



## Drivers take first steps to new future

DRIVERS Louise Atkin and Guy Street have become the first two employees to be seconded to other duties following their success in the company's new set of courses to find managers for the future.

The courses, which are voluntary, have tapped into a rich vein among drivers and Camberwell's Louise came top of the first class. She has been rewarded with a two-month attachment to the road team as a regulator at her 'home' garage.

Guy, from New Cross, came second and is currently gaining experience behind the counter at the south-east London garage.

More than 270 applications were received from drivers who wanted to attend the special evening sessions, which began in June.

Organiser, and Camberwell general manager, Bill Roberts said: "Frankly, we were really surprised and delighted at the level of interest. We are only able to take 12 people at a time and because of the demand we are starting a second course this month (September) and another before the end of the year."

Held on Tuesday evenings at Camberwell garage for six weeks, each two-hour session is led by a senior manager and has a theme, such as company finance, disciplinary procedures and so on.

### Potential

Bill added: "We have many enthusiastic and engaged members of staff and with the continuing rapid growth of the company, it is essential we recognise individuals and develop their talent."

"But the courses are not just about finding new supervisors and potential managers for the immediate future, we are also preparing for five or 10 years time when people in senior positions now will be promoted, leave or retire."

Although there is no guarantee of becoming a supervisor or an official, people who have attended the courses are in a good position.

● Participants for courses already planned for this year will come from existing applications.

# COMPANY BUYS BLUE TRIANGLE

**GO-AHEAD is all set to become London's biggest bus operator.**

The company has bought Essex-based Blue Triangle and will begin operating two huge new routes within the next six months.

It is also about to open Mandela Way, in Southwark, as a new operational garage.

From February 16 next year – when the second of the new services begins – Go-Ahead will account for 20.5 per cent of the London bus market and be the capital's largest operator.

Go-Ahead's interests in the capital comprise London Central, London General, Metrobus, Docklands Minibuses and Blue Triangle.

The acquisition of Blue Triangle comes hard on the heels of the

## New east London move part of big growth

Docklands Minibuses purchase and expands significantly Go-Ahead's footprint in east London.

Managing director John Trayner said: "The acquisition of Blue Triangle represents an important step for us and complements the continuing strong organic growth of our London bus business, which remains at the top of the TfL quality league table."

"Along with Docklands Minibuses, Blue Triangle provides us with a significant presence in east London and gives us the opportunity to remain competitive in what is clearly an expanding market."

While the Blue Triangle operation remains largely as it

was, there is much change in central London.

Go-Ahead is recruiting more than 200 drivers and buying 57 new buses to fulfil its contracts with London Buses on Routes 24 and 453.

The 24, which runs from Pimlico to Hampstead Heath and is currently operated by Metroline, will be based at Stockwell from November. It displaces the 133, which will be the first route to operate from Mandela Way.

Route 453, which runs from Deptford Bridge station to Marylebone station and is currently operated by Selkent, will arrive at Mandela Way in February.

Operations director David Cutts said: "We have been incredibly successful over the past few months, in terms of gaining an addition foothold in east London with Blue Triangle and in the acquisition of two high profile services."

"The competition for Routes 24 and 453 was particularly fierce. It won't be easy to achieve the targets London Buses has set because standards are being pushed up all the time and we are operating on much tighter margins than in the past."

"But we have risen to similar challenges before and we have an excellent team in place to meet this one."

## From Bexleyheath to Blackpool

THREE of the best drivers from London Central and London General flew the flag for Go-Ahead in London at the national final of the Bus Driver of the Year competition on September 9.

In order to reach the national final at Blackpool the trio had to compete against 39 of their colleagues at the company's own driver of the year final at Mandela Way in July. This was an achievement in itself as over 100 drivers entered the competition and only the 39 drivers with the best on-bus driving scores qualified.

Merton's Michael Greatley came first at Mandela Way and Bexleyheath's Kharen Shaheen followed him in second place. Stockwell's George Anan came third. All of them were awarded trophies for their achievement and took away £500, £400 and £300 respectively for first, second and third places.

The trio were among 120 of the nation's bus driving elite at Blackpool and although they were unable to get among the prizes, their colleagues and the company's directors expressed their congratulations in getting to the national final.

Managing director John Trayner, who attended the event at Blackpool, said: "Our three drivers have shown tremendous ability and professionalism to reach the national final. They should not be too disappointed they didn't win. They are, after all, among the best in the country and have a right to feel proud of their achievements."

"I am delighted that all three are even now saying they are determined to have another go next year."

Kharen said after the company final: "There were so many really good drivers from London Central and London General I didn't think I'd stand a chance. But I came second and I'm proud that I was able to take some silverware back to Bexleyheath."



**Kharen is the first London Central driver to be placed in the company final's top three since the in-house competition began a few years ago and the first female driver to go to Blackpool from London Central or London General.**

London Central's best drivers were Faruk Choudhury (New Cross) and Errol Gordon (Camberwell).

Key organisers of the Mandela Way company competition were Waterloo base manager Mark Cambridge, driving instructor Colin James and Sutton union secretary John Doyle. Special thanks were given to marshals, caterers and other helpers.



**Driver Faruk Choudhury.**



**Driver Errol Gordon.**

## Big new challenge for Nick

NICK ROUSE was appointed engineering manager at Stockwell in July. It follows a brief spell in a similar position at Docklands Minibuses and Peckham garage.



**Nick Rouse.**

Nick joined London Central as an apprentice engineer at New Cross in 1988. A number of promotions followed until he became service centre manager at Camberwell for a number of years. He later transferred to New Cross in the same role.

He was acting manager at New Cross last year before taking on his appointment at Docklands.

"This is my biggest challenge to date because it's the biggest garage," said Nick, "but we have an excellent team of engineers and I want to make it number one in terms of performance within the Go-Ahead Group in London."

Camberwell's engineering manager David Clark adds to his responsibilities by taking over Peckham as well. The garage's workshop manager, Belcher Penfold, also extends his duties to Peckham.

# Celebrating young achievers and the best in the business



Some of the best operational staff in the capital enjoy the summer ball.



Honoured for serving London's bus industry.

## 52 are nominated for top employee

IT WAS the most glittering occasion in the history of London Central and London General ... and it was staged to honour the company's engineering apprentices and those employees nominated for employee of the year.

A total of 52 staff were nominated for employee of the year and 38 attended the summer ball in a special marquee in the grounds of the sumptuous 18<sup>th</sup> century Addington Palace, near Croydon.

Just six members of staff – three drivers and three representatives from other grades – were given the accolade of employee of the year, but as managing director John Trayner pointed out: "All the nominees are among our elite staff and it was not an easy task narrowing it down to overall winners ... the reality is that you are all winners."

The event, which included presentations and video

clips, began with a toast to the company's engineering apprentices.

London Central and London General was one of the first of the capital's bus operators to identify a shortage of skilled engineers to replace those who got promoted or who retired.

"We decided," said John Trayner, "to tackle this problem at grass roots level and establish our own apprenticeship programme working in tandem with the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), the College of North West London and several of our suppliers and contractors.

"This company's scheme is recognised as among the very best and we currently employ more than 20 apprentices."

Presentations were made to

Darren Connolly, Nick Field, James Martin and Robert Pitt, four third year apprentices who have completed their Advanced Modern Apprenticeships and have permanent positions in the garages.

Healthy competition is encouraged between apprentices and one was chosen as the top candidate from each year.

Luke Wood was chosen as first year apprentice of the year, Gary McNeill the second year's top apprentice and Darren Connolly the third year's top man.

The six overall employee of the year winners were: Waterloo driver Larry Conte, Stockwell driver Nellie Wilkinson, Peckham driver Donovan Williams, New Cross workshop manager Terry Absalom, Bexleyheath SVE



Engineering apprentices are honoured by the company. They are pictured with chief engineer Richard Harrington and MD John Trayner. Apprentices are, from left, Robert Pitt, Nick Field, James Martin and Darren Connolly.

Kevin Crane, and Merton garage administrator Dot Pearce.

Those members of staff nominated for employee of the year and who attended were:

- Head office – Debbie Gilding, personnel; Louise Larman, finance.
- London Central and London General – driving instructor Arthur Edwards.
- London Central only (drivers)

Bexleyheath – Mick Buttifant and Debbie Cane; Camberwell – John Hempston, George

Heywood and Cyrilla James; New Cross – Phil Garnett and Anthony Thompson; Peckham – Clive McFarlane and Don Williams.

- London Central only (other grades)
- Engineering – Kevin Crane, Bexleyheath and John McFarlane, New Cross; SGA Alan Field, Camberwell; road operating supervisors Collette Connolly, Camberwell, Terrence Dellaway, New Cross and Gary King, Bexleyheath; workshop manager Terry Absalom, New Cross.

## Drivers John and Steve take up conducting for Wimbledon tennis



Steve Winfield, left, Ray Hurren, John O'Regan and Mike Reynolds enjoy Wimbledon, even if they didn't see any tennis.

NEW CROSS drivers John O'Regan and Steve Winfield joined the strawberries and cream set for tennis during the summer.

While they didn't see much tennis and the fruit was in short supply, they had a great time working as pavement conductors during the Wimbledon championships.

John said: "We were helping out our commercial colleagues and had a super time. It was something different, everybody was in a good mood and friendly despite the poor weather at times."

Both men were on duty at Southfields station and conducting for private hire drivers Ray Hurren and Mike Reynolds who were piloting RM 9 and RML 2472 to the tennis. New Cross colleague Owen Stanley helped with conducting for a day and driving duties at short notice.

Organisers of the championships have chosen London Central and London General as preferred supplier of transport for many years.

More than 70 staff were used every day this year and up to 50 buses, including four Routemasters. Virtually all the work was covered by London Central and London General staff and buses, although assistance was given by sister company Metrobus, Ensign and Countryliner.

The commercial department's Tony Bull said: "Growth over the years at Wimbledon has been dramatic. A few years ago it was a 15-bus operation, now we're using about 50 throughout the fortnight.

"It went very smoothly and I'd like to thank all those who helped to make it a success. It's hard work and long hours, but very enjoyable."

## Mary retires from the front desk

ALTHOUGH Mary Brown has retired, she is hoping to keep her hand in and work as a part time conductor.

Mary, who left her position last month (August) as receptionist for London Central and London General at head office, has arranged to do occasional work for the commercial department.

Among her first assignments, even before her official retirement, was conducting a Routemaster used at the Wimbledon tennis championships.

### Interpreter

Mary said: "I really enjoy the operational side of the industry and can't wait to do more work."

Mary has worked for the company for more than 10 years, starting as receptionist at Camberwell. Prior to that she was an interpreter for the Met Police and then a full-time mum and housewife.

### New to the world

**CONGRATULATIONS to New Cross driver Joanne Fowler on the birth of her granddaughter, Chanel, on July 14. Chanel weighed in at 7lb 13oz.**

## OBITUARIES

NEW CROSS and Peckham general manager Trevor Johnson has spoken of the loss felt by employees at both garages following the deaths of three colleagues over the past few months.

Trevor said: "It's been an extremely upsetting time for us. Two of our colleagues died in road traffic accidents and the third after an illness.

"We have been extremely saddened by these events and we send our deepest sympathy to all three families."

### Henry Walker

'Harry' Walker had completed nearly 29 years of service with the company. He was working out his last day before going on holiday and then retiring.

On his way home he was involved in a collision with another vehicle. He was airlifted to the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel, where he died.

Harry is survived by his wife and family. A service attended by many friends and colleagues from New Cross was held at New Eltham. Harry was interred at Falconwood Cemetery.

Among the wreaths was one containing Harry's badge number formed of flowers and another in the shape of a bus with N21 incorporated, the route

he had driven for many years.

A book of condolence was presented to Harry's wife.

### Richard Verlander

'Ricky' left the company in 2005 on medical grounds and died earlier this summer following an illness. He joined the industry in 1975 as a driver and was a former union rep at Peckham.

Ricky leaves a wife and family. He was a keen golfer and much liked and respected at the garage. He also had an excellent employment record.

Many colleagues from Peckham joined friends and family as they attended the service at Falconwood Crematorium.

### Wasiu Asani

Wasiu died on May 10 following an accident outside Peckham garage. He had been a driver at the garage since 2002.

A very popular member of staff, Wasiu was keen on table tennis and renowned for his professional approach to the job.

He leaves a wife and two young children.

A service attended by many colleagues from the garage was held at Old Kent Road Mosque. He was buried at Nunhead Cemetery.

# Momentum builds as staff gear up for iBus

OPERATIONS staff in London Central and London General continue to prepare for the introduction of iBus.

Refurbishment of radio rooms carries on apace as those at New Cross and Stockwell are finished. Camberwell and Bexleyheath radio rooms are completed or soon will be. And work has started at Merton.

London Central is scheduled to be the first of Go-Ahead's two major London operators to go live with the new technology and buses based at New Cross are expected to be converted early in the new year.

Buses at the remaining Central garages are expected to undergo fitment through to April 2008. London General's fleet is expected to

begin conversion in April.

iBus is London Buses' state-of-the-art vehicle location technology designed to replace AVL. It offers better radio coverage and uses satellite-based tracking technology (GPS) which can pinpoint the location of a bus.

The introduction of the system throughout the capital is due to be completed by 2009.

## Preparation

Martin Bilham, who has project-managed the preparation of iBus for London Central and London General, said: "There has been some slippage in the timetable, but we are working to ensure we are ready to go when required to do so."

Training for controllers and drivers will begin some weeks before the fitment of iBus equipment to buses.

## DRIVER TRAINING

(currently programmed as follows): New Cross, December 31 to January 11; Camberwell, January 14 to 31; Peckham, February 1 to 13; Bexleyheath, February 14 to March 3.

## CONVERSION

(currently programmed as follows): New Cross, February 4 to 22; Camberwell, February 25 to March 13; Peckham, March 14 to 26; Bexleyheath, March 27 to April 14.

## PROGRESS AROUND THE GROUP

Message from Keith Ludeman  
Group chief executive

IT HAS been a busy period for us all, and a period of growth and success for the Group.

We were delighted to have been awarded the contract to operate the West Midlands rail franchise by the Department for Transport. We are calling it London Midland and it will run from November 11 to September 19, 2015.

Elsewhere around the Group, Avianca has taken over the ground handling operations of British Airways at four key airports across the UK. In addition, Gatwick Express services, currently operated by National Express, are to be taken over by Southern from May next year.

Not only have we been successful in growing our businesses, our many efforts have also been recognised in our sectors. We were awarded the National Transport Award for Contribution to Sustainable Transport for our CSR reporting, and Southern has won no less than four awards over the past two months. It has won two Railway Innovation Awards, one for Safety and one for Engineering and Information Technology, as well as a Network Rail Environment Award for Team Contribution and Secure Station status for three of its stations.

## Pioneering

The success doesn't stop there. A total of 11 of Southeastern's stations have been accredited with Secure Station status, and Brighton & Hove has won a Learn Direct Achievement Award for providing training courses for employees through the Government's Learn Direct Scheme.

The Group is never standing still. The Oxford Bus Company is pioneering the first use of a smartcard – 'The Key' – in the Group while Southeastern will shortly enter a new phase in its development. Engineers at Hitachi's Kasado factory in Japan have finished building the first of 29 six-car Class 395 trains. The train will arrive shortly in the UK, where it will undergo further extensive testing. The trains will reduce journey times to London from Kent dramatically, as well as providing high speed services from London to the 2012 Olympic Games.

A lot of hard work has gone into achieving these successes, for which you and your teams are all to be congratulated. However, the hard work must not stop there, especially if we are to make a success of the new rail franchise, identify further opportunities for growth and to run the business more effectively and efficiently.

## Bill Roberts takes over at Docklands

CAMBERWELL general manager Bill Roberts has assumed overall responsibility for Docklands Minibuses.

The change allows Frank Thorpe to be released from his duties to explore other business development opportunities for the company.

## Spotlight on HELPFUL STAFF

### NEW CROSS

● ROUTE 321 driver Fred Powell is praised by a passenger for his "good driving and consideration" for passengers, particularly the elderly. The passenger says Fred was particularly helpful to a disabled person who boarded his bus.

● PASSENGER Philip Baker describes C10 driver Michael Sterling as "courteous, considerate, patient and helpful" to all his passengers, but particularly an elderly woman and a young mother with two children. Michael "checked to make sure they were all seated before leaving the bus stop".

● MARK MILNE, a driver on Route 36, is complimented by Mrs G. Hilgner for being "extremely courteous towards rude and abusive passengers".

● PASSENGER Diana Bunyan describes Route 171 driver Austin Andes as being very much "in charge" of his vehicle. She also says he was "polite and professional" with customers.

● ROUTE 21 driver Kim Keen is described as a credit to the company. Passenger Angela Chapman says traffic was "extremely heavy" from Lewisham to London Bridge and Kim "maintained a smooth ride throughout".

Kim is also said to have been "very helpful" to passengers and explained the reasons for the delays in the journey.

### PECKHAM

● PASSENGER Darian Weir says Route 63 driver Orlando Restrepo remained "calm and polite" when a man refused to pay and became abusive using "vicious and offensive" comments. Orlando turned off the bus's engine and refused to continue. Mr Weir says the man was "big and very threatening and the driver was cool throughout – his actions were truly commendable".

## Garden beckons for 'excellent' Keith



Keith, right, enjoys a canteen cuppa with colleagues Noel Curniffe, left, Pam Tomlin and Junior Scarlett.

EVEN as a child in Barbados, Keith Bridgeman loved gardening.

Now, as he looks forward to retirement in November, the veteran Camberwell driver is planning to spend much more time tending to the flowers in his garden and fruit and vegetables on an allotment.

Keith came to this country in 1961 in response to London Transport's recruitment campaign in the West Indies. He began working as a conductor at Cricklewood garage and transferred to Walworth after passing his driving test.

He has an almost unblemished safety record over his 46 years in the industry, picking up safe driving certificates year after year. His one blameworthy accident was in 1969.

General manager Bill Roberts said: "Everyone will miss Keith. He has an excellent employment record and is a steady pair of hands. He is professional and reliable and a very friendly chap. We wish him all the best in retirement."

## Car fan Steve first of the Level 2 successes

ENGINEER Steve Norrington loves engines ... so it's probably not surprising that he's picking up awards for his work.

Steve was one of more than 20 of the company's 'mature students' to apply to take their NVQ qualifications some 18 months ago. And he's the first to complete successfully Level 2 in Vehicle Maintenance and Repair.

Engineering director Phil Margrave presented Steve, who works at Camberwell garage, with his certificate in July.

Steve told the Clipper that he'd start Level 3 this month (September): "I understand there's more emphasis on diagnostics in the new qualification, whereas Level 2 concentrated more on mechanical and electrical aspects.

"I'm really pleased to have gained Level 2, but I realise there's still a lot to learn, but I love working on engines and enjoy new challenges."

Before joining London Central and London General, Steve



Steve with one of his own vehicles, a former London taxi.

completed his apprenticeship with Skoda and qualified in IT to A Level standard. He has three cars – an Alfa 147 GTA, a Nissan Pulsar GTiR and a former London taxi.

Phil Margrave said: "Steve has every right to feel very proud of his achievement because a lot

of hard work goes into earning an NVQ. And I'm delighted that he is one of a number of young employees who are so positive about gaining such an important qualification."

● If you want to follow in Steve's footsteps, you should contact your local engineering manager.

# Creature comforts make Bob's home a sanctuary

IF Bob Sciberras's household continues to expand at its current rate, chances are the service quality inspector will soon need something a lot larger to accommodate his growing family ...

His flock includes an assortment of colourful parrots, chirpy cockatiels and frisky budgerigars, most of which have spent part of their lives in a rescue centre. Each has a name, its own distinctive personality and they're as much a part of the family as any child could be.

The problem is that Bob, by his own admission, is something of a softie when it comes to adopting birds.

"When I see a distressed bird, I just look at its face, my heart melts and I want to take it home with me," said Bob, whose wife Victoria shares his interest.

It all began three years ago when a friend gave Bob a cockatiel that he no longer wanted. He bought the bird a companion and then two years ago, he was asked if he would be interested in adopting a sulphur crested cockatoo living in a bird of prey sanctuary.

"We took on the cockatoo, whose name was Joe-Joe, and then discovered it had mental health problems," Bob explained. "It loved Victoria but it didn't like men or other birds at all. Joe-Joe nearly went back a few times, but we persevered and he has now mellowed with age."

All the birds spend the day in a divided purpose-built aviary



Up before the beak – Bob with one of his feathered friends.

measuring 24 square metres, constructed by Bob two years ago. At night, the bigger birds occupy a room in the house, especially set aside for them.

"Birds such as parrots are flocking creatures and they like to be with other birds," said Bob. "If a parrot gets bored, lonely or depressed it will pull out all its feathers and that's a very sorry sight. They can become as bald as a supermarket chicken, plucked and ready for roasting."

No chance of that chez Sciberras. Treated to a diet rich in all the right nutrients, plenty of

fresh fruit and vegetables, access to the best veterinary services in the county and heaped with oodles of care and attention, the creatures thrive in their adopted home.

A much-anticipated event is the regular shower, when all the birds strut around in the spray, delighting in spreading their feathers – quite a spectacle, given the stunning plumage and wings that can span up to three feet.

One of Bob's birds is a female eclectus with special needs. She has crippled feet and a broken wing, which requires lots of

attention and perches of different sizes, mostly home made.

Echo is a bare-eyed cockatoo and Bob said: "Who says white birds can't dance, this one has rhythm and loves dancing, anything from reggae to classical."

When Bob's not around, his birds are kept entertained with toys from Mothercare, charity shops and their favourite – an egg box with a nut hiding inside.

"They're tremendous fun and great company," said Bob, "but you need understanding neighbours because they can be very noisy."



**Driver and mentor Clive McFarlane is one of Peckham's most respected members of staff. He has been at the garage for 27 years**

**Q Which rule of the road would you introduce?**

**A** Give priority to buses, especially if they are pulling away from stops.

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

**A** The Weakest Link.

**Q What is your favourite sport and which team / or individual do you support?**

**A** Cricket. The West Indies team.

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

**A** Know-it-alls, people who can't admit to being wrong.

**Q Which character trait do you least like about yourself?**

**A** Too trusting.

**Q Your favourite film (any era) and why?**

**A** Guess Who's Coming To Dinner, starring Sidney Poitier. It was one of the first films to tackle the taboo of mixed race romantic relationships.

**Q Which job would you least like to do?**

**A** Pilot.

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

**A** I'd like to join the armed services for a military career.

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

**A** At home enjoying my hobbies.

**Q Your favourite pastime?**

**A** Car maintenance.

**Q Describe yourself in five words.**

**A** Hard-working, trusting, reliable, helpful and easy-going.

**Q What was the happiest time of your life?**

**A** Meeting my mother for the first time. I was 15.

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

**A** Nelson Mandela because he is a role model for all people affected by adversity.

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

**A** Reggae music with meaningful lyrics. Bob Marley.

## Dragon boaters on fire for charity

DIDN'T they do well?!

Bexleyheath's dragon boat racers beat the heat to fight off a challenge from 12 other teams at the Bexley annual show.

Not only did team members win every race except one, but they also raised more money for charity than anyone else – and these achievements won them the entire dragon boat racing tournament.

Engineering satellite manager and team captain Eddie Howard said: "We were over the moon. We did really well last year, but we knew we could do better."

The dragon boat racing is the highlight of Bexley show, which is held at Danson Park, and the garage team raised more than £1,600 for the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust.

Following another fund-raising event, the team will be handing over about £2,000 this month (September) to the Demelza House Children's Hospice. This will have been raised from a dragon boat race on Bewl Water, a reservoir near Hastings, in which 51 teams were due to



Monster effort brings success to Bexleyheath's dragon boat racers.

take part.

Eddie said: "We will have raised well over £3,000 in four months from just two events and I'd like to say a really big thank you to everyone who sponsored us, that's colleagues in the garage and friends and families."

Eddie said that he was hoping to set up more events to raise money for Demelza House, which is planning to build a new unit in Eltham.

Members of the dragon boat team at Bexley show were:

drivers Damien Bouchere and Paul Bowhay; engineers Darren Connolly, Eddie Howard, Kevin Hunt and Tony Taylor; garage administrator Darin Pearman; cleaner Anthony Thompson; electrician Andy Reed and controllers Mark Fogg and Michael Walters. Drummer was Rebecca Howard.

● Next year's event is on Sunday, July 6. If you would like to take part or raise a team, please contact Eddie Howard at satman.bx@londoncentral.com.

## 'A' team nets second place

BEXLEYHEATH'S anglers netted second and third places in the annual London Busmen's Challenge tournament in June.

A total of 44 teams comprising four anglers from all over London took part in the competition, which was sponsored by the Transport Friendly Society and held at a fishery in Kent.

The competition's co-organiser and Bexleyheath garage angling club chairman Tony Cox said: "Our anglers did us proud, with the A team just 12 lb away from the winners."

First place went to London Central's sister company Metrobus with a combined weight of 176 lb 11 oz.

Bexleyheath A team caught 164 lb 2 oz while the B team weighed in at 142 lb 12 oz. The C team in ninth place caught 76 lb 1 oz.

Members of the A team were Derek Comrie (team captain and garage champion), Mick Kearsey, Martin Miners and Dave Tomlin. Derek and Dave were section winners.

B team members were Bob Childs, George Frame, Marco Quickenden and Paul Sharkey (captain). George was the section runner-up on his lake.

C team members were Mick Allen, Ken Langford, Dennis Light and Dean Ruffle.

Colin Jones co-organised the event and he and Tony Cox thanked Dave Barber and Paul Sharkey and their wives for their help on the day.