

Sutton drivers put their foot down for a good cause. Here Paul Fletcher takes up the challenge – see page 4



# SUCCESS! WE HOLD SUTTON NETWORK

## RESULT! Sutton and Merton garages have retained the Sutton Network.

The news was released by Transport for London last month (May) and ended a nail-biting wait for staff at both garages.

The victory secures work for 271 drivers for the next five years. Sutton operates four of the six routes in the package – just over 190 drivers – representing about 70 per cent of the garage's work.

The company faced stiff challenges from other operators during the tender round and there was no certainty that London General would win the work, despite good performance.

Managing director John Trayner said: "TfL has indicated that ours was not the cheapest bid, but that our performance and the quality of operation throughout the term of the contract was sufficient for us to be re-awarded the work."

"I thank all members of staff at Sutton and Merton who have enabled us to be successful in this round of tendering."

The routes – Sutton's 80, 93, 151, 154 and Merton's 163 and 164 – start their new contracts in December.

A total of 81 new buses are to be ordered and services will remain virtually unchanged, although there are minor increases in frequencies and additional running time on some routes.

### Delighted

The new contracts are for five years with the option of two-year extensions for good performance. All routes were tendered under the terms of QIC1, but it is believed that the new QIC2 standards will apply automatically when TfL introduces them.

General manager Colin Langford said: "Naturally, we are delighted to have retained all these routes. We have excellent teamwork between all departments at both garages and this has certainly contributed to our successful performance."

"All of these routes have at least met their targets and most have exceeded them. Good work all round."

● A result of another kind was very welcome for some of Sutton's staff when they learned of their £100,000-plus win on the National Lottery. With almost 30 employees in the syndicate they each got about £3,700.

## iBus training starts in July

iBUS is here. Buses began to be converted and driver training started at New Cross and Camberwell last month (May).

It's all systems go now as staff at London Central's Peckham and Bexleyheath garages prepare for conversion early in July and London General's Stockwell garage follows later in the month.

The state-of-the-art vehicle location system uses a combination of technologies, including satellite tracking and GPRS data transfer, to pinpoint the position of buses and relay the information to the operator and CentreComm, London Buses' command and control centre.

### DIARY DATES

iBus installation  
Stockwell starts July 3; Mandela Way starts August 22; Putney and Waterside Way start August 27; Sutton starts September 22 and Merton on September 29.

### Driver training

Stockwell – July 25 to August 18; Mandela Way – August 27 to September 9; Putney and Waterside Way – August 29 to September 18; Sutton – September 24 to October 9; Merton – October 1 to October 22.

Artic conversion is due to begin at Waterloo on August 27 with driver training beginning two days later and finishing on September 8.



Fourteen of the successful NVQ achievers with group engineering director Phil Margrave, centre. Phil is flanked by engineering training managers Gerry Fleming and Ian Saich.

## Engineers gain certificates of excellence

SIXTEEN employees have been honoured for successfully completing their NVQ qualifications in Vehicle and Maintenance Repair at Level 2 and 3.

The engineers gathered at the company's head office last month (May) to be presented with their certificates by Go-Ahead's group engineering director Phil Margrave.

Phil said: "These men have earned their success. The NVQ is awarded by the Institute of the Motor Industry and is a nationally-recognised qualification, which requires a lot of hard work and is essential for career development."

Level 2 awards were presented to: Nasir Abidi (Peckham), Godfrey Dunbar (Camberwell), Paul Elford (New Cross), Boldomero Garcia-Apraez

(Merton), Ronald McIlroy (Putney), Timothy Nelson (Merton), Edward Smith (Stockwell), Terence Tamplin (Stockwell), Paul Walker (New Cross) and Boyd Wayne (Merton).

Level 3: Mark Fiveash (Merton), David Hinkley (Merton), Andrew Sheead (Merton), Bernard Wall (Merton), Peter Walton (New Cross) and Robert Watson (Camberwell).

● The company is launching a new and updated qualification, which is designed specifically for engineers in the bus and coach industry. Called the Transport Engineering Maintenance (TEM) NVQ, a number of employees have already responded positively to publicity and information put up in the garages.

## Buses to be fitted with 'black box' technology

**STATE-OF-THE-ART** technology that records the performance of a vehicle from the moment the engine starts has been tested for use in the company's buses.

The initiative began last year when garage teams were preparing their entries for the company's 'passenger safety'

### competition.

A data recorder machine, similar to the 'black box' in an aeroplane, was trialled and this has become the forerunner of a more sophisticated system to be introduced in due course.

In General will keep you updated on developments in future issues.

On the move

Safety alert as accidents soar in London

# Drivers urged to take extra care

TWO new engineering appointments have been confirmed.

Chris McKeown has been appointed engineering manager for Bexleyheath and New Cross garages and Belcher Penfold takes over the engineering manager's position for Blue Triangle and Docklands.

Chris has held various engineering roles within the Go-Ahead Group and most recently he was engineering manager at Metrosbus.

Belcher is well known within London General and London Central and has been deputising for the engineering manager at Blue Triangle and Docklands.



Tom Godfrey.

MEMBERS of the engineering technical team have welcomed a new colleague to their ranks.

Tom Godfrey joined the company in March as technical assistant. He is based at head office in Merton and is responsible for the upkeep of all engineering records, taxation of buses, daily fuel monitoring and much more.

Tom has a financial background, having worked in purchase ledger for a publishing company in King's Cross prior to his appointment with Go-Ahead.

Tom is a keen angler and supports Swindon Town football club.

A NUMBER of operational appointments have been made following the restructuring process at Blue Triangle.

Charlie Scott has been appointed as general manager. Operating manager is Mark Cambridge. Nigel Wood, Merton's operating manager, is seconded to Blue Triangle for six months to manage the transition to the new garage structure.

As a result, John Petts has been seconded to Merton as operating manager and Martin Packer goes to Camberwell as accident prevention manager and assistant operating manager.

SAM HANNIGAN and Glenn Harper have been appointed base managers at Waterloo. Sam transfers from Mandela Way while Glenn was a manager at Sullivan Buses.

Merton's Brian Goodger has been promoted to assistant operating manager at that garage following Paul Coyle's transfer to Stockwell.

A TIMELY reminder has been issued to drivers to ensure they drive safely and remain alert behind the wheel.

The prompt comes as the number of accidents involving London's buses has risen over the past 12 months and a number of these accidents are due to bus drivers falling asleep at the wheel.

Across London as a whole, buses account for just two per cent of all vehicle mileage, yet they account for 20 per cent of all fatal pedestrian accidents.

In London General and London Central alone there were 4,835 claims against the company from March last year to the end of February 2008. Of those, 732 were from passengers. Third party settlements have cost £4.1 million. That figure excludes the cost of repairs to vehicles and lost mileage.

Risk and safety manager Andrew Smith said: "Operators are examining ways of dealing with rising numbers of accidents across the board, from falls on buses to accidents involving pedestrians and other road users."

"Of particular concern is the increase in the number of fatal accidents involving bus drivers. "It does not mean that the bus driver was at fault on every occasion, of course. But there is a belief that some accidents could have been less serious, or avoided altogether, if the driver had been more aware of the road.



Six people were taken to hospital following this accident.

"Any accident involving personal injury is distressing, but fatal accidents usually have even greater repercussions in that they impact emotionally on the families of those involved.

"If a bus driver is involved, and at fault, there could well be an impact on his or her livelihood."

Andrew's warning comes just months before the introduction of the new Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) as well as much tougher PCV tests.

"Most drivers do their jobs professionally," said Andrew. "They are careful and they drive safely with consideration for their passengers and other road users."

"Driving a bus is among the most responsible of jobs. It's not like driving a van delivering parcels. Bus drivers are

responsible for lives in a way that virtually all other drivers on the road are not."

Andrew emphasised that all drivers "have a duty to recognise their responsibilities to their passengers and other road users".

"Drivers should ensure they are rested properly and that they are alert and vigilant when they are on the road.

"There is so much to be aware of these days, especially when driving in London, but the vast majority of drivers do their work without incident.

"Drivers should also seek medical advice if they are at all concerned about health issues impairing their driving. In short they should ensure they are fit, safe and alert. People's lives depend on it."

## How the monitoring process works

THE capital's bus drivers are monitored continually by Transport for London and by the operating companies.

TfL uses mystery travellers and the government-sponsored Driving Standards Agency, whose assessors comprehensively monitor and mark drivers throughout London. Mystery travellers and DSA assessors make reports, which are acted upon by the operating companies.

The Go-Ahead Group uses its own mystery travellers and DMIs and has programmes in place to cover remedial training, formal evaluations and one-to-one assessments.

And now, following a pilot scheme set up last year, the training school at Camberwell is set to begin a targeted accident prevention course for selected drivers. The course will look at types of accidents and the cost of accidents in both human and cash terms.

## New course aimed at reducing accidents and saving fuel

A BRAND new course designed to encourage drivers to save fuel and drive smoothly will begin next month (July).

It is being set up against the backdrop of dramatically rising fuel prices, the introduction of the new Driver CPC – Certificate of Professional Competence – and a more rigorous QIC regime.

Driver training manager Eric Dale said all of London General and London Central's 3,500 drivers would take part in the course and that it would eventually form the basis of one of the modules required for the CPC.

road sessions. A total of 12 drivers at a time are expected to attend and it is planned that they will be split into groups of three with a driving instructor and using four training buses.

The Driver CPC is being introduced across the European Union from September and will require drivers to complete 35 hours of training every five years if they want to continue to drive professionally.

The 35 hours is likely to be split into five one-day periods, each of which will cover a different module or subject.



"Smooth driving is the key objective of the course," said Eric, "because it has a major bearing on saving fuel and the safety of passengers.

"Statistics show that far less fuel is used when a driver accelerates and brakes carefully. It is also far less likely that a passenger will have an accident."

## EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

# Celebrating excellence

WINNERS all! A total of 59 people were nominated for the title Employee of the Year and 51 attended the company's most prestigious awards ceremony to find out who would receive the top honours.

It was the second celebration of its kind and once again the venue was the spectacular 18<sup>th</sup> century Addington Palace, near Croydon.

Managing director John Trayner opened the proceedings: "We work in a difficult business that is sometimes unfairly criticised, but many of you in this room often go that extra mile to ensure we provide the best service we can.

"Tonight is about celebrating that success and some of the people who have been shining examples of it."

### Special awards

Three third-year engineering apprentices complete their Advanced Modern Apprenticeship next month (July) and transfer to permanent positions within the garages. They are Gary McNeill, Ricky Nelson and Malachi Peters.

John pointed out that the company would be employing 12 new apprentices in July, making 32 in total.

Awards were also presented to the top apprentice in the first, second and third years. They were Aaron Knight (first year), Andrew Marfo (second) and Ricky Nelson.

London General convener Betty Gallacher received Transport for London's Natalia Muir award from David Brown, former chief executive of Go-Ahead's London bus operations and now managing director of surface transport for TfL.

And then David received an award for 25 years' service to the transport industry.

In a personal tribute, John Trayner said: "I owe this man a lot. I think the amount of effort and hard work David has put in to making transport better over the past 25 years deserves a huge round of applause and a big thank you."

Wayne Ashe and Debbie Murray were presented with Olympic-style medals for being among the 12 finalists chosen to drive to Beijing (the event was cancelled – see this page).

### Employee of the Year – main awards

The 51 nominees who attended were:

**Drivers** Bexleyheath – Bill Light and Kevin Grice; Blue Triangle – Chris Summers; Camberwell – Lorraine Macauley; Mandela Way – Maciej Dziubinski; Merton – Stephen Appiah, Steve Briant and Stephen Riches; New Cross – Terrence Benneworth, Zuriel Cabrera-Navarete and Brian Charlton; Peckham – Alan Church and Selime Siret; Putney – Pat Mitchell and Aneta Trojniak; Stockwell – Wayne Ashe, Eugene Iwenya and Roy Lambe; Sutton – David Feist, Paul Fletcher and Lilo Paxia; Waterside Way – Stephen Polkinghorne.

**Engineers** Bexleyheath – Darren Connolly; Blue Triangle – John Edwards; Camberwell – Godfrey Dunbar; Merton – Steve Akrasie; Peckham – Phil Foster; Putney – Ronnie McIlroy; Stockwell – Chris Leach; Sutton – Michael Gabriel.



Employee of the Year Roy Lambe. Employee of the Year Steve McGrath.



Employee of the Year Stephen Appiah.



Employee of the Year Michael Gabriel with John Trayner.



Winston Cox receives his special award from John Trayner.



Frank Dodge receives his special award from John Trayner.

**Admin** Bexleyheath – Brian Hodgson; Blue Triangle – Brian Nelson; Camberwell – Barbara Smith; Docklands – Asif Latif; HQ – Nathan Wood (Purchasing) and Frank Dodge (Commercial); Mandela Way – Karl Tyson; Merton – Adrian Griffiths and Brian Goodger; New Cross – Emma Tooze; Putney – Gordon Chadwick; Stockwell – Charlie Dixon; Sutton – Ted Napper; Waterside Way – Graham Bradley.

**Road operating supervisors, senior controllers and controllers** Blue Triangle – Ken Gibson; Camberwell – John Kawesi; Merton – Mohammed Abdelhalim; New Cross – Michael Thompson; Putney – Steve McGrath; Stockwell – Liam O'Halloran; Sutton – Ernie Tuck.

Seven overall winners, all taking the title Employee of the Year, were: Stephen Appiah, Godfrey Dunbar, Michael Gabriel, Roy Lambe, Asif Latif, Steve McGrath and Selime Siret.

Special awards were also presented to: Winston Cox for his long and distinguished career, latterly in recruitment at Camberwell; Frank Dodge, the company's oldest serving employee at 77, working in the commercial department, and Jimmy Leacock, the company's longest-serving supervisor. He works at Peckham as an SGA and is past retirement age.

Finally, Nita Patel and Debbie Gilding were given a huge round of applause for organising the event.

## Memorable victory for company's golfers



The company's golfers pulled off a significant victory when they beat members of Mitcham Golf Club for the second time in seven years. Transport team secretary

Jeff Handford said: "We're absolutely delighted. The Challenge Shield match is always very competitive with both teams playing a high standard of golf."

Transport team players in alphabetical order: Lee Farrow, Cliff Grant, Jeff Handford, Richard Harrington, Geoff Robertson, Roy Sayers, John Trayner and Dave Varney.

## Tough new dare for 'Beijing' drivers

TWO London General employees – Wayne Ashe and Debbie Murray – were among a team of London bus drivers chosen to take part in a trip to Beijing, organised by Transport for London.

The team was due to begin their epic 10,000-mile journey by bus at the beginning of June and reach Beijing for a special ceremony at the end of the Olympic Games on August 24.

But the project was cancelled as it was deemed "inappropriate" following the earthquakes in China.

However, the 12 finalists developed into a close-knit team as they went through weeks of gruelling preparation for the journey.

They have now decided to put their expedition training

to good use raising money for the 'Help the Heroes' charity, which supports injured service personnel.

Team members have set themselves the challenge this month (June) of climbing the three peaks of Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in less than 24 hours. Unlike most teams who use cars to drive between each mountain, they will use a London double-decker bus.

General manager operations Pat Mahon said: "Debbie and Wayne were terribly upset the Bus to Beijing project was cancelled, but understood the reasons why. They, like other members of the team, wanted to create something positive from it and we're very happy to give them our full support."

Retirements



Old mates – Hugh Hewitt and Richard Douthwaite.



Ex RT driver Fred Pickard. Former driver Paul Farrugia.

**HUGH HEWITT** HOLDER of safe driving certificates going back more than 30 years, Hugh called it a day in April.

Hugh began his career in 1964 as a conductor at Wandsworth and turned his hand to driving seven years later. He worked at Stockwell for 21 years.

"I will miss the camaraderie at work," said Hugh prior to leaving. "The garage has been a big part of my life for years, but there comes a time to say goodbye."

Hugh has been married to Marva for 42 years and he was looking forward to spending more time with her and getting started on decorating his home.

**RICHARD DOWTHWAITE** AFTER almost 25 years as a driver at Stockwell garage, Richard is planning to start a new life in Newfoundland, Canada.

Richard retired in May and he and his wife Caryll were hoping to have settled in to their new home by the end of this year.

Richard said: "It's like going back in time over there. People are very friendly, the crime rate is very low and you can leave the doors unlocked without worrying."

"It'll be quite a wrench leaving Stockwell. It's a good garage and I've made friends here, but I'm looking forward to a complete change of life."

**FRED PICKARD** GARDENING, golf and visiting places of interest are on Fred's retirement agenda from this month (June).

Fred's career on the buses began as a driver on RTs at Stockwell in 1965.

## Leaving the capital for a less stressful way of life

**BRENDAN CASSIDY** IT'S ALL change for Brendan this month (June) when he moves from the hustle and bustle of the London bus industry to a less stressful way of life.

Brendan retired on April 25 after 42 years on the buses in London.

Brendan began his career at Brixton where he was based for about 16 years as a conductor and then driver. He became an inspector in the Central Traffic Division and this set the course for the remainder of his career as he held a variety of positions including service controller, operating manager and most recently road manager for a number of years.

Over the past few months he has worked in the commercial department and also on special projects.

"I've really enjoyed my career," said Brendan, "and I'd do it all



Keen walker Brendan Cassidy.

over again. The bus industry is like a big family and I've met some wonderful people and made many friends."

Although Brendan might not be planning much other than taking life a bit easier he is keen to keep fit and said: "I hope to be doing more walking and cycling."

# RACERS RAISE £3,000 FOR CANCER HOSPITAL

FORMULA One maestro Lewis Hamilton would have been proud of them ...

Not only did they drive the Buckmore Park go-kart circuit, where Hamilton was discovered, but they raised £3,000 for a renowned hospital while doing so.

Seven Sutton drivers and 10 friends and family gathered at the Kent circuit for a few hours of racing to raise money for Sutton's Royal Marsden Hospital.

Key organiser Dave Jackman said his wife Tracy had been treated for breast cancer at the hospital and he wanted to help raise money for research.

"The wives and partners of some of my friends at the garage have also been treated for breast cancer," said Dave, "and we decided to get people together to have a fun day out and do something positive for the hospital at the same time."

The cash will go to the Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign, which operates in partnership with the Institute of Cancer Research.

"We had the three-quarter-mile track to ourselves," said Dave, "and had a really enjoyable time – there were some exciting moments, but no injuries."

Driver Robert Baldock had a highly-successful day claiming



five trophies, among them overall winner and the fastest time for the circuit within the group, which was just over 52 seconds – well over 50 mph. Dave Jackman came second and the other finalists were Andy Cauchi and

Paul Fletcher. Also enjoying the fun were Sutton colleagues David Maslin, Ken Parratt and Alan Rutnasamy.

Dave said: "I'd like to thank everyone who helped us raise so much money for the hospital."

**Charity racers, from left: Dave Jackman, Bob Baldock, Andy Cauchi, Alan Rutnasamy, Paul Fletcher, Dave Maslin and Ken Parratt.**

## Football's elite give support to fund raiser

PREPARATIONS for the big six-a-side charity football tournament were getting into top gear as In General went to press.

Organiser Scott Horney said all premiership and London football clubs had been approached to donate a prize for the extravaganza on June 22 at The Hub, Tooting and Mitcham's ground.

Among the prizes pledged from the clubs are footballs and shirts signed by major players.

Co-organisers Nigel Wood and Steve Powell have been working hard and a number of the company's suppliers have promised to provide sponsorship on the day.

Driver Scott, who used to work at Peckham and is now based at Merton, said he hoped the event would raise up to £6,000 for the Peter Pan ward at Great Ormond Street Hospital and the neo-natal unit at St George's.

"We'd split the money in half. It would be a fabulous gift for the two hospitals if we could raise that amount," he explained.

Scott's daughter was treated at St George's Hospital and Steve's daughter underwent a successful operation at Great Ormond Street.

## Black beauties grace Crufts



**Garth and Beryl with their star Newfoundlands – Roland, Baggage and Mr Whinge.**

WEIGHING as much as a man, Garth Smith's Newfoundland dogs have an appetite for plenty of food ... but that's not all because they also have an appetite for success.

Two appeared at the world famous Crufts dog show this year – the first full open international in its history – and came away with some success.

Roland, whose Kennel Club name is Jolakada Danzino, came fourth in his Graduate Class and his brother, Mr Whinge (aka Jolakada Cha Cha Warrior), came in the top eight of his Mid Limit Class. Both were entered in the Working Dog group.

Their mum, known unceremoniously

as Baggage, was too emotional to give In General a quote, but Sutton engineer Garth said: "We're really proud of Roland and Whinge, they behaved so well on the day and although they couldn't claim top prizes they are real winners in our eyes."

Mum – whose Kennel Club name is Jolakada Anquilla Dame – gurgled in agreement.

Garth and his wife Beryl have owned and bred Newfoundlands for years – they have seven at present – and their dogs have taken prizes and creditable placings over the past seven Crufts shows. In fact, Mr Whinge was a class winner last year.

## Knights of the road

**What the travelling public says about the people who work for London General**

## Vigilant Jim finds missing boys

VETERAN driver Jim Bigby's quick thinking helped to reunite two small boys with their worried parents.

During the early hours of Sunday, May 11, Jim was leaving **Putney** garage when the two youngsters approached and asked if he could take them to Fulham.

Jim sensed that something was wrong. He allowed them to board his Route 424 bus and contacted the police as soon as he closed the doors behind them.

PC Michael Jones arrived and was able to confirm that police had been searching for the boys. They were taken home to their parents.

PC Jones said: "My colleagues and both sets of parents offer our gratitude to Jim for his actions. Both boys were found unharmed."

### MERTON

● **PASSENGER** Anna Rice describes Route 200 driver Raymond Ware as "really helpful". Raymond waited "forever" for her as she ran for the bus. Apart from waiting for others along the route, he also told everyone where the next stop was on a diversion and directed them where to go next.

### PUTNEY

● **PASSENGER** Nicola Cartwright describes Route 22 driver Chris Thomas as "excellent". She says he was "really friendly and courteous and waited for elderly passengers to sit down before moving off".

● **PASSENGER** Scott Boyne writes it was "a great way to start the day" when Route 22 driver Danny Tiwari welcomed everyone on board his bus with a "happy hello and a polite smile". Mr Boyne adds the ride was quick and safe – "great service" all round.

● **ROUTE 22** driver Paul White is described as "polite and unfailingly professional" on the day of the London Marathon. Passenger Leigh Andrews says most of the people on the bus were tourists and the driver was asked the same questions over and over again. She writes: "I would have lost my patience ... but your driver was extremely helpful."

### STOCKWELL

● **DRIVER** Roy Lambe is congratulated for his "pleasant, cheerful and helpful" demeanour by passenger Georgina Kelly.

● **ELDERLY** customer Davis Cooney thanks Route 24 driver Mohamed Zeghraba for waiting while he walked to the bus.

● **ROUTE 315** driver Pedro Periera is thanked by L. Ramos for being "patient and very helpful".

● **ROUTE 24** driver Gennaro Borrelli and staff at the garage are praised by a passenger, Mr Adamson, for reuniting him with a bag he "absent-mindedly" left on the bus.

● A **FEMALE** passenger (name withheld) is grateful to N87 driver Emmanuel Achiampong for helping her when she was approached by a "creepy bloke" on the bus. When the bus arrived at Kingston the man got off and waited for the woman to follow. She was so frightened she asked Emmanuel if she could stay on the bus until the man had gone. Emmanuel allowed her to stay on the bus and asked another driver to help as well.

### SUTTON

● **PASSENGER** Mr D. Gardner thanks Route 213 driver Michael Dinnen for his "care and attention". Mr Gardner "missed" his footing on entering the bus and fell onto the floor. He sustained a bad cut on his left shin, which "bled profusely". Michael helped his passenger and is described as a "credit to Sutton garage".

### WATERSIDE WAY

● **THE** service is "frequent and reliable and the drivers are generally considerate to people running for the bus" – so says a Ms Kimbell about Route 39.