

Supporting Album, supporting the industry



▲ The Omnibus team, seen here at last year's Coach & Bus Live, has been supporting Album for more years than anyone is able to remember

For more years than anyone is able to remember, Omnibus has supported the annual Album Conference. This year Isle of Man Transport is hosting the Conference, and Omnibus is not only sending representatives from the commercial team and the development team, but it will also be sending a big, red bus.

The Annual Album Conference is important to Omnibus because it supports the industry and provides an ideal opportunity for the company to meet with customers and potential customers.

Existing customers always discover something new about the software that they are using, because enhancements are always being introduced. Potential customers can chat with the Omnibus team about how the software might help them to operate more efficiently, and importantly to hear success stories from the company's biggest advocates – existing users.

Peter Crichton, Managing Director of Omnibus, is looking forward to making the trip across the Irish Sea: "We look forward every year to meeting up with old friends and making some new ones. We have, as always, been busy working on some exciting new developments for our software which we will be able to demonstrate for the first time in Douglas."

Looking to the future Peter commented: "The new 'Buses Bill' will undoubtedly provide more challenges for operators, especially in the area of the provision of data electronically. The move towards Open Data will require consistent, accurate data to be provided to a given standard. Omnibus has many tools for meeting this need already in use with operators and we look forward to assisting others in meeting any future requirements."

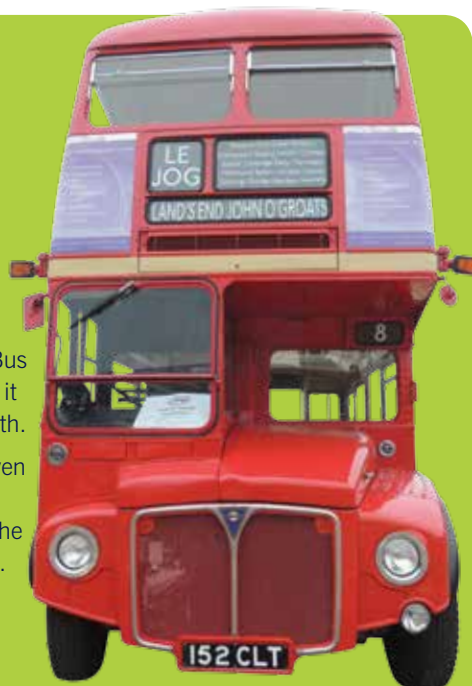
Busman's holiday

In what seemed like a good idea at the time, Omnibus is taking its 1962 Routemaster RM1152 to the Album Conference.

The vintage bus stole the show at Coach & Bus Live last year and is set to cause a stir when it makes the trip across the Irish Sea next month.

Currently residing in Nantwich, it will be driven by Omnibus's tag team of Paul Wreghitt and Marc Knott to Heysham where it will board the overnight ferry to Douglas on the Isle of Man. Because of the height of the double decker, it could not use the car ferry from Liverpool.

The Routemaster will spend the week on display and will also be conducting island tours for Album delegates.



▲ The Omnibus 1962 Routemaster will be conducting island tours for Album delegates



▲ Schedulers at Grant Palmer made immediate cost savings using Omnibus software

Grant Palmer immediately fixes inefficiencies using Omnibus software

Within days of installing new Omnibus software, schedulers at independent bus company Grant Palmer had spotted key vehicle and driver inefficiencies and made immediate cost savings.

Many bus operators turn to Omnibus during times of growth and expansion. Often their usual scheduling system becomes too cumbersome and they need something more responsive to change but still user friendly, particularly as previous systems are normally a manually managed spreadsheet.

This was the exact scenario facing Grant Palmer, a growing bus company operating alongside the larger bus companies in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The company has thrived on seeking out the viable gaps between services operated in the area by Arriva and Stagecoach.

To help the company spot any opportunities to improve efficiencies, Grant Palmer recently installed OmniTIMES and OmniBASE. The Omnibus software also enables the Grant Palmer schedulers to make duty changes and test out new parameters at very short notice.

David Shelley, Commercial Director for Grant Palmer, recently joined the company to assist in improving the customer experience and push the company's expansion even further. He knew the Omnibus software well from a previous role, as he explains: "I had used Omnibus systems before and was also aware that Local Authorities use it, so it all helps with standardising all our systems."

Grant Palmer has already been able to spot areas to improve driver and bus efficiencies. The company is also using the software to monitor operational mileages for BSOG submissions. The Omnibus software also integrates with data from TransXChange and enables Grant Palmer to automatically update its RTPI.

David has been very impressed with the Omnibus customer service: "They offer excellent support and are always just a phone call away. We are aware of their other systems and are already looking at OmniSTOP for our roadside publicity and also OmniROTA for our driver rosters."

Further efficiencies on the way for Halton Transport

Adding OmniDAS to existing scheduling software

After using Omnibus scheduling software for many years, Halton Transport has now added OmniDAS for depot allocation. The Merseyside local bus operator runs 73 buses and 128 drivers and has installed OmniDAS to replace an old driver allocation and sign-on system.

Halton's Managing Director, Colin Stafford, is full of praise for Omnibus software. He says: "We have been using OmniROTA, OmniTIMES and OmniBASE which have delivered significant benefits in terms of operational efficiencies and ease of scheduling. We were very keen to update our depot allocation system and so OmniDAS was the obvious choice to deliver further benefits."

The system was installed last month and the Omnibus team has been busy training Halton's scheduling staff. The training has gone very smoothly, as Colin explains: "Everyone is very enthusiastic about the new software and we are looking forward to seeing what it can do for us."

The myDAS Touch

Omnibus launched the myDAS Touch app at last year's Coach & Bus Live, and the Album Conference gives the development team the opportunity to showcase the enhancements that have been made since the original launch.

myDAS Touch is an integral part of the OmniDAS driver self-service myDAS module, linking drivers directly with the OmniDAS depot allocation system. myDAS Touch allows drivers to access all their own details, including rota and holiday details, from their phone whilst out and about, or other devices when at home. Drivers can use the myDAS Touch app, or the company intranet, to view their upcoming shifts, used and available holidays, and hours worked. They can also submit requests for holidays, shift swaps and overtime. The secure myDAS Touch app can be installed on all modern smartphones.

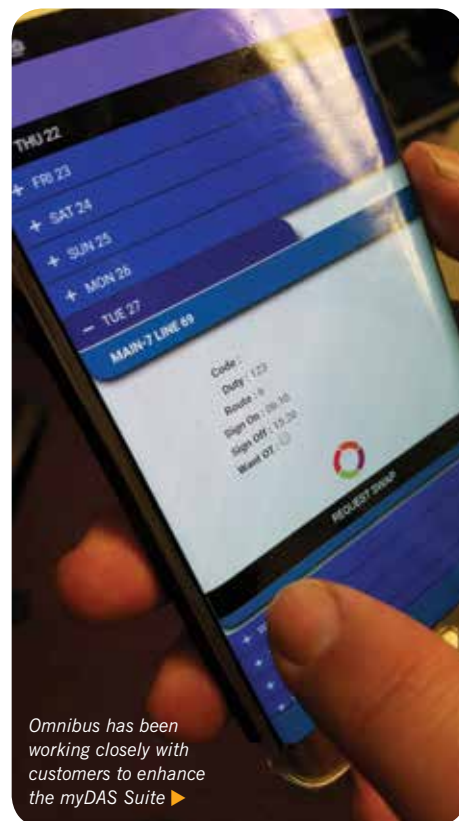
Working closely with customers, Omnibus has developed the facility whereby staff use the operator's own intranet to access their information, which means current OmniDAS users can now select to access myDAS via their own intranet or through the myDAS Touch app.

Peter Crichton, Managing Director of Omnibus, comments: "Since the launch last year we have been working closely

with customers to enhance the myDAS Suite based upon their real world feedback. These enhancements are making the depot allocators' lives a whole lot easier and giving drivers a greater level of control over their own shifts and personal information."

He continues: "myDAS Touch is giving drivers easier access to their own data and enabling them to communicate with their depot from wherever they are. The driver no longer needs to be at the depot to see what is going on at work, it is all there with one touch on their phone. The myDAS Suite is releasing allocation staff from everyday questions and the administration of driver requests, enabling them to concentrate on getting drivers on buses."

The team at Omnibus is ready to demonstrate myDAS Touch to existing OmniDAS users and the whole OmniDAS system to those who still haven't had the benefit of seeing the functionality and benefits of this product.



Omnibus has been working closely with customers to enhance the myDAS Suite ►

New addition to the OmniDAS team

The OmniDAS team has been strengthened with the addition of a new developer in the shape of Lee Tudor. Lee joins Omnibus with 16 years' experience in software development for the travel industry and has worked with other Omnibus employees in the past, including Gordon Pearce and John Crompton.

Lee specialises in data architecture and back office business processing, which means that he will be a valuable addition to the OmniDAS development department.

As well as working on future developments for OmniDAS, Lee will lend his expertise to other new product prototypes that Omnibus is working on.

Lee already feels at home working with Omnibus, as he explains: "Gordon and I ran a business together and it was Peter Crichton who recommended that we set up office in Hollinwood, right next door to Omnibus!"

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport

At last year's Album Conference in Chester, the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) launched Busmark, a new benchmarking club for the Bus and Coach industry. Omnibus immediately added its support by sponsoring one of the key sections of the research.

Omnibus has now become a Corporate Member of CILT to continue its support of the organisation and the Busmark initiative. To mark the occasion, Michael Meilton, Omnibus's Business Development Manager, was presented with a Corporate Membership plaque by CILT President Beverley Bell last month.

The Busmark club held its first meeting at the end of last year, and the initial findings presented some areas of concern for the industry, mainly with regard to the ageing employee base and recruitment issues.

For more information please visit the CILT website
<https://www.ciltuk.org.uk/Membership/Organisation/Busmark.aspx>

OMNIBUS SOFTWARE TO BE USED ON TRAIN SERVICES

Isle of Man Transport is extending the use of OmniDAS to cover three heritage railways

Isle of Man Transport has used
Omnibus software for many years ▶



As Isle of Man Transport prepares to host the 2016 Album Conference, OmniNEWS takes a look at how the organisation has used Omnibus software over the years.

After working hard to accommodate the remote Government log-ins for Isle of Man Transport, Omnibus developers have gone live with OmniDAS, and it went so smoothly that drivers didn't notice the change.

Isle of Man Transport has been using Omnibus software for many years for scheduling and in December last year started using OmniDAS for the first time. Over the next twelve months, as the organisation expects to see the number of railway staff double, the software will also be used for their pay and conditions. This will be the first time that OmniDAS has been used for railway staff.

Being an independent, self-governing Crown dependency, the island operates differently to the mainland in many ways. It produces many excellent athletes who, while they compete as part of Team GB at events like The Olympics, compete for the Isle of Man in the Commonwealth Games.

Its independence however does lead to a few anomalies, one of which was an interesting obstacle for Omnibus to overcome. The island did not have its own NaPTAN numbers, so Omnibus created a series of 'fictional' eight digit references. The island now has

its own true reference number; which Isle of Man Transport will use when the software eventually feeds into Traveline.

The operator also had to negotiate separate agreements with drivers, because the island is not part of the EU and so not governed by drivers' hours. The Omnibus software has had to accommodate these anomalies.

Isle of Man Operations Manager Richard Cranmer says there is no question that the software has led to improved efficiencies. He comments: "Les Cannan, Planning Manager, started using OmniTIMES and OmniSTOP to address inefficiencies a few years ago. We then took a big step forward when we started using OmniBASE."

Duty cards used to be prepared on individual Excel spreadsheets, which involved a lot of manual cross-checking. Cranmer admits that it wasn't foolproof: "We have saved many man hours and eliminated mistakes by using OmniBASE. Once the data is in OmniTIMES you know that it will simply create accurate duty cards."

Isle of Man Transport has adopted Omnibus software gradually to allow its team of schedulers to adapt to each new system, and the next step is to install OmniROTA to produce cost effective rotas and reduce the admin workload even further. In a few weeks' time the organisation will also have its own bespoke duty cards, created by Omnibus taking key elements of Isle of Man Transport's own design.

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