



Mick's on the green team

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Success for Arriva at UK Bus Awards

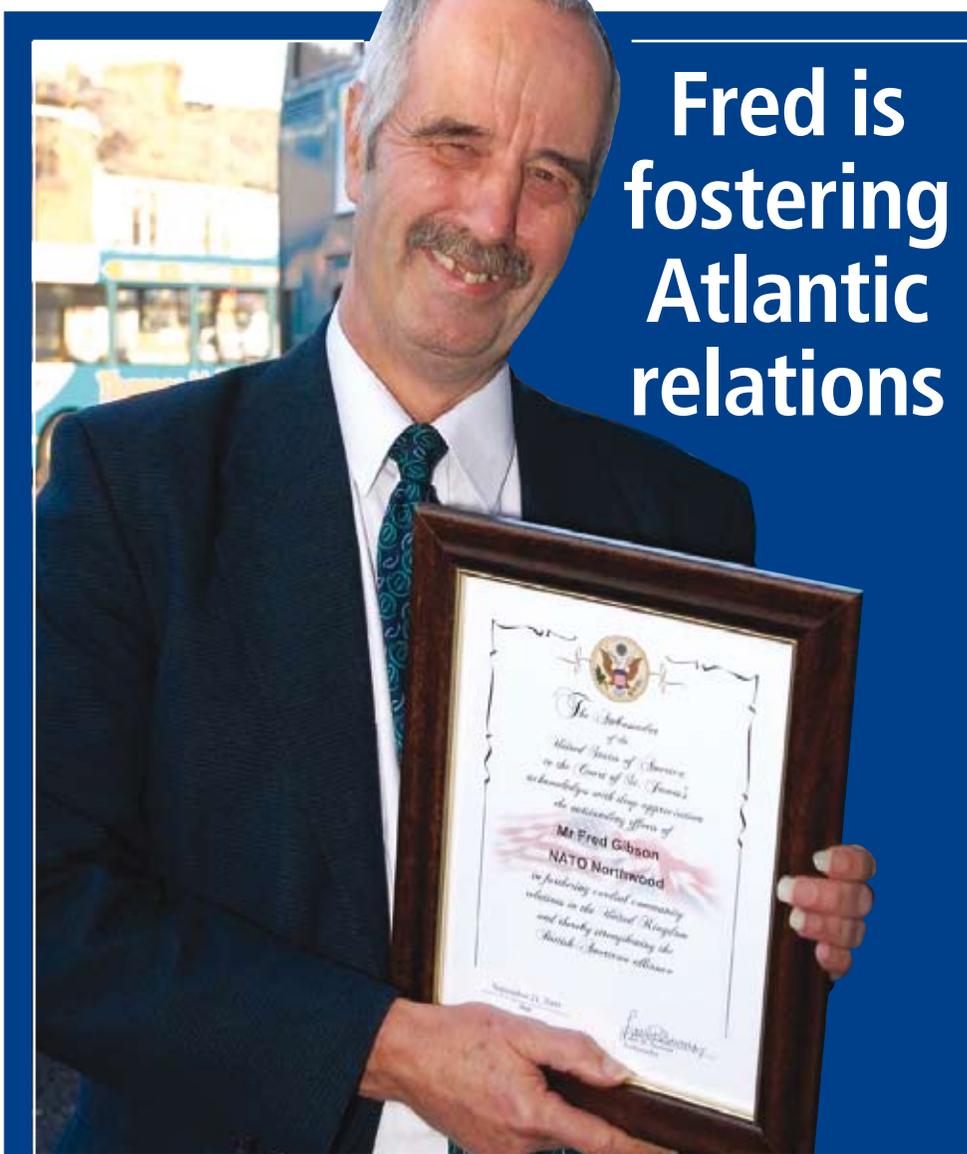
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Veteran Brian's top accolade

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All systems go for EcoManager project



Fred is fostering Atlantic relations

Read all about his rare award on page 7

FOCUS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

A MAJOR campaign is being launched throughout Arriva the Shires and Essex to raise awareness of the environment.

The central focus is EcoManager, the company-wide project to reduce emissions from buses and save fuel by driving carefully.

EcoManager was trialled at Arriva North West's Runcorn garage almost two years ago to see if the scheme could be used on a large scale to reduce the company's carbon footprint.

Such was its success – about 10 per cent reduction in emissions and a similar saving on diesel in some instances – that EcoManager's use in the bus division is at an advanced stage.

But Arriva the Shires and Essex is going a step further by looking at ways in which employees can also save money and fuel in their own homes.

The programme will involve representatives from every garage and advisers from the Energy Saving Trust. HR and training officer Julie Smith said: "Although we are making drivers aware of how much their driving can reduce the company's carbon footprint, we are also taking a much broader approach to environmental issues."

EcoManager involves fitting over 600 Arriva the Shires and Essex buses with special fuel monitoring equipment and training 1,700 drivers.

The process takes up to three months at each garage.

Luton and Watford went live with EcoManager last month (November) and it is planned that the business's remaining seven garages will be completed by August 2010.

The fitment and training programme has MK Metro going live in January with Stevenage, Ware and High Wycombe following in February. Harlow, Aylesbury and Hemel Hempstead are due to follow in March, May and August respectively.

EcoManager monitors how fuel-efficiently a bus is being driven. It informs the driver of his or her performance by a small LED console mounted on the dashboard.

The device displays a series of red, amber or green lights and drivers are encouraged to drive in the green as much as possible.

Julie said: "This is achieved by driving smoothly and without harsh braking or acceleration.

"We do appreciate, of course, that there are times when driving in amber or red is unavoidable, such as going uphill.

"The benefits of driving in an eco-friendly way go far beyond saving fuel and cutting emissions because smoother driving improves customer safety and comfort. It helps our drivers to relax as well."



Fatima Monteiro, eco coach Ron Wright and Mick Ward.

The green team

RON WRIGHT and Terry Jones are eco coaches for Arriva the Shires and Essex and are sharing the 'green' training of drivers throughout the company.

Ron, who is based at Luton, said: "I have been in this industry for 20 years and driving in a way that is friendly to the environment is something I really believe in."

"Neither Terry nor I are teaching drivers anything they don't already know, we are simply asking them to be aware of the environment and how their driving can affect it."

Six drivers at Luton have won vouchers for their eco driving performances over the past three months. A similar scheme has begun at Watford and will be rolled out at the garages.

The prizes are for best eco driver and

most improved eco driver.

Best eco drivers are Mick Ward, John Aldridge and Steve Maynard. Most improved drivers are Fatima Monteiro, Tim Abbott and Khalid Mahmood.

Ron said that since the introduction of EcoManager there had been savings of about four per cent in fuel and a similar reduction in emissions.

"In other Arriva regions the savings have been considerably higher, but that was over a longer period of time," said Ron. "We're pretty confident that we can achieve further improvements."

Ron added that it was important for drivers to switch off their engines whenever possible and avoid idling.

"It's surprising how much fuel can be saved," he said, "and, of course, if the engine's off it's not sending emissions into the atmosphere."

Managing director Heath Williams and his fellow directors would like to wish all our readers a very merry Christmas and a peaceful new year.



Lee's Wembley express

ENJOYING a quick chat and a photo opportunity with a former England footballer proved no ordinary day at work for Lee Goddard.

He's just one of a number of MK Metro drivers who have been involved in National Express photo-calls in recent months and had the chance to mingle with the stars.

On this occasion, Lee had been asked to take one of the depot's National Express coaches down to Wembley as part of a publicity campaign.

Since National Express is the official travel provider to the England team, the event coincided with England's match against Croatia on 9 September.

"The coach had been decked out with special promotional vinyls and it was my job to park it on Wembley Way. Peter Beardsley was on hand to help publicise the work of National Express to the thousands of fans who walked passed.

The company is keen to let people know that it will be supporting the England team during the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

"It was absolutely brilliant to have my photo taken with Peter and an honour for me to be asked to represent National Express and Arriva the Shires and Essex. I'd be pleased to help out again in the future," said Lee.

iBus will reduce red tape

LOST mileage on Transport for London services throughout the capital will be recorded electronically from next month (January).

The move is part of the continuous development of iBus, which monitors service quality.

Once the new system has settled down it will reduce bureaucracy and spell the end of vast amounts of paperwork travelling between operators and TfL.

Trial of the system are being carried out on routes at Watford and High Wycombe – Watford operates 12 scheduled services

and three school runs for TfL and High Wycombe has the U9 from Uxbridge to Harefield Hospital.

Arriva the Shires and Essex business manager Michael Jennings said additional iBus development was due in the summer, designed to make further improvements to service quality.

TfL is planning to use iBus to monitor the punctuality of every bus and the overall performance of services, he said.

"This will lead to the reduction of TfL's roadside monitors, lessening the possibility of human error in the monitoring process."

Tony triumphs at show

ARRIVA is used to winning accolades and now the company can add another to its portfolio, courtesy of Stevenage driver Tony Smith and his colleagues.

Tony, who works at the Norton Green Road depot, has taken buses to the famous Duxford international rally for years, but only this year did he decide to enter his bus for judging.

And, you've guessed it, it won best Arriva bus at the show.

"Absolutely over the moon," was how Tony described his feeling when he heard the results over the public address system.

"How's that for beginner's luck?" he said.

Tony thanked duty manager Peter Willett for programming the digital blind to read Duxford Show Bus International 2009, engineer Alan Clegg for preparing the bus for the show and the cleaning team for making the interior look pristine.

The winning bus was fleet number 3566, one of Stevenage's 17 new Enviro 300s, branded for Service 300 / 301.

"When we arrived at the showground Alan and I got our clean cloths out just to give the bus a final wipe. It looked a real treat and deserved to win," said Tony.



Tony Smith and Alan Clegg at Duxford.

It was also the first time Tony had taken colleagues to the show with their partners and children – there were about 30 people on board.

Tony, who has nearly 30 years in the industry, said: "It was a really good day out and I'm hoping we'll be able to do the same thing with people from the depot next year."

Festive fare on offer at Hemel

SHOPPERS in Hemel Hempstead have been enjoying Green Line trips to some of the best Christmas markets in the country.

The first trip on 7 November offered customers the choice of shopping at either Bluewater or Lakeside.

This set the scene for a real festive party in Southend on the following Saturday when the town's Christmas lights were switched on and there were special farmers' and craft markets.

There was a traditional German market at Bournemouth and a Victorian-style Christmas market at Bury St Edmunds. This month promises to be even more extravagant with Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas market.

The final trip, on 12 December is to Winchester.

Hemel Hempstead depot manager Ken Hargreaves said: "We've been running summer specials for many years and last year we decided to augment them with winter trips.

"We ran five last year and they

were well received. This year we're operating six specials, which are largely targeted at specific Christmas events. The marketing has been increased and the trips started earlier in November."

Geoff Jones drives the lion's share of the specials and said: "I really enjoy this work. There's tremendous variety and the places we go to are really interesting.

"I've been doing the excursions for about 10 years and have got to know quite a few of my regular passengers."



Driver Geoff Jones.

Scout leader gets rare award from US Navy

Fred is fostering Atlantic relations

Page one picture story

IT'S SIGNED by the United States ambassador to the UK and expresses "deep appreciation" to Fred Gibson for his part in "strengthening the alliance" between the two nations.

The certificate, only 15 of which have been awarded to people in Britain, was presented to Fred by Captain David Dittmer, commanding officer of US naval activities in the UK.

"I was surprised to say the least, I couldn't really understand what all the



Fred Gibson: Strengthening the alliance.

fuss was about," said Fred, with a touch of British understatement.

The story starts five years ago when David Dittmer, who was base commander at RAF Daws Hill, near High Wycombe, wanted American Scouts to join in the activities of a local British Scout troop.

The nearest was the First Flackwell Heath troop, run by High Wycombe driver Fred Gibson.

Since the American officer's approach, Scouts of both troops have joined together in countless activities, camps and parades.

Signed by Louis B. Susman, the US ambassador to Britain, the certificate acknowledges Fred's work in "furthering cordial relationships" between the United States and Britain.

Fred, who is branch secretary and union learning rep at the garage, is assistant group Scout leader of the First Flackwell Heath troop and has been involved in Scouting for 30 years.

"I think there is a special bond between the two troops," said Fred. "The Americans relocated to Norfolk, but they came back here to take part in the Remembrance Day parade in High Wycombe last month (November)."

Fred is a former member of the Household Cavalry and served with the British Army for nine years including three years in Germany.

Brian's furry friends

AYLESBURY driver Brian Askham likes to think he has a good rapport with his customers, but one in particular has caught his eye over recent weeks ...

It's a small black and white cat that turns up regularly to sit on a seat at the bus stop on Church Square in Aylesbury.

"At first I didn't think anything of it, but I'm now seeing the cat at least two or three times a week in the same location.

"It's hilarious and just the other day a customer and I both took a photo because we thought the situation was so comical.

"Other drivers who work on Aylesbury's Route 4 and Route 9 have also noticed the cat. We believe that its owner recently died and that someone else is now looking after it. I've got no idea why it keeps coming to the bus stop though.

"It hasn't tried to board yet – now that really would be a story!" said Brian, who has worked in the bus industry for 15 years.

Since the garage in Smeaton Close is situated in quite a rural location, it's no surprise that Brian's come across a number of wild animals during his shifts.

"I usually start work around 4.45am and just the other morning I met a fox in the yard. I've also caught sight of Monkjack deer, too. It's quite normal to have quite a few pairs of eyes looking at me as I perform a walk round check of the vehicles in the morning!" added Brian.



Nature watch: Brian Askham.

Commitment to safe driving is recognised



MORE than a third of Watford garage's drivers were awarded safe driving certificates in October.

The certificates, issued by the Road Operators' Safety Council (Rosco), were given to more than 120 drivers and represent more than 400 years of safe driving.

Depot traffic manager Sean Smales said: "This is the result of a lot of hard work over the years 2007 and 2008 and the determination of our drivers

to do a good job."

He added that Watford drivers – 332 altogether – get plenty of 'box one' assessments from the Driving Standards Agency and Pride.

"We're the most heavily monitored garage in Arriva the Shires and Essex because we're also assessed by Transport for London in the QIC 2 scheme and BTEC," Sean added.

Keith Dorsett had the longest safe driving record with 12 years.



HIGH WYCOMBE employees were in celebratory mood on 21 November as they gathered for the depot's annual awards ceremony.

One of the highlights of the event, which was held at the community centre in Micklefield, was the success of High Wycombe's safe drivers who had 291 years' continuous accident-free driving between them.

Top performer is Chris Hester, who

has 28 years' safe driving to his credit.

Other achievements on the night included the presentation of 'Skills for Life' certificates to various employees (High Wycombe depot piloted the Skills for Life training on behalf of Arriva the Shires and Essex).

Drivers also received their Transport for London BTEC awards.

A disco and buffet completed the evening's entertainment.



JOHN TURNER took home the top award at Hemel Hempstead's safe driving awards night on 10 October.

He had 14 years' safe driving to his credit. He was one of 74 people

who were presented with a special certificate at the event, which was held in Cotterells Club, Hemel Hempstead.

Music and a free bar were included in the evening's entertainment.

Brian's top accolade

VETERAN busman Brian Gosling was 'highly commended' in the Top National Bus Driver category at last month's UK Bus Awards.

Brian, who works at Hemel Hempstead, was one of six drivers from all over the country who were hoping to claim the top accolade.

"Of course, I'm a little disappointed at not winning, but it's the recognition that counts – the icing on the cake if you like, especially after so many years in the industry," he said.

"It was a wonderful occasion in a very smart part of London. I was accompanied by my wife and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves."

Those nominated for the Chris Moyes Memorial Award for the top driver were said to be employees focused on the customer – "true professionals and worthy ambassadors for the job".

Brian has worked for Arriva and its predecessors for 45

years, starting his working life at the old London Transport bus and coach division at Hemel Hempstead.

Although he has spent most of his career based in Hertfordshire, Brian has worked at Reigate, Surrey, and successfully held down different jobs, such as operations supervision, allocation and revenue.

Brian, who has already won the Pride award for the best Arriva Shires and Essex driver for 2008, said: "I just do my job to the best of my ability – that's what I've always done."

Outside of work, Brian enjoys gardening. He and his wife Janett also enjoy trips abroad. The couple have two adult daughters, seven grandchildren and a great grandchild.

Arriva North East drivers Patricia Taylor and Graham Killingworth were awarded the runner-up prize and 'highly commended' respectively.

■ See centre pages for more UKBA results.



Highly commended: Hemel's veteran driver Brian Gosling.

Norton Green trio triumph in annual angling contest



Winners: Mick Mills, Graham Barker and Roger Griffiths.

IT'S become a popular date in employees' diaries and this year the annual inter-depot fishing competition reeled in 60 participants.

Employees from Stevenage's Norton Green and Babbage Road sites joined up with staff from Hemel Hempstead, Watford, Luton, Aylesbury and High Wycombe at Heyford Fishery, Northampton on 20 September.

The event was organised by Watford driver Duncan Murdoch.

Despite tough conditions, a trio from Norton Green proved they had the winning formula

on the day and took home the winners' shield.

The champions were drivers Graham Barker and Roger Griffiths and former driver Mick Mills. They all received individual trophies.

Despite catching a mixture of carp, roach and bream, Graham says it was a hard day of fishing.

"The weights were quite poor overall, but I was pleased that the Norton Green team had the greatest combined weight of fish. I believe it's the first time in several years that we've won the trophy," said Graham, who has worked in the bus industry for 31 years.

Love, actually!

WHO SAYS buses aren't romantic places...

If it wasn't for Arriva the Shires and Essex, Tracy Morris and Joanne Timmons would never have met.

Now, two years after they first got chatting in the staff canteen, the two Luton drivers have tied the knot at a civil ceremony at The Old Palace Lodge Hotel in Dunstable.

More than 15 of Tracy and Joanne's colleagues attended the ceremony on 31 October and driver Paul Cadger and HR and training officer Julie Smith were the witnesses.

More colleagues arrived at Crawley Green Sports and Social Club in the evening to help the couple celebrate their marriage.

Tracy said: "It was a brilliant day and afterwards we enjoyed a few nights' stay in Brighton."



Tracy and Joanne celebrate their special day with colleagues.

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All aboard for charity

COMMUNITY-MINDED Aylesbury employees have stepped up their support for charity by providing transport during the Chilterns 3 Peaks Challenge.

Six members of the team offered to help provide a free shuttle service on 20 September.

Glyn Carnell, Trevor Dixon, Lee Fisher, Ray Robson, Barbara Smeed and Tony Watson helped transport around 1,000 walkers who were raising money for the Iain Rennie Hospice at Home, a registered charity which provides specialist nursing care in the Chilterns region of Herts and Bucks.

Competitors had the chance of tackling a five or nine mile route along the Chilterns Ridgeway, taking in Whiteleaf Cross, Coombe Hill and Ivinghoe Beacon.

Arriva donated the use of four double-decker buses to take walkers from the Ercol car park in Regents Business Park to the start line at Princes Risborough School.

Once at Wendover, walkers were then given a choice of catching a bus onto Tring and walking the final peak (Ivinghoe Beacon) or catching a bus back to the car park to collect their car.

Stalwarts were then collected from Ivinghoe Beacon in the late afternoon.

Duty manager Lee Fisher was in charge of organising Arriva's involvement and he said: "It went really well and the feedback we got from the people using the service was fantastic. It was a chance to get Arriva's name known in the community and, you never know, a percentage of those people may be so impressed with Arriva that they'll use the company's buses again in the future."

Retirements

WATFORD employees have waved farewell to three long-serving colleagues following their retirements. Driver **Eamonn Carr** closed the chapter on his 35-year career in September.

Brendon Davern, who was a driver, had spent nearly 22 years in the bus industry before his retirement. **John Cobb**, also a driver, retired having enjoyed a career spanning almost 21 years.

Depot traffic manager Sean Smales said: "All three have had great careers at Watford and all the team wish them the best of health and happiness in their retirement."