

This article has appeared in the Crosville Enthusiasts Club magazine and the section dealing with the Investiture of the Prince of Wales in Classic Bus magazine.

INTERESTING TIMES IN NORTH WALES 1968/69

Brian Barrett

BACKGROUND

In June 1968, whilst on the Tilling Senior Management Training Programme, I was sent to Caernarvon as Assistant to the Divisional Manager (North Cambrian) to assist with organising the transport arrangements for the Investiture of the Prince of Wales in July of the following year.

The earliest Crosville presence in the area was in 1925 and growth by acquisition proceeded rapidly such that a new depot, known as the Prince of Wales Depot was constructed in 1932 opposite the Royal Hotel, extended in 1937 and with a Crosville Licensed Club added in 1935, this latter being particularly important as the area was dry on Sundays well into the seventies. William 'Borth' Jones, my boss, was only the second Divisional Manager for the area his predecessor being 'Mr Crosville' Stanley Hughes who had recently retired and whose local business interests included a couple of restaurants, the Lee Ho Floating restaurant and Harpers, the closest Caernarvon came to 'fine dining'. Our Office was on the first floor at 12, Castle Square, acquired in 1936, with the divisional schedules office above us and the enquiry/parcel office on the ground floor. I had a commanding view of the Castle and the bus stands out of the window, although on the negative side the property had not been given much attention over the years with ancient furniture and carpets. North Cambrian Division at the time included depots at Holyhead, Llangefni, Bangor, Blaenau Festiniog and Pwllheli.

Prior to my arrival, deficit reduction had been energetically pursued by John Hargreaves, first as Assistant Traffic Manager (West) and then as Traffic Manager. His view was that cost reductions by means of one-man operation were a better way forward than cost reductions by means of service cuts. This policy was accepted by all North Cambrian depots except Amlwch which suffered severe service cutbacks in consequence and was reduced to outstation status joining Portmadoc and Criccieth.

In respect of Caernarvon, its basic service pattern remained intact although there were reductions in workman's services to slate quarries in the Llanberis and Dinorwic area as mining operations were run down, Dinorwic finally closing in July 1969. There were four remaining independents, Clynnog & Trevor whose main service from Caernarvon to Pwllheli was co-ordinated with Crosville to give roughly an hourly service but additionally served the village of Trevor, Express Motors (Jones) of Rhosgadfan and Silver Star Service ('Nedu' Thomas) of Upper Landwrog who both served a variety of communities to the south of Caernarvon including Cesarea and Bontnewydd and Whiteways (Williams) whose main service was from Caernarvon to Waenfawr. These operators had co-existed harmoniously with Crosville for years and their routes barely overlapped either with Crosville or each other than the Pwllheli service. Purple Motors also operated an hourly service from Deiniolen to Bangor.

Caernarvon was dry on Sundays and other than along the coast, buses did not start operating until early afternoon. As there was not much else to do, I got into the habit of driving either the 1402 or 1602 Coastliner round trip, whilst on Saturdays my favoured turn was the 1225 round trip to Rhyl on the stopping service.

CROSVILLE SERVICES FROM CAERNARVON DEPOT 1968/9

There was incredible diversity present at Caernarvon in the late sixties ranging from daily express services to Liverpool to deeply rural market day only bus services. Congestion was a feature of North Wales Coast operations but in May 1966 the opening of the Llandudno flyover marked the start of a series of improvements to the A55 trunk road. There were both crew and OMO rotas as well as some driver only jobs.

100% Crew operated

A1 Caernarvon-Rhyl via Penrhos (47.6 miles)

A2 Caernarvon-Rhyl via Glanadda (47.5 miles)

These two routes operated hourly with a slight route variation west of Bangor. The North Wales Coast has always been awkward to serve because of the enormous influx of holidaymakers, most dependent on public transport but sufficient with cars to create horrendous traffic congestion, particularly between Conway and Prestatyn. A particularly difficult spot was the diversion off the main road heading towards Rhyl to serve Dwygyfylchi which necessitated crossing the main traffic flow twice. Crosville generally chose to split the service at Llandudno but prior to the introduction of the Cymru Coastliner in 1965, a Caernarvon to Chester stopping service was introduced as A1/A2 reverting to the current form in 1966.

Three weekday evening journeys on A1 terminated at Penmaen Head, east of Llandudno, one of which was operated by Caernarvon. It was very unpopular with crews as it involved a 30-minute wait in Llandudno off the previous A2 which went through to Rhyl. One round trip on the full route took just under six hours and usually was made up to a full shift by tagging on a couple of town service journeys. On winter Sundays, through journeys dropped to hourly, the cycle time extended to 7 hours and the bus did Caernarvon-Rhyl-Llandudno-Penmaen Head-Caernarvon, which cleverly increased the frequency to half hourly over the busiest section.

L1 Caernarvon-Chester via Rhyl `The Cymru Coastliner` (77.5miles)

This was an inspired early example of stage carriage marketing. Primarily targeted at intermediate traffic on the North Wales Coast Railway Line, the `Liner` was a high quality, limited stop service running on a clockface timetable. Launched with the support of en route civic dignitaries, it was an immediate success with a 210-minute single journey time less a four-minute break at Rhyl and a three-minute break at Bangor. There were 64 stopping places identified by a distinctive blue bus stop flag. An average speed of 22.5mph enabled the through journey time to be slashed by over one hour compared to the A1/2 which also required a change at Rhyl. A round trip was a complete shift.

Four depots provided crew and vehicles and schedules were complex to return crews and the right number of buses to their depots. An oddity was the 1702 ex Caernarvon which made a direct changeover with the 1500 ex Chester at Aber about 15 miles from Caernarvon, necessitating both buses stopping as close together as possible and the drivers and conductors swapping vehicles. Despite its popularity, the temptation to reduce vehicle mileage resulted in the curtailment of off peak journeys at Llandudno, which seemed pointless as it saved payable hours but not vehicles.

X4 Caernarvon- Liverpool via Bodelwyddan (85 miles)

Also known as the A service, the route started at the Crosville Bus Station at the Liverpool Edge Lane Depot proceeded though the Mersey Tunnel then continued through the Wirral before reaching the North Wales Coast route at Queensferry. Generally, there was a morning and evening return trip but an interesting additional Caernarvon working on a Saturday went out via X7 and returned via X4 with only a five minute turn round at Edge Lane, although the bus was ferried between Pier

Head and Edge Lane, which enabled the crew to take a statutory break. At 9.30 minutes this was the longest turn at the depot.

Journeys from each end were timed to permit a crew change at Bodelwyddan, where discretion was needed to extend the allowed 8 minutes into the 15 necessary to give passengers a sensible comfort break. Crosville policy at the time was that each picking up/setting down point was a timing point resulting in 44 timing points for a 260-minute journey. To avoid unintentional early running, it was the habit of Caernarvon crews to run about five minutes late but this coupled with heavy traffic congestion along much of the route made actual arrival times and intermediate points a bit unpredictable.

X7 Caernarvon-Liverpool via Corwen (110.4 miles)

The B service following a longer inland route was less busy but more demanding for the driver. Mid journey crew changes were made at the Corwen refreshment stop except on Saturdays when the crews worked through. Apart from Saturdays, there was one return journey each day.

R26 Pwllheli-Butlins (4.0 miles)

Caernarvon Station-Butlins (19.7 Miles)

These two services were run on an as required Saturday only basis to and from the railheads at Pwllheli and Caernarvon to the Butlins Holiday Camp at Penychain. In addition, Crosville ran a network of Saturday services linking most of its operating area with the Holiday Camp.

Driver only operated from crew rota

X60 Caernarvon-Aberystwyth via Dolgellau (82.4 miles)

The X60 was a Summer Saturday only chartered express service, normally with a regular driver, leaving Caernarvon at 1000. It was tightly timed, traversed narrow congested roads and was reckoned to be the hardest day's work at the depot. The loading of cases was an art form as, without knowing in advance exactly how many cases were bound for which destination, using the limited locker space such that intermediate cases were easily accessible could save a lot of precious minutes. Further pressure was created by the need to run to time to facilitate connections with other Crosville express services at Aberystwyth at 2pm, notably for Birmingham, Liverpool, Llandudno and Pwllheli. Through fares were in force for all these services and the mini-interchange was well used, particularly, in the case of X60, for intermediate stops to Birmingham

SSB 1 or 2 regular drivers (Weather permitting)

SSB or Single Seat Bookings started from outside the Crosville Office at Castle Square. Advertising was by traditional chalk board elegantly sign written in-house, and excursions and tours leaflets distributed to all holiday accommodations with a commission paid on sales. The two regular excursion drivers were also excellent salesmen with the incentive that if less than 10 passengers were booked, the trip didn't run. Their days work started at 11.00am when the coach was driven down to Castle Square and the driver collected the chart showing passengers already booked. For the next two hours he attempted to attract passers by to travel.

Afternoon trips generally left around 1.00pm and day trips at 10.00am with return journeys arriving around 6.00pm so as not to conflict with mealtimes at the local boarding houses. Popular afternoon trips were to Aberdaron and the Llyn Peninsula, the Festiniog Railway and Portmeirion. Day trips visited places like Harlech Castle and Barmouth. However Crosville was very proud that the CEGB appointed it exclusive provider of trips to the Ffestiniog pumped storage power station at Stwlan Dam, opened in 1963 and the first in the country. The two regular drivers were continually pressing for more modern vehicles than the usual CMG coaches resulting in the allocation of a brand-new Bedford for the 1969 season. Predictably loadings continued to fall.

Occasional journeys crew operated but mainly OMO

N82	Caernarvon – Pwllheli via Clynnog	(20.8 Miles)
N84	Caernarvon-Portmadoc	(20.9 miles)
N86	Caernarvon-Nantlle via Talysarn	(10.4 miles)
N92	Caernarvon-Maes Barcer (Town Service)	(2.0 miles)
N93	Caernarvon-Maesincla (Town Service)	(2.2 miles)
N94	Caernarvon-Nant Peris via Llanberis	(10.8 miles)
R1	Caernarvon-Dinorwic via Deiniolen	(9.4 miles)
R5	Caernarvon-GroeslonTy Mawr	(6.3 miles)

Although mainly crew operated for scheduling reasons, a few journeys required the extra capacity of a double decker, particularly the R1. This group of services included medium distance interurbans to Pwllheli and Portmadoc, the busiest short distance links to Dinorwic, Nantlle and Llanberis and an oddity to Groeslon. The Sunday 1415 N82 journey had a direct crew changeover with the bus coming from Pwllheli at Pontllyfni about 8 miles into the journey. The 1600 N86 was often a crew operated coach as the vehicle and crew went on to form the 1800 evening X4 departure.

Journeys 100% OMO operated

N81	Caernarvon-Menai Bridge Post Office (Menai Bridge Fair day only)	(8.3 miles)
N85	Caernarvon-Nebo	(8.9 miles)
N88	Caernarvon-Cilgwyn via Carmel	(7.0 Miles)
N91	Caernarvon-Dinas Dinlle	(7.2 miles)
N97	Caernarvon-Ceunant (WFO)	
N99	Caernarvon-Rhiwlas via Bethel	(8.0 miles)
R2	Caernarvon-Dinorwic via Brynrefail	(8.2 miles)
X63	Caernarvon-Llangwyfan Hospital.	(58.4 miles)

The N series routes were classic Crosville rural services tending to be comparatively short distance diversions off the principal routes along narrow roads to serve a village or group of villages and with predominantly one-way traffic flows into Caernarvon except for N91, which transported many beach lovers to Dinas Dinlle on fine days. Menai Bridge Fair, traditionally held on 24 October, was sufficiently significant to warrant an hourly service with duplication. X63 was a longstanding Sundays only one return journey express service to the Llangwyfan Sanatorium, at the time specialising in TB and chest infections, also calling at the Abergele Chest Hospital

Not many routes had clock face timetables but there were many departures around 1300:

1255	A1	Rhyl
1300	N86	Talysarn
1300	N88	Cilgwyn
1305	N91	Dinas Dinlle
1320	N92	Maes Barcer
1305	N93	Maesincla
1310	N94	Nant Peris
1305	N99	Bethel/Groeslon
1300	R1	Dinorwic

2200 was the usual last bus time and the cinema arranged performances such that its patrons were able to catch the bus home if they so desired.

Very few timetable changes were made during this period, mainly reducing running times on last journeys and diverting the last Rhiwlas to provide a later departure time for the Maesincla estate

CROSVILLE SERVICES FROM BLAENAU FFESTINIOG DEPOT

I spent a week in March deputising for the Depot Superintendent. There had been a Crosville depot in Blaenau since 1924 and a new depot, recently converted to 100% one-man operation had been opened as recently as 1962. The Depot Superintendent's office was located within the North Western Road Depot. Routes operated were

R26	Blaenau Ffestiniog – Pwllheli via Portmadoc	(27.5 miles)
R27	Blaenau Ffestiniog – Pwllheli via Portmadoc & Chwilog	(28.7 miles)
R33	Portmadoc – Morfa Bychan	(5.6 miles)
R34	Blaenau Ffestiniog – Llanrwst (Market & Fair Days)	(15.6 Miles)
R35	Blaenau Ffestiniog - Dolgellau via Bontnewydd	(22.2 miles)
R36	Blaenau Ffestiniog – Dolgellau via Maentwrog	(24.1 miles)
R37	Tan-y-Grisiau – Manod	(2.8 Miles)
R38	Tan-y-Grisiau – Manod via Adwy Goch	(3 miles)

Blaenau routes mainly comprised quite lengthy links to neighbouring towns offering genuine interurban facilities but busiest on local market days. R37/8 were effectively cross Blaenau services and the R33 journey was a fill-in turn for a Blaenau bus on R26.

The staff at Blaenau comprised 10 drivers, 1 foreman mechanic, 2 cleaners and 1 greaser and the weekly wage bill was around £250, to which needed to be added the Depot Superintendent's salary direct operating costs and depreciation plus fixed costs. Average weekly receipts amounted to £325 about 10% of which was parcels traffic including motor parts. The depot Superintendent's job was not particularly demanding involving cash counting, wages sheet compilation and distributing the wages on Thursday. This barely took a couple of hours each day.

CROSVILLE SERVICES FROM DENBIGH DEPOT

In August 1969, I spent time at Denbigh, deputising for the Chief Clerk who was on extended leave. Once again, duties were far from arduous and I was usually finished by lunchtime. Having opened an outstation in 1928, two years later Crosville built a depot at Lenten Pool where the offices were also located. The depot had been particularly hard hit by route closures in recent years.

Crew Operated

M29	Rhyl-Mostyn via Talacre	(12.0 miles)
M51	Ruthin–Rhyl via Denbigh	(20.0 miles)

One man operated

B43	Denbigh-Mold via Afon Wen	(16.9 miles)
M54	Rhyl-Eryl Hall Holiday Camp	(3.3 Miles)
M76	Denbigh-Ruthin via Hendrerwydd	(13.5 miles)

The bulk of the crew operated work was on M51; north of Denbigh this was very busy linking Rhuddlan and St Asaph with Rhyl every half hour with every other journey extending south to Ruthin. The M76 service took about twice as long to travel to Ruthin from Denbigh as the M51. The Eryl Hall service was a twice a day Summer only link between a Holiday Camp located in the

grounds of a 19th century country house in St Asaph and Rhyl. There were many other services operated by this depot of which I had no direct experience.

FLEET

My view has always been that drivers are paid to drive and to adapt their skills to get the best out of whatever bus they were driving in the conditions prevailing at the time. For instance, at Caernarvon, drivers had to adapt to 2 types of engine, 1 four speed manual, 3 types of five speed manual, synchromesh and semi-automatic transmissions, vacuum or air brakes, 4 vehicle lengths, 3 vehicle widths and front, forward and rear entrances. During my time at Crosville, I drove a total of 118 buses as below:

CUB 326 327
CUG 310
EUG 333
SUG 283 290

CSG 623 625 661
SSG 606 607 610 611 613 616 648 665 667 670

CMG 34 359 360 361 363 390 429 472 474 475 484 485 515 518 520 522 560 565 566
EMG 351 583 584
SMG 391 403 404 452 454 458 459 461 464 499 536 543 545 549

CRG 109 493 494 524 527 528 530 579
ERG 52 58 593 594 595 596 597 598
SRG RELL 12 16
SRG RESL 91 92 99

CVF 694

DLB 857 899 903 937 989
DLG 810 883 884 891 954 955 957 958 960
DFB FLF BUS 51 241
DFB FLF COACH 110 113 149 150 151 152 153
DFB FS BUS 138 145 180
DFG FLF BUS 244 262
DFG FS BUS 32 33 34 124 126 184 185 186 187 189 206
DFG FSF BUS 68

Until the arrival of motorways, the general feeling amongst Tilling engineers was that economy was preferable to performance and 50 was the appropriate maximum speed for both single deck buses and coaches. However, the RE was a very sprightly vehicle as both a bus and coach and even the five speed double deckers were opened out to 50mph.

MAXIMUM SPEEDS IN GEARS (Approximate)

	1	2	3	4	5
SC	5	13	25	30	38
LS	5	12	23	35	50
MW	5	12	23	35	50
RE	8	20	32	47	70
LD	5	11	22	35	
FS (Up to DFB 133)	5	11	22	35	42
FS (From DFB 134)	5	12	23	38	50
FSF	5	12	23	38	50
FLF	5	12	23	38	50

A1/A2 WEST OF RHYL ALLOCATED BUSES 1969 (all FS except 241 which was a FLF)

DFG 124 126 184 185 186 187 189
DFB 138 145 180 241

The A1/2 Group of routes were diagrammed on a weekly basis to include scheduled maintenance with many buses starting and finishing at different depots each day. If a vehicle was unavailable, a five speed DFG/B could be substituted but had to be replaced as soon as possible. For instance, on Saturday February 1 DFG 185 was allocated to the 1225 ex Caernarvon to be replaced by the scheduled bus DFB 180 at Rhyl. Although buses governed to both 42 and 50 mph were allocated, this did not appear to affect timekeeping but during 1969, the entire 5 speed FS fleet was adjusted to a governed speed of 50mph.

L1 `CYMRU COASTLINER` ALLOCATED BUSES 1969

DFB 151 152 153
ERG 593 594 595 596 597 598
COACHES SUBSTITUTING FOR ALLOCATED VEHICLES ON `CYMRU COASTLINER`
CMG 34 390 475 518 520 522 565 566
CRG 493 494 524 527 528 530 579

The 1969 vehicle allocation for the Coastliner included five speed manual and five speed semi-automatic RE's plus 5 speed manual FLF Coaches, whilst regular substitutes included five speed manual MW Coaches and five speed manual RE Coaches. The Coaches had manual doors which added to the conductor's workload except for CMG 34 which was delivered with electrically operated doors controlled by the driver.

Similar weekly scheduling arrangements applied as to the A1/A2, except that any replacement vehicle had to be a CMG or CRG Coach. This could be requested from any convenient depot, usually Chester, Flint, Rhyl, Llandudno Town, Llandudno Junction, Bangor or Caernarvon. Non-compliance with this instruction was extremely rare and the instruction to return the scheduled vehicle to service at the earliest opportunity produced many user unfriendly en route changeovers.

For instance on Sunday 16 February 1969, I left Caernarvon on the 1602 to Chester with CMG 565, changed to CMG 518 at Llandudno Town Depot and finally swapped to the booked vehicle for this departure, ERG 593 at Rhyl. The mandated use of a high specification vehicle was a Traffic department requirement, but sadly the Engineering Department refused to budge on en route transfers and many passengers got used to swapping buses on garage forecourts. It was unfortunate

that the early RE vehicles were not particularly reliable. The Cymru Coastliner was very busy with conductors regularly paying in between £50 and £60 for a return trip in the morning, worth around £1500 today.

Care had to be taken with ERG and CRG vehicles in particular when going through the narrow gateways in the Conway Town Walls, one of which was immediately preceded by a sharp bend. It was an interesting choice for a driver – either a maximum dimension vehicle with a high top speed or a more manoeuvrable but slower double decker but both did the job equally well.

VEHICLES DRIVEN ON X4/X7

CMG 360 361 363 390 484 520

CRG 109

CUG 310

DFB 110 113 149 150

DFG 206 244 262

EMG 351 583 584

ERG 52

Although vehicles and crews worked through on Saturdays, on other days crews but not vehicles changed over at the refreshment stop at Bodelwyddan (X4) or Corwen (X7), the vehicles being returned on the next journey. The quality of vehicle provided by Liverpool was variable with the booked FLF Coaches appearing on a minority of occasions and it was interesting that there was no imposed restriction on the type of vehicle to be used. Mid route crew changes required close co-operation between Liverpool and Caernarvon and on at least one occasion, last minute problems at Liverpool meant that they could not supply a driver for the evening X4 service. As our vehicle had already left Caernarvon, it had to be intercepted at Bangor, where the crew very kindly agreed to operate through to Liverpool.

VEHICLES FITTED WITH SEMI AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION

CRG 109

ERG 52 58 596 597 598

SRG 16 91 92 93

DFG 244 262

For some reason, no driver familiarisation was offered for these vehicles which required a change of driving style compared to previous transmissions. They tended to be unpopular.

LS/MW

The LS was an interesting bus. Developed at about the same time as the Lodekka, Bristol/ECW plumped for a lightweight integral underfloor bus, rather than the heavyweight chassis favoured by AEC and Leyland and undoubtedly made the right choice. Its shortcomings were few, mainly that the gear linkage became slacker and slacker through time, the cab layout was distinctly driver unfriendly with similar pull on switches located below the windscreen at the limit of the average driver's reach, and the upright driving position did not suit everybody. On coach versions, the LS generally featured an outward opening passenger door which could present a danger to pedestrians. The MW was in many ways the LS perfected with a positive gear change, a much more convenient instrument grouping and a more angled steering wheel. The passenger door on the coach version became inward opening. Although the MW had a synchromesh gearbox, most if not all drivers continued to double declutch out of force of habit.

SSG/CSG

This Bristol/ECW design collaboration displayed much ingenuity to meet a Tilling specification for a lightweight economical bus. Lightweight turned out to be 4 tons and economical was 20mpg, which made them less thirsty for Crosville than 2 Commer minibuses purchased for a rail replacement service near Pwllheli. The Gardner 4LK engine had first been produced in 1934, the gearbox came from David Brown and the axles reputedly from Bedford. ECW embarked on weight reduction with innovative construction methods and pounds shaved off practically every interior component including the seats and soundproofing. 280 of the 323 built between 1954 and 1961 were delivered to 3 operators, including Crosville, each of which had many deeply rural services and for whom they met a unique requirement.

The bus itself was much derided but only by those who had forgotten the purpose of public transport to adapt to meet all types of demand and those who forgot that a professional driver should be able to adjust his technique to get the best out of any bus. It was less clear why the slightly shorter coach version was produced. To emphasise that the SC met an industry wide need, the closest bus generally available was the slightly smaller Albion Nimbus, although this had an underfloor engine permitting a front entrance, launched in 1955. Described as ultra-lightweight it weighed in at around 6 tons and had a typical fuel consumption of around 12-14mpg. 341 were delivered and production ceased in 1965.

At Caernarvon, the unofficial vehicle allocation policy was that OMO drivers could take out any available bus for the second half of a late shift. After the two EMG's 583 and 584, OMO drivers tended to pick SSG's as their length and width made them very manoeuvrable on narrow and winding roads and for difficult reverses which tended to be a feature of rural services. In addition, the empty nearside space opposite the driver was ideal for storing parcels. The gearbox, whilst totally different from other contemporary Bristols was easy to master and coupled with the excellent driving position and light and responsive steering, there wasn't much not to like.

The driving position was not ideal for one man operation and the noise level common to most diesel buses with the power unit within the passenger compartment was seen as bearable; most rural bus drivers realised that without the SC, the routes on which they operated would have been withdrawn a lot earlier and they would have been out of a job. CSG's, which by 1969 were never used on express or excursion work, tended to be last out of the depot because of their slow moving vacuum operated door and the three I drove each had the 'automatic door' decal altered to 'atomic door.' SC's were generally the only buses used in snowy conditions before roads were either gritted or visited by a snow plough. All in all, a versatile rural bus.

ERG 593-595

The 3 synchromesh RE's ERG 593-5 were a problem for some as the usual clue for gear change, the revs, could not be heard from the cab although experience soon led to alternative techniques being employed. Unlike previous five speed gearboxes fifth was reached by pushing the gear lever forward into neutral, right across the gate and then back to engage the gear.

PROBLEMS WITH BRAND NEW SRGs

Sunday 5th January 1969 was the day when 3 brand new RE's, an RELL and 2 RESL arrived to convert two more vehicle workings to OMO the next day. Things didn't go according to plan. I tried out SRG 91 on the 1300 R1 Dinorwic and was pleased by the positive passenger and crew reaction. Unfortunately, problems with the doors then prevented it being used and the RELL, 12, didn't even

leave the depot because of an inability to select reverse gear. Spare parts didn't arrive until Wednesday morning but it was off the road again by the afternoon, now nicknamed QE2, as the great liner was also experiencing teething problems.

It was working perfectly on Friday and I drove it on the journey that required its seating capacity, the 7.50 Deiniolen R1 and 8.25 R2 return via Brynrefail, which was a busy schools journey. The late arrival of the connection from Dinorwic delayed departure to 8.30 and we did not arrive at Pen-y-Lyn where there was a connection for Llanberis at 8.37 until 8.45, ten minutes late. The Llanberis bus then had to go via Llanberis Quarry to Victoria Terrace and then back to the Greengate and Irwell Rubber Factory by 0900. The R2 arrived in Caernarvon at 9.02, 7 minutes late, having had to have several cars moved en route to allow the bus to proceed. Most of the morning was then spent dealing with complaints from schools, quarries and rubber factories, where it was deemed politic not to mention the delays were caused by brand new buses which had not been properly route approved. To cap it all, there was nowhere safe to reverse a 36-foot-long bus in Deiniolen (I could only accomplish this with the assistance of the booked driver who had accompanied me) and the journeys reverted to crew operation until RESL SRG 99 arrived to replace SRG 12 on February 7.

TWO COACH TRIPS TO LONDON AS SECOND DRIVER

On Friday May 9, Bangor Normal College Historical Society organised a private hire in respect of a visit to London. I duly boarded CMG 520 for the trip, driving the coach from Bangor to Whittington near Oswestry and having stopped for breakfast at the Blue Boar M1 Services at 0345, on to London. These were the days before the M6 and the M1 were linked and the usual route for overnight coaches was to leave the M6 at Walsall, stop at an all-night cafe at Erdington and join the M1 at Crick.

Some of the party left at Victoria Coach Station and after a break during which CMG 520 was fuelled and washed at Samuelsons, I dropped the rest of the Party off at the Gloucester Hotel in Westbourne Terrace, Paddington before driving over to the Mead Row Coach Park off Kennington Road. On the way we picked up a Lincolnshire driver who was collecting his Bristol RELH6G Coach 1430 for his return trip to Lincoln, having overnighted in London, and gave us a lift back to Victoria from where I travelled home to Ilford.

Next day, Sunday, I picked up CMG 520 at Mead Row, picked up Bob the driver and part of the load at Victoria then on to Paddington, departing at 2.30pm. I drove between the Blue Boar and the New Inn at Gobowen, where the party enjoyed several drinks before pressing on to Bangor. We arrived back at Caernarvon at 11.00pm.

Then on 31st August, the Bank Holiday weekend, I picked up Denbigh coach CMG 515 at 7.15am to reach Liverpool at 8.30am, load for London and depart at 9.15am as one of many relief coaches on the Motorway Express service X61. We were routed direct to Runcorn and then to London where we arrived at 4.00pm. As the motorway link between the M6 and the M1 had not yet been constructed the overall running time of six hours plus the two comfort stops was quite creditable, although being a fully loaded relief from Runcorn, we did not have to call at any of the many intermediate picking up points. My contribution to the driving was Denbigh to Liverpool to Keele Services and from the Blue Boar services to London, where my parents picked me up.

On the Monday, I drove CMG 515 from Victoria to the Blue Boar and from Keele to Liverpool and on to Mold. We arrived back in Denbigh at 8.00pm. Most of the passengers were hippies fresh from a music festival on the Isle of Wight.

Both CMG 515 and 520 came from the 1964 deliveries which from the front resembled the early RE coaches and had a similar interior specification, including forced air ventilation. Adequate heating on coaches, particularly those used on the overnight London services was a long-term problem as the Gardner engines generated even less heat than usual. Cave-Browne-Cave and Webasto paraffin heaters had been tried without success on earlier batches but forced air worked best.

The least attractive feature of these journeys were the stops at Motorway Service Areas, generally for twenty minutes. These compared unfavourably with the network of stops on off motorway routes which specialised in dealing with a large group of people in a short period of time. Both catering and cleanliness at Motorway stops detracted from the overall journey experience and was one of the major drivers behind on coach facilities being provided.

‘THE CAERNARVON FLYER’

Most private hires were routine but one came up in 1969 which was far more interesting. This was an ambitious tour organised for the Anglo-Norse Society, a charity formed to improve Anglo Norse relations. The Organisers had operated several previous trips some utilising 4472 ‘Flying Scotsman’ and visiting a range of attractions at the destination end to broaden out their appeal. Their requirements stretched our coaching resources by requiring up to 10 coaches and their constantly changing demands tested our patience and that of the Ffestiniog Railway.

The trip was scheduled for May 5 and started badly as the train arrived 45 minutes late at roughly the same time as one group were scheduled to board a special train on the FR at Portmadoc. The original plan was for them to travel by train to the end of the line at Dduallt and then return to Tan-y-Bwlch to board the coaches for the return journey to Bangor. This was tightly timed anyway and my advice was to shorten the narrow gauge rail journey to terminate at Tan-y-Bwlch and forget about Dduallt, thereby getting the group back to Bangor on time. The organisers insisted on completing the full itinerary and Allan Garraway, General Manager at FR, agreed to run a rearranged special as soon as they arrived so 5 coachloads were duly despatched.

The other Groups comprised 2 coaches visiting the Portmeirion Italianate Village and Gardens and 3 coaches undertaking a tour of Snowdonia with afternoon tea at Penrhyn Castle which I accompanied. Yet others stayed in Caernarvon and visited the Castle. These trips passed off as planned and the groups duly arrived back at Caernarvon or Bangor to board the train for the return journey to London. However, the Ffestiniog party left Tan-y-Bwlch 60 minutes late as arrangements for detraining and boarding the coaches were chaotic with no-one checking that passenger numbers tallied and despite heroic efforts by our drivers the Group was still 30 minutes after scheduled departure from Bangor, causing much disruption and a very slow out-of-path return journey to London. Despite repeated requests neither ourselves nor the FR were reimbursed for additional costs incurred and we both wrote it off to experience.

BAD WEATHER

Winter conditions in the area could be challenging as occurred from Friday February 7 1969, when snow fell continuously from early morning until mid-afternoon. By 2.00pm many services were at a standstill with the A55 blocked at Llandegai and Bangor effectively cut off with no bus for about 3 hours. I operated a 2.30pm A2 journey to Bangor and return which took 4 hours. The afternoon X4 was 2 hours late and the 3.28pm. Coastliner arrival one hour late, both drivers reporting clear conditions from Penmaenmawr. The X7 turned back. By the evening the only services running were the N82 to Pwllheli, the N94 as far as Llanrug, the N86 to Pen-y-Groes and the two town services.

It was fortunate that no buses were stranded and following overnight snow and a heavy frost, conditions were even worse on Saturday except for the North Wales coast services which were running close to normal apart from the A1 via Penrhos. Weather improved slightly by midday and services resumed to Pwllheli, Talysarn, Llanberis and Deiniolen, but passengers were advised to plan to return by 4.00pm. As night fell and frost formed so services were cut back to Llanrug and Pen-y-Groes. The X7, N91, N84, N85, N88 & N93 didn't run all day.

On Sunday, we were able to resume services to Llanberis (but not Nant Peris), Talysarn, Llanlyffni and Nantlle but Portmadoc and Dinorwic remain impassable. In the evening the driver scheduled for the X7 changeover at Corwen was reluctant to go so I took his place as the Liverpool crew had already departed. Fortunately temperatures remained above freezing but returning through the Nant Ffrancon Pass, we were hit by a blizzard which lasted as far as Bangor.

By Monday, it was clear the worst was over. At 11.05 the first bus ran to Nant Peris and at 3.00 service to Dinorwic resumed with only Cilgwyn not connected to the network.

Thanks to great co-operation from the crews who kept us informed of ever-changing weather conditions, no bus or passenger became stranded and things were back to normal on Tuesday after five interesting days.

DEPOT WORKING RESULTS 1969 AND FOLLOW UP

Every year in June, the Traffic Manager chaired a Depot Working Results Meeting for each of the Divisions. Faced with a trend decline in passenger numbers of 5% pa and multiple cost increases, principally labour, these tended to be fairly gloomy. Without actually specifying this as policy, it was generally acceptable to the Traffic Commissioners for fares increases to cover passenger decline and cost reductions to balance cost increases.

I presented a paper showing that in our deeply rural part of the Crosville world, we were bearing costs which were not present for independent operators notably a Head Office (or Headquarters as Crosville referred to it) and Central Works and that these costs never seemed to form part of the review. This was of course ignored and after a day's discussion the Traffic Manager proposed that the Division should put in place plans to close Blaenau Ffestiniog Depot and convert the A1/A2 and the Coastliner to one man operation within 2 years. Both of these did not seem particularly sensible.

As there was no intention to cut Blaenau services the net result would have been the closure of a depot only opened 7 years ago and the saving of 5 staff and as the North Wales Coast Services were generally regarded as the only ones making a profit, anything that would threaten those profits was also not going to be welcome. The Divisional proposals were to explore operations in areas such as Llanberis, Deiniolen and Rhiwlas, which had routes to both Caernarvon and Bangor and save buses and crews by linking those services and converting them fully to one man operation. Additionally to keep the network of quarryman's services under constant review as terminal decline in numbers of employees had set in and to continue with the programme of reducing running time on last journeys as this produced a saving in payable hours if not in crews and buses. Finally, SSB operation within the Division should be ended as it was heavily loss making apart from a few summer Sundays and instead the Company should act as agents for the independent operators, receiving a commission on bookings made.

As was often the case, no agreement was reached and a decision was deferred.

INVESTITURE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES 1 JULY 1969

The Crosville GM, Cyril Buckley had been seconded to the Organising Committee to co-ordinate public transport arrangements for the Investiture and the first local meeting to formulate a plan was held at the Police Headquarters at 10.00am on Friday 22 November. The following key decisions had already been taken:

The Royal Party would arrive on the Royal Train

An estimated 4000 invited guests would arrive by special trains to Caernarvon Station

There would be an Investiture Zone within which only essential traffic would be allowed

Cars would be directed to Park & Ride car parks and then bussed to the Centre.

Coaches would be parked in a location within walking distance of the Castle

Public buses would terminate at suitable points within walking distance of the Castle.

There was considerable concern about the threat of terrorist attack from Welsh Nationalists and the need for confidentiality was emphasised whilst information about the arrangements for the Royal Family would be on a `Need to know` basis only. Even at this stage it was clear that the mainly English Organisers under the direction of Lord Snowdon and the Royal Borough of Caernarvon were far more enthusiastic than other Welsh groups who felt that the idea of an English Prince of Wales would not go down well to which the rather huffy response was that this was an event which had been planned for world consumption through television rather than for Welsh people. Nobody was entirely sure how many people would turn up on the day but planning was to assume a minimum of 500,000 visitors, 20,000 cars and 1000 coaches.

The Meeting concluded after four hours with an instruction that detailed plans for the Park and Ride and coach parking should be agreed no later than 2st April 1969. A group of interested parties was convened to move things forward as the Investiture Transport Committee comprising the Gynedd Police, British Rail, Crosville, the AA and chaired by the Borough Engineer. We all worked well together and there was very little interference from our superiors.

Coach Parking

The Borough suggested Hendre Fields on the Beddgelert Road as a suitable site for coach parking, it being large and within easy walking distance of the Castle. Spaces would need to be prebooked and would cost £1 for all day parking on Investiture Day. The Borough handled all arrangements including the issuing of passes.

Park & Ride

Caernarvon was fortunate that each of the principal routes was separate until very close to the Centre and these made obvious and natural corridors. The Investiture zone extended roughly one mile in all directions from the Castle, except that in the direction of Bangor it extended two miles to Griffiths Crossing because of the Royal use of the Ferodo factory. All agreed that this was going to be the busiest access route and that splitting Anglesey and A55 traffic into two flows would be sensible. It was agreed from the start that each of the principal access routes should have its own car park and its own park and ride service. The Borough Engineer undertook to look for suitable town terminals which ideally would handle both park and ride and scheduled bus services for each corridor. The AA made the sensible suggestion that these routes were colour coded and agreed to sign each route accordingly as below:

Route	Catchment	Car Park location	Park and Ride drop-off
Yellow	Anglesey/Bangor	Crug	Mount Pleasant Square
Red	A55 via Bethel	Tyddyn Hen	Mount Pleasant Square
Blue	Midlands A5/Llanberis A4086	Pontrug	Ffordd Maes Barcer
Brown	Beddgelert (A4085)	Bontnewydd Road	Vaynol Road
Green	Portmadoc/Pwllheli A487/499	Caeathro	Constantine Road.

The main Crosville input was to determine how many shuttle buses would be needed for each car park. Clearly more would be needed for the more distant yellow and red car parks but by taking the predictions of car visits and assuming two occupants per car and a frequency which ensured there would always be a bus available to board we came up with a workable and logical formula.

The stormiest meetings were with local residents whose day would be badly disrupted by noisy buses from early morning to late at night but in the end they accepted the plans for the greater good.

The next step was to acquire the buses. The original intention was to offer jobs first to local independents, then to Crosville outside of Caernarvon and Bangor and then to other Welsh bus operators. In the event, the local independents were enthusiastic but only United Welsh were interested from the rest of Wales. After a brief panic, we broadened the search to include Lancashire and Cheshire which resulted in buses appearing from Manchester, St Helens, Widnes and Wallasey Corporations, Potteries and North Western from the BET and an independent operator Lancashire United. All committed to sending modern double deckers complete with 2 drivers, one to drive and one to control boarding. A flat rate for hire of £65 was agreed for all 50 hired in buses and vehicles would be fuelled and cleaned if necessary at Caernarvon depot.

As not all vehicles would be needed all day, buses from individual operators were kept to the same routes with services operated as required from 6.00am to 1.00am with a break during the actual Investiture between 3.00pm and 4.00pm.

The final allocation, sorted on June 16th, enabled me to send out a welcome pack to all concerned to include full details of their stay and the need to comply with the instructions from the Crosville regulators at either end of the route, plus a route kindly supplied by the AA from their area to Caernarvon to avoid low bridges. The allocation was as follows;

Wallasey	Yellow	4 Atlantean	
Widnes	Yellow	2 PD2	
St Helens	Yellow	6 PD2	
Purple Motors	Yellow	1 Crossley	TOTAL 13
Manchester	Red	10 Mancunian	
Potteries	Red	2 Fleetline	TOTAL 12
North Western	Blue	6 Fleetline	
Lancashire United	Blue	4 Guy Arab	
United Welsh	Blue	2 FSF	TOTAL 12
Crosville	Green	4 buses	
Clynnog & Trevor	Green	3 buses (inc 1S/D)	
Express Motors	Green	4 S/D buses	
Silver Star	Green	3 S/D buses	TOTAL 14

Whiteways	Brown	3 buses (inc 2S/D)	TOTAL 3
Crosville	Reserve	3 buses.	

The next job was to find 2 nights' accommodation for one hundred plus drivers and the Headmaster of Bontnewydd School kindly agreed to using the school as a dormitory on the nights of the 30th June and 1st July provided we didn't interfere with lessons. The school dinner ladies agreed to act as housekeeping staff as well as cooking and serving dinner and breakfast for an extra 35/- per day.

The first of the hired vehicles, the two from United Welsh arrived at 4.30pm on June 30th to be followed by the rest within a couple of hours. They were piloted up to the Hendre Coach Park, bussed to the Bontnewydd School for dinner and then taken around their individual routes. The drivers, all volunteers, and vehicles were extremely smart and enthusiastic.

Scheduled bus and coach services

In the expectation that there would be heavy demand on local bus services, the whole service provision was reviewed and the conclusions presented at the Investiture Transport Committee Meeting on 11 March. With all works and school journeys and Town Services N92 and N93 suspended, and by grouping all remaining routes by Terminal, 5 double deckers and 4 single deckers could be made available and crew requirements reduced to 32 duties. In the end, it seemed more sensible to develop special timetables for the day and basically services to Dinorwic, Talysarn and Llanberis would operate half hourly with Rhiwlas, Dinas Dinlle and Cilgwyn/Carmel operating hourly. In addition, three return journeys would operate from Beaumaris, two from Nebo and an additional through journey from Edern.

A separate group looking at North Wales Coast services agreed on April 1st that the Coastliner should operate hourly with as required duplication on all services including the X4/7. Both of these proposals were duly agreed by the TGWU. Bus services normally terminated at Castle Square but on this day terminated at the appropriate Park and Ride terminal for their corridor. Unlike cars, buses passing through Bangor were able to follow their normal route to Griffiths Crossing.

Excursions and Tours

Crosville advertised all day excursions to the Investiture from Holyhead, Treaddur Bay, Valley, Amlwch, Benllech, Llanerchymedd, and Llangefni on Anglesey and from Pwllheli, Butlin's Camp, Abersoch, Mynytho, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Lan Ffestiniog and Trawsfynydd.

Preparations

May and June were months of intense preparation, interspersed by familiarisation visits for various interested groups. Most important of these were the Crosville inspectors who were to supervise the Park and Ride services and were drawn from across the Company operating area. At this stage, despite protestors being much in evidence, it was expected that the day would produce large numbers of tourists and this was reinforced when news that the £10 seats in the Castle Square viewing area were sold out after a week and the £5 were selling fast. Elsewhere, hotels and B&Bs reported steady demand. The Royal Borough of Caernarvon had agreed a surcharge on the rate to pay for the Square to be tidied up, this included proper bays being created for buses and coaches, some tree planting and castle floodlighting.

Advice to residents suggested window boxes were a more appropriate sign of approval than flags and bunting but in the event this was largely ignored.

News that senior Directors were intending to be in Caernarvon on Investiture Day prompted a flurry of activity amongst the Crosville architects and our offices at 12 Castle Square were given a complete makeover. A television was to be installed (but removed after the big day) but the new desks and other office equipment would remain. Works commenced on May 12.

The Castle floodlighting was officially switched on on May 21 and MANWEB hired 3 coaches so that the VIP's could view the effect from the far side of the Aber Bridge.

Meanwhile, the BBC were preparing for one of their biggest outside broadcasts and our role was to provide back up in case of breakdown and transport for staff between their various control sites. On May 28, DKNS Associates called to discuss their 'Son et Lumiere' plans, this being a very fashionable and upmarket activity very appealing to Lord Snowdon.

By June 6 all the highway modifications in respect of the Park & Ride services had been completed and by June 16, detailed instructions for inspectors including pro forma to record number of departures and passengers carried, and instructions and directions for local and foreign drivers had been finalised. The final job, the Inspector's duty roster was completed on June 27.

INVESTITURE DAY – July 1 1969

Royal Party

At the time all we were made aware of was a security zone covering the Bangor Road. Later we learned that the Royal Family were using the Royal Train, staying overnight in a siding at Menai Bridge before progressing to a specially constructed platform at the Ferodo Works at 2.00pm and transferring to the Carriage procession starting from the adjacent Ferodo Car Park.

On the day 4000 soldiers had been billeted at Llandwrog and these lined the streets particularly the carriage procession route whilst 250 extra police had also been drafted in. 4 random bomb explosions were reported but the only casualties were 2 of the bombers.

Castle invited guests

Within the Castle were 3850 invited guests, 350 members of the orchestra and choir and 150 members of the world press corps. A dedicated Car Park had been established at the end of Coed Helen Road across the Seiont from the Castle but guests were advised to travel by train.

Setting a good example some 376 leading dignitaries, including the Prime Minister, Ambassadors and Heads of State or their representatives boarded a train of first class carriages with at seat dining which left Euston at 0810 and arrived at Caernarvon at 1230. This was the last of a flight of 9 trains, 2 from London, 3 from Cardiff, 3 from Chester and 1 from Rhyl and was also the first to leave at 1730. Although a fleet of 4 brand new CVT coaches were present to meet the 1230 arrival and each made 2 trips to the Castle, many chose to walk.

The station itself was the subject of a fairly major refurbishment even though it was to close in January 1970.

Caernarvon Depot

As the Depot was on the processional route, we could only access it up to 8.00am and from 9.30pm. This meant that special signing on/off arrangements were necessary for some crews. the vehicle allocation was identified by letter on the vehicle and by a corresponding letter on the special duty schedule although this did not apply to the North Wales Coast Services. Free parking was arranged for crews at the Park and Ride Car Parks and they then travelled to the centre in one of the shuttle buses. Finally some coaches were deployed for use by essential services including BBC and St John's Ambulance staff and to gain admittance to the Special Area, a red `essential services` sticker had to be displayed.

Attendance

All of the Crosville arrangements worked smoothly but only a fraction of the expected crowds turned up. The quoted figure was that around 100,000 people lined the route or located themselves in the Square, with the poor weather, overcast with rain threatening but not actually falling, being blamed for the small attendance.

Barely 100 coaches turned up and the car parks only attracted 3200 cars. Our estimate based on these figures plus likely attendance by locals suggested that the total figure, excluding those in the Castle was likely to be between 20,000 and 25,000. The low figure was less likely to be terrorist or weather related and more likely to be general apathy to the idea of an English Prince of Wales.

As a consequence, the shuttle buses had very little to do, which was a great shame for all those contributing. Some buses were never used at all but although we gave Park and Ride crews the option of returning a day early, all wanted to stay. Indeed we need not have bothered working out crew duties as the drivers arranged things between themselves often driving buses from other operators, the Mancunians being particularly popular.

The scheduled services were poorly patronised except from the North Wales Coast and total takings were very little more than on a normal Tuesday.

On the other hand, the estimated worldwide television audience was 500,000,000 and the quiet day meant that we had time to enjoy the best view through our office window with the visiting VIP's graciously sharing their buffet with us.

The return journeys were easily dealt with and the big problem was that many of the minor VIP's had to hang around waiting for their trains, particularly the earliest London train which having departed Euston at 7.05am was not scheduled to leave Caernarvon until 6.45pm over two hours after the Ceremony concluded.

Aftermath

At around 12.45am on July 2 a van belonging to the military police exploded on Slate Quay killing the one drunken occupant who was locked inside under close arrest. This prompted a major alert until it was discovered that the soldier concerned has spilled a can of petrol which had later been ignited by a discarded cigarette from a passer-by. The Free Wales Army was cleared but many found the official explanation implausible.

Also on July 2, the television was removed from the office!

There was considerable excitement on July 4 when one of the BBC's Eagle Towers (a 60 foot extendable mast used as a portable transmitter and mounted on a Bedford lorry chassis) overturned at the BBC transmitting station at Llanddona in the east of Anglesey. When we got to the site with heavy recovery vehicle 59A, it became clear that the reason for the incident was that one of the other vehicles used to anchor the Eagle tower had attempted to drive off before it was detached.

It was child's play for our recovery team to get the Bedford back on its wheels and as it had fallen on soggy ground no damage appeared to have been done. However if it had happened on July 1st the vision signal would not have been transmitted until the tower had been reinstated, a major disaster. July 14 was the opening night for the 'Son et Lumiere' spectacular with commentary by Richard Burton, Rupert Davies and Wynford Vaughan Thomas. The opening night was packed but the event was not as successful as expected, although it continued nightly until September 27.

The following day, it was announced that the Clerk to the Royal Borough of Caernarvon and the Borough Surveyor had been awarded well deserved OBE's, whilst the Clerk to Caernarvonshire County Council and the County Surveyor had been awarded a CBE and OBE respectively. The Crosville team were commended for their efforts and the Company was indemnified against losses incurred as we were following official guidance on numbers.

On July 24, a Special Depot Committee Meeting was held at which the Crosville Traffic Manager John Hargreaves agreed to a special one-off payment of £1 for each member of the hourly paid staff in Caernarvon on Investiture Day as some recognition of the effort they made to make the arrangements successful.

AND FINALLY

Back to reality on July 26 when we were faced with a Smith's of Wigan coach with a broken injector. There were rules in place for dealing with these situations. Tilling and BET Companies could receive unlimited help including the provision of a suitable vehicle, other operators who had an account arrangement with Tilling/BET could also receive similar assistance but as Smith's were not so privileged, vehicle only hire was not possible and the hire of a coach and driver at the agreed rate had to be authorised by a responsible person from Smith's. We managed to find a coach (£20 per day) and driver (£13 per day up to the legal limit for driver's hours) to enable the party to continue to their destination in Lancashire. The following day someone came to repair and remove the offending vehicle, FJP 501 an AEC Reliance with Plaxton bodywork, one of several purchased in 1960 for their extended tour programme.

Thus ended my time in North Wales. To say that I had learnt a lot was an understatement but only because John Hargreaves had torn up the standard Senior Management Trainee programme in favour of giving me actual tasks to perform; if it hadn't been for him, I would have had no experience of actual managing at all and I didn't think that counting cash, compiling wage sheets, understanding vehicle maintenance and covering the full range of duties undertaken by clerks, whilst essential, helped me in my career at all. On the other hand, knowing how to drive buses certainly did.

I left Caernarvon with an uneasy feeling that operators like Express would be better suited to running rural services than Crosville as although the direct operating costs of their buses was probably very similar to ours, the overhead cost was not so much reduced as eliminated altogether. Also concerning to me was the social cost of retrenchment where men who had worked their whole lives with Crosville were likely to be rewarded by pensionless redundancy and no prospect of another job. Even if what they collected in fares was less than their cost to the company, it was still more than the financial contribution of administrators whose function never seemed to be questioned.

In those days, trainees had to write a monthly report and I included my thoughts in mine for July 1969. Usually, no feedback was forthcoming but on this occasion, I was summoned to Crane Wharf to meet the General Manager. Cyril Buckley was I suspect typical of a General Manager at the time and his basic comment was that if it was good enough for him, it was definitely good enough for me. I thought I was going to be fired but instead I was despatched to the Traffic Manager, who gave me a much more useful chat on Management being the art of the possible saying while he might agree with a lot of what I said, how would I plan to go about progressing it. To which I had no real answer but it was excellent advice.

Brian then went on to join the Tilling Group as a Senior Management Trainee in 1967 and was appointed Assistant Traffic Manager at Yorkshire Traction in July 1970. After time at the University of Newcastle and as Assistant Director of the Bradford Bus Study, he joined Midland Red as Chief Planning and Development Officer, before taking up the same role at NBC regional level. After a period as Director of the Market Analysis Project, Brian was made Group Marketing Manager and subsequently Director of Marketing. A change of direction saw him appointed Marketing Director of Trusthouse Forte Catering and later the same role in Forte Hotels. Finally, he was appointed Chief Executive of Virgin Rail before retiring in January 1999.