

ON STAGE



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Virgin Trains East Coast signals start of new franchise

VIRGIN Trains East Coast began its new franchise with an announcement that customers and communities along the network will be able to bid for a share of a £3m innovation fund.

The fund will be used for projects suggested directly by Virgin Trains East Coast customers and their communities. The money is in addition to the £140m already committed to the franchise by the Stagecoach / Virgin partnership.

The scheme will see £500,000 available each year of the new franchise from 2017. Virgin Trains East Coast will use the time before then to set up the customer feedback mechanisms and begin gathering ideas for the first set of awards. Claire Perry, Transport Minister, said: "Today is the start of a new chapter for the East Coast franchise. Passengers will benefit from thousands of extra seats, new connections and improved services between London and Scotland. The deal also means more than £3bn will be returned to taxpayers."

Virgin Trains East Coast is also planning to bring back freshly cooked breakfasts for all its First Class customers as part of a series of catering improvements planned over the next two years. There will also be new menus designed by regional



Launching the new service were new Virgin Trains East Coast Managing Director David Horne (back left), Stagecoach Chairman Sir Brian Souter (front left), Virgin Group founder Sir Richard Branson (back right) and Stagecoach Group Chief Executive Martin Griffiths (front right).

chefs and customers will be asked personally for their feedback and suggestions. Employees and customers are at the heart of the new approach. David Horne, Managing Director of Virgin Trains East Coast, added: "Passengers using the East Coast mainline are already set to benefit from hundreds of millions of pounds of infrastructure investment and service improvements over the next decade. Our new 'Customer and Communities Improvement Fund' builds on that but puts the

decision-making power firmly in the hands of the customers and communities we serve."

The announcement came as Virgin Trains East Coast began full operations on the line between London King's Cross and Edinburgh. The franchise was awarded in November last year and runs until the end of March 2023, with the option for a one year extension at the DfT's discretion.

Turn to page 4 to find out more about the new Virgin Trains East Coast senior management team.

Putting people first

STAGECOACH'S UK Bus division has been named Large Employer of the Year at the People 1st Apprenticeship Awards.

The Group scooped the award after impressing judges with its comprehensive bus engineering apprenticeship programme which has successfully delivered more than 350 apprenticeships over the past seven years.

Stagecoach UK Bus Training and Development Manager Matt Darroch said: "It's fantastic to win this award and have the hard work of our apprentices, and those who deliver our apprenticeship programme, recognised in this way. "We place great value on our apprenticeship programme as it is critical to the future success of our business. As a company, we believe in investing in the engineers and managers of the future as they



Stagecoach's Matt Darroch with People 1st Managing Director Simon Tarr.

are the people who will help us continue to deliver greener, smarter bus and coach services for our customers in the years to come."

A new way to nominate your Stagecoach Champions

THERE is still time for employees to put forward their Stagecoach Champions of 2015 and we have introduced a new, easier way to nominate. Nominations can now be submitted online by visiting the follow link:

www.stagecoach.com/media/champions

Those who would prefer to complete the original form can also use the above link and the form can be emailed to champions@stagecoachgroup.com

[stagecoachgroup.com](mailto:champions@stagecoachgroup.com)

Employees from across the Group's businesses in the UK and North America are invited to nominate colleagues who they believe are



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What a Laugh!



Posted online by a regular Supertram customer:

“Two teenagers on the tram are discussing music genres I’ve never heard of. I’m out of touch. They might as well be conversing in whale song.”

If you have seen or heard something funny – online, in the papers, on social media or just while out and about – send your contributions for the ‘What a Laugh’ section in the next edition to lindsay.reid@stagecoachgroup.com

The sky’s the limit



John Sabine (front) takes to the skies

FOLKESTONE bus driver John Sabine has completed a sky dive to raise £1,675 for Pilgrims Hospices in memory of a friend’s granddaughter. John undertook the challenge on behalf of his close friend Dave Pollock, whose

granddaughter Hannah Ward (aged 23) was cared for by Pilgrims Hospices throughout her illness. John said: “I had always wanted to do a sky dive and the idea of raising funds for Pilgrims gave me the perfect excuse to it.”

Anita Ward, Hannah’s mother, said: “I want to say how grateful I am to John and everyone at the Folkestone Rowing Club who supported him. I was so touched that he wanted to do this in memory of Hannah.”

In memory of Bob Jaynes



The late Bob Jaynes

ROBERT (Bob) Jaynes who became a bus driver with Coach Canada in 2000 after retiring from the Ontario Provincial Police, and was the full-time driver for the

Peterborough Liftlock Stars hockey team for years, has passed away after a lengthy battle with cancer. Bob received the Ontario Motorcoach Association’s 2009 Award of Heroism after drawing on his police training to save a hockey player on his bus who had a severe allergic reaction to peanuts. When not on duty, Bob regularly donated his time without pay as the main driver for the company’s United Way fundraising trips, without which they would not have been possible. He always made them fun and informative.

Successful Buy As You Earn scheme update

OUR award-winning Buy As You Earn Share Plan (“BAYE”) provides a savings and investment opportunity for employees. The BAYE plan has been operating successfully for over three years and we currently have around 8,880 employees contributing an average of £56 per month into the scheme. UK employees can join the BAYE plan when they have three months service with Stagecoach Group or every six months in June or December each year after that. The BAYE is seen as a long term savings and investment vehicle to support employee participation on tax advantaged terms in the shares of the Company. The value of investments are subject to movements in the share price and investments can increase or decrease in value over time.

The key aspects of the scheme are shown below:

- It provides employees with the opportunity to purchase shares in Stagecoach on a rolling monthly basis.
- Invest from £2 up to £150 per month (or, if lower, 10% of your gross regular salary) to purchase shares out of pre-tax income.
- Employees receive 2 for 1 free Matching Shares to a maximum value of £20 per month. So, investing £10 per month could give you up to £30 of shares under BAYE for a cash cost to you of no more than £6.80 (for a basic rate tax-payer).

- Shares are held in trust for the employee for potential tax savings.
- Shares can be removed from the Trust, free of tax, five years after the monthly purchase date.
- Employees can withdraw shares that they have purchased at any time but tax will be payable on the sale proceeds of all shares removed from the trust within five years of date of purchase.
- The free Matching Shares awarded by the company can be withdrawn by employees after three years from the date of purchase but tax will be payable on the sale proceeds of all shares removed from the trust within five years of date of award.

Annual benefit statements were issued to all members in January 2015. If you are a member of the BAYE and have not received your annual statement please send an email to: bayeadmin@stagecoachgroup.com and a new statement will be sent out to you. Employees who increased their savings amount in 2014 to take advantage of the increase in the limits on the market value of shares that can be purchased by employees, will have their BAYE deductions reset to £34.61 per week or £150 per month (within the new maximum annual limit of £1,800). Your payroll department will do this in April 2015 – you don’t have to contact them.

Smart travel for school pupils



Andrew Jarvis, Managing Director, Stagecoach East Scotland with St John’s RC Academy pupils, Ewan Morrison and Lorraine Mackenzie

SECONDARY school pupils in Perth are benefitting from a new and more efficient smart ticketing scheme which makes it easier for them to travel between the city’s high schools and college by bus.

The initiative means that around 110 senior secondary school pupils studying Advanced Highers at different high schools and the college can now store their travel electronically on their Young Scot National Entitlement Cards. The cards will be loaded with the smart tickets required for each pupil’s travel needs. These smartcards can then be used on Stagecoach bus services for travel during the school day. Transport Minister Derek Mackay said: “This innovative project is a welcome development in smart ticketing which will benefit secondary pupils travelling to school by bus across Perth.”

Stagecoach East Scotland Managing Director Andrew Jarvis added: “This project is the first step towards the introduction of smart ticketing on our network and we’re pleased to be involved in this partnership.”

Customers vote Stagecoach as best value

BUS passengers have voted Stagecoach as the best value major bus operator in Britain, according to new independent research. Consumer watchdog Passenger Focus found that customers across the UK rated Stagecoach higher than any other national bus operator on value for money in its latest UK Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey.

Stagecoach was also found to have the most satisfied customers of any bus operator surveyed in Scotland (Tayside and Central region scored 95%) and the company continues to have one of the highest overall levels of satisfaction (88%) of any major bus operator in England.

Youth Employment Award of the Year

SOUTH West Trains has been named Employer of the Year in the Young London Working Awards. The award was given to the South West Trains’ Recruitment Team at the Mayor’s Fund for London Awards at London’s City Hall.

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making a real difference in the areas of Safety, Health, Innovation, Customer Service, Community and Environment. This year, the Innovation category will recognise employees who have ideas that could make a difference to the business and our customers in the future. For the Customer Service category we are 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 team of 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.

Nominations for the 2015 Stagecoach Champions awards close at midnight on Thursday 30 April 2015.

London's Rainbow Bus

LONDON residents and visitors to the capital can now board the world's first rainbow bus in passenger service after Transport for London (TfL) and bus operator, Stagecoach London, teamed up to celebrate and support diversity in the city. The organisations have created a special rainbow design based on the symbolic rainbow flag to celebrate the people who live, visit and work in the city. The rainbow is wrapped on a red New Routemaster which will remain in operation for a year. The rainbow bus also marks the 10th anniversary of TfL's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) staff network group, OUTbound. Mark Threapleton, Managing Director for Stagecoach London, said: "This will be a travelling advertisement, spreading the message of diversity to the hearts of our communities and to visitors from across the world. We look forward to the bus raising a smile and awareness wherever it goes."



Garry Nicholass from Stagecoach London with Martyn Loukes, Chair of OUTbound

Top award for Coach Canada staff

COACH Canada has awarded its Driver of the Year and Employee of the Year accolades to Bill Alkerton and Tracey Brooks. The two were honoured at the company's annual awards after being voted for by their peers. Bill, a driver with Coach Canada since 1975, receives many comments and compliments on his service and was also a recipient of this award in 2010. Tracey Brooks was this year's recipient of the Employee of the Year Award. Tracey has been with Coach Canada since 1997 and is Customer Service Supervisor for megabus.com Canada. Tracey is always the first to step up to any challenge and champion internal or external events and never looks for thanks or praise. Congratulations to both Bill and Tracey.

Sunshine and smiles

RESIDENTS and seasonal visitors took advantage of the rare winter sunshine to enjoy a family bus event in Hayling Island recently. Stagecoach South held a 'Big Bus Day' event on the island to launch its new fleet of new buses for a popular bus service. During the day children were able to have their faces painted and take a seat in one of the miniature Southdown buses that were displayed alongside one of the brand new Stagecoach vehicles as well as a vintage bus. Steve Thorpe, Stagecoach's Marketing Officer, said: "We had a nice flow of visitors throughout the day and it was great to see just how many people were keen to find out more about the new buses."



Visitor Ethan Nokes in one of the miniature buses

Top safety accolade

megabus.com has been named Safety Champion by the Transportation Safety Exchange (TSX) in the US. The company has become the first bus operator to receive the safety rating from TSX, an independent safety rating organisation that provides safety ratings of more than 300,000 passenger and freight carriers. Don Carmichael, Executive Vice President and Senior Vice President, Safety of Coach USA megabus.com, said: "We take our commitment to safety very seriously and maintain the most stringent safety standards in the industry. It is very rewarding to be recognised for that commitment."

Reaching the summit

SENIOR Information and Customer Experience Manager with the South West Trains-Network Rail Alliance, Allison Dunn recently trekked to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro via the Limosho route.



Allison described the trek as "the hardest thing ever" but also thoroughly enjoyed it.

Allison Dunn at summit of Mount Kilimanjaro

Blindfold challenge

RUGBY guide dog owner Chris McLatchie-Wade recently invited Mark Pawsey, MP for Rugby and Bulkington, and Ian Campbell, Stagecoach's Rugby Operations Manager, to take a blindfold challenge. The challenge for both was to undertake a blindfolded return bus journey from their home to Rugby town centre to help understand the challenges that people with a visual impairment faced each day. Ian explained: "I found the experience very enlightening and I am glad that I was, in return, able to explain the disability awareness training that Stagecoach provides to all its drivers."

Local MP Mark Pawsey and Stagecoach's Ian Campbell with guide dog owner Chris McLatchie-Wade



Local support in Perth

STAGECOACH Group has become the first corporate patron of Perth's popular Black Watch Castle and Museum.

The transport company has pledged to support the popular tourist attraction for a year after agreeing to become a Gold level sponsor through the museum's new Corporate Patrons Scheme. Stagecoach Group Chief Executive Martin Griffiths said: "As a Perth company through and through we are delighted to be supporting the museum, which is one of the city's most popular tourist attractions, and we look forward to working with them over the next year to help even more people find out about the proud military history of the area."

Stagecoach Chief Executive Martin Griffiths with Chief Executive of the Black Watch Castle and Museum Anne Kinnes



megabus.com in Young Scot Awards drive

megabus.com is on board for the third year in a row as transport partner for the Sunday Mail Young Scot Awards and has joined forces with the event organisers for a promotional tour of Scotland.

A specially-branded Young Scot megabus.com vehicle spent a week travelling around the country, stopping at various locations for roadshow events which were attended by celebrities and previous award winners.

megabus.com Managing Director Edward Hodgson said: "We're delighted to be involved with the Young Scot Awards for the third consecutive year. We have many inspiring young people in Scotland and it's only right that they should be recognised."



megabus.com mascot Sid with the branded bus at the launch of the Young Scot Awards bus tour

PICTURE THIS



This edition's Picture This winner was taken by driver **Edward Reid** from Stagecoach North Scotland. It shows a vehicle in Macduff Depot on a winter's evening. Congratulations to Edward who will shortly receive his prize of £50 in M&S vouchers. 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

New Virgin Trains senior management team confirmed

VIRGIN and Stagecoach have announced a number of new senior management appointments for Virgin Trains East Coast. The Virgin Trains East Coast team will be headed by David Horne who has more than 25 years' experience in the rail industry. The new team also includes:

- Finance Director – Richard Bodicoat
- Commercial Director – Andy Sparkes
- People Director – Clare Burles
- Engineering Director – Jack Commandeur
- Major Projects Director – Tim Hedley-Jones
- Safety & Operations Director – Warrick Dent

- Customer Experience Director – Alison Watson
 - Marketing and Sales Director – Danny Gonzalez
- David Horne, Managing Director for Virgin Trains East Coast, said: "Our new team has been carefully hand-picked to ensure we are in the very best position to take the new company forward." Meanwhile, Phil Whittingham has been appointed as Managing Director for the Virgin Trains West Coast franchise. Phil has been Lead Executive at Virgin Trains for the last year, during which time he has led the company through negotiations for a new franchise which concluded successfully with the Department for Transport in June.

Best of the best

EAST Midlands Trains staff have once again been recognised for their outstanding contributions at the company's third annual Great Service Awards. The main award of the night was the 'Outstanding Individual' Award and received more than 600 passenger nominations. The winner was Kass Pinjara, a Customer Service staff member based at London St Pancras International, who was praised for being "always helpful and always approachable". Other notable award winners include, Dale Bagshaw from Chesterfield Station who scooped the award for Ticket Office Staff of the Year, Andy Fretwell from Sheffield Station who was named Dispatch Staff of the Year and Paul Green from Norwich who was hailed as Driver of the Year. Neil Micklethwaite, Customer Service and Commercial Director for East Midlands Trains, said: "We have absolutely fantastic staff right across the network who are focused on delivering great service that we can all be proud of. The Great Service Awards recognise all groups of staff and their efforts to help our passengers as well as paying tribute to those who have gone that extra mile, those that are the best of the best."



The East Midlands Trains Great Service Award winners

Good samaritan

MIDLANDS driver Iain Callaghan was hailed as a good samaritan recently after he helped reunite a passenger with his wallet that contained £160. After leaving his wallet on the last bus of the evening, customer Jeff Lambert went to the depot in Northampton to ask for help in finding it. Despite being at the end of his shift, Iain searched around 50 vehicles to find the wallet which he promptly returned to Mr Lambert.

Back of the net

STAGECOACH recently agreed to sponsor a new set of strips for Stranraer boys football club Millenium FC.

The team is pictured wearing the new strips along with Hugh Fowler, Operations Manager for Stranraer/Cumnock.



Scaling new heights

FRANCIS HOUSE CHILDREN'S HOSPICE, has seen sponsorship climb thanks to a Cheshire Three Peaks walk completed by staff and drivers from Stagecoach Manchester.

Two staff teams from five depots raised over £1,000 for the company's charity of the year. Managing Director of Stagecoach Manchester Christopher Bowles said: "I'm really proud of all of the staff who dedicated their own time and put in a great deal of effort to raise funds for an excellent local cause."

Some of the Stagecoach Manchester employees who took part in the challenge



Kevin's excellent record

NEWCASTLE driver Kevin Arrowsmith has been named Slatyford bus driver of the year for his excellent record in areas such as attendance, timekeeping, safe driving and customer service. Kevin, joining the company as a bus driver in 1986, who was chosen for the award – a day's leave, a food hamper, and a gift set of glasses – said: "I enjoy my job very much and there is always something different happening every day, meeting new people and new experiences. It is never boring!"



Driver Kevin Arrowsmith with his certificate



LETTERS OF PRAISE

The letter and Facebook message below demonstrate excellent service at Stagecoach Manchester and Stagecoach South.

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.

Dear Sir/Madam,

On a cold, dark and wet day a week before Christmas we did not expect to witness what we just have. I would just like to say thank you to the driver of the 330 bus from Stockport to Ashton. I'm not sure if this driver is aware of how happy he has made a lot of children today. So I'd just like to say well done to him for dressing as Santa and handing out sweets to every passenger. The decorations on the bus and the effort he has gone to are really appreciated. If it was either his idea or something that Stagecoach has put together... bravo...We were really impressed.

Many thanks,
Name supplied

Dear Stagecoach,

I would like to say how fantastic Stagecoach buses are in the south coast (Chichester), I get so fed up with people complaining! I just wanted to say, Chichester Bus station has been amazing and the buses run so well. My son, who is five, is Autistic and has a major love of buses. We spend so much time at Chichester bus station when he is off school. Thanks to Stagecoach buses, he learned to read all the bus routes and memorised all the bus numbers and different models – before our visits he was non-verbal and had little understanding and now he is amazing!!! Thanks to the buses inspiring him and giving him reason to learn... The drivers are lovely and polite, so from us – THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!!!



The late Steve Moody (right) pictured receiving his champions award from Stagecoach Group Chief Executive Martin Griffiths in 2011

Steve Moody – a tribute

SCUNTHORPE Depot has lost one of its most colourful characters, Stephen Moody, who passed away late last year. Steve joined the company in 2002 as a driver. He loved his job, was always talking and chatting to the passengers, young and old. In 2011 he received a Group Champions gold award for his outstanding customer service during extremely difficult driving conditions in the winter of 2010. One day Steve was taking school children when he reached Messingham Hill Top where the road was impassable. Steve parked up his bus in a nearby lay-by and walked his remaining five passengers to their pick up point, over a mile away, to ensure that they all got home safely. Steve's efforts that evening were commended by both of his managers and grateful parents of the students. Steve could not believe he won the gold award and was so proud of it. He and his wife Sue asked that the award stay at the depot as a reminder to all. Steve sadly passed away on 10 December 2014 after a courageous fight against cancer.

On the ball

A GROUP of Northampton Town football players undertook a series of special driving challenges in a Stagecoach bus at Sixfields to celebrate a brand new partnership between Stagecoach Midlands and Northampton Town Football Club.

The event was recorded and uploaded to the Northampton Town Football YouTube channel for the winning driver to be chosen.

The driving challenge was to mark the beginning of a new route which will make it easier for supporters to get to the Northampton Town ground on a matchday. Steve Burd, Managing Director, said: "We are delighted to work with Northampton Football Club on this project. I am sure this new service will be of benefit to many fans."



The Northampton Town footballers with Stagecoach Managing Director Steve Burd

On your bike

EAST MIDLANDS Trains recently joined forces with British Transport Police to offer free D-Locks to anyone signing up to Cycle Hub life membership. The one day special offer took place at Leicester station Cycle Hub which opened in June 2014 and provides secure, underground cycle storage and facilities for more than 300 bicycles.

■ *megabus.com success*



THE SUCCESS of inter-city coach company megabus.com has been highlighted in a major US transport study.

The annual review of America's transportation industry, released by Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development of DePaul University, notes that 2014 was 'a really good year for megabus.com'.

"megabus.com is the increasingly popular choice of more than 40 million travellers seeking affordable, safe and reliable travel options, and today we're pleased to be recognised again in Chaddick Institute's annual study," said Dale Moser, Chief Executive Officer of megabus.com."

■ *Pedal power at stations*

PASSENGERS in Teddington and Ewell West stations are set to benefit from a share of £60million to improve accessibility at railway stations.

The South West Trains-Network Rail Alliance secured the funding from the Government as part of the Access for All Scheme and is an addition to the funding award announced previously to improve accessibility at Barnes, Godalming, Virginia Water, Walton on Thames and Whitton stations. The Alliance will now work with local authorities and other partners to develop and deliver the final schemes, which will all be completed by 2019.

■ *Stagecoach Manchester unveils new buses*

STAGECOACH Manchester has unveiled 29 new double-decker buses, which will serve Chorlton and the South Manchester area.

The investment, worth more than £5 million, in efficient, modern vehicles, with free wi-fi, will improve the services for local people by providing increased capacity and upgraded safety and comfort levels.

Stagecoach Manchester managing director, Christopher Bowles, said: "The new buses will give our fleet an even more modern profile and enable customers on our busiest services to benefit from the latest standards which the industry has to offer."

Getting even greener

A NEW sustainability strategy has been launched by Stagecoach to cut carbon emissions, reduce water consumption and improve recycling at its transport operations in the UK, mainland Europe and North America.

The transport group's new five-year strategy, Shared responsibility, shared future, produced in partnership with the Carbon Trust, sets out a package of investments at the Group's bus and rail businesses. It follows a 30% reduction in Stagecoach Group's carbon intensity since 2007-08 and the achievement of previous targets 12 months ahead of schedule. In 2013-2014, Stagecoach had a total carbon footprint of 1,563,000 tCO₂e, a water footprint of 835,000 m³, a waste footprint of 10,200 tonnes and a waste recycling rate of 77%.

By April 2019, the Group is aiming to:

- reduce buildings carbon emissions by 7%
- cut like-for-like fleet transport carbon emissions by 2%

- lower water consumption by 9%
 - achieve a waste recycling rate of 83%
- Stagecoach Group has already been awarded the prestigious Carbon Trust Standard for measuring, managing and reducing its global carbon footprint, becoming the first public transport operator to have its boundaries certified outside of Europe. Martin Griffiths, Stagecoach Group Chief Executive, said: "We are proud of our track-record and reputation of being a sustainable business and a force for good. But we need to do more and our plans for the next five years set even more demanding targets for improvement. I believe that by working together we can turn our shared responsibility into a positive shared future."

A copy of the Group's Sustainability Strategy can be found here – <http://www.stagecoach.com/~media/Files/S/Stagecoach-Group/Attachments/pdf/stagecoach-group-sustainability-strategy-2015-2019.pdf>

Global leaders in eco-driving

STAGECOACH bus employees have topped a global eco-driver performance scheme which measures fuel-efficient driving.

More than 4,100 Stagecoach drivers have been awarded Fleet Elite status under the programme managed by GreenRoad, whose telematics system serves professional drivers in the UK, Ireland, Europe, the Middle East, America, Australia and New Zealand.

Over 1,000 of Stagecoach's Fleet Elite drivers have achieved the Gold badge for consistently maintaining the Fleet Elite driving standard for three consecutive years.

Some 21% of Stagecoach's 19,000-strong driving team have achieved the prestigious benchmark – more than any other bus company using the GreenRoad system.

In addition, this year Stagecoach is introducing special awards, in honour of former Stagecoach Ecodriver Project Manager Christopher Ball who sadly passed away last year. The Christopher Ball Memorial Trophy will be awarded to the best performing company in Stagecoach UK Bus, with plaques presented to the best depot and best driver. These will be presented in early summer with the winners based on performance over the 2014/15 financial year to 30 April 2015.

Robert Montgomery, Stagecoach UK Bus Managing Director, said: "For so many of our drivers to have reached Fleet Elite status is a great achievement and reflects the hard work and professionalism that our drivers display on a daily basis."

New coaches for prestigious X5 route

2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the X5 Service which travels between Oxford and Cambridge so it was only fitting that Stagecoach East should re-launch the service with 18 new Plaxton Elite coaches.

The team held pre-launch events at Bedford, Milton Keynes, Oxford and Cambridge, where bespoke X5 promotional bags were handed out alongside a number of other goodies.

The new X5 coaches have Euro 6 engines making them among the cleanest and greenest coaches in Europe. They can each seat 55 passengers along with one space for a wheelchair when required.

Managing Director of Stagecoach East Andy Campbell said: "This is great news for our customers. The X5 service is used by around 1.3 million passengers a year and provides a vital public transport link between Oxford and Cambridge. We are delighted to be launching these new vehicles."



One of the new X5 vehicles at Stagecoach East

■ New roles at Supertram

KATE WRIGHT, Supertram Head of HR, has taken on a nine-month secondment to the new role of Stagecoach Talent Manager. Kate will focus on developing the Group's employee and management appraisal systems and build Stagecoach's talent programme across the Group to identify and nurture our highly-skilled future business leaders.

As a result, Helen Tunnicliffe, previously PA to Supertram Managing Director Margaret Kay, has been appointed as HR Manager for Supertram. PA duties for Margaret Kay will be split between James Chapman and Abi Barker, both of whom have been tram conductors in the past.



Claim to fame



ABDUS SHAHID, Service Controller at Stagecoach London's West Ham Garage, mingled with the stars recently at a fundraising event for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. Among the celebrities Abdus hung out with was Strictly Come Dancing presenter Tess Daly... keep dancing!

If you, or one of your colleagues, have a claim to fame – perhaps a hidden talent, a meeting with a celebrity or an interesting hobby – please email details to lindsay.reid@stagecoachgroup.com

■ Praise for Pauline



Pauline is pictured with Kevin Sharp, Operations Manager in Cheltenham, Chris Evans, founder of the Butterfly Gardens and some of the students

PAULINE HARPER, a Stagecoach West driver, was chosen as the top bus driver by the Butterfly Garden – a project for people of all ages with disabilities – after going above and beyond the call of duty.

Pauline was chosen for her cheerful and helpful nature which has included stopping at the right place even when the group forgets to press the button and helping them cross the road.

Britain's future, Britain's railway

STAGECOACH has been involved in the production of an ambitious blueprint for better services, better journeys and better value on Britain's railway which has been published by the Rail Delivery Group. The plans are set out in a short booklet called 'Britain's Future, Britain's Railway', available on the organisation's website – www.raildeliverygroup.com The document details many improvements that are in the pipeline for the next few years and other potential long-term changes. These cover areas from how trains are run to how passengers buy their tickets and how they get information about their journey.

It also highlights the vital role that our industry plays in keeping the country moving – from getting 2.5 million people into major towns and cities every day to shifting 115 million tonnes of freight each year.

Restoration project

STAGECOACH Cumbria and North Lancashire Commercial Trainee Lee Wardle is working on an important project to restore a vehicle. With the support of friends and colleagues, Lee purchased a Leyland Olympian Alexander F805 FAO vehicle, brand new in 1988 and is working as part of a team to restore it to its former glory. Unfortunately



Lee with the Leyland Olympian

Lee, at the moment, is unqualified to drive it. The work is ongoing and is scheduled to finish within the next 18 months. The project's progress is being charted via the 'Carlisle Bus Group' on Facebook.

■ Making a difference



MORE THAN \$2,500 has been donated by megabus.com toward the University of New Hampshire which will be used for the Sustainability Institutes Climate Fellows Program. The Program is

led by Dr. Tom Kelly, one of the country's most respected leaders in the field of sustainability. The Sustainability Institute encourages full participation in the creation of a sustainable world and the donation is another example of megabus.com's commitment to protecting the environment for generations to come.



Lindsay's big trip

SUPERTRAM employee Lindsay Horsfield (pictured), recently travelled to Africa for a fundraising cycling trip. Lindsay cycled 350 kilometres in total, along a varied distance and difficulty of route each day. The route took her through Tanzania and across to the island of Zanzibar. In total, she raised £3,318 through Just Giving for the Genesis Research Trust.

Lindsay Horsfield (right) during her travels

A special visit

STAGECOACH South East paid a special visit to a local Beavers group recently where they answered questions on public transport and provided information on local bus services. After the visit, the group wrote to thank Thanet Operations Manager Ian Waterfield and driver Lou Bowden for their attendance on the night.



Stagecoach representatives Ian and Lou onboard with the Beavers group

Top fundraising

CHRISTMAS activities run by Stagecoach Midlands raised £2,000 for Save the Children. Over 20 staff at the Northampton head office participated in the national Christmas Jumper Day and staff contributed to a collection in the offices. Drivers from the four depots – Northampton, Leamington Spa, Stratford Upon Avon and Kettering – also dressed up in Santa costumes during the ten days leading up to Christmas. One driver each day from the four depots drove in their costumes and money was raised from passengers in special collecting boxes. Chris Child, Marketing Manager for Stagecoach Midlands, said: "It was a fantastic effort from everyone involved and thanks needs to go to our drivers for being great sports and our passengers for being so generous."



Santa driving his bus in Leamington Spa

Charity clear-out

STAFF at Oxfordshire's Banbury depot had a clear out of their spare rooms and wardrobes to find unwanted goods to donate to Stagecoach Oxford's chosen charity Helen & Douglas House. The depot received enough unwanted goods to fill eight bags which equate to a total of £320 for the charity. A fantastic effort from everyone involved.

Memorial cup match raises £700 for charity

STAFF at Stagecoach East Midlands have commemorated a fellow employee who sadly passed away last year by holding a fundraising football match for Cancer Research UK. Andy Searby, a Senior Driving Instructor at East Midlands with over 39 years of service with the company, sadly passed away after a short illness in early October. Lincoln and Skegness depots took part in the charity match for the newly created 'Andy Searby Memorial Cup' and a total of £700 was raised.

A new logo

STAGECOACH North Scotland has announced the winner of its re-brand competition which challenged designers and artists across the North-east to submit their ideas for the new Stagecoach Bluebird logo. Over 100 entries were received and the winner was Ondrej Culko, a student from RGU Gray's School of Art. Steve Walker, Managing Director, Stagecoach North Scotland, said: "We were overwhelmed by the number of high quality entries submitted in the competition. Ondrej's logo stood out to us and really compliments the Stagecoach brand."



A Stagecoach Bluebird vehicle displaying the new logo

Top prize for Laura

LONG EATON resident Laura Watts was named as the winner of East Midlands Trains' 'Win Back Your Season Ticket' competition. The competition was open to all passengers either buying or renewing a season ticket at stations in December and January and received thousands of entries. Laura was presented with her prize at Leicester train station this week and said: "I was absolutely delighted when I was told I'd won back the cost of my season ticket it was a lovely surprise!"



Winner Laura Watts receives her prize from Leicester Station Area Manager David Oldershaw



Vintage bus raises cash for kids

THE RECENT operation of a vintage Routemaster bus in Dundee raised money for Radio Tay's 'Cash for Kids'. Stagecoach Strathtay operated the vintage vehicle during December and the company donated all fares taken on the vintage service on Christmas Eve as well as any additional donations kindly offered by bus passengers

and staff. A total of £282.43 was collected for the charity. Stagecoach East Scotland Marketing Manager Sarah Elliott said: "Our thanks go to our passengers who contributed, either by directly donating money on the bus or indirectly just by paying their normal bus fare on the vintage bus on Christmas Eve."

The vintage vehicle in operation in Dundee (photo taken by Gordon Low at Taybus)



This recipe was suggested by Steph Phillips from Stagecoach London – it's healthy and very economical.

Unwrapped Cabbage Rolls

Ingredients

1 white cabbage (diced), 250g extra lean beef mince, 4 large carrots (sliced), pack of button mushrooms, chopped onion, 2 tins chopped tomatoes, carton of passata, vegetable stock cube, 1 or 2 dessertspoons Worcester Sauce (according to taste), 1/2 tin of cold water

Method

- Place ingredients in a large saucepan or stock pot
- Bring to the boil
- Simmer for at least one hour (until the carrots are soft)
- Season to taste

Serve

Makes 5/6 servings and can be frozen. Option to serve with crusty bread.

Major investment

MORE THAN £80million will be invested by Stagecoach in new buses and coaches for services in the UK and mainland Europe.

A new fleet of nearly 470 vehicles, many equipped with free wifi, will be introduced in the coming financial year. More than £75million of new buses and coaches will be introduced in Stagecoach's regional networks in England, Scotland and Wales. There is also a £2.7million order for new buses for London, as well as £6.9million of new coaches for the company's expanding megabus.com low-cost service in the UK and mainland Europe.

Ninfa's 'ugly' sweater



Ninfa and her winning 'ugly' Christmas sweater

THE TEAM at Coach USA held a fun "ugly" Christmas Sweater Contest over the festive season. A lot of creativity and deep thinking went into their submissions. The contest was judged by Alistar Bryan-Jones and the winner was Accounting Department's Ninfa Dicristina who was presented with a \$25 visa gift card.

National award for East Midlands Trains

EAST Midlands Trains was a winner at the National Institute of Customer Service Awards. The rail operator was awarded in the 'Leadership Factor Best Return on Customer Investment' category for its 24/7 customer contact centre which was launched as a rail industry first in March 2014. The company was also a finalist in the 'Best Customer Satisfaction Strategy' category. Jayne Moyses, Head of Sales & Customer Service Centre for East Midlands Trains, said: "This is a fantastic tribute and recognition to all the team who work so hard, day in day out, to deliver a great service to our customers, no matter what time of the day or night!"



From buses to bikes

BUS drivers from Manchester and Merseyside went head-to-head in a bike race to raise money for their respective charities of the year. Staff and drivers from the two Stagecoach companies battled it out in a sponsored bike ride, travelling from their own head office, along a 30-mile route to reach the other team's city.

Fundraising Santa

STAGECOACH West Scotland driver Andrew Mcgarva dressed up as Santa over the festive period on local bus services to raise money for Yorkhill Children's Hospital in Glasgow. Local people in and around Stranraer gave generously and Andrew raised a total of £560 through passengers and his colleagues.



Andrew dressed as Santa on his bus in Stranraer

Back in the capital



One of the Manchester vehicles beside the more familiar London buses at West Ham garage

FOUR vehicles made a return to London from Manchester recently to help with increased demand for bus services during on-going rail works at London Bridge Station. As a result the four Dennis Tridents currently working in Manchester temporarily returned to West Ham garage to operate on services between London Bridge and Lewisham.

Allan clocks up 30 years of service

STAGECOACH London's Head Office receptionist Allan Sedge reached the 30 years of service milestone recently. Allan began work as a driver at Upton Park garage and was there for 18 years before a shoulder problem put the brakes on his career. After a period of working around the garage Allan joined the new Travelshop at Ilford where his past shop management experience proved useful. Since the shop closed and head office moved to West Ham, Allan has been the welcoming face of Stagecoach London.



Allan cuts his cake to mark 30 years' service

■ Peter bids farewell



Peter Constable

STAGECOACH East employee Peter Constable has retired after a career spanning 56 years. In 1958 Peter started work at the Eastern Counties garage in his home town of March in Cambridgeshire.

Now aged 80, after a career driving and fuelling buses for 56 years, he is ready to take a break.

Regarded by many as synonymous with Stagecoach East's March garage, he will be fondly remembered by those he has worked alongside over the years who wish him all the best in his retirement.

■ Long service awards



The long-serving Stagecoach Manchester employees with Traffic Commissioner Beverley Bell (front centre) and Stagecoach Managing Director Christopher Bowles (front second left)

STAGECOACH Manchester thanked 36 members of staff, for a collective 1,035 years of service, at the Company's annual Long Service Awards ceremony. The awards recognise employees who have worked with the local bus company for 20 years or more. Particular commendation went to Systems Specialist, John Pollock, who has worked with the firm for 46 years, and Drivers Frank

Llewellyn and Roberts Usher who have each clocked up 44 years of service. Stagecoach Manchester staff were presented with their awards by Traffic Commissioner for the North West of England, Beverley Bell, at The Lowry Hotel, Manchester.

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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 17 April 2015**.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...

Gemma Toolan, Social Media Manager, UK Bus

■ Who are you?

Gemma Toolan, Social Media Manager (extraordinaire) for UK Bus

■ What do you like most about your job?

The people. I enjoy working with different teams across the business.

■ What do you like least about your job?

The travelling. As much as I love my job, if I could do it all and still get to my own bed at night I'd be happy!

■ Favourite food?

Breakfast, I love breakfast!

■ Least favourite food?

I hate mushrooms.

■ What are you most proud of?

To be honest I feel quite proud if I can get to the end of the day and I've managed to stay upright! (see below!)

■ Favourite holiday destination?

Anywhere in the Caribbean.

■ Most embarrassing moment?

I'm generally a bit clumsy and awkward and gravity tends to work against me. I've got far too many embarrassing moments as a result, like getting run over by a push bike or slipping in the snow, landing on my handbag and

flattened my yoghurt in the car park. I also recently got stuck on a Tube in London while my colleague got off!

■ Favourite music?

Anything I can dance and sing (badly) to!

■ Person you would most like to have dinner with?

Harry Potter at Hogwarts!

■ First thing you would buy if you won £1 million?

Jump on a plane and think about it while I sip a cocktail on a beach somewhere! I would also really like to open a comfy, laid back breakfast cafe serving loads of different options for breakfast!



'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

North East appointments

NATHAN STANISLAWSKI has been welcomed as the new Operations Manager to the team at Stagecoach North East's Teesside bus depot in Stockton on Tees. Lincoln-born Nathan was previously Operations Manager for Stagecoach in Ardrossan in West Scotland and is responsible for a team of 170 drivers and office staff at Stockton on Tees which operates 76 buses around the Teesside area.

Nathan said: "I am looking forward to my new challenge and working with my new team. I endeavour to make Stockton a great place to work for all employees and provide a fantastic service for our customers."

Nathan's appointment follows the promotion of former Operations Manager Abbey Pettigrew who has taken up the role of manager for local bus at Stagecoach Oxford.

Meanwhile, Stagecoach North East has appointed apprentice fitter Kenny Kelly at Slatyford depot following the retirement of fitter Gordon Scott.



New Teesside operations manager Nathan Stanislawski

New management teams

NEW management teams are in place across many Stagecoach Merseyside and South Lancashire depots as the company develops and expands its team. The following Operations Managers are now in place:

- Preston: Colin Nicholson (previously Chorley)
- Chorley: Nat Ward (previously Liverpool Gillmoss)
- Liverpool Gillmoss: Louise Simpson (previously Preston)
- Birkenhead: Jamie Reid (previously Dunfermline)
- Chester: Alan French (promoted from Assistant Operations Manager, Preston)

Last call for Bob



Bob Knowles, who has retired after 40 years

CHORLEY bus driver Bob Knowles has bid his passengers a fond farewell after more than 40 years on the buses.

Bob covered the Chorley to Preston route for Stagecoach Merseyside and South Lancashire since 1974. He said: "I've loved my job, I've met a lot of interesting people because of it. My dad was also a driver so I've been surrounded by buses for as long as I can remember – I think retirement will be a bit surreal for me!" Bob's retirement plans include a trip to Europe and all at Chorley wish him the best.