HEROES from the Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital helped to celebrate the launch of their new charity partnership with Stagecoach Manchester.

100 nurses, who were all involved in treating children injured in the arena attack, were gifted tickets by Key 103 to the Key Live 2017 concert, while Stagecoach Manchester, who sponsored the concert, invited Lily Harrison, who was injured in the attack, along with her friends and family as VIP guests.

Lily, who was looked after at Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital following the blast, was treated to performances by Rita Ora, Louis Tomlinson and Zara Larson alongside a packed house at the arena. The tickets for Lily and her family were a gift from the bus operator as it kicked off a two-year partnership with Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital Charity.

Elisabeth Tasker, Stagecoach Manchester Managing Director, said: “The victims and emergency services showed tremendous bravery, both on the night of the tragic incident and in the months following, and a number of our staff and buses were also involved on the night of the attack in helping to get people to hospital.”

Lauren Harrison, Lily’s mother said: “As a devoted pop princess this was a real treat for Lily. We all had such a fantastic time at the concert. Ever since the attack we have been fundraising in any way that we can to give back to the hospital and want to say another massive thank you for all that they have done for our family.”

Nominate your 2018 Stagecoach Champions

IT’S TIME to start thinking about who you would like to nominate for a Champions Award as the search gets underway for our Stagecoach Champions 2018.

In nine years of the awards, more than 180 employees from across the Group have been honoured for their outstanding efforts in a number of fields. The 2018 awards will again recognise success in the following categories: Safety; Environment; Community; Health; Customer Service; and Innovation.

Employees from across the Group’s bus and rail businesses in the UK and North America are invited to nominate colleagues who they believe are making a real difference in any of these areas.

For the Customer Service category we will be calling on the help of the millions of passengers who use our bus and rail services each year, inviting them to put forward their recommendations for their Stagecoach Champion. Their views and those of our own employees will be considered in deciding the award.

Gold, Silver and Bronze awards are presented for each category and shortlisted entrants receive a trophy and a cash prize.

Stagecoach Group Chief Executive Martin Griffiths said: “It’s always exciting to celebrate and reward our Stagecoach Champions and we have seen some fantastic winners over the years. If there is a colleague you think does an outstanding job, goes the extra mile, or has done something extraordinary, please do take the time to nominate them for an award. We are fortunate to have many amazing staff members in our team and I look forward to hearing about those nominated for this year’s awards.”

We are giving employees plenty of time to share their nominations – the deadline for nominations is Friday 25 May 2018 with an awards ceremony to follow later in the year.

To nominate your Champion, all you need to do is download a form from the FAQ section, under ‘Media’ at www.stagecoach.com then email the completed form to champions@stagecoachgroup.com or send it by post to Lindsay Reid, Senior Group Communications Manager, Stagecoach Group, 10 Dunkeld Road, Perth PH1 5TW. You can nominate yourself or one of your colleagues. Look out for updates on the awards and the shortlisted nominees in future editions of On Stage.

Categories for 2018

Safety Champion: awarded to employees who have championed good safety or excelled in dealing with a specific situation or incident.

Environment Champion: presented to individuals who have championed greener working practices and sustainability, such as by improving energy efficiency, reducing the company’s carbon emissions or developing innovative ways to get people to switch from the car to public transport.

Community Champion: recognises employees who have made a significant contribution to the local community through charitable fund-raising or volunteering.

Health Champion: for employees who have done most to promote employee health within the Group.

Customer Service Champion: presented to individuals who have gone the extra mile to deliver exceptional customer service.

Innovation Champion: for employees who can suggest the best new idea across any area of the business, whether it’s the launch of a new product, the introduction of a new system or a way of saving the company money.

Customer Service Champion: presented to individuals who have gone the extra mile to deliver exceptional customer service.
10 years of success

STAGECOACH has marked 10 successful years of running train services at its East Midlands Trains franchise. It is now 10 years since the launch of the first East Midlands Trains service, which was the 06.41 Derby to St Pancras on 11 November 2007. Since then, over 235 million passenger journeys have been made on East Midlands Trains services, helping to connect people with jobs, housing and leisure opportunities as well as bringing business closer to their customers and helping local communities thrive. Customers have benefitted from travel on the UK’s most punctual long distance services, a record held by East Midlands Trains for more than eight years of its franchise.

Customers have also seen millions of pounds worth of investment, with over £12 million invested in station improvements such as better toilets and waiting facilities, as well as major station programmes including the multi-million pound transformation of Nottingham, carried out in partnership with Nottingham City Council and Network Rail. In addition, 2,500 new cycle spaces and 1,000 extra car parking spaces have been installed across the network. Well over £30 million has been spent on refurbishing all 94 trains in the fleet, and the Class 158 trains operating on the local routes are in the process of being refurbished again with extra features such as at-seat USB points.

Three new stations have opened at East Midlands Parkway, Corby and most recently, Ilkeston, where passenger numbers are already higher than forecast since its opening in April this year. Additional services have been launched on many routes, with a brand new weekday and weekend timetable on the Nottingham to Lincoln route and the launch of an extra train each hour between Sheffield and London.

A member of the East Midlands Trains team is now available for customers to talk to around the clock with the launch of the 24/7 Customer Contact Centre, which links through to every station on the network via a specially installed help-point. East Midlands Trains employs over 2,000 people working in a variety of customer-facing and support roles, and as one of the biggest employers in the region, has recently been named as a Top Employer by the Top Employees Institute and as one of the UK’s Best Employers for Race by Business in the Community. East Midlands Trains customers also remain happy, with the latest independent passenger survey stating that 89% of people were satisfied with their East Midlands Trains service, a 10% improvement since the start of the franchise.

Jake Kelly, Managing Director of East Midlands Trains said, “As we celebrate 10 successful years of East Midlands Trains, I’d like to pay tribute to the 2,000 plus strong team of colleagues who show a huge amount of professional commitment day after day, both in the good times and in more challenging circumstances. “We’ve achieved a huge amount together over the past 10 years and delivered some fantastic improvements for customers, but as well as looking back over what we’ve done, it’s also important that we remain focused on the future. We’ll carry on running this franchise until at least 2019 and there’s still plenty of work to do before then, including the major upgrade of Derby station, and working with Network Rail to deliver the infrastructure improvements needed to improve journey times on the Midland Main Line route.”

A grand total

STAGECOACH Manchester has generated over £21,900 for its chosen charity, Prevent Breast Cancer. The company drew on a variety of creative methods to reach the amount including achieving a Guinness World Record for dressing a double decker in a 26-metre tutu.

In addition, Stagecoach staff also held a number of spectacular fancy dress fundraisers, took part in sporting challenges and Stagecoach also held a drive in cinema at its Hazel Grove Park and Ride, which attracted over 1,000 people and raised over £2,400. Prevent Breast Cancer and Stagecoach presented the money raised in the charity’s notorious pink colours to celebrate reaching the grand total. The money will go towards funding the charity’s vital research across four key areas: gene research, early detection and screening, preventative drugs and diet and lifestyle.

Elisabeth Tasker, managing director of Stagecoach Manchester, said: “Reaching the total of over £21,900 is an accolade to the wonderfully creative fundraising that our staff have thrown themselves into. It’s been a personal highlight to watch our staff get involved in fundraising at each and every occasion during the two years.”

A helping hand

MEGABUS.COM was proud to be able to contribute in a small way to a holiday in Cornwall for victims of the Grenfell Tower fire in London. The team donated a coach and driver to transport a group of twenty-nine youngsters and their families to Porthtowan as part of a project called Cornwall Hugs Grenfell. Dozens of grieving schoolchildren from two schools near the Grenfell Tower neighbourhood spent the week enjoying time away on the Cornish coast. A total of 45 guests journeyed from London to stay in cottages at the Towan Valley Resort, and were transported around the area by driver Dan Wojcik for the week. Esme Page from Cornwall Hugs Grenfell who organised the event said: “Thank you is totally insufficient to express our gratitude for megabus. com’s gift to the guests. Your generosity enabled a deeply healing and freeing week for 45 guests, including 29 grieving children. “I want to pay tribute to Dan our driver. He was, quite simply, exceptional and immediately felt part of the team. From calm head and problem solving, to his ‘can do’ attitude, ever present smile and kind words, it was an absolute pleasure to have him with us. He went well beyond the call of duty and was loved and respected on the whole. He checked out his routes, rang ahead, and moved things around to meet our changing needs. In every way he was in service to the group and seemed to thoroughly enjoy the various activities and challenges. His communication was perfect – always checking in with me on what was needed, what he’d planned and how he could help.”

Tony Simmons, Operations Director at megabus.com said: “We’re delighted to be able to help with this trip and pleased that we could contribute to providing a memorable, positive week for all of those involved.”
Driving fitness together

TV PRESENTER Ferne McCann has joined forces with Stagecoach to help promote the extensive career options available for females within the bus industry. The star – who recently gave birth to a baby daughter – has teamed up with the country’s biggest bus operator through an innovative fitness-based campaign for employees.

Ferne, who previously gained her bus driving qualification after training with Stagecoach, is turning to the company’s female staff for support as she – and around 100 employees – embark on a fitness and well-being programme designed by Ferne’s personal trainer Ellie Hopley.

The 8-week home-based programme aims to help the Stagecoach staff improve their physical and emotional health and participants are from all of Stagecoach’s regional operating companies across Scotland, England and Wales.

The wellness programme – which requires no equipment and is designed to fit into busy lives – provides employees with detailed information on exercise, nutrition, mindset, stress-management and overall wellbeing.

The Stagecoach participants, along with Ferne, will get together to celebrate their results on International Women’s Day in March. Ferne said: “It’s brilliant that Stagecoach is providing this free fitness programme to staff and I can’t wait to get started on it. I’ve worked with Ellie for the past year and I know the plan she has designed will help us all feel amazing, physically and emotionally, and the beauty of it is that we can all do it together and help each other along the way. For me, I worked hard to remain physically strong throughout my pregnancy and now it’s about getting back to feeling great again in a sensible and healthy way.”

Stagecoach UK Bus Managing Director for England and Wales, Mark Threapleton, said: “We know that having a diverse workforce will help us deliver an even better service for our customers and, as well as helping to improve staff well-being, we want to use this campaign to remind people of the many career options we have available for females.

“It’s fantastic to have Ferne back with us – we’d like to congratulate her on becoming a mum and look forward to seeing her, and our employees, taking advantage of this great opportunity to improve their fitness and wellbeing.”

Scottish debut for Azuma

VIRGIN’S state-of-the-art Azuma train made its inaugural visit to the Highlands as preparations to transform cross-border rail services gather pace. The iconic train, which takes its name from the Japanese word for “east”, will be rolled out on Virgin Trains’ east coast later this year, ushering in a new era of comfort and style for rail passengers.

It passed through some of the most iconic scenery on the UK rail network as it journeyed north of Edinburgh to Inverness before travelling back to a depot in Doncaster.

David Horne, Virgin Trains Managing Director on the east coast route, added: “Azuma will bring a new era of style in long distance rail travel and we’re excited to see preparations gather pace that will help transform services for passengers across Scotland.”

A chicky customer

WEST bus driver Ben Coulson got a surprise when he reported for duty at the company’s Forest of Dean outstation to find a ‘chicky’ customer already on board his bus. It is thought the unusual passenger (pictured) was trying to get to Chelt-HEN-ham.

Trendy trainspotters

NEW findings revealed by Virgin Trains have unveiled trainspotting as the latest emerging hipster trend, as millennials with a thirst for photography, high-speed travel and fast-moving technology declare their love for trains online like never before.

With just a year to go until the launch of the new high-tech Virgin trains, interest from millennials shows no signs of slowing down as the Azuma continues to spark spikes in conversations on social media.

Social media analytics platform Talkwalker has also identified more millennial Instagrammers documenting train travel than ever before.

#Trainporn and #train_nerds saw a year on year increase in posts of over 200 per cent between January and September 2016-2017, while on #ukrailscene, posts increased by 615 per cent for the same period, with 76 per cent of these posts made by the under 35s.

Sleep in the Park success

CONGRATULATIONS to Perth HQ’s Sleep in the Park conquerors Leanne Kelly, Agnes Munns, Fiona Fitzpatrick, Lorinda Lumsden and Ruth Makwembo who have helped raise more than £17,000 towards eradicating homelessness in Scotland.

The Stagecoach ladies spent a night under the stars in Edinburgh, in -6 degrees temperatures, for the charity event and found it an eye-opening experience which gave a different insight into the situation that homeless people find themselves in night after night.

The team would like to thank everyone who donated and supported their efforts. Office fundraising alone raised over £500 and a bingo tea was also a hit, raising £1,100.

The team with Sir Bob Geldof who also supported the cause
Did you know?

Virgin Trains used the voice of Hollywood actor Will Ferrell to remind passengers to lock their toilet door.

---

**Top employer**

EAST Midlands Trains has been named by Business in the Community as one of the UK’s Best Employers for Race in a new listing published this week. Creating a Best Employers for Race list was one of the recommendations made in the McGregor-Smith Review of race in the workplace earlier this year to showcase best practice on race equality in UK workplaces.

Stagecoach East Midlands Trains was the only train operator named on the Business in the Community list. The listing is unranked and includes 65 public and private sector organisations listed in alphabetical order who collectively represent the best employers for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people in the UK.

Jake Kelly, Managing Director for East Midlands Trains, said: “It is important that our workforce reflects the communities we serve and we need to be a welcoming place for everyone.”

---

**Hop to it**

CHRISTMAS came early in Devon when Stagecoach South West launched 22 brand new buses onto its Torbay network. 17 of the buses are in the Hop12 livery and all the buses feature high backed leather effect seats, free wifi and USB charging. To celebrate the launch, the South West team organised for all 22 buses to be lined up on Paignton seafront for a unique photo opportunity. Gary Rabbit, the Hop mascot even got in on the act by sporting his very own Christmas jumper and antler deely boppers.

Gary Rabbit launches new fleet

---

**Charitable giving**

GROUP staff in Perth went the extra mile over the Christmas period by making several charitable donations. The team raised almost £430 for Perth Autism Support through Christmas Jumper Day and a Christmas raffle. In addition, staff donated to the local Perth and Kinross Foodbank, collecting enough supplies – 88 kg of food – to feed 8 people for 3 days or 4 families for 3 days over the Christmas period.

---

**Celebrotary dinner**

THE ANNUAL 4th year apprentice presentation dinner took place recently at Lancaster House Hotel. It was attended by a total of 27 apprentices, who have all completed an Advanced Apprenticeship in either mechanical, electrical, body or mechelec. Certificates were presented by Adrian Havlin, Group Technical Engineer.

![The fourth year apprentices with their certificates]

---

**Having a hoppy Christmas**

13-YEAR-OLD Romany Emmingham from Worksop was given an early Christmas present from Stagecoach East Midlands’ mascot Ralfie Rabbit. Ralfie, joined by Santa and Stagecoach employees, visited Romany at her home in Worksop and surprised her with an early Christmas present, a much wanted Karaoke machine.

Stagecoach East Midlands launched the ‘Have a Hoppy Christmas’ competition in November, giving participants the chance to nominate someone special to receive an early Christmas present up to the value of £500. Romany’s mum, Anna McIntosh, entered the competition and nominated her daughter, who suffers from cerebral palsy but despite being in constant pain, never complains and always remains happy and positive.

Michelle Hargreaves, Managing Director, Stagecoach East Midlands said: “Romany’s story of struggling with a lifelong condition in such a valiant and positive way really stood out for us.”

---

**Sleigh-loads of fundraising**

STAGECOACH Santas entertained passengers on some of its services across South Manchester in the run up to Christmas by performing a selection of festive classics to raise money for the Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital.

Stagecoach’s own father and son team, Rob and Matt Stennings, sang every week for passengers alongside Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital mascot, Humphrey, with generous customers donating to raise money for the hospital.

Elizabeth Tasker, Stagecoach Manchester Managing Director, said: “We know purse strings are tight this time of year but we are always encouraged by the generosity of our staff and customers, and hope that Rob and Matt’s performance will see as many people as possible donate aboard our selected services.”

---
Luxury launch in South Wales... Find out more on page 7.

**Important donation**

BUS staff in Plymouth nominated ‘Children with Cancer’ for the company’s annual £500 charity donation. During December, staff are asked to put forward suggestions for a £500 charity donation from each of Stagecoach’s four Devon depots. Driver Kev Kellow nominated Children with Cancer UK for the Plymouth donation after meeting local fundraiser Steve Goucher. Since 1988 Children with Cancer UK has raised over £200 million to help fund research, improve treatments and support for children with cancer and their families. During the last three years, Steve has raised over £14,000 for the charity through running marathons and other fundraising events. To say thank you, Steve popped down to the depot to join staff for a rendition of Christmas classic, Chris Rea’s ‘Driving Home for Christmas.’

**The big move**

STAGECOACH has moved staff into its new UK Bus head office within Stockport’s One Stockport Exchange development. The company has signed up to a 15-year lease for 33,000 sq ft at the new 50,000 sq ft office building which is now home to around 200 employees from its former Daw Bank office. Mark Threapleton, Managing Director of Stagecoach UK Bus in England and Wales, said: “Our Stockport office has long been at the heart of our UK Bus business and we’re delighted to have committed to at least another 15 years here, in these fantastic new offices. “Over the years we have outgrown our old base and needed to find somewhere new. This office will better suit the needs of our business by providing a better working environment for staff and we’ve already had great feedback from employees on the improved facilities.”

**A close shave**

SOUTH Wales drivers at Blackwood Depot had a close shave to raise around £1,000 for charity. The team of 10 drivers did a hair and beard shave to raise money for St David’s foundation in memory of former colleague Stuart Powell who recently passed away due to cancer after 15 years service. Well done to all who took part.

---

**Hull bus gets a big hand**

A ‘PAINT the town Hull’ handprint bus has been unveiled by Stagecoach East Midlands after the design was created by student Lauren Jones in honour of Hull’s 2017 UK City of Culture status. The handprint design was revealed at the Rose Bowl Fountain in Hull with over 60 local people attending to see their handprints displayed on the colourful bus. 300 local Hull residents, including BBC’s Face of Hull Kofi Smiles, contributed their handprints to the project.

Michelle Hargreaves, Managing Director at Stagecoach East Midlands, said: “We are delighted to be able to unveil this fantastic and unique bus and have so many local people contribute towards the finished product. It is such a unique concept that we hope all the residents of Hull can enjoy whilst it continues to service routes around the city.”

**London donation for Poppy Appeal**

LONDON Regional Director, Paul Lynch, recently presented a cheque for £3,365 to Ken Hill and Roy Williams from the Royal British Legion in aid of this year’s Poppy Appeal to remember those that gave their lives in the two world wars and conflicts since. The money was raised from the sale of a commemorative badge, designed by retired Stagecoach London bus driver Geoff Stockley.

Geoff couldn’t have achieved raising so much money without the help and support of his promoters and distribution team who included; Barry Hartland of Leyton, Steve Holman of Barking, Kevin Fitzsimmons of Bow, Bob McLeod of Bromley, Jade Bloomfield of Catford, John O’Rourke of Plumstead, Daniel Stoller of West Ham, Les Armstrong of North Street, Heather Sherwood and Colin Fair of Rainham, Gordon Young of iBus, Ricky Sickelmore of Head Office and Tony Coolican of Tfls CentreComm.

Paul Lynch said: “This is a wonderful achievement for a deserving cause, and it’s nice to see every garage represented.”

**Citylink goes contactless**

THOUSANDS of coach passengers travelling across Scotland can now make their journeys using contactless payments after Scottish Citylink became the first national coach company to have the technology installed across its entire fleet. Minister for Transport and the Islands, Humza Yousaf and Citylink’s Operations Director Peter Knight launched the new payment method which is designed to make bus and coach travel even easier. The technology has been launched as part of a £12 million Stagecoach programme, to allow passengers across the UK to pay for their travel using a contactless credit or debit card, as well as through Apple Pay and Android Pay.

Scottish Citylink Operations Director Peter Knight said: “We are now the first national coach provider to have contactless payments available across all of our fleet. This is great news for passengers who want to be able to turn up and pay quickly and easily.”

Humza Yousaf, Minister for Transport and the Islands said: “As one of Scotland’s largest operators, Stagecoach have laid out ambitious plans to be at the forefront of smart ticketing and payment services. That is why it’s great to see Citylink launch their contactless payment service, which can be used on all of their coach services across Scotland. I look forward to seeing further delivery of Stagecoach’s contactless products across the country.”
Back of the net with new buses

STAGECOACH Manchester has unveiled five new buses to serve the Stockport area, taking its spending figures on new buses, facilities and services to nearly £10m in the past three years. The latest additions to the fleet are single-decker buses, each fitted with contactless payment technology and complimentary wifi for all passengers.

The investment in new buses follows Stagecoach sponsoring local football team, Brinnington United, as it continues to invest in community projects across the area. The new sponsorship has paved the way for the club to get new home and away kits as they continue their league campaign in the Stockport District Sunday League.

Welcoming walkers donation

STAGECOACH South has donated £250 to the Whitchurch Walkers are Welcome group to help deliver and produce two new bus walks leaflets. The idea of bus walks is for people to catch the bus and walk back to where they started in Whitchurch. There are two separate trails around Overton and Laverstoke which can be accessed using Andover route 76.

Both Melanie Keylock, Stagecoach’s Operation Manager in Andover, and Stacey Churton, Marketing Manager, attended the launch. Stacey said: “We are thrilled to be supporting the walking scheme. It is great for both of us as it gets more people to visit the area, as well as using the bus for leisure travel.”

New buses launched in Winchester

The brand new British built Enviro 400 MMC vehicles are state of the art with USB charging points at every seat, free wifi, luxury seating and the latest smart technology to minimise emissions.

Managing Director Edward Hodgson said: “It’s fantastic to not only be launching new buses on the route 64, but to be improving the timetable at the same time. The route is very direct and travelling by bus you don’t need to worry about finding a place to park. You can use the journey to catch up online with our free wifi and USB charging sockets.”

STAGECOACH South has invested over £1 million in 6 brand new double deck buses for its Winchester route 64, as well as increasing the number of journeys.

Pedal power

VIRGIN Trains Carlisle Station Announcer Iain Robinson is gearing up to take part in his first ever cycling challenge halfway across the world, whilst raising thousands of pounds for charity. Iain will take to his bike in March for Ride India – a 450km cycling challenge through Rajasthan, known as Land of the Kings - to raise money for Railway Children and Virgin Trains’ charity partner, Rethink Mental Illness.

Along with three other representatives from Virgin Trains on the west coast, Iain will pedal 450km (nearly 300 miles) over six days, tackling a variety of terrains across India.

To reach the fundraising total of £3,000, the Virgin Trains team at Carlisle have rallied around to create a calendar of fundraising activities.

New fleet in North Scotland

STAGECOACH North Scotland has launched a £2.75 million fleet of 10 brand new coaches to operate between Aberdeen and Inverness. The luxury coaches boast leather seats, free wifi, toilet and USB charging points and are also equipped with the most up to date vehicle tracking system which means passengers will be able to track exactly when their bus will arrive via the Stagecoach mobile app or by visiting stagecoachbus.com.

Mark Whiteelocks, Managing Director, Stagecoach North Scotland said: “We are committed to encouraging more people to travel by bus and we hope that when the community see the new coaches they will make bus a better choice to fulfil their travel needs.”

Chief Information Officer appointment

STAGECOACH has announced the appointment of Lesley Ashman as the Group’s Chief Information Officer. Lesley will be based from the Shared Service Centre offices at Stockport and will report to Group Finance Director Ross Paterson.

Lesley brings significant technology and business experience from a number of senior roles in complex organisations.

Lesley will succeed Brian Coburn, who will be leaving the Group following a short handover period.
Top awards

STAGECOACH Manchester staff collected the Frontline Employee of the Year prize at the second annual North of England Transport Awards. Five Stagecoach Manchester employees, Rob McCarthy and Ashley Mumford (both inspectors), alongside drivers Hayley Sibthorpe, Gary Wilkinson and Jose Lusimana, collectively won the award after they went beyond the call of duty on the evening of the Manchester Arena attack. On the night of the attack the team worked around the clock to transport injured members of the public to medical facilities and, as a result, have been praised for their bravery and professionalism.

In addition, Stagecoach Manchester was also awarded highly commended status in the Public Transport Operator category after investing an impressive £9m in new buses, routes and facilities in 2017 for Greater Manchester.

Putting the giving in Thanksgiving

EAST Thanksgiving once again resulted in a very busy time for megabus.com US so it was all hands on deck to get everyone to their destinations.

Over 300 additional trips operated on the Northeast corridor with the help of Lakefront, Dillons, Community, Suburban, Central Cab, Lenzner and Butler Motor coach and assistance in New England coming from Dattco.

The Northeast training school shut down for the week and training staff assisted with bus shuttles and driver reliefs and trainees in the driving school volunteered to assist with luggage loading in New York City for the busy days.

Kerrville and All West added a combined 30 additional trips to their networks in Texas and California.

This was a great example of the company combining its resources to reduce wasteful miles and increase the number of seats for the holidays.

Meanwhile, in early November, a gentleman walked into the Van Galder home office in Janesville, Wisconsin and Safety Manager Scott Morovits asked how he could help.

The man said that he was there to ask about renting a bus with a wheelchair lift... just for an hour or so as his wife was in an assisted living facility. She really wanted to be in her own home for Thanksgiving, but he was simply unable to get here there.

Morovits, who has a son who is also a wheelchair user, reached out to Charter Manager Shannon Deremer and School Bus Manager Steve Schroeder and they agreed to help the man’s wife get home for Thanksgiving. Driver Mark Mackinnis volunteered his time to take the transport from the assisted living facility and back again on Thanksgiving Day in a lift-equipped Van Galder school bus.

Retirement for Terry

IT WAS sad to say goodbye to a Stagecoach Wales legend recently as Terry Barrett retired after 42 years service to the Stagecoach team.

Terry was known as Uncle Albert for his endless stories and tales and will be missed by everyone at Brynmawr depot, although they’re sure he’ll pop in to visit from time to time.

The team wishes Terry all the best in his retirement.

Going for gold with luxury buses

PASSENGERS travelling between Blaencwm and Blaenrhondda in the Rhondda Fawr Valley to Caerphilly will be able to travel in greater style and comfort after Stagecoach in South Wales launched its latest fleet of luxury Gold buses.

The £4 million investment means travellers using the Stagecoach Service 120/130 bus route can enjoy the comfort of e-leather high back seats, increased legroom and free wifi and USB charging. Bilingual audio and visual next stop announcements have been introduced which provides passengers with additional information on their journey.

Nigel Winter, Managing Director of Stagecoach in South Wales, commented: “As part of our Gold service we ensure that each one of our drivers is trained to provide a five star customer service experience. Our team of regular, enthusiastic drivers will help customers, whether it’s their first time travelling by bus or they are a frequent traveller, and the touches of comfort will make a real difference to a more enjoyable as well as productive journey, with free wifi and USB charging points”.

The launch of the new Gold fleet

THIS edition’s ‘Picture This’ winner was taken by Stagecoach Manchester Operations Performance Analyst Anthony Fox. It shows a bus on Royal Parade in Easbourne, Sussex.

Congratulations to Anthony who will receive a £50 M&S voucher. If you have any good photos for Picture This please send them to Lindsay Reid, On Stage, Stagecoach Group, 10 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 5TW, or email it to lindsay.reid@stagecoachgroup.com

PICTURE THIS

THIS edition’s ‘Picture This’ winner was taken by Stagecoach Manchester Operations Performance Analyst Anthony Fox. It shows a bus on Royal Parade in Easbourne, Sussex. Congratulations to Anthony who will receive a £50 M&S voucher. If you have any good photos for Picture This please send them to Lindsay Reid, On Stage, Stagecoach Group, 10 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 5TW, or email it to lindsay.reid@stagecoachgroup.com
Christmas crackers
SOUTH East bus staff helped raise over £210 for Save The Children by taking part in this year’s Christmas Jumper Day.
Staff looked very fetching in their festive attire.

Big rail savings
Virgin Trains customers could save £11m a year on the east coast route following moves to reduce fares by a third on the day of travel.
The operator began offering cheaper advance fares on the day of travel in May last year. These can be less than half the cost of a walk-up fare but are usually only available until 11.59pm the day before travel.
The popularity of these cheaper fares has now led Virgin Trains to dramatically expand their availability and the number of destinations on the east coast route where they are sold, making it easier to bag savings when going for a last-minute business meeting or impulsive day trip.

In partnership
Megabus.com has announced a new partnership with Brighton based transport company CrewFlyer.
Passengers travelling between Brighton and Gatwick Airport can now purchase tickets from megabus.com for travel on CrewFlyer services.
The new services will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.
Mark Venables, Managing Director for megabus.com said: “This is a very exciting partnership for us and we’re delighted to be able to introduce this brand new route to our network for our passengers.”

Letters of praise
If you or one of your colleagues has received a letter of praise from a customer, please email a copy to lindsay.reid@stagecoachgroup.com or post it to Lindsay Reid, Senior Group Communications Manager, Stagecoach Group, 10 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 5TW. We will publish as many as possible.

The below letter was received by Stagecoach West regarding Milkwall Outstation driver Ben Coulson.
Dear Stagecoach,
My daughter who is only 3 had a sleepover at her Nan’s in Gloucester Tuesday night but came home without her favourite comfort teddy and his blanket which she has never spent a night without so we had tantrums. Her Nan then drove to Gloucester Bus Station and asked the driver on the number 23 Gloucester to Lydney if he would take it back for us to meet him at the Bus Station which he did. The driver gave teddy and his blanket a ticket and let him sit in the window and when the bus pulled into Lydney Bus Station the driver made the teddy give my daughter a wave and handed him over to my daughter.
I will say this man is my hero and he really deserves to be recognised for his fantastic customer service.
Best wishes,
Name supplied

The below letter was sent to Stagecoach Midlands.
Hello,
Today is my last day travelling on a Stagecoach bus, not because the service is bad but because I am relocating abroad. And I feel sad as I have travelled every day on the 96 service between Northampton and Rugby to go to work in Crick. I have say to all the drivers that during two years, I have been pleased by their professionalism, polite and really friendly attitude on top of a reliable service all year round.
Thank you from the young French lad – I will miss this level of service!
Kind regards,
Name supplied

Chemo Hero bus
Stagecoach South West has launched a very special branded Chemo Hero bus (pictured) which promotes a fantastic local charity that provides ‘boxes of kindness’ for those undergoing chemotherapy at the North Devon District Hospital.
The charity’s founder Lisa Wallis, a two times cancer survivor, has a very personal connection with Stagecoach as her son’s name, Stanley Walter, has graced the front of one of the company’s North Devon Wave buses for the last few years.
Lisa explained: “Some years ago, my Mum entered my son into a Stagecoach competition to have his name on a bus. People noticed the Stanley Walter bus all the time and would exactly tell me about it, it was wonderful and I cannot explain what this did for me when I was undergoing treatment. When the bus disappeared I asked Stagecoach about it. By this time I had started Chemo Hero and was undergoing treatment for a second time. Stagecoach came up with the idea of a bus dedicated to the charity and it made perfect sense, with chemo patients undergoing their own journey. Naturally, this bus is now also called Stanley Walter!”

On the up
Virgin Trains in partnership with ASLEF has launched the rail industry’s first driver apprenticeship scheme.
Over 1,200 applications were received for these positions, following a 16-stage recruitment process aimed at identifying the highest calibre potential apprentices.
During a year-long training programme, apprentices will receive training in all aspects of the train driver role plus additional training in functional skills and English, Maths and ICT. They will shadow drivers as well as train managers and station staff so they can gain a full appreciation of how their role fits with others. Apprentices will also spend time with other Virgin companies, including Virgin Atlantic.
The first three apprentices comprise of 29-year-old Simon Tyler from Presto, 24-year-old Samantha Jones from Manchester and 19-year-old Joe Wilson from Liverpool.
Ryan’s a winner

16-YEAR-OLD work experience student Ryan Goodridge won the Student of the Year Award at the annual Skillstree Awards.

Stagecoach South Training and Development Manager Robert Hall nominated Ryan after a period of work experience he had undertaken with the Stagecoach Training school earlier this year. Robert said: “It’s fantastic that Ryan was selected as the winner. Whilst on his work experience placement he made such an effort, worked hard and really impressed us. He’s mad on buses and eventually wants to become a driver. We were only too happy to help him achieve his goal, and have offered him a Saturday role in our Travel Shop.”

No barriers for Harriers

HERNE Bay Harriers under 11s squad have a smart new kit thanks to local bus firm Stagecoach South East.

Employee Danny Buga, whose son Kyle is the team’s goalkeeper, approached the company for sponsorship.

Local Stagecoach bus manager, Daniel Millis said “As a major public service provider we believe that supporting our local community is extremely important. Our own staff put a great deal of effort into supporting local charities and good causes, so when Danny told us that the squad were looking for a sponsor to fund a new kit, we jumped at the chance.”

Remembrance Ceremony

ARRIVA and Stagecoach joined forces in a tradition that has taken place in Merseyside over the last 16 years as the companies attended a Remembrance Day event at Gillmoss Depot which took over as guardian of the Cenotaph from Edge Lane garage when it closed.

The social committees of the two bus companies continue to look after the Cenotaph, ensuring it is kept clean and its surroundings are neat. Father Graeme Dune delivered a moving service with poems, readings and prayers. Jimmy Smith, Treasurer of Gillmoss, arranged wreaths, poppies, crosses and fresh flowers on the day and there was a Piper and flag bearer, with The Last Post played.

Raising awareness

STAGECOACH East Midlands helped raise awareness of World Pancreatic Cancer Day by lighting up their buses and travel shop in purple.

Staff at depots including Hull, Grimsby, Skegness, Worksop, Mansfield, Gainsborough & Scunthorpe and the head office in Lincoln also dressed in the colour to help promote awareness of the fifth deadliest cancer in the UK, and raise over £390.

The ‘Turn it Purple’ campaign urges businesses to get involved and generates discussions and awareness of pancreatic cancer by helping to light up the UK in purple.

Helen Smith, Operations Manager, Stagecoach Grimsby-Cleethorpes said: “The aim of events such as this is to break down the barriers of seeking advice and treatment for conditions and to encourage people to talk about their concerns.”

Creative fundraising

STAFF at Stagecoach Cumbria and North Lancashire held an Open Day which raised £2000 for the Eden Valley Hospice with a raffle, tombola and selling items. Most of the money came through the sale of teddy bears that were made using the off cuts of material that the company’s Trimmer Jacqueline Johnston could not use to make seat covers. Well done to all involved.

George says goodbye

SOUTH East driver George Newell has completed his last journey after a career spent within the bus industry. George began his career as a conductor for London Transport in 1974 and has worked from several London garages. He moved to Eastbourne in 2006 and remained there until his retirement in January 2018.

George’s colleagues wish him all the best in his retirement.

Guiding the way

DRIVING Instructor Richard Mole at Stagecoach in Carlisle assisted in the training of guide dog puppies when travelling on the bus. The training helped the dogs get used to the motion of the bus and helped to settle and calm them.

The training took place over three consecutive days and staff at Carlisle would like to thank Debs and her guide dog Cyder for allowing them to help.

Birkenhead’s Bernie bids farewell... Find out more on page 10.
Bernie bids farewell

STAGECOACH Merseyside employee Bernie Winstanley has retired after 31 years’ of service. Bernie, who was based at Birkenhead Depot, is pictured with Alex Crane, Operations Director at Stagecoach Merseyside, Chester and South Lancashire.

Long service

SOUTH East held its Long Service Awards dinner in Folkestone recently where current and recently retired employees were presented with a certificate from Managing Director Phillip Norwell, who himself has reached 30 years’ service. The employees had a minimum of 20 years’ service right up to Bridget Harris with an outstanding 60 years’ service.

Contacts

Editor: Lindsay Reid, On Stage, Stagecoach Group, 10 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 5TW
Email: lindsay.reid@stagecoachgroup.com

If you have a story for On Stage, please contact Lindsay Reid as above. The copy deadline for the next edition of On Stage will be Friday 16 February.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...

Keith Weightman, Stagecoach Group.

Who are you?
Keith Weightman, senior Project Manager for Stagecoach Group.

What do you like most about your job?
I like the fact that my job involves a lot of travel and I get the opportunity to work with some very interesting people from all walks of life.

What do you like least about your job?
Having to spend time sat in endless traffic jams on the M6.

Favourite Food?
I have a real passion for authentic Indian food.

Least favourite food?
Like most people I tend to steer very clear of celery.

What are you most proud of?
As a young man, and in a different company, I stood up for someone who was being bullied at work. It did not make me very popular with my ex colleagues at the time but it is something I remain very proud of.

Favourite holiday destination?
Lisbon – with its wonderfully winding streets and breath taking vistas.

Most embarrassing moment?
Too many to mention but the one that still wakes me up at night was when I reversed a Routemaster bus into an Operation Director’s car while attempting to demonstrate ‘safe reversing techniques’ to new drivers.

Favourite Music?
Just about anything from the 70s and 80s.

Person you would most like to have dinner with?
Harry Hill.

First thing you would do if you won £1m?
I’d make sure that my Mum, wife and family were financially secure and then use the rest to fund a walk around the British coastline.

‘Getting To Know You’ features in every edition of On Stage and we want to hear from as many staff as possible. To suggest the next participant, email lindsay.reid@stagecoachgroup.com

Celebrating commitment

UK BUS employees from across Hampshire, Surrey and West Sussex have been recognised for their loyal service and commitment to passenger transport at a special ceremony. Over 20 members of Stagecoach South staff (pictured) had clocked up an impressive 650 years of long service between them. Managing Director Edward Hodgson said: “The bus industry can require exceptional levels of commitment from those who work within it and we so value the contribution of all our employees across the business and the support from their partners and families.” A special tribute was also made to longest serving employee, John Clarke from Aldershot who has been driving buses for 48 years.

New faces

AS THE megabus.com US retail team focuses on improving customer experience and creating value, they have welcomed two new faces to strengthen the team. Peter Scanlon (pictured left) joins the business as Pricing and Scheduling Manager with 25 years’ experience in a variety of roles in pricing, trade management and new business development in the Shipping industry. Pulkit Maheshwari (pictured right), a recent Masters graduate in Industrial Engineering at the University of Illinois at Chicago, joins the team as an Analytics Specialist.

Peter Scanlon (left) and Pulkit Maheshwari have joined the team as Pricing and Scheduling Manager and Analytics Specialist respectively.