

## The Latest News *July 2008*



29/07/08



**Arriva North East** now have "interurban" Optare Solos 2824-32 (YJ08XBD-H/K-N) all now at Darlington, from my own sightings and reports from John Robinson, Daryl Mitchelhill, Neil Wise and Stu Gray, with 2833 (YJ08XBO) ready to join them from Jesmond soon. Indeed, Stu notes the delivery of 2831 to Darlington today, allowing sister 2808 (YK08ESV) to move to Durham, displacing MPD 1772 (NK05GWO) to Bishop Auckland to see Optare Metrorider 900 (P59XTN) off. Stu also reports that Bishop Auckland have lost DAF SB220 / Ikarus 4083 (J926CYL) and Optare Metrorider 2633 (P633FHN) to Redcar, with Metrorider 2712 (R712MHN) coming in exchange (after only brief use at Redcar!). Redcar also have a number of reserve fleet Metroriders in service, including several which had been sent there for storage! Durham have Scania L113 / East Lancs 287 (N287NCN) on loan for trial on the X1, with DAF SB220GS / Plaxton 4065 (S707KFT) being at Blyth in exchange. Neil Wise reports that Darlington currently have Scania Omnicity 4647 (NK05GXA) for Moorsbus. DAF DB250 / East Lancs 7443 (Y693EBR) initially went to Durham in exchange, but this has now been swapped for DAF SB220GS / Plaxton 4080 (T81AUA). Optare Delta 4097 (G258UVK) is back home at Darlington.

Danny Howard reports that **Stagecoach North East** Leyland Olympian 14668 (H668BNL) has been towed to Slatyford, while I can confirm that as of yesterday 14672 (H672BNL) remained in service at Sunderland, but is still expected to move to Hartlepool.

Scott Cooper has noted **Skelton Coaches, Charltons** (and one time Busways) Leyland Leopard / Plaxton TBC2X being towed through Portrack, Stockton minus panels, windows and seats - presumably destined for scrap.

James Stoker reports that **Tees Valley, Eaglescliffe** swapped Leyland Olympian / Roe E500LFL for Dennis Javelin / UVG R339RCJ with Croft Travel and now have the Olympian for sale on [ebay](http://ebay.com).



An update on the new bus station at Washington Galleries. As shown in the above photos, it is much like a scaled down version of the Metrocentre facility.

**23/07/08**



Kenneth French (with the aid of a zoom lens!) illustrates the new coaches for **Go North East's** National Express work.



Daryl Mitchelhill reminds us that there is at least one series 2 Bristol VR still in service in the region - this being **Shorline Suncruisers'** open top HPK507N. It is also worth noting that **Coastal & Country** have replaced their VR in Whitby with ex Chester City Transport Leyland Olympian / Roe UWW2X.

A vehicle not previously seen with **Skelton Coaches, Charltons** is Mercedes Vario / Plaxton Cheetah W551BHG.

**20/07/08**



The major changes to **Arriva North East's** Darlington network take effect from today. This sees a new system of grouped numbered routes introduced, together with some tendered work being won from Compass Royston, whose presence in Darlington will be reduced to service 70. Inevitably, this results in some sections of route losing their service altogether - an example being Mayfair Road (pictured with 2723 above) - though it should be interesting to see how things take off. Further new Optare Solos for Darlington are 2825-30, of which 2830 was in service on Saturday and 2825 in use for publicity in the Market Place. Stuart Gray reports Optare Metrorider 914/2633 (R914JNL, P633FHN) and Optare Delta 4097 (G258UVK) are on loan to Bishop Auckland at the moment.



Andrew Tyldsley has kindly provided details of the latest moves at **Go North East**. New for National Express work are Scania / Caetano 7094-6/8-100, of which 7094/9/100 (FJ08KLF/MU/V) are in use, 7094 being seen in Middlesbrough by Peter Nardone yesterday. Super Pointer Darts 8211/2 (V211/2ERG) are now at Gateshead, while Optare Metrorider 416 (P416VRG) is out of service and Optare Solos 456/8 (T456/8BCN) and Mercedes Sprinter 470 (BU53KXC) are Sold. Peter Barclay has noted the Optare Versa demonstrator now working for Deptford on the Drifter services as planned. Lee Wardle notes Volvo Olympian / Northern Counties 3817/9 (S817FVK, S819OFT) now yellow.



News on a couple of former **Busways** vehicles is that Leyland Olympain / Northern Counties 14667 (H667BNL) has been re-registered PIW4457 and was photographed in Cleethorpes by Daniel Stazicker, while Scania N112 / Alexander 413 (JFT413X) has now made its rally debut after its recent restoration, wowing the crowds at Whitley Bay today.



Kenneth French and Gary Mitchelhill note that **Weardale, Stanhope** have MAN / Wright Meridian WX08DFN on loan.



Alex Kennedy reports that **JSB, Coundon** have Optare Solo SE MX07NTG in use.



Lee Wardle notes that the former Redby Coaches business has re-launched itself as **Promotion Buses**, the name previously used for their Routemaster/Open Topper hire business.

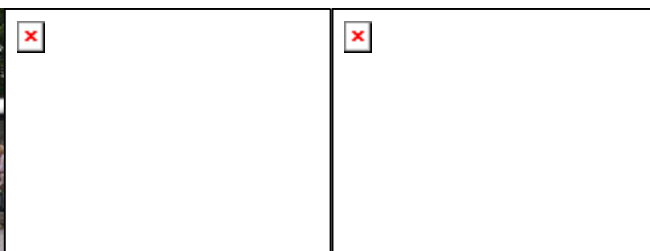
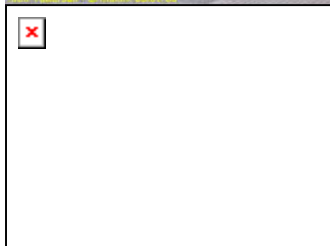


Lee Wardle reports that **Henry Cooper, Annitsford** have been using Scania / Jonkeere E516KWY ex Colbourne, Killingworth.

**10/07/08**



Neil Wise reports that new **Arriva North East** Optare Solo 2824 (YJ08XBD) is now at Darlington. It looks absolutely first class in the "interurban" livery. Neil also reports that sister 2804 (YK08ERX) is now at Durham, seemingly replacing Metrorider 873 (M873LBB), which, incidentally, was the last one in service with the Northumbria moquette. Ian Wilson and Bryn McGloin note that Optare Metrorider 2640 (P640FHN) is now operating for Redcar and it can be confirmed that sister 2721 (R721MHN) is now in service at Loftus. Ian also reports that 9962/3 (N878/82RTN) remain parked up at Redcar as of yesterday. Former fleet member, Leyland National Greenway 3518 (SIB1288) is currently for Sale on [ebay](#), as is well travelled Leyland Olympian / ECW [7237 \(A237GHN\)](#).



Gazza, Ian Gordon, Nathan Brown and Geoff Laidler all provide sightings of the latest changes at **Go North East**. Dennis Trident / East Lancs 3878 (W188SCU) has returned to Chester-le-Street, Scania L94UB / Wright

4937/70/92 (NK51OLV, NK53UNW, YR02ZYM) are now at Deptford, while sisters 4944/5/7/8 (NK51OLH/J/N/O) are all at Gateshead. All five of the Volvo B7RLEs are now at Winlaton. Scania L94UB / Wright 4990 (YN51MKX) is back from refurbishment and is painted purple. VDL SB120 / Wright 8258 (NK04FPC) is now at Precy Main. Nathan Brown has noted some ex GNE Optare Solos for sale on [busbiz.co.uk](http://busbiz.co.uk). Former GNE Dennis Dart / Plaxton M814HCU is now with Click, Pemberton.



Gazza reports that **Stagecoach North East** Leyland Olympian / Northern Counties 14671 (H671BNL) is now branded for City Sightseeing South Tyneside. Ian Ward reports that Cotswold Green additionally have ex Busways Scania H431EFT and may also have H434EFT, while Westward Travel have Atlantean EJR118W.



Andrew Razmussen reports that **Tees Valley, Eaglescliffe** have Dennis Javelin / UVG R308RCJ (sister R339RCJ believed now operating for Croft travel, who also have ex Tees Valley Volvo B10M / Plaxton E52WAG).

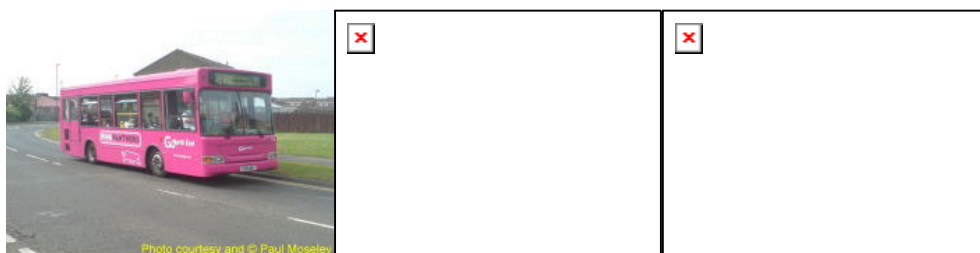


Daniel Stazicker has been on the prowl for interesting vehicles in the Glasgow area and has returned with a bumper crop of findings! We have former

**Stagecoach NE** Scania N113 / Alexander 28915 (F915JRG) with a dealer near Larkhall and Leyland Olympian / Alexander 14663/4 (C663/4LFT) with McKindless, Wishaw, one time **United** Leyland Olympian / ECW AEF221Y with JD Travel, Coatbridge, CEF232Y with JJ, Coatbridge and A236GHN with Arthurs Coaches, and finally ex **Stockton Council** Optare Excel V823DHN with Trip in Time.

**07/07/08**

Stuart Gray reports that **Arriva North East** were due to send the loaned Dennis Darts back to Birkenhead today. Mark Westgarth has noted Optare Metrorider 2640 (P640FHN) being removed from Hexham by a fitter, so presumably it is being reinstated somewhere.



Ray Parnaby, Paul Moseley and Gazza report that **Go North East** have, after some delay, added Pink Panthers branding to their pink MPDs at Percy Main. From the sightings of Paul, Gazza and myself, Volvo Olympian / Northern Counties 3812-4/7/8/20/32 (S812-4FVK, S817/8/20/32OFT) are now additionally in full Yellow Bus livery, while sister 3907 (R265LGH) is yellow. Gazza also notes Dennis Tridnet / East Lancs 3878 (W188SCU) now at Deptford.



Danny Howard confirms the withdrawal of **Stagecoach North East** Leyland Lynx II 29629 (K629YVN). Neil Watson reports that Volvo B10M / Northern Counties 20297 (M407SPY) is now at Walkergate, while Richard Smiles reports that sister 20295 (M405SPY) is at Stockton and I can confirm Plaxton-bodied 20258 (R558RPY) at Slatyford. Richard also reports that Volvo B10B / Plaxton 21036 (L36HHN) is at the Wheatsheaf for driver training conversion, with sisters 21041/2 (M41/2PVN) expected to follow, ending operation of "proper" Cleveland Transit vehicles. Steven Hodgson 32655 (P455EEF) now at South Shields.



I am happy to report that **Tyne Valley, Acomb** continue to operate Leyland Leopard / Plaxton AAG23X alongside several Leyland Tigers and ex Arriva Optare Delta H261CFT.

Added to stock at **Roberts, Wingate** is Scania K113 / Van Hool NIL6339 ex Nash's, Birmingham.

Added to stock at **Gillinghams, Catchgate** is Volvo B10M / Van Hool P464JWB.

Joe Curry reports that **Lees, Durham** have DAF SB3000 / Plaxton N73FWU on loan ex Godsons - it may be added to stock at a later date.

Joe also notes that **Durham City Coaches, Brandon** have new Mercedes Vario / Plaxton Cheetah YN08OWM.

**02/07/08**



Neil Wise and Gary Mitchelhill report the first of **Arriva North East's** "proper" Darlington Optare Solos (2801-23 will move on to Durham / Peterlee eventually), which wear the high profile "interurban" version of Arriva livery. 2824/5 (YJ08XBD/E) are currently under preparation at Jesmond. Stu Gray reports that Optare Metrorider 2640 (P640FHN) has been parked up withdrawn at Hexham, while Susan reports that sister 2721 (R721MHN) is now resident in Loftus depot (2630 having been parked up at Redcar). John Tyson illustrates the fact that Optare Delta 4018 (L418FHN) has joined 4008/13 at Gardiners. Alex Kennedy passes on a report that Optare Prisma 3001 (M301SAJ) has been removed from Redcar, as has Optare Metrorider 2728 (M442HPF), with sisters 9962/3 (N878/82RTN) expected to have followed by now.



**Stagecoach North East** confirm that they are to hold an open day event at their Wheatsheaf depot in Sunderland on 02/08/08. For more details click [here](#) and [here](#) and keep an eye on the Stagecoach in Sunderland [website](#) for additional information. Steven Hodgson reports that Dennis Dart / Alexander 32655 (P455EEF) has moved from Stockton to South Shields and confirms that Volvo B10M / Northern Counties 20299 (M409SPY) is now at Slatyford as anticipated. Danny Howard reports that Volvo B10M / Alexander 20729 (K729DAO) is back at Sunderland ex Walkergate, while Ian Gordon reports that Dennis Dart / Plaxton 32133 (K133SRH) is back in use at Slatyford. It should be noted that Volvo B10Ms 20265/96 (M755RPY, M406SPY) are at Walkergate rather than Slatyford. It is understood that MAN 18.220 / Alexander 22465/6 (T465/6BNL) have returned to Walkergate from Sunderland and that the final Leyland Lynx II 29629 (K629YVN) has (or is about to) finally been removed from service. Former Stagecoach NE Scania N113 / Alexander (28)930 (H430EFT), now with Cotswold Green, made an appearance at the Stroud Vintage Bus Running Day on Sunday.



**Go North East** are to take delivery of nine new tri-axle [Scania / Caetano Levante](#) coaches for National Express work and Andrew Tyldsley confirms them to be expected this month. He also reports that the Optare Versa is expected to stay for four weeks, working for two weeks on the 53/54 at Gateshead and two weeks on the "Drifter" services at Deptford. Additionally, it would seem that Optare Spectra 3843 (K311FYG) will stick around for a while longer. Steven Hodgson has noted a number of Gateshead's Optare Solos spreading their wings recently and working into South Shields on the 27 and 57 services. Peter Greensmith has traced Optare Metroriders 398/9 (M938/9FTN) to Bzee bus, Canterbury.

Peter Conell notes that **Cumbria Classic Coaches** are this year operating into Barnard Castle - click [here](#) for more details.