benz 516CDI/Excel M15	10/16	
FT66 JXR	Mercedes-Benz 516CDI/Excel M16	10/16	
*YH66 JLO	Mercedes-Benz 513/Onyx M16	9/17	

**SLEAFORD TAXI, Sleaford (Sleafordian Coaches)** – [4/21] re-registered: **YN07 EYZ**, Scania N94UD/East Lancs, to **LC07 TOM**. [6/21] acq: **YX17 OHW**, Volvo B8R/Plaxton C57F, ex-Mid-Wales Coaches, Penrhyncoch, to whom new in 6/07.

**TC MINI COACHES, South Elkington** – [11/19] acq: **LP15 JXU**, Mercedes-Benz 515CDI/Treka M16, ex-Thalet Community Transport, Broadstairs, new 6/20. [3/20] acq: **EK65 OYR**, Mercedes-Benz 513CDI/Treka B16FL, ex-East Surrey Rural Transport, Oxted, new in 9/15.

**TRANSPORT CONNECT, Barrowby** – [8/19] acq: **WX08 RZJ**, ADL Enviro300 integral B55F, ex-Astons, Worcester new to Bodman, Worton in 7/08. [7/20] acq: **EX65 EPO**, Mercedes-Benz 513CDI/Treka B15FL, ex-Norse Eastern, Norwich, new in 9/15. [12/20] acq: **LN66 EYY**, Mercedes-Benz 514CDI/Mellor B16FL, new 11/16. [5/21] acq: **BV57 MOA**, Autosan A1012T integral C67FL, ex-JKT, Bloxwich, new to Vitalise, Chigwell as C16FL in 1/06. The Autosan Eagle is built in Poland and is believed to have been acquired by Transport Connect to assist with maintaining social distancing on its school services.

# BOOK REVIEW

## **The Railways of North East Lincolnshire – A Celebration of the Days of Steam. Part Four: Comforts and Fish** by Paul King. Reviewed by the Editor.

This is the fourth instalment in Paul King's A Celebration of the Days of Steam series and as its title suggests focuses on steam-hauled excursions to the seaside and fish trains to Grimsby Docks. The book is more a pictorial, with almost 350 black-and-white photos, all well captioned. Around 15% of the book comprises very interesting self-produced departure lists of trains from local stations from 1950 to 1962 and working timetables. There are a number of historic railway signs and tickets that accompany photos of trains working services on which they'd have been accepted.

The story told is through local eyes – the author makes clear his unashamed 'local boy' turn of phrase, and the book benefits from this considerably. There are some excellent views of stations slightly beyond North East Lincolnshire (Louth, in particular, features) and they act as a fascinating time capsule that historians will appreciate as much as rail enthusiasts. My favourite photo is No. 222 that depicts Humber Street Bridge, with six running lines passing beneath, a steam excursion arriving and a freight departing – how times change!

It is clear that those with little knowledge of local historical railway operations will have much to be entertained with and those who have vivid recollections of the time will relive those heady days and almost certainly learn something they'd either forgotten or never knew.

Published by Pyewipe Publications, 144 pages, b&w, colour covers, £19.95. ISBN 978-1-9164603-4-8. It is available from Paul King, 4 Mersey Way, Grimsby, DN37 9DY (01472) 233627; so too are Parts 1-3 (The Engine Sheds & their Allocations; The Stations; More than Railways), and Part 5 (Beyond Wrawby Junction) is planned for later in 2022. Payment can be made by cash, cheque or bank transfer.

## SOCIETIES AT WORK

### **HORNCASTLE HISTORY HERITAGE SOCIETY** By Chris Bates

Exhibitions – real and “virtual” – by Horncastle History Heritage Society, which told how Horncastle people built a railway to the town, how it changed life in what had been a backwater and the fight to keep it open, have been honoured with a prestigious award. The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology has awarded its annual Flora Murray Award to the society for its “End of the Line” exhibition staged in the town's Sir Joseph Banks Centre and on-line. The Award, named in memory of Flora Murray OBE (1913–2009) is awarded once each year in recognition of the endeavours and achievements of local groups and individuals in the fields of Lincolnshire history and archaeology.

### **LINCOLNSHIRE COAST LIGHT RAILWAY** By Chris Bates

A train-loving rabbit, incoming pilots of aircraft landing at the adjacent airfield and staycationers visiting Lincolnshire for the first time, have all helped the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway to a record season in 2021, after a year's closure because of the Covid pandemic. A £5,000 Business Recovery Grant from Lincolnshire County Council to help recovery from the effects of the pandemic and a £10,000 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage Emergency Fund, to upgrade facilities for volunteers, have helped the LCLR overcome the worst of the effects of the last year's 'lockdowns'.

The LCLR received a runners-up award in the national Heritage Railway Awards for the restoration of the 'Skegness Simplex'. Generous publicity was afforded the organisation by

local media and specialist railway press that contributed to record numbers visiting during the summer – so successful were mid-week trials that steam locos were fired up to meet demand.

The new chime whistle fixed to ‘Jurassic’ certainly helped to whistle up trade – it can be heard far into Ingoldmells and the outskirts of Skegness. “The whistle is loud enough to shake the Jolly Fisherman out of his gumbooks,” said LCLR Historic Vehicles Trust Chairman, Richard Shephard.

## INDEPENDENT BRIGG LINE RAILWAY GROUP

When Brigg Line passengers thought that staffing issues were over they had more disappointment to come as Northern continues to struggle to find staff the crew the Saturday-only services. On 13 November the last Sheffield–Cleethorpes via Brigg service and return working was cancelled, leading to a debate with a passenger from Brigg who asked the train operator: ‘Can't we even relay on our one day a week now?’

From the December timetable change two out of the three Brigg services have had a timetable tweak, with the 1137 & 1537 to Cleethorpes retimed to 1154 & 1554. Yet again we find ourselves exasperated with Northern digging its own grave by not stretching the timetable out, despite numerous and continued requests from passengers on the line to get the first service into Sheffield earlier than the present 1313.

An inspector from the Office of Road & Rail visited recently and highlighted the concerning state of the platforms at Brigg station. Network Rail has admitted it has absolutely no idea about any works planned, so documentation has been passed to them from the IBLRG. On the 4th of November, Brigg had a visit from the Network Rail Road-Rail vehicle, its job that day was to clear out the drainage in and around the track near the station.



## THIS ‘N’ THAT!

**Dry ice on the line.** The annual £345 million bill paid by Network Rail to train operators due to delays incurred for leaves on the line could be consigned to the history books, or so a report in the press during October suggested. Trials involving a device fitted to a train in the Northern fleet will see whether the ‘pellets of dry ice’ that are ‘fired’ onto the tracks will do as those at the University of Sheffield believe, and turn all leaves on the track brittle, thus removing the inherent danger of a train skidding.

**Back to the future!** Stagecoach Hull-based 27880, that had been the recipient of Stagecoach’s turquoise ‘Specialist’ livery, was taken from its role on the Priory P&R service and transferred to Gainsborough depot in September, necessitating its repaint out of Specialist and into the Regional livery. We venture that this is the first example of a vehicle being painted out of the new colour scheme.

**Train cancelled.** The National Railway Museum in York is re-examining the links between Britain’s colonial past and slavery. Trains will be assessed for their ‘role in facilitating colonial expansion’ as part of the £9,000 study. One fears the worst possible outcome, but the NRM’s very survival is based on Britain’s railways being seen in a positive light.

# Lincolnshire BSIP Commentary

Peter White

In my academic role at the University of Westminster over many years, examining changes in the bus and coach sector has been a major theme, covering issues such as the deregulation of express coaches in 1980, regulation of local buses from 1986, and extensive minibus operations of the late 1980s. This has been combined with an interest in rural issues, especially in my home county of Lincolnshire. The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) produced by Lincolnshire County Council in late October relates directly to both of these interests, illustrating the application of a national policy framework to the Lincolnshire case.

## The national background

Bus deregulation in 1986 was aimed at reducing the growing costs of supporting bus services by stimulating more efficient operation. It also aimed to encourage more innovation in service patterns and fare structures. In place of incumbent operators receiving most of the support payments available, operators were required to register those services with were 'commercial' (i.e. covering all costs from passenger revenue, concessionary fare compensation payments and fuel duty rebate – now BSOG). There were no restrictions on registration of parallel competing services. Where a local authority wished to ensure provision of services not registered commercially, notably in low-density rural areas, the service required could be specified by the authority and put out to competitive tender. Controls on fares had already been removed in 1980 (with little effect). Privatisation of NBC and SBG regional companies was completed over the following years. Local authority-owned operations were restructured as "arm's length" companies, and their privatisation was encouraged. Licensing restrictions on taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs), were eased, creating scope for 'taxibus' and shared taxi operations, again with little effect overall. There was an expectation that intensive competition within the bus industry would help to keep down fares and enable a much wider range of operators to enter the market.

What were the results? At the national level, average cost per bus-kilometre fell dramatically, by a about 45% in real terms (i.e. adjusting for inflation), mainly through more efficient working practices (but also worse wages and working conditions for staff). A surprisingly high level of service was registered commercially, and some innovative services introduced. However, a very unstable pattern of services was seen in the first few years. Demand continued to fall, partly due to external factors such as rising car ownership, but also high fares. Many new operators entered the market, but competition was often short-lived. NBC and SBG companies privatised separately recombined in groups such as Stagecoach. London produced the same cost reduction through competitive tendering for all bus services within a planned network, and enjoyed broadly stable ridership.

## Lincolnshire changes

In the Lincolnshire case, intensive competition between municipals and Lincolnshire Road Car (Lincoln City Transport expanding to run services in Scunthorpe and Gainsborough) proved unsustainable. Well-established independents such as Hornsby and Delaine continued, and some expansion was also seen (for example Hunt of Alford's Skegness service). Substantial expansion by independents in the south of the county occurred as RoadCar withdrew, notably in the Grantham, Boston and Spalding areas. In other respects, however,

RoadCar consolidated its role by eventually incorporating both the Lincoln and Grimsby-Cleethorpes undertakings, and regaining the Spalding–King’s Lynn service.

### Changes from 2000

The very low operating costs per bus-km proved unsustainable, and have gradually risen in recent years (but are still below pre-1986 levels in real terms). However, the bus industry has placed a much stronger focus on improved service quality, as can be seen in better passenger information, more accessible vehicles and more positive marketing. More recently, lower speeds due to growing traffic congestion have pushed up costs and made services less attractive.

In many instances, innovations have come about through public funding and/or co-operative activity rather than commercial competition – for example in the Lincolnshire case, the ‘Call Connect’ demand-responsive minibus services, and the largely commercial ‘InterConnect’ services.

Central government policy continued to emphasise competition *within* the bus industry, rather than the basis for fair competition between buses and other modes. This made it difficult to provide co-ordinated fares and/or ticketing where more than one operator served the same route, and even to provide through ticketing between services feeding into each other. However, some changes were made, enabling voluntary partnership agreements in places such as Oxford, and Statutory Quality Partnerships (as in Nottingham). Given the much better ridership trends in London than other large cities, there has been long-term interest in powers to enable similar structures elsewhere. However, the legal framework had not been thoroughly thought through. The only proposal put forward formally, in Tyne & Wear, proved unsuccessful.

### The Bus Services Act 2017

This Act marked a radical change, emphasising co-operation rather than competition as the main approach. Two major changes were introduced:

**Franchising:** Powers to introduce this were made much clearer, enabling directly-elected Mayors in Combined Authorities (CAs) to do so relatively easily, and also (with more complexity) elsewhere. An obvious case is Greater Manchester, so far the only one formally planning such an approach. The authority has to take on major financial risks.

**Enhanced Partnerships (EPs):** These powers can be adopted by Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and enable the creation of a bus network which has some similarities to franchising, but retaining much of the existing roles of bus operators. Common branding can be adopted, and joint ticketing is made easier. However, agreement through a majority vote of local operators to adopt such a scheme is needed.

Both of these options were discretionary, i.e. there was no compulsion on LTAs to adopt either of them, and the existing deregulated framework could continue to apply. By the start of 2021 only one EP had been formally adopted, in Hertfordshire.

### ‘Bus Back Better’

The long-awaited government bus strategy for England was published on 15 March, and proved more radical than expected. It contains many very positive statements about the role of buses, and the case for more bus priorities, for example. There is an emphasis on improving services, simplifying ticketing, and encouraging more use of the bus. To achieve this, funding of £3,000 million is available nationally, covering both capital and operating expenditure. However, to receive such funding, all LTAs were compelled to adopt an EP or franchise as defined in the 2017 Act, and to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by the end of October. This involved consultation processes, and in the case of EPs, ensuring operator

support. This was a very tight timescale, and the capacity of LTAs to do this had been reduced by extensive staffing cuts following austerity measures since 2010. There was no parliamentary debate on the strategy, nor any new legislation. This means that competition rules remain in place, which may complicate the process of co-ordinating fares and ticketing.

Some of the guidance on preparing a BSIP was not issued until well into this timescale, adding to pressures on LTAs. Nevertheless, all 89 of them had agreed to adopt an EP or franchising (only Greater Manchester in the latter case) – hardly a surprise in view of this being essential to secure funding. They have also produced their BSIPs. However, the criteria on which they will be assessed remain unclear. If the national total of bids received exceeds the £3,000m, how will funds be allocated?

### **Lincolnshire's response**

Comments below are based on two documents: Agenda Item 7 for council meeting in early October, in the form of an open report by the 'Executive Director – Place' on the EP and BSIP and the 'Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)' as submitted to the government by the end of October. Both are available on the County's website, but the latter does not include the costing for the bid being made.

The first document reports the decision made to go for an EP rather than franchising, and notes that the alternative of not doing either would cut out the opportunity to bid for part of the £3,000m funding (as noted above). It also comments on the very tight timescale imposed by government, and notes that not all proposals in the BSIP may go ahead if funding is less than the bid made.

The plan itself contains a great deal of useful background information on buses in the county, quite apart from the new proposals as such. There are currently 12 million passenger journeys per year, of which 4.49 million [i.e. 37%] are on concessionary passes, and 37,000 per day by scholars. 410 buses are used to operate 275 registered bus services, running 15.59m bus-km in service per year [i.e. around 38,000 per bus, which is somewhat below the national average]. £6.6m per annum is spent on concessionary travel [i.e. around £1.47 per trip. This is on a full adult fare averaging £2.46, implying a compensation rate of about 60%] and £6.085m on supported services, but these are dwarfed by expenditure on school travel at £33.5m.

24 operators provide registered services. However, the bus fleet is an ageing one – of the 410 total, only 35 meet Euro VI emission standards and about 120 fall in to each of the Euro III, IV and V standards. 9 buses are at Euro II level. The mean age of a vehicle is 13.34 years, compared with a national average of 8.8. Total passenger trips on the network fell from 16.09m in 2013-14 to 12.03m in 2019-20. Between 2014-15 and 2019-20 bus-km in service registered commercially rose slightly, from 12.7m to 13.67m, but that tendered fell by around 70%, so that bus-km in total fell by 18.7%.

The public engagement survey carried out for the BSIP showed about 90% of respondents saw the main scope for improvement in better information at stops and in general, more frequent services, better bus stops or shelters, and services operating later in the evening. For respondents under 19, lower fares were the major issue.

In terms of overall targets, there is an aim of getting back to pre-Covid ridership by 2023-24, and a growth of 8% by 2025-26. Higher targets are set for routes on which improvements are anticipated (mainly through bus priority) – Stagecoach 1, 3 & InterConnect 56; Brylaine InterConnect 7 (10% growth by 2023-24, 15% by 2025-26). It is hoped to reduce round trip journey time on InterConnect 56 (Lincoln–Skegness) by 10 minutes; 1 & 3 (Skegness–Chapel St Leonards) by 5 minutes, and also 6 (Lincoln–Birchwood) by 8 minutes. Specific bus lane feasibility studies are to be undertaken at Lindum Hill and High Street in Lincoln and Roman Bank in Skegness.

In terms of specific service level commitments, the most striking is one to increase the InterConnect services from hourly to half-hourly Mon-Sat daytime, also to hourly on Sundays, and to add early morning and evening services. This is broadly in line with proposals in the CPRE report earlier this year (see **LEYTR** p84), but there is no support for their rather unrealistic plan to raise all other fixed route services to higher frequencies. The BSIP also proposes that all intra-urban bus services be raised to half-hourly or better frequencies M-S daytime, and hourly Sundays.

General quality improvements are proposed on the network including multi-operator ticketing, serving new residential developments by bus, better information, and improved emission standards. The 'Call Connect' demand-responsive network will be improved, enabling passengers to book journeys only 30 minutes ahead of travel, and expanding coverage to include 1900-2300 weekdays, also to run on Sundays. DRT services could also be used to provide coverage at evenings and Sundays when fixed routes are not viable. Many other proposals are included in the plan, and only the main features are highlighted here.

### Some observations

Overall, the plan's proposals are a fair reflection of what is attainable in a rural area such as Lincolnshire, meeting needs identified by consultation respondents. Some issues arise as part of the general BSIP process, not unique to Lincolnshire:

There are no detailed forecasts of future demand, or indications of how much of anticipated passenger recovery and growth may come from specific measures such as higher frequency. In most transport studies proposing substantial expenditure (for example, on a road scheme) a forecast would be provided – for example, on expected future traffic flows, time savings, casualty reductions etc.

No economic evaluation of changes such as those produced from additional bus priority (passenger time savings, operating cost reductions etc.)

These issues arise largely from the very tight timescale imposed on the BSIP process on comparison with most transport plans. The further studies and monitoring of changes – as indicated in the Lincs BSIP for example – will enable these issues to be examined in future.

Another point is whether bus and rail schemes are being examined in isolation. At the same time as promoting the National Bus Strategy, government is talking of restoring rail services closed in the Beeching era, yet how realistic can this be except for handful of cases? Would not enhanced bus services be a better prospect? A case in point is the proposals put forward by Greengauge21 for partial reopening of the East Lincs line (**LEYTR** p121). A greatly accelerated bus service between Grimsby and Louth could be provided by using the Peaks Parkway over the former rail, alignment to New Waltham, and existing by-passes at Holton-le-Clay and Ludborough, which could also operate direct along the A16 within Louth.

## LEYTR NEWS

The **LEYTR** Subscription will **remain at £12** for the coming year. We would like to thank you for your continued and valued support for our unique publication. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the increasing number of local bus and coach operators who furnish the Editor with information 'hot off the press'.

The **LEYTR** Committee extends its best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

We are excited to make available our entire archive as we approach our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023. Details of how the 9,000-page Archive can be purchased will be made in April.

# Black Cat Open Day

Steven Crombie

The depot of Harmston-based Black Cat Travel was opened to visitors and enthusiasts alike on Sunday 7 November and I attended the Open Day with a friend. The first thing noticeable on approach to the depot is how much of Harmston railway station still survives. As you turn into the drive entrance, the railway buildings are extant, complete with parts of the platforms and also in view is one of the original GNR Harmston station signs, attached to the wall of one of the buildings. Looking to the right from the same position you can see along the former trackbed towards Waddington station and beyond to Lincoln.

Moving towards the depot you are actually on what was the station yard. Black Cat Travel (BCT) uses the former goods shed as a workshop for single-deck buses and minibuses. The goods shed was open at one end so that visitors could see inside and its occupant that day was GO02 BCT, a Dennis Dart SLF/Caetano Nimbus, new as LK03 NLM to First London, named *Bertie*, suspended off the ground and devoid of front wheels.

Passing through the gate on the left are the BCT office and utility buildings. Once in the yard it was evident that the majority of the fleet was in residence. The only missing vehicles were N111 BCT, a Wrightbus Solar-bodied Scania and GO21 BCT, a Ford Transit. Also noticeable parked at the depot was C760 OCN, the 'Lincoln Fun Bus' in the form of an MCW Metrobus. Visiting vehicles were parked towards the rear of the yard in order to allow space for 'in service' vehicles to manoeuvre.

BCT ran clockwise and anti-clockwise services at a 30-minute frequency between their depot, the Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum and Lincoln City Centre. The clockwise journeys were provided by the company's heritage fleet, in the form of B19 BCT (Leyland Olympian/Alexander R), TJI 4296 (Leyland Tiger/Van Hool Alizee) and RGV 284N (Leyland Leopard/Willowbrook), while the anti-clockwise journeys ran using low-floor members of the fleet: Y666 BCT (Dennis Trident/East Lancs Myllennium), S666 BCT (Dennis Trident/East Lancs Myllennium), V111 BCT (TransBus Dart/Plaxton Pointer) and J666 BCT (Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400).

Visiting vehicles were PDJ 269L, an AEC Swift; LAG 188V, a Leyland National 2; JMY 120N, a Leyland Super National; 966 RVO, a Bedford BAL; DAL 771J, an AEC Reliance; YJE 3T, a Bedford YMT; S3 YRR, a Mercedes-Benz Tourino; and WU02 KVV, a Volvo B7TL/Alexander ALX400. Also present was Dennis Dominator H132 GVM, complete with sales stand.

Toilets and light refreshments were provided both at the BCT depot and the Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum; two sales stands were at the BCT depot and were doing brisk trade, as were the refreshment areas. I got a ride as far as the Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum on B19 BCT, which put in a sprightly performance. The vehicle retains many original features, including the w/c on the lower deck. After a few hours I returned to the BCT depot aboard Y666 BCT, an ex-Blackpool Transport Dennis Trident.

All donations made on the day and profits from sales of refreshments at the BCT depot were kindly given to the Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum, which had previously been the focus of the Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle Society's 'Transport Festival', that would have taken place on the same date, had a decision not been taken by the LVVS to cancel it.

In all, the Black Cat Open Day was a good day out and I extend my thanks to John and the Black Cat team for taking the trouble to organise it.