Burnham’s new powers on anti-social behaviour
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MINISTERS FAILING to turn up to industry events is nothing new; but it is still very frustrating for organisers and attendees, and a missed opportunity for a government which professes to be keen on working closely with the passenger transport sector.

So the absence of newly-appointed bus minister Nusrat Ghani from CPT’s annual dinner in London was not a great surprise, and the organisation managed to wheel out a former minister instead who promised to take the new president Martin Dean’s message back to Westminster.

It’s a far cry from previous events when the industry was spoilt by the attention from former coalition government minister Norman Baker, but he seemed to have a genuine interest in the sector and wasn’t just passing through in the way that so many former transport ministers have appeared to.

The new CPT president in fact stressed the importance of working in partnership with central and local government and other stakeholders, in spite of the minister’s absence. He pointed to the need for a more proactive approach from the industry when it comes to lobbying with more promotion of the positive achievements of the sector.

The Bus Services Act could be game-changing, and Dean acknowledged the importance of engaging with stakeholders on future plans, as well as highlighting the industry’s concerns on the impacts of congestion.

He warned the sector not to be complacent, however, and made a timely call for the sector to “get to a situation where ‘best in class’ is normal.”

Coaches figured briefly in Dean’s speech but a good example of the value of quiet, but forceful lobbying is seen with the news reported in this issue about new arrangements for red routes in London. The London Tourist Coach Operators Association and CPT appear to have achieved a positive outcome for those operators who need to set-down and pick-up on the TfL road network which will hopefully be fully implemented following the forthcoming road trials by their members.
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Thirty new Celebration Class coaches for Shearings

SHEARINGS Holidays is to add 30 new ‘Celebration Class’ Mercedes-Benz Tourisms to its fleet in May. Each coach will carry an individual name to honour loyal customers and drivers. The new coaches will include new safety features as well as lateral seat movement and USB charge points.

Shearings received more than 300 nominations of individual customers to name the coaches after, which it has whittled down to 20 who are now being contacted. In addition, it is asking its drivers to nominate fellow drivers both past and present who they feel are worthy of recognition and ten drivers will have coaches named after them.

“Our customers and drivers are incredibly loyal and we wanted to give something back in recognition of this,” says Jane Atkins, managing director at Shearings Holidays. “We felt that naming a coach after them would demonstrate just how much we value them and the name will appear on the coach door so everyone can see it.”

Shearings’ fleet of 130 coaches has an average age of no more than 7 years. As well as the new coach intake having USB charge points, the reminder of the fleet will have wi-fi installed in March ahead of the summer season.

Shearings has involved its customers in deciding the livery for the new intake. “We were keen to involve our loyal customer base in this decision-making process and we took to social media to ask our followers their thoughts on a change away from the current colour and design,” adds Atkins. “There was a resounding request for the brand to remain blue.”

ComfortDelGro acquires South Wales-based New Adventure Travel

METROLINE owner ComfortDelGro has expanded beyond the capital with the acquisition of New Adventure Travel which operates 117 buses and coaches across four depots in Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Pontypridd.

“We have been operating bus and coach services across the UK for close to two decades,” says ComfortDelGro managing director, Yang Ban Seng. “With this addition of NAT Group, we are broadening our footprint into Wales, and expanding our bus operations outside of London which has always been our strategic intent.

“We look forward to serving the people of South Wales and introducing new and improved services to meet their travel needs.”

Kevyn Jones, managing director, NAT Group, adds: “Following a decade of growing this business, we are delighted it has now become part of the ComfortDelGro Group. We feel their expertise and financial strength will give us a great platform to continue to grow, improve and develop public transport in South Wales.”
Manchester given new powers to clamp down on anti-social behaviour

ANDY Burnham, mayor of Greater Manchester, has requested additional powers to allow Transport for Greater Manchester to apply to the courts for civil injunctions against those involved in nuisance and anti-social behaviour on the transport network.

The home secretary has now agreed, subject to parliamentary approval, to extend powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to TfGM.

More than 240 million journeys are made on the region’s buses and trams each year, and TfGM says that the chance of being a victim of or witness to ASB remains low, although it has recorded year-on-year increases with 3,984 incidents reported in 2016/17, a 70 per cent increase, compared to 2013/14.

Between April 2016 and July 2017, 86 assaults were recorded on Metrolink, 46 of which were upon staff, while 165 reports of threatening or abusive behaviour were also recorded.

“Anti-social behaviour is a blight on our communities and the transport networks that serve them,” says Burnham. “We’ve seen a steady increase in the numbers of incidents reported in recent years and I am not prepared to sit back and allow free rein to the small minority of people who think it acceptable to intimidate, threaten or abuse transport workers and commuters.

“That is why I asked the home secretary to grant TfGM the power to issue civil injunctions and help them battle the eroding effect that ASB can have on a person’s decision whether or not to use public transport.”

Home secretary Amber Rudd adds: “It is unacceptable that people should feel intimidated in public places or whilst commuting.

“It is important that Transport for Greater Manchester has the right tools it needs to tackle this crime on their public transport networks and I am pleased to extend the use of civil injunctions to this area, subject to parliamentary agreement.”

Stagecoach and Reading Buses in route transfer deal

STAGECOACH South has agreed to transfer part of its route 7 between Aldershot and Reading to Reading Buses. The deal, which also involves the sale of two Stagecoach vehicles, will see Reading Buses take over the northern part of the route, between Hartley Wintney and Reading in April. Stagecoach will continue to operate the section of the route between Aldershot and Hartley Wintney.

The agreement does not involve the transfer of any employees.

Both companies report they are finalising details to sell through-tickets for the entire route between Aldershot and Reading. Once the new arrangement is in place, passengers travelling the length of the route will change buses in Hartley Wintney.

The timetable changes are now being registered and the changes are expected to come into effect on Monday 16 April.

“The part of the route between Hartley Wintney and Reading has always been geographically quite remote in comparison to our core operations and we have struggled to find a way of making that part of the route sustainable over the longer term,” says Edward Hodgson, managing director, Stagecoach South. “Reading Buses is operationally better placed to deliver the northern section and we’re finalising plans to ensure that customers will still be able to travel from Aldershot to Reading using one ticket.”

Martijn Gilbert, chief executive officer, Reading Buses, adds: “The northern part of route 7 is a great fit with the Reading Buses network. Its acquisition will harmonise the current arrangement where we are the operator of evening and Sunday journeys at the Reading end (under contract to Wokingham Borough Council), meaning that we will be able to provide a daily coordinated service to many customers.”

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www.reading-buses.co.uk
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Cummins takes further step on electric road

CUMMINS has acquired Johnson Matthey’s UK automotive battery systems business and the two companies have also agreed to collaborate on the development of high energy battery materials for commercial heavy duty applications.

Cummins says that the acquisition enables it to expand its electrification and energy storage capabilities in its efforts to be a global leader in electrified power.

“The addition of Johnson Matthey Battery Systems’ technical expertise and customer base in markets that are more rapidly adopting electrification further positions us as a global energy storage supplier,” says Tom Linebarger, chairman and CEO, Cummins Inc. “By combining our electrification capabilities, portfolio of diverse power solutions, and global network, Cummins is uniquely positioned to lead in electrification. What differentiates us is our ability to help customers succeed with high quality products across the spectrum of power solutions they use, whether it’s electric, diesel, natural gas or other energy solutions.”

Robert MacLeod, chief executive, Johnson Matthey, adds: “This collaboration with Cummins is an important step for us. It will enable us to grow our position in high energy battery materials, particularly for heavy duty applications, and apply our chemistry expertise to develop new products that will give our customers, and ultimately consumers, the performance they demand from electrically-powered vehicles.

“In divesting our automotive battery systems business to Cummins we can focus on our strategy of expanding our eLNO platform and developing commercial battery materials for the full range of transport applications.”

The purchase of the Johnson Matthey battery business, which has 50 employees and is based in Milton Keynes, follows the announcement last October of Cummins’ acquisition of Brammo, which produces low-voltage battery packs for mobile and stationary applications.

www.cummins.com
www.matthey.com

Uno Bus opts for Volvo/MCV B8RLEs for fleet replacement

UNO Bus has purchased six new Volvo B8RLE single-deck buses as a part of a fleet upgrade for its Hertfordshire bus network. The MCV Evolution-bodied vehicles will serve students at the University of Hertfordshire and local people on a route between Luton Airport, the University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield and Cockfosters.

“We went through a formal tendering process and Volvo came out on top when it came to the size, capacity and appeal,” says Jim Thorpe, managing director, Uno Bus. “The introduction of these six new single-deck vehicles forms part of our transformational programme, creating an enhanced customer experience for our passengers.

“We’ve worked closely with Volvo to create an interior that will provide the very best in comfort and facilities. We’ve also included sofa seating at the front of the bus which gives the customers more space and offers a relaxed, lounge type feel.”

Uno Bus, is owned by the University of Hertfordshire, and provides services to local communities as well as university students in Hertfordshire and Northampton.

www.unobus.co.uk
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Weak domestic orders sees Wrightbus consult on up to 95 job losses

WRIGHTBUS has started a statutory consultation process regarding a potential workforce reduction of 95 jobs at its Ballymena plants. The company says that the move concerns Wrightbus and Customcare operating divisions.

“Wrightbus, along with the rest of the industry, is facing some very difficult conditions in its domestic market at present, with current order intake for new vehicles at relatively low levels,” says Mark Nodder, chairman, Wrights Group. “In order that the business remains competitive in the long term, it is vital that we promptly take appropriate steps to align our production capacity to projected demand in the foreseeable future.

“We have continued to invest in our product range so that it remains best in class in terms of fuel efficiency and environmental performance. The company will therefore be well positioned when market conditions improve.

“As a privately-owned business and one of the largest employers in Northern Ireland, we have not come to this decision lightly and it is done with a heavy heart. However, we operate in a dynamic marketplace with competition from around the globe and we must respond and react accordingly. We will naturally work with the union and employee representatives to ensure that we manage the process in the most sympathetic way possible for all affected.”

www.wrightsgroup.com
GO-AHEAD is starting a nationwide roll-out of its disability initiative, Helping Hand, which aims to break down accessibility barriers across its public transport network.

The scheme helps passengers communicate their disabilities to bus drivers through an accessibility card, created in consultation with users and charity groups. Go-Ahead points out that the card removes the need for customers to verbally explain their disability, which often causes discomfort and anxiety around using public transport.

Rather than labelling a customer’s condition, bespoke messages on the cards focus on the type of help needed such as: please be patient if I’m confused; please wait until seated; please speak clearly, I lip read; help count my change; please lower the step; priority seating required.

The cards are designed to be suitable for people with a wide range of accessibility needs including those living with conditions such as cystic fibrosis, epilepsy, dementia or autism, and passengers who are partially-sighted or hard of hearing.

About 7 per cent of children in the UK are living with a disability, with the figure rising to almost one in five working adults (18 per cent) and 44 per cent of pensioners, according to disability charity Scope.

The Helping Hand card has been successfully piloted at Brighton & Hove Buses and following its roll-out across the Go-Ahead Group, Helping Hand will be available to more than 800,000 passengers a day.

Go-Ahead says that all its drivers are trained in assisting people living with dementia or those who are blind and partially-sighted.

“For many disabled people, having access to user-friendly public transport can give them the independence and freedom to take control of their own lives,” says Go-Ahead Group chief executive David Brown. “By introducing an accessibility card across our network, we are sending a clear message to our customers that we want them to feel comfortable and safe using our services.”

Victoria Garcia, Go-Ahead senior accessibility advisor, adds: “Our unbranded card is already being used across bus operators, in shops, in cinemas and even on the continent. We’re very proud of this initiative and we hope that it will be adopted widely across the country.”

www.goahead.com

THE Oxford Bus Company has launched a revamped mobile phone app, to make passenger journeys easier. New features include being able to purchase travel passes and multi-trip tickets in advance, or on the day of travel, including while waiting for a bus. The latest technology enables passengers to tap their phones on buses contactless readers to complete their transaction.

The app also enables passengers to view their bus or coach on a map to see exactly where it is, plan journeys and use new virtual departure boards. The app is available for a free download from the App Store and Google Play.

“Since launching our original app in 2015, technology has developed and passengers have become increasingly tech savvy, so we have invested in taking our provision to the next level,” says Oxford Bus Company managing director Phil Southall.

“We are committed to making bus and coach travel as accessible and convenient as possible for customers and allowing them to access information and pay for their travel in a way which suits them is key.

“Many of the new features were included as a direct result of customer feedback, including being able to view where buses are and purchasing tickets,” adds Southall.

www.oxfordbus.co.uk
Fourth London bus route going electric

GO-AHEAD London has put 11 more electric buses into operation on its TfL 153 route with the delivery of the latest batch of BYD/ADL Enviro200EV single-decks. The Finsbury-Moorgate route is operated from Go-Ahead’s Northumberland Park garage in Tottenham, and the new buses marked the transfer of the route to Go-Ahead from CT Plus. BYD has supplied the depot with its charging points.

“We are delighted to make another significant step in the electrification of London’s bus routes and to be in the vanguard of the transformation”, said Richard Harrington, Go-Ahead Group engineering director.

“At Go-Ahead we have developed considerable practical knowledge of electric bus operation, gained over six years, and are well positioned to contribute further to the improvement of the capital’s air quality.”

Speaking on behalf of the ADL BYD partnership, Frank Thorpe, UK country manager, BYD UK, adds: “The smooth switch on of our electric buses to operate another intensive London route is a testament to the strength of our overall offering – not just the proven and reliable buses themselves but of the back-up and support of our partners in planning and installing the necessary equipment to make electric bus operation successful from day one.”

BYD reports that it sold more than 14,000 electric buses globally in 2017 and its fleets in London, Liverpool and Nottingham have already accumulated more than a million miles of emissions-free operation.

www.byd.com
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LTCOA negotiates new coach set-down and pick-up procedures on London red routes

NEW procedures have been agreed between Transport for London, London Tourist Coach Operators Association and CPT to enable coaches to set-down and pick-up passengers on TfL’s red route network.

The LTCOA reports that, once fully implemented, the new arrangements will allow coaches to set down and pick up only within a 10-minute period at locations where its members say they face regular challenges.

The LTCOA has worked with TfL to agree a number of sites, but it stresses that operators need to ensure that they follow the conditions for each of these to ensure that regular traffic is impacted as little as possible.

Therefore, the new arrangements will initially be available for trial only by members of the LTCOA and CPT, before being rolled out more widely over the course of the summer. LTCOA’s Peter Bradley says that this will help ensure that any potential issues can be ironed out at an early stage and will also help TfL adjust to any potential impacts. He stresses that any use of the facilities outside the given window, and for any other purpose, will result in a penalty charge notice being issued and any regular infringement could result in the withdrawal of one or all of these facilities.

“I am very pleased to welcome these improvements, which have come through determination and hard work by all those involved,” says Stephen Telling, chairman, LTCOA. “This will allow coach operators to set-down and pick-up their customers at specific locations without fear of being penalised. This shows the strength of working together with our partners and the importance of trade associations in representing their members.

“However, we in the coach industry now have a responsibility to ensure that these arrangements work. We all need to ensure that we keep to the rules set out by TfL to minimise the impact of coaches on the busy Red Route network”.

The LTCOA and CPT stress that they will continue to lobby for further improvements to set-down and pick-up facilities as well as coach parking throughout London.

www.ltcoa.co.uk

Rochdale expansion for Mellor

The new site will provide an additional 15,000 sq ft of space which will be used for manufacturing and administrative offices. The £1 million investment includes the purchase of the site and the planned upgrade and refurbishment project, which is scheduled to be completed by June 2018.

Mellor says that its expansion plans will create two new production lines and the creation of up to 40 new manufacturing and administrative jobs over the next three years.

“This purchase and planned expansion of our facilities will massively increase our production output and we anticipate manufacturing will be taking place as early as April/May 2018,” says John Randerson, managing director – bus division, Woodall Nicholson, Mellor’s parent company.

“Our expansion plans are the result of an increase in demand for our products which follows the introduction of a number of new and highly innovative vehicles launched last year, including the Strata – high and low floor versions – and our new fully electric Orion E small bus.”

www.mellor-coachcraft.co.uk

John Randerson, managing director – bus division, Woodall Nicholson.

ROCHDALE-BASED Mellor has acquired an adjacent site to its existing Miall Street facility to enable the expansion of its manufacturing capacity.
New CPT president calls for more pro-active lobbying

CPT’S incoming president, Go-Ahead managing director, bus development, stressed the importance of partnership with central and local government while presenting its case more firmly, and the need for the industry to embrace new technology.

Speaking at the trade body’s annual dinner in London last week, Dean said that it was a fascinating time to take on the role of CPT president.

“We have new legislation in place and it is now up to us to embrace the new opportunities afforded by the new partnership arrangements,” said Dean. “Now is the time, like never before, that we must forge closer and stronger relationships with our local authority partners.

“We need to work in partnership because we have to address congestion. Congestion has always been a factor in bus operations but it is getting worse. It is the scourge of our industry and it does affect the willingness of people to use our services.”

Retrofit fund announced for Scotland

THE Scottish government has announced £1.6million of funding for the first phase of its Bus Emissions Abatement Retrofit Programme (BEAR), following its earlier commitment to introduce Low Emission Zones in Scotland’s four largest cities by 2020.

“I am delighted to announce this extra support to assist financially with the costs of reducing air pollution emissions from buses,” says Humza Yousaf, minister for transport and the islands. “There is no doubt that the bus sector is playing a vital role in improving our air quality. Many bus operators have already taken advantage of the previous seven rounds of the Scottish Green Bus Fund, where over £16million of funding has resulted in over 360 new low emission vehicles being brought into the fleet.

“For many operators, the right decision is also to invest in retrofit technology for their existing fleet. This will breathe new life into older buses, reduce harmful nitrogen dioxide emissions and help to progressively improve the quality of the air in our towns and cities.”

George Mair, CPT Scotland adds: “The bus industry has invested over £250million in the last five years on greening Scotland’s bus fleet, improving the performance of what is already one of the most environmentally friendly modes of travel.

“The BEAR Programme fund, alongside the Green Bus Fund, are two schemes that facilitate further investment, but the real benefits of this investment are only realised when buses are given priority and freed from congestion.”

The BEAR programme is designed to support retrofitting of existing vehicles up to Euro 6 emissions standard with up to £25,000 available per vehicle.

www.gov.scot
Singapore autonomous bus plan to move into testing phase

VOLVO Buses and Nanyang Technological University in Singapore have signed a cooperation agreement on a research and development programme for autonomous electric buses. The program is part of the Land Transport Authority of Singapore’s aim to promote sustainable public transport solutions.

Singapore has announced that self-driving buses will be deployed in several areas of the country by 2022.

For Volvo this will be the first autonomous application in public transportation. Volvo has already demonstrated the autonomous technology in mining, quarry and refuse collection operations.

“We are seeing fast-growing interest in both autonomous and electric vehicles in cities all over the world,” says Håkan Agnevall, president, Volvo Buses. “Together with NTU, one of the world’s leading universities of technology, we now have the possibility of testing various solutions under realistic conditions in a major city that has high ambitions for its public transport.

“We consider Singapore and NTU as excellent partners for Volvo, offering an enabling environment and complete ecosystem of research, development and implementation of new solutions. The technology developed in Singapore can contribute to future autonomous applications by Volvo Buses.”

The programme includes two standard all-electric 12m Volvo 7900 Electric buses, of the same type that Volvo Buses already delivers.

One of the autonomous electric buses in the program will be used on Singapore’s advanced new test facility for autonomous vehicles, Centre of Excellence for Testing and Research of Autonomous Vehicles, which was inaugurated in November 2017. Here, NTU’s researchers will test new functionality and study how the bus interacts with other road users in various conditions.

The second bus will be used for tests in the bus depot in partnership with public transport operator SMRT. The aim is that tomorrow’s autonomous buses should be able to charge their batteries, drive through the depots to the vehicle wash and park – entirely autonomously.

NTU president Subra Suresh, adds: “Industry-academic connections are key in nurturing an environment which promotes innovation, research excellence, and technological change for a better tomorrow. NTU takes pride in its strong industry connections, and this partnership with Volvo will pave the way for future mobility solutions by developing and testing autonomous buses right here on campus. These solutions will further strengthen Singapore’s vision of embracing autonomous vehicle technologies and enhance public transportation.”

The cooperation between Volvo Buses and NTU will initially last for two years. The jointly developed autonomous electric buses are due to arrive in Singapore at the beginning of 2019.

Mr Desmond Kuek, president and group chief executive officer, SMRT Corporation, says: “Our goal is to stay future-ready by keeping abreast of latest land transport solutions for safe, efficient and comfortable journeys, and adapt such urban mobility solutions to Singapore’s unique operational setting. SMRT will leverage on decades of experience in operating and maintaining buses to lead the operational testing and evaluation of autonomous buses for their eventual safe deployment on our roads.”

Fast-charging stations based on the common OppCharge interface will be supplied by ABB. The HVC 300P fast charging system delivers 300 kW DC power and will recharge a battery in three to six minutes.

www.volvobuses.com
**Netherlands**

**AkzoNobel and Gasunie aim to convert water into ‘green hydrogen’**

AKZONOBEL Specialty Chemicals and Gasunie New Energy are working together to investigate the possible large scale conversion of sustainable electricity into ‘green hydrogen’ via the electrolysis of water.

A proposal at Delfzijl in the Netherlands, would use a 20Mw water electrolysis unit, the largest in Europe, to convert sustainably-produced electricity into 3,000 tonnes of green hydrogen a year – enough to fuel 300 hydrogen buses, according to the promoters. A final decision on the project is expected in 2019.

AkzoNobel and Gasunie are using their joint experience in providing gas transport and storage, electrolysis and handling of hydrogen.

"Achieving the Netherlands’ CO2 reduction targets and the corresponding transition in the energy system will be a huge challenge," says Ulco Vermeulen, member of Gasunie’s executive board. “This requires not only vision, but also immediate action and concrete collaboration.

“We see ‘power to gas’ not only as a promising technology, but also as one that will be necessary to achieve a fully sustainable energy mix by 2050. Hydrogen also plays a crucial role in achieving the emission reduction target set by the Dutch government for 2030, i.e. a reduction of CO2 emissions by 49 per cent compared to 1990. To make sure we have enough hydrogen in 2030, we will need to take steps now to validate the technology at different scales.”

Marcel Galjee, energy director, AkzoNobel Specialty Chemicals, adds: “Industry is important for the economy, but is also responsible for a large percentage of CO2 emissions. Only with far-reaching change of its industrial activities can the Netherlands achieve the international climate targets. During this transition, new value chains and revenue models can emerge across sectors through collaboration between companies.

“The vast majority of the more than 800,000 tonnes of hydrogen used by Dutch industry each year is produced using natural gas.

"Replacing this by sustainably-produced hydrogen will reduce CO2 emissions by seven million tonnes. However, the real potential is in large-scale production as the basis for green chemistry.”

The companies claim that the northern part of the Netherlands is well positioned to develop a green hydrogen economy, due to the large-scale production and import of green electricity, the existing chemical industry, the current gas transmission infrastructure, the knowledge infrastructure and the support within the Northern Innovation Board.

www.gasuniene newenergy.nl
French trials for Aptis electric bus

ALSTOM and NTL have been demonstrating their full-electric bus Aptis on line 82 in Aix-Marseille Provence. Aptis was developed jointly by Alstom and NTL and the prototypes are manufactured at NTL’s site in Duppigheim. The road trials are designed to evaluate the specific characteristics of Aptis in a new urban setting, its charging system, its autonomy, and its operating in traffic and earlier tests in Ile-de-France, Lyon, Strasbourg and Belgium.

Two prototypes of Aptis are currently being tested: the two-door version, which was tested in Paris on the RATP network (lines 21 and 147), Lyon, Strasbourg and now in Marseille; and the three-door version, which is being tested for a year by Ile-de-France Mobilités on the Keolis network between Vélizy and Versailles (line 23).

Aptis has a full low floor and wide double doors with panoramic windows at the front and rear of the bus provide 20 per cent more window surfaces than a conventional bus, according to the developers, as well as a lounge area at the rear.

The vehicle has four steerable wheels that Alstom and NTL claim minimise the space needed to turn (25 per cent less than a conventional bus).

At night, Aptis can be recharged inside the depot. Alstom will also provide a daytime charging solution at the end of each line. Rapid charging is carried out either via an inverted pantograph or via SRS, Alstom’s ground-based static charging system.

Volvo Buses introduces new B8L double-deck for Asia Pacific

VOLVO Buses has launched a new Euro 6 double-deck chassis for the Asia Pacific market. The new B8L was launched in Hong Kong during the Volvo Ocean Race stopover last month.

The three-axle double deck city bus chassis is manufactured in Borås, Sweden and units have already been tested in Hong Kong and Singapore. The new B8L product replaces Volvo’s B9TL which saw more than 4,000 units sold in the Asia Pacific region.

Powered by Volvo’s D8K engine the B8L delivers 350hp (258kW) and 1,400Nm of torque between 1,200 and 1,600 engine RPM. The D8K engine is matched with a fully-automatic ZF 6AP1600C transmission.

“In response to our customer’s input we have simplified the drive-line”, says David Mead, vice president Asia Pacific, Volvo Buses. “Key to the new design is the direct drive layout with the 8-litre engine and automatic transmission designed to be in-line. This provides a more efficient driveline sure to set new standards for fuel efficiency in this segment.”

In addition to the driveline, the B8L offers lower overall weight, a smaller turning circle, and new axles and suspension.

“Our new B8L product demonstrates our understanding of the demands of Asia in the high capacity double deck segment”, adds Mead. “The overall package we have created shows our experience in this area and allows us to deliver a product to our customers that will set new benchmarks for performance, safety and reliability in this segment.”

Volvo Buses has commenced training for dealers, distributors and operators in Asia Pacific to ensure that the new Euro 6 technology is understood. “We have one of the most experienced teams of dealers and distributors in the region, ready to continue their heritage of providing world class service to our customers”, says Mead. “Our service teams in Hong Kong and Singapore represent some of the most experienced double-deck specialists anywhere in the world.”

One of the customers who worked with Volvo was SBS Transit from Singapore. “We are pleased to have contributed a key part in the development process of this product,” says Gan Juay Kiat, CEO, SBS Transit. “Based on our experience of operating over 1,100 units of the Volvo Euro 5 double-deck, we were able to give inputs to further enhance the performance of the new product.”

www.volvobuses.com
Martin Dean takes over as CPT president

MARTIN Dean, Go-Ahead managing director, bus development has been appointed CPT President for 2018, succeeding Ian Luckett, director, Luckett’s Travel.

“I am honoured to have been appointed CPT President for 2018,” says Dean. “The coming year will be an exciting and challenging time for all involved in our sector. Operators have renewed impetus to engage with their local authority partners to make use of the new legislation and to contribute to plans designed to improve local air quality.”

CPT chairman Ian Morgan adds: “Martin has a wealth of experience in the industry and through his role at Go Ahead has made a huge contribution to the work of CPT during recent bus policy developments and through its Committee structure over many years. Along with all CPT members and staff, I am very much looking forward to working with Martin over the next 12 months.”

www.cpt-uk.org

New appointments for Stagecoach in west country

CHRISTINA Scant has been appointed operations manager at Stagecoach’s Plymouth depot and Martin Gibbon appointed as operations manager at Exeter. Both joined Stagecoach as graduate trainees and have been awarded ‘Young Manager of the Year’ at the UK Bus Awards in 2009 and 2015 respectively.

Stagecoach South West has announced changes to its operations management teams in both Plymouth and Exeter.

On returning from maternity leave in the spring, Scant moves to Plymouth while Gibbon who has been covering her maternity leave, will remain in the Exeter role on a permanent basis.

Bob Dennison, managing director, Stagecoach South West, says: “I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both Christina and Martin and wish them both every success in their new roles.”

www.stagecoachbus.com

Matthew Ashton appointed area managing director for Yorkshire Tiger

YORKSHIRE Tiger has appointed Matthew Ashton as area managing director. Ashton is the first to come through Arriva’s graduate programme and be promoted to a board position, having joined the management graduate scheme in 2011.

In his most recent role, Ashton was head of commercial for Arriva Yorkshire, where he was responsible for maximising business growth and developing a new network.

Nigel Featham, regional managing director says: “I am delighted to welcome Matthew into his new position and it just shows how far our graduate programme can take you. It has been fantastic to see Matthew’s progression and I wish him every success in his new role.”

Ashton adds: “I am thrilled to be appointed area managing director for Yorkshire Tiger. Since joining I have worked closely with many departments across the business, getting to know our colleagues and customers. I look forward to building on these relationships, as well as strengthening Yorkshire Tiger’s...
commitment to provide welcoming and affordable bus travel to our customers across Yorkshire.”
www.yorkshirertiger.co.uk

Encore boosts senior management team

JOE Steele has joined Encore as the new chief executive officer and Nick Benjamin joins as the new chief technical officer on 1 March, as the company targets “technology-fuelled growth and expansion”.

Steele was formerly group CEO at Bookatable, which was recently acquired by and integrated into Michelin Group. He brings experience of business transformation and international growth with previous digital leadership roles at Expedia, Tripadvisor and Thomas Cook Group.

Benjamin, currently CTO at Dunelm, brings technical expertise to drive Encore’s technology strategy. New system integrations are planned in 2018 to add ticketing product across all of Encore’s global multi-channel distribution.

John Wales, co-founder of Encore says: “I am delighted both Joe and Nick are joining me and the rest of the team at Encore at this pivotal time and look forward to working together to achieve our growth ambitions.”

Steele adds: “I am very excited by what we can next deliver for our customers and partners through the best of our two decades of industry experience plus our new digital and technology capabilities.”
www.encore.co.uk

ITSO confirms new senior roles to lead organisation

ITSO has appointed Michael Moir as chief technology officer. Moir was previously leading the technical development of ITSO as head of mobile technology.

In his new role as CTO, Moir will lead the technology team to meet the challenge of delivering the technology elements of ITSO’s strategy.

“As an organisation, ITSO is currently going through a time of significant change which will continue into the immediate future,” says Steve Wakeland, chief executive officer. “As we begin to offer new services, we will engage with our members and suppliers to the industry in new ways. Michael’s role will be to ensure that the technical elements of ITSO’s strategic direction are successfully implemented and that we engage and consult with key ITSO suppliers and members on technology issues to maximise mutual benefit and mitigate the risk of fragmentation.”

Moir will work with recently-promoted chief operating officer Kate Pearman who joined ITSO in October 2016 as head of operations.
www.itso.org.uk

Three new directors for Eminox

EMINOX has appointed three new directors as the company enters its 40th year. Rachel Eldridge and Carlos Vicente have been pro-
moted and Cyril Journoux joins the company.

Eldridge, who is the first female to be promoted into a senior management role at Eminox, becomes operations director after two years with the business.

Eldridge says: “I am thrilled to be the first woman to hold a role at this level, joining the senior leadership team, and I’m looking forward to making a real impression in the emissions industry within 2018.”

Carlos has been promoted to retrofit sales director from international business development manager after nine years with the company. He will focus on delivering solutions for new ultra-low emission zones and clear air zones, as well as expanding into new markets.

Originally from Paris, Journoux joins the Eminox senior management team as OE sales director. He brings 12 years’ experience having previously worked for Parker Hannifin and Tata Technologies. “With the rest of our senior management team, they will be delivering new, streamlined company targets focusing on our customers and driving innovation.”

Founded in 1978, the privately-owned company has grown from three employees to almost 300 staff.

Obituary: Alan J. White
(1958-2018)

IT is with sadness that we report the death of Alan White who was sales director for Moseley in the South since 2006. He joined Moseley (PCV) Ltd in 1996 as sales manager, having started his career at Merseyside Transport in 1974 and worked with Salvador Caetano (UK) and Jonckheere (UK).

His close friends at Moseley say that Alan will be remembered by his very many friends in the industry as being a joy to work with and a sad loss to the team.

Alan leaves behind his wife Lynn and daughters Adele and Nie and grandson Chester.

The funeral will take place at 1 pm on Tuesday 13 February at Taunton Deane Crematorium. Donations can be made to the Brain Tumour Charity. Those attending are invited to wear an item of orange or yellow clothing.
ARRIVA UK Bus is supporting a campaign to raise mental health awareness across its workforce by pledging £1,000 to one employee who is preparing to run the Virgin Money London Marathon in aid of MIND the mental health charity. To mark national Time to Talk Day on 1 February, Arriva donated the money to social media manager Abi Buck.

Buck says: “I chose to run for MIND was because of how beneficial they were for me when I started to experience mental health problems myself.

“In late 2013 at the age of 25 I woke up in the middle of the night having a panic attack and it quickly spiralled into a period of extreme anxiety. I had periods in my teenage years where I had experienced similar symptoms, but it never got to the point where it was affecting my day-to-day life and I always managed to ‘shake it off’. This time it was different. I quickly started living in a cycle of fear of further attacks, and sleeping and eating became almost impossible. I constantly battled on for a year thinking I could get better without any help, that it would disappear, but I was getting worse.

“I called on MIND’s website and their resources one evening after admitting to myself that I was ill and needed support. At that point I was at the lowest in my life, I felt horrendous and I genuinely couldn’t ever imagine feeling better. I kept saying to myself that I had no reason to feel the way I did, but that’s the thing about mental health issues, they aren’t always logical.

“I used MIND’s resources to help me understand what was happening to me and booked into the doctor’s to get the help I needed. One huge part of getting better came from understanding and accepting that I was struggling. Part of managing it came with confiding in people who I can trust and that includes my employer Arriva, who have been overwhelmingly supportive and because of this I thrive in my job.

“I’ve continued to be as open as I can be about mental health, in the hope that it will help anyone who is struggling and challenge the stigma. To also give faith that you can get better, you can thrive in your life, you can get promoted and you can do anything that you want to do, even if that’s running a marathon.”

During Time to Talk Day, Arriva encouraged its employees to open up about their worries, anxieties and feelings, and to talk more freely, be it with a friend, family, or someone at work.

Julie Linforth, Arriva marketing director, from Arriva, adds: “The wellbeing of our team is of the utmost importance and we have just engaged Health Assured, a third party health provider, to provide employees with that support through our new and enhanced Employee Assistance Programme. The programme has been designed to help employees deal with any personal or professional problems that might affect their health or well-being. It offers advice, guidance and counselling on a wide range of services.

“Time to Talk Day offers us the opportunity to shout from the rooftops that mental health is as important as physical health and it’s high time that we started looking after ourselves better.

“Abi has been incredibly brave to be so honest about her struggles and we are so proud of how she is channelling her time into championing Time to Talk Day across the business by being open with her own personal experiences, whilst also fundraising for MIND.”

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/abidades
www.time-to-change.org.uk
New magazine enables readers to build their own model Routemaster

TRANSPORT for London is partnering with publishers Hachette for a new weekly magazine which enables readers to create their own replica of the Routemaster. The magazine went on sale at retailers across the UK and Ireland last month and gives enthusiasts an opportunity to build their own authentic model.

The partnership forms part of TfL’s work to license its branding to a worldwide audience to generate non-fare income.

The magazine includes the history of buses and transport across the capital since the early 1800s to now, as well as instructions on building a 1:12 scale model of a classic Routemaster bus.

The bus, RM857, was originally built in July 1961 and is based on the look of the bus when it operated along route 11 in 1966.

Each component of the model has been produced from high-quality die-cast metal and durable plastic, with many photo-etched parts. The finished model also contains a number of special features, such as a working blind box, fully operational lights and a bell that works to signal to the driver.

The magazine will be available from retailers across the UK, as well as through a dedicated website - www.buildtheroutemaster.com. TfL is also working with Hachette Partworks to offer the magazine to other worldwide territories in the future.

“Nothing says London to the rest of the world like the red Routemaster bus,” says Graeme Craig, TfL’s director of commercial development. “This new magazine will allow people, young and old, to find out more about this iconic vehicle as well as build a classic piece of transport history.

“This deal is part of our wider work to bring our internationally renowned symbols that embody the heritage and identity of London – such as the Tube map and the roundel logo – to the global licensing market. Making the most of our brand allows us to generate funds which are then reinvested in delivering a modern and affordable transport network for the millions of people who rely on it every day.”

Trevor Wright, a test train operator for London Underground who owns the actual RM857 bus, adds: “As a current employee of Transport for London, it was a great honour to have my Routemaster bus represented in this new magazine. The model of this world famous vehicle, in London Transport red livery, is fantastically detailed and shows this design classic at its best.”

Tom Bath, marketing director, Hachette Partworks, says: “The Routemaster is iconic across the world and we look forward to giving people the chance to build their own special piece of London transport history.”

www.tfl.gov.uk
Britcom demonstrates its scope with new video

BRITCOM has launched a new corporate video which was filmed by a drone to capture the size of its site and the range of facilities offered by Britcom at its Market Weighton headquarters.

“Many of our export customers rarely get the opportunity to visit the site themselves, and purchase vehicles and equipment from us based on our established reputation around the World for providing reliable quality used vehicles,” says Rachel Reed, marketing manager, Britcom. “We feel the video is a great addition to our marketing portfolio to demonstrate the sheer size of our purpose built operation, where we can store around 500 units, and help build on our already well established credibility.”

Rachel adds “Britcom offers more than just selling trucks, trailers and plant equipment, and the video also enables us to portray the wide range of after sales support services we offer to our UK and export customers. This includes chassis engineering and bodybuilding services, repair and paint services, export parts sales, and cleaning and valeting. We also have our own Britcom trucks and trailers and offer delivery across the UK for our UK customers, and to all UK Ports for our export customers.”

www.britcom.co.uk/corporate-video

New drone-filmed video of Britcom site in Market Weighton.

Tower Transit TfL refurbishment by H&D

HANTS and Dorset Trim held a ‘topping out’ ceremony to mark the completion of an 18-month refurbishment contract for TfL operator Tower Transit.

Bus 39112, seen in the photo, was delivered back to Westbourne Park Garage last month, marking the completion of an 18-month, 190-vehicle contract which covered 159 double-decks and 31 single-decks.

“The contract ran through with barely a stutter,” says Dave Clack, Hants & Dorset Trim general manager.

“It is a great tribute to the professionalism of everyone involved, both at H&D and Tower Transit.”

www.hantsanddorsettrim.co.uk

New home for VOSC testing facility

INDEPENDENT UK accredited testing facility VOSC has acquired the seat belt anchorage safety system from Manchester Metropolitan University’s specialist testing facility STATUS.

Aiming to transfer and build upon the testing services offered by STATUS Vehicle Occupant Safety Centre, VOSC is currently undertaking the full installation and reconfiguration of the safety system following its recent move from Manchester to its new location in the Science Park at University of Wolverhampton.

The new location provides workspace for the test rig alongside meeting and conference facilities. VOSC says provide further updates on its website and will formally open its facility in April.

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Decelerometer assists with regular brake tests

BRAKE testing specialist Bowmonk points out that bus and coach operators are expected to undertake a minimum of three ‘voluntary’ brake tests in addition to the annual MOT test. It suggests that pro-active operators will want to monitor braking performance more frequently as a means of identifying potential braking deficiencies before they become a potentially dangerous and costly exercise. “The more frequent the checks, the quicker a fault can be identified and dealt with,” says a Bowmonk spokesperson. “It is still very evident that many operators are under the misconception that any interim brake tests must be performed on a roller brake tester at their local ATF centre. In fact, for all powered and rigid-framed vehicles, an approved decelerometer like the Bowmonk BrakeCheck can be used, affording the convenience of performing their own brake tests, on their own premises, preferably coinciding it with a scheduled interim inspection, for example, the six-weekly check.

New Textar ProTecS brake pad

TMD Friction is an OE-approved supplier to Knorr-Bremse for its SN7 commercial disc brake system, which has been modified for the SN7 HP Caliper for all Scania vehicles produced after 1 January 2016. The previous Scania application Textar brake pads with WVA no. 29278 (2927801 (TRUCK) 2927802 (BUS)) can no longer be used in the modified caliper. The pad contour of the Textar brake pads has been adapted for the updated SN7 HP caliper, clearly identifiable by the recesses on the bottom left and right, and are available under WVA no. (29331 2933101 (TRUCK) 2933102 (BUS)).

The preceding products no longer fit the new caliper, warns TMD, but the design is backwards-compatible, allowing the new brake pad to be used in older versions of the caliper.

Like its predecessor, the new brake pad from Textar is supplied exclusively with ProTecS retaining springs to the standard of original equipment. Direct connectivity between the brake pad and spring ensures reliable adjustment of the spring force, and therefore optimum brake pad guidance, says TMD. The spring design extends the life of the pad especially in rough driving conditions.

The welded retaining clip acts like a sliding shoe, providing protection against spring and stirrup abrasion due to dirt. The pad slides out of contact with the disc more easily, reducing idle wear.

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New Textar ProTecS brake pad

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KNORR-BREMSE
London’s Ultra Low Emission Zone and further Clean Air Zones around the country have meant a renewed focus on retrofit technologies that can extend the life of existing vehicles. 

Steve Banner reports

CLEANING up London’s atmosphere is a key priority for mayor Sadiq Khan; and buses are in the front line of the battle.

In 2017 he announced the launch of a £86.1million Transport for London retrofit programme to upgrade over half of the capital’s buses, some 5,000 vehicles in total, to Euro 6. The aim is to cut emissions of harmful nitrogen oxide (NOx), nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulates and get the capital’s entire bus fleet to at least Euro 6 by September 2020.

The retrofit equipment typically employs a continuously-regenerating particulate trap plus selective catalytic reduction which brings down NOx using AdBlue.

The mayor’s move is all of a piece, not only with the introduction of the central London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in April 2019 (buses and coaches entering it will have to meet Euro 6) but with the gradual roll-out of Low Emission Bus Zones (LEBZs) in air quality hotspots outside the planned ULEZ.

Operators running bus services in LEBZs are obliged to use vehicles that meet or exceed Euro 6 with the aim of cutting harmful emissions by 84 per cent.

Twelve LEBZs will be in place by 2019, says TfL, and two are already up and running. One along Putney High Street came into force last March and a zone between Brixton and Streatham came into force in December.

Due for March, says exhaust emission control specialist Eminox, is a zone covering the A12 Eastern Avenue. The Putney LEBZ has shown a 90 per cent reduction in hourly pollution level breaches it adds, and early analysis shows a 40 per cent reduction in annual NO2 concentrations.

Eminox has already upgraded more than 400 buses to ensure they meet LEBZ requirements.

LEBZs include a number of Bus Priority Schemes that ensure buses have precedence over other traffic and are able to keep moving, cutting emissions from idling and speeding up journey times. TfL has budgeted to spend £50million on such schemes.

Not one to rest on his laurels, November saw the mayor launch a consultation which could result in extending the ULEZ London-wide so far as buses, coaches and trucks are concerned from 26 October 2020. Under this plan a ULEZ would also embrace the majority of cars, vans and motorcycles as far as the North and South Circular Roads from 25 October 2021.

“I am determined to take the bold action needed to protect the public from London’s poisonous, deadly air,” Sadiq Khan says.

The aforementioned retrofit scheme involves equipping pre-Euro 6 buses with upgraded exhaust systems supplied by one of five companies appointed after a competitive tender process. The line-up is Baumot Twintec, HJS, Proventia, Amminex and Eminox.

continued page 30 ➔
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AdBlue face is that they can sometimes struggle to function when exhaust temperatures are low; when a bus leaves the depot first thing in the morning for example.

Last year saw Eminox’s SCRT become the first system of its type to be approved for the government’s Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme operated by the Energy Saving Trust. CVRAS certifies technology that meets real-world Euro 6 emission levels and signifies that it will comply with the requirements likely to be laid down by the various low- and ultra-low-emission zones soon to be rolled out across Britain.

Sadiq Khan is by no means the only politician campaigning to cut air pollution. Iveco pointed out during a recent conference that politicians in a number of regional towns and cities are planning to launch Clean Air Zones with the same end in view, with getting on for 20 proposed for England alone.

CVRAS certification can also be used to support applications for funding from government programmes that are introduced from time to time with the aim of reducing pollution. They include the £30million Clean Bus Technology Fund for England and Wales that was rolled out in 2017.

The same year saw the announcement of a £220million Clean Air Fund which English local authorities will benefit from over the next 12 months or so. Some of the money could be used to retrofit vehicles with emissions-reduction technology, suggests Eminox.

Retrofitting diesels in line with TfL’s requirements does not come cheap. It costs over £17,000 a bus on average and a package such as SCRT takes around 50 hours to install.

“Remember though that what we’re talking about is a sophisticated emission control system,” says Eminox marketing manager Kathye Vicente. As a consequence it is bound to be more expensive than the £3,000 to £4,000 it might cost to retrofit a particulate filter.

Metroline has had ASDS fitted to 55 Euro 5 buses in service in London. One of them has been independently tested at the Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire; and the results would appear to bear out the claims Amminex makes for it.

“From previous trials we knew that the ASDS system was doing a good job,” says Metroline engineering director Ian Foster. “However it was quite a surprise to us when the official test results showed that the NOx emissions of a Euro 5 bus were cut to Euro 6 levels just by substituting ammonia for AdBlue.”

Eminox and Denmark’s Amminex are working closely together, with the former offering the latter’s ASDS Ammonia Storage and Delivery System in the UK as well as its own AdBlue-based SCRT (Selective Catalytic Reduction Technology) as retrofit routes to Euro 6 compliance.

Employing ammonia stored in solid form in removable and replaceable cartridges which is released into the exhaust system as a gas, ASDS is said to be especially effective in cold conditions. The challenge upgrade packages that rely on
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Ian Foster, Engineering Director, Metroline London

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So far as cold weather performance is concerned, Transdev reports that ASDS technology fitted to buses it operates in Sweden has functioned effectively at way below freezing. “Combined with an Eminox SCRT, it is delivering robust NOx reductions in sub-zero temperatures,” says Transdev service manager Johan Andren.

A NOx Tracker Live app showed some interesting data from a Transdev bus during one icy Swedish morning.

“Ninety-eight per cent NOx reduction at minus 15 degrees C wasn’t something we’d seen before,” says Amminex chief executive officer Annika Isaksson.

“But it proves that ASDS doesn’t care whether it’s warm or cold outside,” she adds. “It just keeps dosing exactly the right amount of ammonia into the exhaust.”

Amminex is not the only business to adopt a different approach to emission control. Baumot Twintec offers a system called BNOx. It employs AdBlue, but does not inject it as a liquid.

Instead it employs hydrolysis plus a small generator to create ammonia gas from it andinjects that into the exhaust instead.

As a consequence it can operate at very low temperatures, says Baumot Twintec. BNOx has been fitted to 24 vehicles at the behest of Transport for Greater Manchester.

Buses have of course been retrofitted with emission reduction technology before. Finland’s Proventia and Excalibre, its Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire, UK partner, have previously co-operated over the upgrading of upwards of 350 Euro 3 Dennis Tridents and Darts to Euro 5.

Last October Proventia stated that its NOxBUSTER City retrofit package achieved NOx and NO2 reductions of nearly 99 per cent according to independent tests conducted on a Euro 5 bus in service in Paderborn in Germany. Eminox says that its SCRT can match this figure.

Based in Menden, Germany, HJS Emission Technology is one of the five companies accredited to Transport for London’s £86.1million retrofit programme to upgrade half the capital’s bus fleet to Euro 6. The system it offers uses selective catalytic reduction technology, which relies on AdBlue.

“We’ve received a good, positive reaction to what we have to offer and installations are being completed although we are seeing orders being issued according to Low Emission Bus Zones at present,” says Mark Cooper, managing director of HJS UK. “What we’re seeing is a more-calculated fitment plan, with all the fitments being prioritised and Low Emission bus route vehicles being equipped first.”

Coach operators carrying commuters or tourists that wish to enter the Ultra Low Emission Zone when it comes into force in April 2019 will have to upgrade their vehicles to Euro 6 if they do not continued page 34 ➜
Cummins meet the need of every bus operator by offering the most energy diverse power portfolio in the industry. Our new, zero emissions electrified systems with Cummins battery technology fully complement our Euro VI clean diesel, hybrid and natural gas power. All ready for the arrival of ULEZs with solutions designed and built in the UK.

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already meet the standard. That is likely to prove more of a challenge than retrofitting buses, believes Cooper.

The difficulty is the extent to which coach designs can vary. Two models which may appear on the face of it to be identical may differ in all sorts of ways, from the size of the luggage compartment to the whereabouts of the onboard toilet; and that can mean installing a different selective catalytic reduction technology design.

Unfortunately it is not currently cost-effective to produce a selective catalytic reduction technology system that may end up being a one-off; something coach firms may have to bear in mind. To address this issue, HJS in the UK is looking to become more autonomous in that respect.

“We are about to embark upon an expansion of our British facility that will enable us to design and develop systems for the coach market in the UK,” he says. “The advantage here is that much of the development work will be carried out locally rather than in Germany, which will keep system costs viable.”

He has no qualms about the performance of HJS’s SCRT system at low exhaust temperatures. “With careful calibration it can achieve everything that a UK bus operator is likely to require,” he states. “The development work will be carried out locally rather than in Germany, which will keep system costs viable.”

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Upgrading diesel exhaust systems is not the only route to environmental virtue. Another option is to change the entire engine and extend the vehicle’s operating life.

Cummins is suggesting that operators with older diesels swap them in favour of a Euro 6 four-cylinder B4.5 or a six-cylinder B6.7.

Take a Euro 4 engine out of a 2007 bus and slot in a Euro 6 diesel instead and you can reduce NOx by almost 90 per cent and particulates by 50 per cent, it asserts. It also contends that moving from Euro 5 to Euro 6 can reduce diesel costs by between £1,500 and £2,500 annually.

CO2 emissions could shrink by between 4 and 6 tonnes a year, Cummins adds.

To underline its point, a 56-year-old AEC Routemaster employed on heritage services in London not only meets Euro 6 thanks to a Cummins repower but is certified as Low Carbon because it can return 9.5mpg.

Bus operators might be forgiven for feeling a little confused by the various low-emission technologies available to them. In response, the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership has produced a guide that can be downloaded from its web site and has been running a series of seminars addressing the subject; one that is unlikely to go away any time soon, no matter where you are based.

**CONTACT**

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from Excalibre’s viewpoint the TfL retrofit programme is going well, Grimston says. “We’ve got four teams of fitters on it; and we’re starting to get retrofitting inquiries from operators outside London,” he reports.

TfL’s ultimate aim is to phase out diesel-only buses. All London buses that enter the ULEZ will have to be hybrid, electric or hydrogen.

Operators based outside London bringing passengers into the ULEZ will be able to continue to use diesels, but they will have to meet Euro 6. Vicente says that during the coming months they should start thinking about what they will need to do if their vehicles do not already comply; and make plans accordingly.

Upgrading diesel exhaust systems is not the only route to environmental virtue. Another option is to change the entire engine and extend the vehicle’s operating life.

Cummins is suggesting that operators with older diesels swap them in favour of a Euro 6 four-cylinder B4.5 or a six-cylinder B6.7.

Take a Euro 4 engine out of a 2007 bus and slot in a Euro 6 diesel instead and you can reduce NOx by almost 90 per cent and particulates by 50 per cent, it asserts. It also contends that moving from Euro 5 to Euro 6 can reduce diesel costs by between £1,500 and £2,500 annually.

CO2 emissions could shrink by between 4 and 6 tonnes a year, Cummins adds.

To underline its point, a 56-year-old AEC Routemaster employed on heritage services in London not only meets Euro 6 thanks to a Cummins repower but is certified as Low Carbon because it can return 9.5mpg.

Bus operators might be forgiven for feeling a little confused by the various low-emission technologies available to them. In response, the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership has produced a guide that can be downloaded from its web site and has been running a series of seminars addressing the subject; one that is unlikely to go away any time soon, no matter where you are based.
SOUTH Kirkby operator Browns Coaches has taken delivery of a new Volvo B8R with Sun-sundegui bodywork. This is the company’s first Volvo in 35 years and the first B8R SB3 for a Yorkshire operator.

“We have heard some good things about Volvo and the B8R, so when we needed a coach for our new school and college contracts, we decided to put our trust in the company,” says David Brown, managing director, Browns Coaches. “From our understanding of its fuel consumption and reliability, the Volvo B8R was the perfect solution for us. The 72-seat capacity, and three point seatbelts were also important considerations with our younger passengers in mind, as well as the volume of space needed to fulfil our contracts.

“We are looking forward to product quality and fuel savings and will work with Crossroads in Rotherham for all of our aftermarket support needs.”

Browns Coaches, based in South Kirkby near Pontefract, was established in 1976 and provides coach services in and around south and west Yorkshire.

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New Mellor Orion for Villager Bus

VILLAGER Bus has taken delivery of a new Mellor Orion bus for a service that carries 300 passengers from 66 villages in the north Cotswolds every week.

Villager Bus’ Orion has a sliding entry door, luggage pen, Eberspächer air climate system, and is configured to carry 16 passengers with all-age provision seatbelts throughout.

“Our first Orion was such a quantum leap in capability from our old van conversions that it is difficult to remember now how different it felt,” says Keith Gowing, chairman, Villager Bus. “We have been operating Orions for five years, and our passengers love the spaciousness and light, airy feel of the interior as well as the low-step and flat floor.

“The handling and performance makes driving very easy and, given its size, the fuel consumption is remarkable. We regularly get better than 25mpg on our rural narrow roads which include a large amount of stop-start driving.”

The Villager Bus service has been running since 1982 providing transport to small, isolated villages which have no other public transport facilities. It operates in the north Cotswold areas of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire.

Leopard joins Wilson’s of Rhu fleet

WILSON’S of Rhu, a family-run business based near Helensburgh, on the west coast of Scotland, has taken delivery of a new 12.2m, 70-seat Plaxton Leopard. The new coach, which has alloy wheels, Buckingham Prime seats with burgundy moquette, Thermo King air-conditioning, Bosch CR24 sound and PA systems, has gone into service on local school runs and private hire contracts.

Based near Loch Lomond and the main tourist routes to the north, Wilson’s of Rhu provides coach services for the three main airports in central Scotland, Glasgow, Prestwick and Edinburgh, and also runs local bus routes in Helensburgh, Vale of Leven, Alexandria, Dumbarton, Milton, Paisley, Coulport, Kirkmichael and Churchill.

“We have been in business for over 30 years and pride ourselves in a continuous investment programme that ensures we maintain a modern, efficient and environment-friendly fleet,” says director Alistair Wilson. “In that time we have also enjoyed a long and successful relationship with Plaxton and the new Leopard, like its fore-runners, combines class-leading passenger appeal with a track record of outstanding performance. Our latest addition has slipped seamlessly into the fleet and brings an added dimension to our line-up as we strive to meet the ever-increasing demands of our various client groups.”

www.alexander-dennis.com
STAGECOACH has put 12 new Enviro400 double-decks into service on its coastal route 99, branded the ‘Wave’, between Hastings and Eastbourne. The 12 new buses feature free wi-fi and USB charging points.

“The route maintains important links between coastal towns and with these new buses we hope to tempt even more people to try the service,” says managing director Philip Norwell.

The 99 route carried more than 1.3 million passengers in 2017.

“These buses aren’t just about providing comfortable seats. People want to use their travel time to catch-up and stay connected. Our free wi-fi and USB charging will allow them to do this, contributing to our customers’ overall journey experience whilst reducing our impact on the environment.”

The new buses, along with all other Stagecoach buses in the south east, run on a greener fuel blend which contains at least 20 per cent biofuel derived from a range of waste products.

For comfort the buses also come with high-back faux-leather seats and have a new ‘Wave’ livery featuring a montage inspired by the seaside route.

www.stagecoachbus.com
SCANIA (Great Britain) has taken its largest order for the new Scania Irizar i6S with a 20-vehicle commitment from City Circle (UK) Limited. The first examples of the new model will enter service in the UK later this year and will operate on City Circle’s premium tours and corporate contracts.

“The Scania Irizar i6 product has performed exceptionally well over the last few years for our business,” says Neil Pegg, managing director, City Circle (UK). “When I was introduced to the upgraded i6S model, and the additional refinements and specification enhancements it offers, I knew it was the right product for our high-profile client base. We look forward to operating the 20 new vehicles in what looks to be a very busy season in store, and 2018 will also see us opening up fantastic new purpose built premises in Heathrow to operate from.”

Eighteen of the vehicles in the order are 13.2m models based on Scania’s K410 6x2*4 2 chassis with fully-automated Scania Opticruise gear-selection system. The Irizar i6S bodywork features 53 reclining seats with leather and extra padded flaps, sunken toilet/washroom and Frenzel kitchen located at the centre continental exit. Additional features include Alcoa Dura-Bright alloy wheels, reversing and road cameras and integrated satellite navigation. Passenger seats will benefit from seat back tables, magazine nets and footrests and the body will be finished with extra dark tinted double-glazing.

The other two coaches in this order are 10.8m vehicles based on Scania K360 4x2 chassis with fully-automated Scania Opticruise gear-selection system. The Irizar i6S bodywork of these coaches feature 36 recliners with half leather trim to the seats, rear floor mounted toilet/washroom and an extensive servery at the rear of the coach with built in units for fridges and drinks facilities fitted by A&D coach systems.

The vehicles will all have WiFi on board, CCTV systems and USB charging points to all passenger seats.

www.scania.co.uk
New greener bus fleet for Stonehenge visitors

GO Ahead-owned Tourist Coaches has launched a fleet of six new ADL Enviro200 buses for a shuttle service at Stonehenge.

English Heritage opened the new Stonehenge visitor centre four years ago, removing the previous car park and road that for many years had been immediately next to the monument, in a bid to re-unite the stone circle with its prehistoric landscape.

Cars and coaches now park at the edge of the World Heritage Site and visitors continue their journey to the stones either on foot or by shuttle bus.

“We are really excited to be taking delivery of our new greener buses,” says Jennifer Davies, English Heritage head of operations at Stonehenge. “They’re of world-leading design, are comfortable and they look great. The great news for us and our visitors is that as each vehicle can carry more people than our old buses, it means less time to wait on busy days, before your journey to the stones begins. It’s better for our disabled visitors and also those with young families.”

Andrew Wickham, managing director, Tourist Coaches, adds: “We are proud to be operating these new vehicles on behalf of English Heritage here at Stonehenge. Not only are they better for the environment, they offer extra comfort for those travelling on-board with us whilst visiting this world-renowned site.

“The new fleet is the result of considerable investment from us, but we have an excellent partnership with English Heritage - and are confident the buses will be very well-received by all who use them here.”

www.touristcoaches.co.uk
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Historian David Starkey curates new Hever Castle exhibition

The childhood home of Anne Boleyn is undergoing a transformation to tell the story of the Tudors. Guest curator, historian David Starkey, will oversee a permanent exhibition in Hever Castle’s Long Gallery to depict the entire saga from the War of the Roses to the Reformation through its art collection.

The Tudor period remains one of the most fascinating eras in English history. Through more than 20 paintings hung in dynastic order, the tale of the Tudors will be told. Insight from historian and TV presenter, David Starkey will be provided in a multimedia device that will deliver a guide to understanding the impact that one family made on English history.

The Long Gallery, created in 1506 by Thomas Boleyn, will be transformed with new lighting, redecoration and paintings displayed in the style of the 16th century.

The ornate plasterwork that adorns the Long Gallery ceiling has been painted a softer off-white to give the effect of lime wash and full length drapes will be reinstalled at the large stained glass windows situated at each end of the 98ft-long room.

Religious vestments will also be displayed alongside the original artwork and chairs of the period relocated from other rooms of the castle.

“Hever Castle has one of the best collections of Tudor portraits after the National Portrait Gallery,” says Starkey.

Visitors will be able to see the new permanent exhibition from autumn 2018.

New global campaign to boost inbound tourism

VisitBritain has launched a new global campaign for 2018 to boost inbound tourism to Britain. The campaign ‘I Travel For...’ uses short films and story-telling to highlight less-explored destinations in Britain, alongside globally renowned and iconic landmarks and attractions.

The digital campaign includes a launch film on Facebook and Instagram, followed by a series of films and images promoting destinations across Britain. The campaign is launching across social media channels from February to April in Britain’s largest inbound visitor markets including Australia, France, Germany, USA, China, the GCC and India.

“Tourism is one of the UK’s most valuable export industries, driving economic growth and creating jobs right across Britain,” says VisitBritain chief executive Sally Balcombe. “It is also a fiercely competitive global industry and we are seizing the opportunity to build on the strong growth we have seen, showcasing that Britain is bursting with fun activities, adventure and wonderfully unexpected experiences to come and discover all year round.”

The campaign has been developed based on VisitBritain’s global research into people’s motivations, passions and inspiration for travel including adventure, fun, relaxation, discovery, culture, food and drink and the unexpected. The campaign uses these motivators to create tailored content for target audiences, which is then shared on Facebook and Instagram globally.

www.visitbritain.org
Wallonia highlights offbeat attractions in new groups guide

The Belgian Tourist Office-Wallonia has launched ‘Surprising Discoveries’, a new guide to help tour planners create memorable group visits to southern Belgium.

The 32-page guide has been produced to encourage group travel organisers to take a closer look at what southern Belgium has to offer, and to find out more about the region’s many quirky festivals and events.

“Wallonia is only a couple of hours drive by coach from Calais and Dunkirk,” says Philippe Maree, trade manager with the Belgian Tourist Office-Wallonia. “That makes it an ideal option for group travel organisers, coach tour operators and tour planners looking to add something new and different into their tour programmes. However, when tour planners think of Belgium, they often only think of Bruges or Brussels. This new guide aims to show that southern Belgium, with its spectacular castles, medieval towns, the picturesque Belgian Ardennes and a host of quirky and fascinating carnivals, festivals and other attractions, is well worth a closer look.”

The new guide features popular group-friendly destinations including La Roche en Ardenne, Tournai, Dinant and Waterloo. There are also details of the unique Venetian Costume Festival held in May at the Gardens of Annevoie near Namur, and the Dinant Bathtub Regatta held on the River Meuse in August.

The guide also provides information about the Anniversary of the Armistice that takes place in the city of Mons in November. The event will be partly based at the city’s St Symphorien Cemetery, the resting place of the first and last soldiers to be killed in WWI. The guide also features the region’s many other WWI and WWII sites together with full details of heritage railways and how to sample Wallonia’s famous beer, wine, cheese and chocolate.

www.walloniabelgiumtourism.co.uk

Excursions 2018 hits the spot

Now in its 42nd year the Excursions one day-group travel show, which took place at Alexandra Palace on 27 January, was well supported by exhibitors and visitors.

Special guests who attended the show by personal invitation from coach tour operators enjoyed exclusive access to the Mary Rose Experience where they discovered more about Henry VIII’s favourite ship and were able to handle some replica artefacts and real objects from the Mary Rose. They were also treated to a wine reception and sommelier presentation from Denbies Wine Estate on arrival.

“The event was an amazing success and it was fabulous to meet hundreds of group trip organisers and give them a flavour of what the Mary Rose experience has to offer,” says Paul Griffiths, Mary Rose Museum. “Hosting the VIP area also gave us the chance to give a more in depth briefing on the Mary Rose and for visitors to get their hands on genuine Tudor artefacts.”

Many exhibitors took the opportunity to launch something new at the show including Greatdays Travel Group, the New Lanark Mill World Heritage Site and the Belgian Tourist Office-Wallonia, while others brought along their mascots including Lenny the Lemur from Marwell Zoo and Roman legions in full costume from Butser Ancient Farm.

And hourly matinee Shows presented by Groups Direct in association with James R Hearn attracted a large audience with tribute artists performing popular songs from both Frankie Valli and Shirley Bassey, while the Hambledon Vineyard feature stand was constantly busy with visitors enjoying a free tasting of their refreshing sparkling wine.

Organiser Anna Wilson-Barnes, travel trade marketing manager, Tourism South East says: “We were very pleased to welcome a large number of quality visitors this year, all eager to see the growing number of exhibitors at the show.”

www.excursionsshow.com
Cruising offer from Chalkwell

Chalkwell of Sittingbourne has announced new Cruising Holidays through a collaboration with GreatDays and Fred.Olsen Cruise Lines with coaches taking holidaymakers to and from Dover Cruise Terminal.

“We have teamed up with Greatdays Holidays and Fred.Olsen Cruise Lines to bring our customers something completely different,” says Roland Eglinton, Chalkwell’s commercial director.

There are three cruises on Boudicca starting with nine nights on the German Waterways from June 21; five nights cruising the Seine from August 24 and seven nights through the scenic Fjords from August 29.

“We’ve worked hard to come up with a great selection of departures with many old favourites and some exciting new features, including new Day breaks such as the London Postal Museum with its underground train,” adds Eglinton. “There is also the Bombay Sapphire Gin Distillery and a commemorative trip to Mons and brand new holidays include RHS Chatsworth Flower Show, Cadbury World and the fantastic Valkenberg Christmas Market.”

Chalkwell’s holiday programme has also been expanded with new pick-up locations around Kent. Holiday customers can now join departing coaches in Ashford, Maidstone, Canterbury, Faversham and various points in between. Customers also have the option of a door-to-door collection.

www.chalkwell.co.uk

Record numbers of international tourists for English regions

In the first nine months of 2017 there were a record 12.7 million visits to English regions outside London, up 4 per cent compared to the same period in 2016, according to the latest data from VisitBritain.

International visitors spent £6.1billion across England’s regions during this period. There were 909,000 overseas visits to Wales from January to September last year, up 6 per cent compared to the same time in 2016, and visitors spent £337million.

In Scotland, overseas visits increased 14 per cent to 2.6 million in the first nine months of 2017 compared to the same time in 2016, with overseas visitors spending £1.8billion.

“It is fantastic news that towns and cities across the UK are benefitting from the boom in tourism, and as the new Tourism Minister I want to ensure that this trend continues,” says tourism minister Michael Ellis. “Promoting the UK as a must-visit destination to the rest of the world is paramount in ensuring that local areas can reap the benefits of tourism.”

VisitBritain Director Patricia Yates adds: “Boosting inbound tourism throughout Britain is at the heart of our work, so it is very encouraging to see the growth across our nations and regions.”

www.visitbritain.org
Marking 400 years at Historic Dockyard Chatham

2018 marks The Historic Dockyard Chatham’s 400th birthday and to celebrate the year there a range of activities and exhibitions to captivate all ages. The dockyard is working in partnership with the creators of Call the Midwife, Neal Street Productions, to launch an official Call the Midwife tour in 2018 as The Historic Dockyard Chatham has been the backdrop for many of the show’s well-known scenes.

The new tour will be overseen by the show’s producers and will feature material from the latest series, as well as props, costumes and sets.

Over Easter 2018 the venue hosts the Festival of Steam and Transport and later in the year, groups can enjoy the popular Salute to the ‘40s festivals, complete with military trucks, jeeps, encampments and anti-aircraft guns, civilian vehicles and a re-enactment of life on the home front.

Exhibitions at Chatham include Powerful Tides: 400 Years of Chatham and the Sea – featuring objects from major national institutions including Tate Britain and Turner gallery. And historical scenes made from LEGO Bricks will take over the No.1 Smithery in the summer depicting scenes from the Big Bang to the Battle of Trafalgar to the Moon Landings.

Terracotta masterpiece on show at Lion Salt Works Museum

The Lion Salt Works Museum in Northwich is hosting a special exhibition from 1 May to 15 July this year to display a stunning Northwich terracotta altarpiece of the ‘Last Supper’ at Little Leigh church. The exhibition explores how such a fine altarpiece, known as a ‘reredos’ was produced by a local Northwich manufacturer and how the reproduction sculpture, based on Leonardo Di Vinci’s painting, the ‘Last Supper’ is evidence of the town’s salt-making history.

“Northwich is famous for salt and boat-making but not many people are aware that the town also supported a thriving terracotta-making firm led by Jabez Thompson in the late 1800s,” says Alexander Boulton local historian and researcher. “Jabez was part of the large Thompson family who owned the Lion Salt Works for six generations. In addition to making terracotta ornamentation for many of the buildings in Northwich, his company also made the tough, non-corroding tiles for beneath the town’s numerous salt pans as well as many of the red bricks that make up the town’s houses.”

David North, researcher and Little Leigh resident adds: “It is a mystery how such an astonishing terracotta altarpiece could be produced by a firm that usually produced such ordinary items and puzzling that a small church like St Michael & All Angels could have afforded both this sculpture and the church’s astonishing architectural detailing and design. Whichever craftsman created this sculpture was a master of his trade and clearly proud of the town’s salt history.”

The Lion Salt Works Museum tells the story of salt through interactive displays, including a sound and light show, automaton and ‘subsiding house’. It has won nine awards since re-opening after a four-year £10million restoration in June 2015.
Merlin creative speaker confirmed for BTTS

Justin East, senior creative director of innovation at Merlin Entertainments, will present a keynote session at the British Tourism & Travel Show, which takes place at the NEC Birmingham on 21-22 March 2018.

Responsible for the concept, development and creative strategy of the Merlin portfolio, East has implemented a range of creative projects, including Legoland Discovery Centres, Thorpe Park’s Derren Brown’s Ghost Train, and Little Big City in Berlin.

His session on Wednesday 21 March will cover innovation in the attraction industry, the thinking that stimulates it, and who produces it.

“I hope people will take away from the session that they should relax when they’re talking about creativity, and not be inhibited,” says East. “Start a vision – then lead the creative team towards that vision. It’s a crazy job, but you’ve just got to keep headspace for thinking, and not be embarrassed to make suggestions.”

Other keynote speakers include Countryfile’s John Craven OBE, Google’s industry head of travel Ruairidh Roberts, Andy Headington, CEO of digital marketing agency Adido, and Max Sinclair, founder of Ecocompanion.

New Lanark Mills launches ‘Spinning a New Yarn’ travel trade campaign

New Lanark World Heritage Site, the 18th century mill village located by the Falls of Clyde in Scotland, has launched a new trade campaign to attract more group visitors. Its new campaign, ‘Spinning a New Yarn’, emphasises the connection between New Lanark’s cotton and yarn spinning heritage, and how today’s attraction reveals stories of Scotland’s illustrious history.

“New Lanark is one of only six UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Scotland,” says Scott McCauley, chief executive, New Lanark Trust. “It’s a real opportunity for groups to see how people lived, learned and worked in the 18th and 19th centuries. This new campaign deliberately uses the word yarn in the title to highlight the link between our historic textile production and the fascinating stories of the millworkers. It’s also a link to our own New Lanark Wool, spun on the village’s historic machinery and used in our own range available in our Mill Shop.”

A visit to New Lanark Mills can be combined with a walk to see the Falls of Clyde, one of three waterfalls along the River Clyde. The Visitor Centre encompasses a visit to Robert Owen’s House, which tells the story of Annie McLeod, a child millworker from the early 1800s, and to see textile production in operation and visit the schoolhouse.

The Mill Café serves a range of lunches, light refreshments, baking, tea and coffee and award-winning New Lanark Ice Cream.

A new Group Visits Guide has been published providing details of what there is to see and do at New Lanark Mills.
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