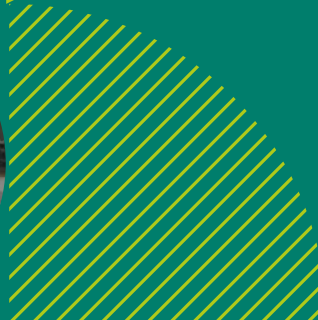
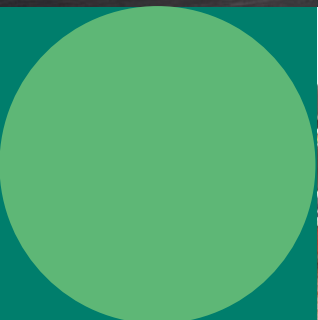
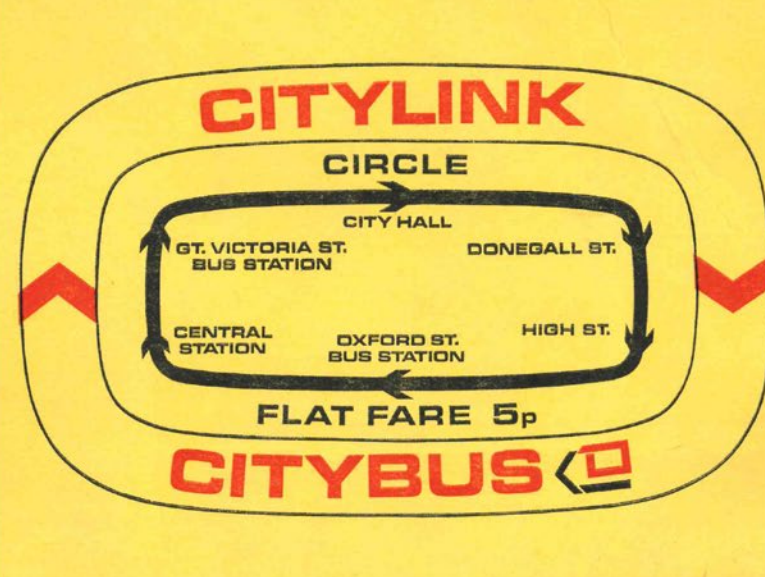


Citybus

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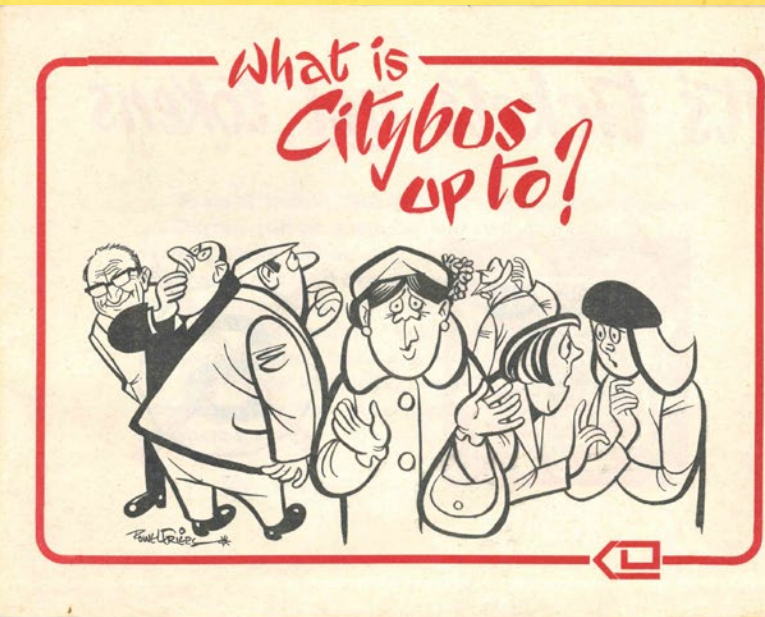
Year Anniversary





CITYBUS ULSTERBUS
SENIOR CITIZENS DAY TICKET
(AVAILABLE TO CONCESSION PASS HOLDERS ONLY)

VALID FOR UNLIMITED TRAVEL ON CITYBUS AND ULSTERBUS SCHEDULED SERVICES **WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND** AFTER 09.30 ON DATE OF ISSUE.



TIMETABLE
MONDAY to SATURDAY
BELFAST CENTRAL STATION

Depart:
07.17 — 07.57 Every 20 minutes
08.10 — 17.40 Every 10 minutes

ROUTE:
Clockwise Circular Service from Belfast Central Station via Cromac Square, May Street, City Hall, Howard Street, Great Victoria Street Bus Station, Fisherwick Place, Wellington Place, Donegall Place, Royal Avenue, Lower Donegall Street, Bridge St., High St., Oxford St., Belfast Central Station.

Flat Fare 5p
(Including Pensioners and Children)



Citybus is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Rebranded Translink Metro in 2005 following a major review of the Belfast bus network, this milestone is being celebrated to mark the contribution of the service to the city and its people.

On 2nd April 1973, the company started operations with all staff, vehicles and depot assets of the former Belfast Corporation Transport Department transferring on this date. Full Limited Company status of Citybus was achieved in April 1975 and Citybus Ltd remains the legal trading name of Translink Metro to this day.

The public transport service has transformed over the decades with today's modern, high tech, zero emission electric buses now operating across Belfast a world away from the 1970s Citybus fleet where some vehicles dated back to the 1950s.

However, one thing that has remained consistent has been the vital role played by the city's bus service in keeping people connected and supporting economic, environmental and social wellbeing.

The Citybus story also reflects Belfast's evolution over the years into a modern, vibrant city and this anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on the contribution of Citybus in Belfast and to celebrate the success of the city's Translink Metro and Glider service today.



Chris Conway,
Group Chief Executive,
Translink

"I'd like to pay tribute to former and current colleagues who have shown tremendous dedication, resilience and service over the decades to keep the city moving."

1970s



In the 1970s, Citybus services moved away from having a driver and conductor on one bus, to a one person operated vehicle. This was achieved by August 1975 and by 1978, tokens were phased out in favour of tickets.

Buses were frequently damaged and destroyed by stoning, hijacking, bombing and burning and it proved difficult during 'The Troubles' to operate a fleet replacement programme, with vehicles often being damaged and subsequently repaired.

Older buses were at times used on the most susceptible routes, in an attempt to protect the newer vehicles, although many were over 15 years old.

Along with some vehicles transferring from Ulsterbus to Citybus in the 1970s, the company purchased second hand vehicles from London Transport, London Country, Northern General and Crossville simply to keep services running.

79 buses were destroyed in 1977, and in 1979 Falls Depot was bombed, destroying 24 buses. Despite this, bus services kept running.



An on-street ticket kiosk opened in Donegall Square West in 1978, becoming a popular stop for passengers buying tickets, collecting timetables and looking for general travel advice.

The Kiosk closed in December 2020 and will be rehoused at the Ulster Transport Museum at Cultra.





The Troubles

Citybus drivers and their buses were regularly caught in the crossfire during periods of civil disturbance. Buses were often hijacked and used as burning barricades, with drivers being assaulted and robbed. Four Citybus employees tragically lost their lives during the course of their duties over the period of The Troubles, with many other staff injured, some seriously.



Colleagues who lost their lives were:

S Agnew 1972
P Crossan 1973
A Millar 1975
H Bradshaw 1977

A ceramic panel is on display at Laganside Bus Centre, in tribute to the four Citybus and eight Ulsterbus staff who died during The Troubles. It was formally unveiled at the opening of Laganside Buscentre on the 1st May 1996.



1980s



Further buses were lost in the 1980's due to civil disturbance, resulting in additional second hand vehicles being purchased from the larger bus companies in England.



In 1988, 35 new Leyland Tiger buses were ordered from the Alexander body building company at Mallusk.





By January 1989, the entire double deck fleet was withdrawn from regular bus services, with only single deck vehicles in operation.

1989 also saw the introduction of a tour department 'Citybus Tours', which operated private hire, excursions and the popular Belfast City Tour.

1990s



The first bus priority measures, aimed at making services more attractive and enhancing bus performance, were rolled out in the 1990s.

This started with the introduction in 1991 of a pilot scheme bus lane scheme in the Ormeau Road area. The lane approaching Ormeau Bridge was deemed successful and became permanent in 1992, then extended in the following two years.

A more extensive roll out of bus priority continued throughout the 1990s. In May 1991, City Express was launched, using the M2 Motorway to bring commuters to/from Newtownabbey.

At the then end of the M2 in Belfast, as traffic progressed along Duncrue Street, a short section of "bus only" lane was constructed across the central reservation, which allowed buses to avoid lengthy traffic delays. This was followed by a 400m contra flow system at Nelson Street.





In 1996, Albertbridge Road received its first bus lane, followed in 1997 by Upper Lisburn Road and Malone Road; and in 1998 Castlereagh Road, with Hollywood Road and Crumlin Road in 1999. The first contra-flow lane opened in Queen's Square in 1996, coinciding with the opening of Laganside Buscentre.



Citybus patronage was declining during the 1990s with just modest profits and an extensive study of bus operations was carried out between 1999 and 2001.



2000s



The development of bus lanes continued in the early 2000s. The first bus lane on the Saintfield Road opened in 2000, with additional lanes on the Shore Road, Cregagh Road, Albertbridge Road, East Bridge Street, and the Andersonstown Road and Falls Road in 2002.

Double decker buses returned to Belfast in 2001 when an order of 20 new Alexander double deckers with Volvo engines were brought into service by Citybus. 35 single decks were also added to the fleet.

New ticket machines made their debut – The Wayfarer TGX register was introduced in Citybus from October 2001, with improved functionality and memory.

The Wayfarers brought with them a digital fares list, SmartCard capabilities and GPS to identify the location of the bus. The GPS capabilities led to the introduction of the first real time passenger information system.

This system allowed the first Senior Smartpasses to be implemented in May 2002 for free concessionary travel on bus and rail services in Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, the first multi-journey Smartlink smartcards were also introduced in October 2002 for fare-paying customers, replacing the previous Citybus paper 4 journey tickets. With these implementations, the new ticketing system became the biggest smart ticketing scheme in the UK outside of London's Oyster card implementation in 2003.





This position was further strengthened over the next 15 years with the introduction of further concessionary and fare-paying smartcard options including Half-Fare Smartpass, Metro DayLink (multi-day) smartcard, yLink (youth) smartcard and aLink (annual) smartcard. With the iLink (integrated) smartcard product, Translink became the first operator in GB and Ireland to implement a fare-paying smartcard for all bus and rail services across on a country-wide basis.

A further welcome addition for customers was the introduction of the mLink mobile ticketing app, which initially offered

customers the ability to purchase NI Railways tickets on their Android or Apple smartphones, and this was further expanded to include Metro, Goldline and Ulsterbus mobile tickets thereafter.

A website and journey planner were also launched for the first time, as well as a centralised contact centre.

During 2002/03, a major review of bus services – the ‘Citybus Strategic Review’, was carried out, with the aim to redesign and modernise the network/ timetables and enhance the efficiency of the overall operation. This laid the groundwork for the change to Metro in 2005.



Celebrating the Heritage of Metro

The Metro network was launched on 7th February 2005, integrating Citybus and Ulsterbus services in Belfast.

Buses were painted in a magenta and white livery, differentiating from the red and cream of Citybus and in contrast to the blue and white livery of Ulsterbus. The improved network of services was based on twelve quality bus corridors (QBCs) around Greater Belfast, colour coded for easy passenger identification.

The 12 QBCs operated on Shore Road, Hollywood Road, Newtownards Road, Castlereagh Road, Cregagh Road, Ormeau Road, Malone Road, Lisburn Road, Falls Road, Shankill Road, Carr's Glen and Antrim Road.

Metro currently operates over 6,000 journeys each day.



2010s

GLIDER

Glider

A new, modern, bus rapid transit system, Glider, was launched in Belfast in September 2018, connecting East Belfast, West Belfast and the Titanic Quarter via the City Centre.

Glider operates with bespoke vehicles of tram-like appearance, modern halts with a platform feel, extensive bus priority, enhanced passenger information systems and enjoys off-board ticketing, to speed up boarding times and improve journey time reliability.

It's been hugely successful since its launch with plans now proceeding for a Glider North – South service.

The Glider launch led to a complete overhaul of the wayfinding system, visually representing the new service in relation to existing Metro services, this required a new network map and associated signage scheme, all of which needed to tie into existing Translink branding as well as accommodate the new Glider service brand.



The Milewater Service Centre, an integral part of the Glider network, opened on 20th February 2019. The high quality, bespoke service centre accommodates Glider and Metro vehicles, workshops, central storage facilities, specialist equipment and bus washing and fuel facilities.

Glider has proven to be a huge success since its launch in 2018 and has helped to support economic growth and regeneration. Translink actively supports the proposed North/South corridor expansion, and we will work with the Department for Infrastructure to deliver the service along the preferred route.



A new look and feel was developed for the entire Metro network, including colour coded bus stop flags along the 12 corridor routes, enhanced passenger information at terminus points in the city centre and at shelters of high frequency.

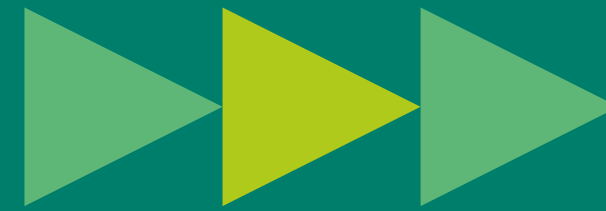
After carrying out research, bus stop flags were stripped back, giving the most essential information, bus stop name, corridor number and colour of that particular route. Service numbers were removed which cluttered the flags and improved customer information was installed at eye level and at shelters.

2020s

Translink has begun the roll-out of its Zero Emission bus fleet in Belfast as part of its Climate Positive Strategy, which aims to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 – operate a fully zero emission fleet by 2040 – and be climate positive by 2050.

The ‘Road to Zero’ Zero Emission Bus Project delivered 100 Zero Emission buses from Ballymena supplier Wrightbus into the Belfast Metro network during 2022, made up of 80 Battery Electric and 20 Hydrogen vehicles.

The roll out of these greener, cleaner high specification vehicles led to approximately one third of the Belfast Metro bus services operating on ZE technology. This is set to grow with a further 60 ZE fleet vehicles due to enter service by mid-2024.



The new BEVs run on sustainably sourced “green” electricity and offer the latest standards in comfort, quality and accessibility with in-seat USB chargers, Wi-Fi and low-floor accessibility features. They also operate double doors, allowing for faster disembarkation.

As part of the Zero Emissions project, Short Strand, Newtownabbey depots and the state-of-the-art Milewater Zero Emission Service Centre have also been fitted out with the latest in hydrogen refuelling and vehicle charging infrastructure.

We are working to progress bus priority measures in Belfast and urban areas across Northern Ireland, reducing congestion in town centres and helping make public transport a better option for everyone.

Public transport has a huge role to play in enabling the NI economy to reach Net Zero. Climate Action is prioritised as one of Translink’s four strategic objectives alongside Customer Service, Continuous Improvement and Connecting Communities.



Customer Benefits



All Belfast Metro services are low-floor fully accessible for wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility. A new wheelchair docking area is also available on the new Zero Emission fleet vehicles.

Customers will benefit from the high specification nature of the vehicles, with leatherette seating, Wi-Fi, and USB charging. The new vehicles also offer enhanced safety, accessibility, and comfort with a view to incentivising people to make the shift to public transport, ultimately reducing congestion and carbon footprint.

Improved bus priority measures, in conjunction with the newly introduced double doors on the vehicle, should aid quicker journey times, better punctuality, reliability and enhanced accessibility to further attract more users on board.

We are also planning enhanced P&R capacity on main routes into Belfast, helping to reduce the impact of congestion on our roads.

Ticketing Developments

Translink's Future Ticketing System began roll-out with the introduction of Glider in 2018, with the company's first off-vehicle ticketing system, namely 114 Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) and 207 Platform Validators across the Glider network, as well as 35 Handheld inspection devices for use by Glider Customer & Revenue Protection Officers.

This new technology saw a marked increase in smart ticketing usage, meaning faster boarding times for everyone, as customers saw the benefit of simply tapping their smartcard on the Validator rather than having to spend time buying a ticket from a TVM.

In 2020, the first new 'Retail Kiosk' TVMs were implemented on a Pilot basis at key locations such as Europa Buscentre, Cairnshill Park & Ride and George Best Belfast City Airport.

In March 2022, new on-bus ticket machines were introduced on Metro services in Belfast, for the first time allowing contactless payments on-bus with a daily capped fare for customers making two or more journeys each day, meaning that the customer's third (or any subsequent) journeys in the same day are free of charge. In November 2022, Translink reached the 1 million contactless payments mark and this ticket type has steadily grown to be one of the most popular methods of travel on board Metro, due to its convenience and excellent value.



We are working towards delivering a contactless "Tap-On Tap-Off" system, where customers can use contactless payments to travel on all Glider, bus and rail services where the system will automatically calculate a good value discounted fare based on the individual customer's specific journey. Customers will be given the option of either using their credit/debit card (or Smart payment device) or a new Translink-branded smartcard, which customers can load with money for travel at Translink ticket offices, TVMs or even online.

Translink's plan is to introduce further capping rules, for example, weekly capping to ensure that customers automatically receive discounts based on the number of times and the distance they travel.

In terms of other developments, TVMs and Platform Validators will be introduced at all stations across the NI Railways network, along with Electronic Gates at main rail stations. TVMs will also installed at bus stations, key bus stops and Park & Ride facilities and a new Collect Tickets facility will be introduced to allow customers to buy online and redeem their ticket at a TVM, ticket office or on-bus.



The Future

Translink's vision is to be your first choice for travel, today for tomorrow.

Metro offers customers reliable, convenient, and good value journeys on board modern and comfortable buses.

It provides a vital service to the public and our drivers have played a significant role in serving society over the past five decades, supporting Belfast's development as a modern, vibrant, and successful city.



Photos by Howard Cunningham, Raymond Bell,
John Montgomery, Fred Kelso, Harvey Nicholson
and Translink.

References: Citybus 1973–1988 by Will Hughes

And with thanks to Irish Transport Heritage.