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'No redundancies' as Bexleyheath loses key routes

MANAGERS moved swiftly to reassure drivers that there would be no redundancies following the loss of Routes 51, 469 and B12 from Bexleyheath garage.

SUCCESS AS GARAGES WIN EXTENSIONS

Great news for 140 drivers at Camberwell and Peckham

CAMBERWELL and Peckham garages have secured Routes 12 and P12 until the end of 2011.

Both were offered two-year extensions by London Buses on their existing five-year contracts because of good performance.

The extension on Route 12 begins in November next year while the P12's extension begins a month earlier.

The news means guaranteed work for more than 140 drivers at both garages for the next three years.

Camberwell general manager Bill Roberts said: "We're delighted with the news. Route

12 is a high profile, high frequency service that has performed well despite considerable difficulties, particularly the horrendous delays in the Walworth Road area last year.

"I'd particularly like to mention roadside control staff whose hard work contributed to our being awarded the extension."

Peckham operating manager Brian Willis said: "The P12 is a very challenging route and everyone at the garage has worked as a team to ensure we offer the best possible service. We're obviously really pleased to have won the extension."

Camberwell and Peckham garages have operated both services successfully for more

than 20 years and together they require more than 40 buses, including the N12.

Both contracts will be retendered in 2011.

Bill believed there was a strong possibility that Route 12 would return to conventional double-deck operation after 2011 as the current thinking at Transport for London was to phase out bendy buses.

"We have 33 artics on the route now and they have generated more patronage since being introduced in 2004," said Bill. "We used to operate 42 RMs before that, so you'd need at least that number of conventional buses now."

The news of the lost contracts was a "huge blow" to the garage as all three services and a couple of school bus routes will go over Christmas and the new year period.

The routes represent about 25 per cent of the garage's work. They provide jobs for more than 100 drivers and use 34 buses.

General manager Karl Blair said Routes 51 and the B12 had met and "generally exceeded" their London Buses targets. The company had campaigned for additional resources on Route 469 owing to the nature of the service.

"We are bitterly disappointed," said Karl, "because everyone involved in these routes has worked hard to provide a good service. Route 51 has performed well this year and the B12 is consistently a very good performer."

Competitive

"We are aware that London Buses is looking very closely at price and we believe that price was a priority in this case.

"Quality of service remains paramount, of course, but we work in a very competitive environment. As operators we have to show we can be cost effective and continue to offer a high standard of service quality."

"We do not envisage any redundancies. In fact we are looking hard at ways to offset the effect of the losses."

Karl added that from now until the end of the year there would be "increasing amounts" of overtime available because the garage was 40 drivers down on full complement and recruitment had ceased.

● A decision is due to be made by London Buses soon on whether to extend Bexleyheath's Route 89 contract for two years from January 2010. The service operates to a high standard and is hitting its targets.

Terry and Russell in engineering moves

THE following changes to engineering responsibilities were announced in June.

Terry Absalom has been promoted to workshop manager at Bexleyheath.

Russell Latimer has taken over as workshop manager at Stockwell.

Angie's in charge

FORMER senior controller Angeline Verrillo has been appointed road manager for Putney, Waterside Way and Waterloo.

Angie has covered for road managers at most locations within the company.



Employees raise £4,000 for children's units

Two proud dads – Merton drivers Steve Powell, left, and Scott Horney, right of centre – presented cheques to St George's Hospital, Tooting (pictured here) and Great Ormond Street Hospital during the summer. Some £4,000 was raised by Go-Ahead London employees who responded to a campaign mounted by Scott and Steve whose children were cared for at the hospitals. See the full story on page 2.

Fuel-saving driving in CPC course

TRIALS of a one-day fuel efficient driving course have taken place on New Cross garage's Canada Water to Hither Green 225 service.

The trial was in preparation for the introduction of the Driver CPC programme, due to come into force in the UK on September 10. It was also developed in response to a Go-Ahead directive to cut fuel costs.

Resources manager Keith Wood and driver training manager Eric Dale are responsible for successful delivery of the course.

Keith said: "We chose to pilot the course on a single service so that we could see how it worked out and look at the results on a small scale."

"We learned a lot from this trial and have tweaked the course as a result."

The course is now being rolled out across London Central and London General as part of the Driver CPC programme."

Around 12 drivers a day will take part in the one-day course on a garage-by-garage basis.

Black box technology, which monitors a drive and produces detailed information on fuel usage during a journey, will be fitted to buses at each location ahead of the training, or in tandem with it. Used in conjunction with training, the results are expected to be significant.

Black box technology not only offers data on the quantity of fuel used, but equally important, how it is being used. Buses will be fitted with the technology to coincide with the completion of training at the end of 2009.

Last purr for CATS, now it's Grampian

HI-TECH capability at London Central and London General is moving up a gear with the introduction of new behind-the-counter software.

Called Grampian, the new kit covers HR and the allocation of employees to rotas through to the production of timesheets ready for input to payroll.

The software replaces the old CATS allocations program and the Perfect HR System, combining the two functions into one manageable package.

The big benefit for drivers is that when the new system is up and running at their location, they will no longer sign on manually at the beginning of a duty, but instead use a swipe card.

Merton and Sutton general manager Colin Langford, who is managing the project, said: "This process will do all that is required for the driver to get paid."

Grampian is already working well at Waterside Way and Mandela Way and it is scheduled to go live at Blue Triangle this month (September).

Colin added: "We aim to complete one site every six weeks, so by the end of 2009 all 13 Go-Ahead London locations should have switched over to Grampian."

iBus: a huge exercise in logistics Co-operation the key to success

ANTICIPATION, some anxiety and sheer hard work have all come together over the past few months to ensure a smooth conversion to iBus in London Central and London General.

London Buses' £117 million investment was born out of the need to improve service reliability in the capital and dramatically update the old radio system. State-of-the-art iBus uses satellite-based technology (GPS) to pinpoint buses' positions and relay the information to the operator and CentreComm.

When the project is completed some 23,000 drivers and controllers across London will have been trained to use iBus and 8,000 buses fitted with new kit.

Go-Ahead is the third major operator in London to undergo the change and driver training and installation started with London Central during the early part of the summer.

Such has been the pace of progress that all driver training at London Central and the conversion of buses was completed last month (August).

The programme within London General began at Stockwell in August and both training and bus conversion are due to be completed by the end of next month (October).

At that point some 3,500 drivers and controllers will have been trained to use the new equipment and almost 1,300 buses converted.

A key committee – led by



Gerry, right, and Jamie ensure buses are in the right place at the right time and that iBus is installed properly.

operations director David Cutts and supported by Martin Bilham (operations), Eric Dale (driver training) and Gerry May (engineering) – was set up months ago to see the project through.

Although involved in the planning for months, Gerry's is the most recent part of the project to go live. Before the iBus project began in Go-Ahead, Gerry spent time at Arriva and Transdev looking at their approach.

"Their help was invaluable," said Gerry. "It's fair to say that there were teething troubles and that those two operators helped to iron many of them out with Siemens and London Buses."

Gerry took on the responsibility within Go-Ahead to get 12 buses every night over to Norwood garage so that technicians from iBus manufacturer Siemens could fit the equipment. He has had to

work closely with managers in operations and engineering in each garage to keep disruption to a minimum.

"The biggest issue by far has been logistics," said Gerry. "London Buses said right at the beginning of the project that it expected operators to continue to provide a high quality service."

"We have had to ensure that there were sufficient buses available to cover for the 12 away at Norwood every night."

Gerry's colleague and New Cross electrician Jamie Magenis has worked – and continues to work – at Norwood to ensure iBus is fully functional before a bus is driven back to its garage.

Gerry said: "We have experienced a high level of co-operation and teamwork both from our own staff and from people working for Siemens and London Buses."



Selime 'Selma' Siret is one of Go-Ahead London's employees of the year. She has been a driver at Peckham since 1993.

Q Which well-known celebrity would you most like to meet and why?

A Muhammad Ali, because I think he's the world's greatest-ever boxer.

Q Which television show would you most like to appear in?

A Big Brother.

Q What is your favourite sport and which team do you support?

A Football and Chelsea.

Q Which character trait do you least like in other people?

A Rudeness.

Q Which character trait do you least like about yourself?

A Gullibility, I'm too trusting.

Q Your favourite film?

A Pretty Woman, with Julia Roberts.

Q Which famous person annoys you the most and why?

A GMTV presenter Fiona Phillips. She has an annoying voice.

Q If you had your time over again, which career would you like to pursue?

A I'd like to be a pilot.

Q Your idea of the perfect day is ...?

A Visiting my nieces and nephews in Scotland.

Q Your favourite pastime?

A Bingo.

Q Describe yourself in five words.

A Bubbly, caring, sensitive, professional and loud.

Q If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be?

A Get rid of poverty.

Q What was the happiest time of your life?

A The last holiday with my mother.

Q Name one person (dead or alive) you consider to be 'great' and why?

A My mother, because her love was unconditional.

Q What sort of music do you enjoy listening to and who is your favourite artist?

A R and B and love songs. Usher.

Q What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

A Look after number one.

Go-Ahead London staff raise £4,000 for children's wards

THE lives of babies and children who need special care have been improved thanks to employees of Go-Ahead London, their families and friends.

More than £3,000 was raised from a great six-a-side football tournament and family fun day at Tooting and Mitcham's ground, The Hub, in June, and then staff at head office weighed in last month (August) with a donation in excess of £700.

Half of the money raised was presented to St George's Hospital's Neo-Natal Unit and the other half to the Peter Pan Ward at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Merton driver Scott Horney, one of the main organisers of the football match, thanked colleagues and sponsors for making the six-a-side tournament "such a success in terms of fun for the family and raising money for a couple of worthy causes".

A total of 12 teams took part



Going for a result ... for their team and charity.

– Blue Triangle, Camberwell, head office, two from Merton, two from Putney, New Cross, Sutton and three from Stockwell. Stockwell County beat Stockwell

Rangers in the final and Merton A and Camberwell took third and fourth place.

Apart from the football, there was plenty to entertain the youngsters including the presence of a vintage Green Goddess fire appliance and a bouncy castle.

Among the raffle prizes were a Virgin Experience Day, an LCD television, a week's break in Kent and a night's stay at a hotel in Wimbledon.

A photograph signed by all the Arsenal players attracted the highest bid in the auction at £81.

Among the number of people Scott thanked were colleagues Linda Austin, Mark Bolton, Jenny Green, Steve Powell and Nigel Wood.

Scott said: "We've raised nearly £4,000 for these two hospitals and on behalf of the organisers I'd like to thank all those who have contributed so generously to two really worthwhile causes."

Engineers urged to take NVQ

EXPERIENCED engineers are being offered the opportunity to train for the new Transport Engineering Maintenance qualification.

Unlike its predecessors the new scheme is an NVQ developed for the bus and coach engineering industry, as opposed to heavy vehicles in general.

It was introduced to London Central and London General last year to new apprentices and is now on offer to mature staff.

Joint engineering training manager Ian Saich explained that Transport for London was looking for an increase in the engineering skills base throughout London's operators with a high percentage of the workforce having recognised industry qualifications.

"At some stage in the future fully experienced and capable engineers will require a certificate to show that they have reached an acknowledged standard of work," said Ian. "Ability and experience without the paperwork will not count."

He added that in the long term the qualifications held by engineers could be taken into consideration in the tendering process.

The course is offered to all mature engineers at the company's expense and qualification within a year is seen as a "very realistic timescale".

High praise for apprentice Tom

THE College of North West London has named apprentice Tom Martin Student of the Year for its annual Institute of Road Transport Engineers (IRTE) award.

Tom is the second London Central / London General apprentice to achieve the coveted award in three years – the first was Darren Connolly.

Tom, who is specialising in body trades, begins the final year of his three-year apprenticeship this month (September).

The award is sponsored by the IRTE (West London Branch) and is presented to the one student among many from all over London who has shown outstanding ability, aptitude and an excellent attendance record.

Congratulations

Group engineering director Phil Margrave said: "We are very proud of our engineering apprentices, but to be given this award is something very special because the competition is so great. My personal congratulations to Tom."

The company has 26 engineering apprentices at various stages of their training, including 12 who started this summer.

Joint engineering training



Tom Martin is the second London Central / London General apprentice to achieve Student of the Year in three years. He follows in the footsteps of Darren Connolly. Tom is seen here with his individual trophy and the college shield with his name among other top students.

manager Ian Saich said: "It's probably true to say we have the largest number of engineering

apprentices in London and our scheme is certainly streets ahead of anyone else's."

Spotlight on HELPFUL STAFF

BEXLEYHEATH

● DIETER HERING has offered his support to driver Michael Moloney. It follows an incident in which a passenger verbally abused Michael and told him he would report him to the company.

Mr Hering writes: "I have never heard anyone be so aggressive and abusive and I would like to commend the driver for his self-control."

● IAN HORROCK writes that a teenager involved in a cycling incident "would have been killed if it wasn't for the skill of the bus driver". Mr Horrock not only congratulates driver Andrew May, but also asks if he is all right.

CAMBERWELL

● PASSENGER Keith Henry commends X68 driver Leon Gibbons for welcoming people aboard his bus and announcing the stops. "At Norwood, the final picking-up point, he made passengers aware of this and at Russell Square he told them to have a wonderful day." Mr Henry added the journey was "quick and smooth" as well.

● FRIENDLY and considerate are just two of the words used by passenger Ingo Marowsky to describe P5 driver Alexander Gray. She says Alexander drives safely and is an example of "good behaviour" for others on the road.

NEW CROSS

● DRIVER Christian Ludiambele-Mafuta is commended by passenger Gary Law for his "excellent, safe and comfortable driving" as well as his attention to customer service.

● ROUTE 21 driver Denise Gordon impressed passenger Frank Tamplin as she called out stops and asked young passengers to vacate seats for the elderly and infirm.

"I was really impressed with this young lady and so were many other passengers."

Diploma for Paul Coyle

Paul joined Go-Ahead as a graduate trainee.



STOCKWELL'S assistant operating manager Paul Coyle has achieved his BTEC Advanced Professional Diploma in Management Studies.

The qualification is recognised by the Chartered Management Institute.

Managing director John Trayner presented Paul with his diploma at Stockwell garage in August.

Paul joined Go-Ahead as a graduate trainee and completed his Certificate in Management Studies during his first 18 months with the company.

David's £3,000 charity challenge

A CAMBERWELL driver is hoping to raise more than £3,000 to help poor children in India.

If all goes to plan David Bell will cycle 400 kilometres from Cochin on the coast of India to Kodaikanal and Vilpatti village where the International Childcare Trust runs one of a number of projects to care for pre-school children.

The cycle ride takes place in November and in order to join the group of up to 50 riders, David has to raise £3,000 by October 24. He had already collected £1,000 by the beginning of last month (August).

"It's a tall order," he said, "but I am determined to raise the money because I'd like to see for myself what the charity is doing and do my bit to help."

The charity has projects throughout Africa and India designed to help destitute children, orphans and street kids. But the Vilpatti Village Project differs in that the youngsters here are given care and looked after while their parents work in the fields.

David got involved when he responded to an advertisement in Metro. It appealed for adventurous people to help children by taking part in a charity cycle ride. He'd just bought a bicycle and decided to find out more.



David's taking a hard road to raise money for poor children.

The ride is expected to take up to five days, which means that riders will cycle roughly the distance from London to Brighton every day.

David said: "It is the first time I have ever done anything like this for charity, but I'm really keen to help these kids, who are very poor. I have also arranged for

unpaid leave so that I can stay for a few days after the cycle ride and do something physically to help the project."

David thanked friends, colleagues and family who had helped raise money so far, but others who would like to contribute should contact him on 07949 247 949 or at the garage.

New safety warning for drivers

RISK and safety manager Andrew Smith has renewed his call for drivers to take extra care and anticipate hazards.

It follows two fatal accidents and another incident involving a bus hitting a low bridge.

Both fatal accidents involved pedestrians and Andrew said: "People's behaviour is often unpredictable, particularly where schoolchildren are involved and at crossings. We can only appeal to drivers to anticipate what pedestrians might do and be extra vigilant in areas where the risk is highest."

The low bridge incident occurred when a driver was running light returning to a garage. The driver took a wrong turn and hit a bridge in Hinton Road, near Loughborough Junction. The whole roof came off the bus and landed in the road.

Andrew said drivers must stick to official routes, whether in service or running light. If they take a road that is off the line of route, such as in a diversion or a wrong turn by mistake, they should stop and call CentreComm for further instructions.

He said the area around Loughborough Junction was like a "spider's web" for railways and many roads had low bridges and other overhead obstructions like trees and scaffolding.

"The message is," said Andrew, "for drivers to be aware at all times. Lapses in concentration result in accidents, some of which are very serious."

Magnificent 11 raise £2,000 for heart charity



They cycled their hearts out for charity – from left, Andy Rutherford, Jason Mahoney, Michael Smith, Clive Gaywood, Peter Walton, Nigel Pike, Derek Parker, Nick Field, Ray Thomas, Paul Elford and Hugh Brathwaite, who came first in the New Cross group.

Brighton bound

A GROUP of engineers and drivers from New Cross raised more than £2,000 for the British Heart Foundation when they took part in the London to Brighton Bike Ride.

The intrepid 11 covered the 54 miles without incident and arrived within 90 minutes of each other.

Organiser Derek Parker said: "We all did the course in less than six hours, which isn't bad when you're jostling for position among 27,000 other riders.

"It's hard work, but really enjoyable and you feel like you've achieved something especially when the crowds lining the route cheer you on. You get a real buzz from the whole experience."

Derek thanked all those who helped the team raise so much money and said how grateful he and his colleagues were that Chris Jeffrey was at Brighton with a bus to take them home.

● A total of £42 million has been raised for the charity since 1980. Organisers hope that money raised from this year's event will top £4 million.

Bexleyheath 'A' take fifth place in angling event

SIX garages from London Central and London General took part in this year's big London Busmen's Angling Challenge, sponsored by the Transport Friendly Society.

The event took place in June at Monk Lakes, near Maidstone, Kent.

Bexleyheath 'A' team took fifth place, Merton seventh, Peckham tenth, Sutton 'A' eleventh, Bexleyheath 'B' thirteenth and Sutton 'B' fifteenth.

The event raised £100 in donations for the Demelza House Children's Hospice.

Tony Cox, one of the key organisers, said: "The competition attracted 80 anglers in 16 five-person teams, the largest entry since the competition began seven years ago.

"I'd like to thank everyone who made the day such a great success and those who helped at lake side and in the adjudicating tent."

Bruised dragon racers raise the big money



Dragon racers brave the elements to raise another record donation for charity.

FIRE-BREATHING fundraisers at Bexleyheath raised almost £2,500 for charity over two events in June and July.

Event One: it was the fourth year running that the garage's dragon boat racers put their muscle behind the oars at the Bexley show. This year they raised £1,760 for the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust. Over the four years the team has donated £6,000 to the charity from this event.

As usual, the garage raised more than any other team and the two boats came in third and fifth overall.

Organiser Eddie Howard said: "It was tough going because we were rowing against a high wind. Most of us went home bruised and worn out, but it was still good fun and there's a great sense of achievement."

Eddie thanked sponsors,



The easy bit, team members celebrate their success.

helpers and all those who took part, in particular suppliers PSV Direct, City Diesel and managing director John Trayner for their donations.

Event Two: the team finished second twice and first in the last race during a competition at the

London Regatta Centre. They raised £722 for the bone marrow charity.

● The garage's dragon boat racers are out again this month (September), this time raising money for the Demelza House Children's Hospice.

Big hitter Scott set for first title defence



Scott's looking for another TKO to keep his championship belt.

PINT-SIZE puncher Scott McDonald was set to defend his Southern England featherweight title for the first time as the Clipper went to press.

Scott, who has won eight of his nine professional fights inside the distance, claimed the title following a technical knockout over his opponent in the third round earlier this year.

The Camberwell's driver's only professional defeat came when he moved up from the nine stone division to lightweight.

Scott, who is sponsored by the gym and health club Fitness First, was confident he would retain his new title and follow in the footsteps of great featherweights like Barry McGuigan and Naseem Hamed.

"My dream is to fight for a world title. There's a long way to go, but I'm improving all the time and eight victories out of eight bouts at featherweight is a good start," he said.

Scott, who is a former national ABA senior champion and holder of the Four Nations Gold medal, runs five miles every day before going to work and then goes to the gym in the evenings to work out for a couple of hours.

"It's tough fitting everything in because I work full time, but the garage is good about how I work."