

**BREAKING NEWS...**

come to **stand T64**  
at **Coach & Bus Live**  
to find out what!

# omnibus

# Celebrating 25 years in business

This year sees Omnibus celebrate 25 years in business. Peter Crichton looks back: "When we started the business, some of the newest members of our team weren't even born!"

Omnibus started when Peter Crichton was made redundant from Shearings and decided to see whether there was a market for the Scheduling Software that he had been developing for his own use.

In the early days, Peter was supported by his wife, Carol, who looked after the finance side of the business while continuing with her teaching career.

The first clients were Citibus and Maynes in Manchester and it wasn't long before the business went international with an order from Hong Kong Citybus, which remains a client to this day.

Another early client was Oxford Bus when Peter noticed, whilst using their Park and Ride, that they were still using hand written running boards, so he wrote to the company, a demo was arranged and they purchased the software shortly afterwards.

Over the years the business has grown organically. The company has hardly ever had to advertise for new staff though, as Carol explains: "We always seem to find the right people, just when we need them!" This hand-picked approach to recruitment, coupled with the family philosophy, has meant that in its 25 years only a handful of people have ever left for another job.

## Just how long ago is 25 years?

**TOP FILMS** – *Ghost* and *Home Alone*

**IN THE CHARTS** – *Unchained Melody* from *Ghost*, Elton John's *Sacrifice* and Sinéad O'Connor's *Nothing Compares 2 U*

**IN THE NEWS** – Margaret Thatcher's time as PM was coming to an end, there were Poll Tax riots, inflation was at 9.4% and engineers from France and Britain broke through to meet for the first time in the Channel Tunnel

**WHAT WE WERE WATCHING ON TV** – first ever episodes of *Masterchef* and *Stars in their Eyes*, and we met *The Simpsons* and also *Mr Bean* for the first time

## BIG BUS, BIG CELEBRATION AND BIG NEWS AT COACH & BUS LIVE 2015

Stand T64  
Coach & Bus Live  
NEC – 30<sup>th</sup> September & 1<sup>st</sup> October

Coach & Bus Live this year will mark a very important milestone in the life of Omnibus, as the company is celebrating 25 years in business. To mark the occasion, we will once again be making room on our stand for the 1962 Routemaster.

The company will also be launching its new brand image, so looking beyond the dominant feature of the big red bus, the stand will look very different this year.

As if that wasn't enough, the team will also be unveiling some very exciting new products that they have been working hard on. So come and see us on the stand, or on the bus, at the NEC this year.

*Peter and Carol Crichton.*



## We are family!

▲ The Omnibus Routemaster enjoyed a day out with the 'family' before making its way to Coach & Bus Live

Omnibus has always prided itself on its family orientated culture. This was never more obvious than when Omnibus developer Raj Ramaswamy brought his new wife Niveda to meet the 'family'.

To make Niveda feel welcome, the Omnibus team organised a trip out to lunch on our 1962 Routemaster for the newly-weds and Raj's colleagues. To get there they took the scenic route through the beautiful Saddleworth countryside.

Raj was delighted by the warm welcome: "Niveda arrived in this country from India knowing no-one, and within a day she had 25 new friends!"

There is a time-lapse video of the journey back available to view on the Omnibus website.

# Pembrokeshire County Council takes Omnibus out to operators

Pembrokeshire County Council has recently installed **OmniTIMES**, **Omnimap** and the **TransXChange** module to drive the county's Real-Time Passenger Information system.

Owen Roberts, Passenger Transport Co-ordinator for Pembrokeshire County Council, explains: "We are currently running every route through the system to ensure that all data is up to date and 100% correct in order to feed back to Traveline Cymru. Currently only timetabled information is being used, but the plan now is to supply accurate, real time information for passengers."

The Omnibus software has also been loaded onto a laptop in order to take the system to all seven public transport operators in the region.

Pembrokeshire County Council will also be using the software to produce more accurate kilometre records for the Bus Service Support Grant (BSSG).

Owen Roberts is already looking to the future with Omnibus: "We will very soon start to see the benefits of the new system, with much more accurate data and reports. We will be working on our timetable displays as the next part of the project."

He adds: "The Omnibus team has been extremely helpful in assisting us as we make the transition, with training and on-going support".



▲ Pembrokeshire County Council now uses Omnibus software to drive the county's Real-Time Passenger Information system



The Omnibus software is also on a laptop to take the system to all seven public transport operators in the region ▶

## Arrivals...

There have been four key appointments at Omnibus in the last few months, with the strengthening of the development team, an addition to the accounts team and a new face at our Southampton office for the summer.

Gordon Pearce recently sold his business, developing web-based reservation systems for the Travel industry, and joined Omnibus initially as a Consultant. He says that he loved the place so much he joined the team permanently as a Senior Software Developer: "I have rarely seen such a

warm, supportive environment." He is now working closely with existing developers to design mobile-based applications and plugins to existing applications.

Craig Foden has just graduated from Manchester Metropolitan University with a BSc first class honours degree in Computer Science. He is working alongside Gordon and is enjoying working at Omnibus developing new software and learning along the way.

Jane Clare, has joined the Accounts Team as John Crompton's accounts assistant. Jane will work part time from Monday to Thursday.

The youngest member of the team is George Cooper. After passing his test at

eighteen, George began work as a part-time PCV driver for Tourist Coaches.

He has joined the Southampton office to assist with OmniDAS during the summer until he returns to Southampton University for the final year of his MEng Computer Science course.

## ...And a delayed departure

Many people in the bus industry will know Michael Meilton, who this year reached the 'age he would have got a bus pass (had he lived in Scotland or Wales)'. Rumours of his retirement have been greatly exaggerated, as he will continue on various Special Projects on a part-time basis three days a week.



▲ “OmniDAS is so easy and intuitive to use...it basically guides you through the whole process”

# Wellglade praises ‘intuitive’ OmniDAS

A year ago we reported on how trentbarton, the largest subsidiary of The Wellglade Group and an Omnibus customer of many years, was installing OmniDAS for depot allocation. Twelve months on and Group Projects Director Mark Greasley is particularly pleased with how well the installation has gone and how easy the system is to use.

He told OmniNEWS: “The conversion from our old Excel system went very smoothly. Even the depots that were using a manual, paper-based system found switching to OmniDAS very straightforward because it is so easy and intuitive to use. If for example you leave any shifts uncovered by mistake it will alert you – it basically guides you through the whole process.”

The Group is also using OmniTIMES for timetable design and management, which interfaces with OmniMAP to edit services and routes. Other subsidiaries benefitting from the use of Omnibus software are Kinchbus and TM Travel, as well as Nottingham Trams, with over 1,000 employees, 300 buses and 37 trams between them.

Mark says that the anticipated Group efficiencies and cost savings from switching to the Omnibus software have been realised, but other benefits have also arisen through

integrating information across all operations. “We found it particularly useful when we introduced average holiday pay as it enabled us to automate the entire system” says Mark.

Another benefit has been the flexibility of the reporting features. Mark explains: “We are now really starting to reap the benefits of standardised reporting across all our depots, for example with absence and performance reports.”

The company is planning to further enhance the OmniDAS application by implementing a staff intranet and Depot Diary. Mark explains: “This will be a big step forward for us and our employees will find it hugely beneficial. They will be able to use the intranet to access their details and submit requests for shift changes and holidays. The diary will include any important events or service disruptions that we need to plan for and all depots will be able to access it in real time.”

## OMNIBUS ADDS ITS SUPPORT FOR BUSMARK

At Album earlier this year, The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) launched Busmark, its new sector-specific benchmarking club for the Bus and Coach industry, and Omnibus was one of the first companies to support the initiative.

Omnibus is both a corporate member of CILT and a key sponsor of Busmark, which has been two years in the making. Busmark has developed into a unique and innovative benchmarking club designed to allow the sharing of best practice, providing operators with a snapshot of what they do well and where they can improve against their peers in the industry.

Michael Meilton, Business Development Manager for Omnibus, explains why the company had no hesitation in signing up as a sponsor of Busmark. “This is an extremely important initiative for the industry, which will inevitably work towards improving operations across the board and ultimately impact positively on the passenger experience. By sharing best practice in this ‘club environment’ the industry will take huge strides forward to the benefit of everyone. Omnibus will be lending its full support to all aspects of the initiative, including attendance at events and forums.”

Speaking at the launch, Austin Birks, Chair, Bus and Coach Forum, said: “This is an exciting and positive initiative that we genuinely believe has the capacity to make the bus and coach industry even better than it already is.”

A benchmarking survey has been drafted that helps to capture the ideas, innovations and infrastructure of the bus and coach industry. The 90-question survey covers subjects such as engineering, the environment, technology, customer service and an operations section which has been sponsored by Omnibus.

# Streamlining bus service data throughout Wales

Omnibus's work for Traveline Cymru is one of its biggest projects yet ▼

**Omnibus has just completed one of its biggest projects yet. In partnership with Traveline Cymru, Omnibus's team of developers has streamlined the processing and management of timetable and mapping data for all bus services in Wales.**

Working in partnership with SilverRail and Spindogs, Omnibus was brought in to facilitate the seamless integration of the various data sources to make the resulting Traveline Cymru passenger information user-friendly, consistent and up to date.

The aim of the ambitious project was, according to Graham Walter, Managing Director for Traveline Cymru, "to develop a more flexible and agile means of providing valuable travel information to our passengers and one that is tailored to our needs." He continues: "It was important for the solution to be flexible, provide value for money and an excellent level of support. The solution we have provides all of that and also keeps us ahead of future developments."

The new website and journey planner bring together accurate data on around 5,800 timetables covering 1,370 bus services on a network of over 26,000 bus stops. It incorporates data on around 80 bus, coach and rail operators and 22 Local Authorities, covering the whole of Wales.

The Omnibus work enables Traveline Cymru to output consistent data across four channels: a new journey planner, a new national data set, matrix timetables and downloadable timetables in PDF format.

A considerable amount of additional development work was conducted by Omnibus for the new journey planner, which is supplied by SilverRail and fed using the Omnibus TransXChange 2.4 module.



The UK Traveline National Data Set is also fed using TransXChange (2.1). This provides the "Open Data" to power the national journey planner, a multitude of third party smartphone apps and transport data on Google Maps.

The Omnibus OmniWEB product was used to power the online display of matrix timetables, and OmniEXPORT powers the function allowing pre-formatted PDF timetables to be downloaded, both via the Traveline Cymru website.

As a result of the development work carried out by Omnibus, the new system also allows Traveline Cymru to link every service to the appropriate fare tables as supplied by all of the operators, allowing the journey planner to offer fare options for each suggested journey.

Omnibus also created an automated process that takes a snapshot of the complete data set and creates all the data exports from it. This ensures that the data is consistent and provides a full backup of every exported data set. The process can be initiated manually or configured to run automatically every night,

ensuring that the information available to the public is always up to date.

Graham Walter found working with Omnibus 'very refreshing' and says that every member of the team at all levels was friendly and professional. He explains: "The team at Omnibus has a 'can-do' approach and a willingness to listen. The company's ability to work with other partners on this project was a key element of its success. I couldn't be happier to be working with a company that reflects our own key values of being customer focussed."

Peter Crichton, Managing Director of Omnibus, comments: "This project required a significant amount of development work and is the latest example of how Omnibus can work with partners to produce practical solutions to meet the client's requirements. Because of our blend of 'bus people', with many years of experience in the industry, coupled with IT professionals, our solutions are always better focussed to meet clients' needs."

[www.traveline.cymru](http://www.traveline.cymru)

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