

Title: Give us a push, please

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The Moorsbus routes were literally a new departure for many buses, and their drivers.

This required a new approach for some of the 'long-distance' drivers, not only were the roads usually narrower than their normal town and city routes, but also they had new hazards to contend with. Sheep, tractors, grouse and other road users not usually found on the streets of Hull or Darlington. They also had quite a different group of passengers most of whom were on the bus for leisure, rather than going to work, or shopping. Many passengers will have fond memories of the core drivers, especially their friendliness and skill. Often getting onto the 'Moorsbus rota' became fiercely contested in the larger bus depots.

At the beginning of each season, some of the operators ran 'ghost buses' – training trips for new staff so they could learn the intricacies of the route, and simultaneously giving a day out for drivers' partners and children who joined them on the exercise.

But the buses themselves were also more used to short, stop-start services in towns and cities, rather than the long journeys and steep hills on a Moorsbus day. When Moorsbus was first being developed in the early 1990s, there were vehicle breakdowns as buses overheated or developed other faults. This was frustrating for all – passengers, drivers and Moorsbus staff. And often the breakdown occurred many miles from the base depot, meaning that a replacement vehicle took a long time to reach the scene of the breakdown.

One Sunday afternoon, passengers bound for Hull found their laden double-decker struggling on its homeward journey. A few miles south of Malton one hill in particular proved troublesome and the driver asked those who could manage the walk up the hill to get off. Some even managed to give the bus a bit of a shove.

Bus and passengers were re-united at the top of Grimston hill and – slightly later than planned – the bus deposited its passengers at Beverley and Hull without further mishap.

Only on Moorsbus would you find that everybody took the day in their stride – drivers and passengers alike. There's no record of the fate of the wheezing bus.

Bill Breakell