



# Years Of Success

**Passion & innovation has helped family business Edwards  
Coaches stay one step ahead of the competition**

**I**n the last year it is estimated that there were over 5.2 billion bus and coach passenger journeys in Great Britain, making up around two thirds of all public transport journeys, meaning that buses and coaches are no small part of the UK economy.

Operating out of South Wales, Edwards Coaches are among the oldest coach companies in Great Britain, having been founded in 1925. 90 years ago George Edwards came out of retirement and began transporting people around in a Charabanc – an early form of coach with an open top

and rubber wheels – with the simple objective of providing a service that would put a smile on people's faces, and since then their goal has remained the same.

"We're primarily a coach company, but we've diversified in a number of different transport functions over the years," said Jason Edwards, Company Director. As well as a regional bus service providing key transport routes for the local community, the company also offers rail transport, river and sea cruises, flight tours, and other holiday services. "But our bread and butter, really, is schools," explains Jason. "We transport 6,500 school

children every day on an am and pm school run and a lot of the schools have confidence in us."

It's good to know that the company still treasure the same family values after all these years – even though the business, and the coach industry itself, has changed dramatically. "It's not just a simple job any more, to get out of bed and run a coach company," admits Jason. In recent years, government legislation has meant that coach companies have come under strain, and as a result many have gone out of business. However, it seems that Edwards Coaches is thriving better than ever despite the economic climate.

"We've always had people picking up the phone and chasing us, looking to operate coaches for customers instead of the other way around. In recent years, we've gone from operating one coach a day to London to around 35 coaches a

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day from the South Wales area,” said Jason. “And we’ve just launched a new service operated through National Express from Cardiff University to Bristol Airport every two hours.”

The company puts 210 vehicles on the road every day, ranging from people carriers, chauffeur driven cars, to high occupancy double deckers, 70 seat school coaches, and everything in between. And they are in the middle of expanding even further, having recently purchased 10 luxurious Mercedes Benz Tourismo M coaches for a massive £2.7 million, in honour of their 90th anniversary.

“We’re just pushing the boat out a little bit this year. When our customers get on a Mercedes coach, it gives you that ‘Wow’ factor. The coaches are coming in March and going straight to work

on our holiday programme. This huge investment firmly cements our company values - there will be no compromise on quality. We will be offering our customers, staff, and drivers first-class travel with the safest and best coaches on the road, allowing our own maintenance team to work on the best vehicles that money can buy.” The coaches will each have 49 seats, wood-effect flooring, Luxline seats with leather head rests, a centre toilet, and even wifi, ensuring that Edwards Coaches customers are really getting the luxury that the company believes they deserve.

What sets the company apart from competitors is, without doubt, their down to earth attitude to the business. “[People] know that we are a company they can trust and we provide good value for money,” Jason explained. “The



pillar of our business has really been the local people that travel with us on a regular basis – one of the most important testaments we’ve got has been with us for the last 20 or so years, and does a day trip with us every two months... Our feet are firmly on the floor.”

It is these strengths which have attracted some high profile clients over the years. “We’ve got a bus out in Paris now, transporting the Welsh rugby team around, we sup-

ply transport to the Welsh Football Association, and we’ve got a large contract with Cardiff City so we do all of the away fixtures and all of the academies under that. We’re very into our sport, and we take care of the majority of international touring teams all entering Cardiff and South Wales – when you’ve got an interest in sports, you tend to push the boat out that little bit further.”

Despite having their feet firmly



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## “FOR US WE ARE JUST PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT WE DO – IT’S NOT JUST A JOB, IT’S WHAT WE’VE BEEN BROUGHT UP WITH AND IT’S WHAT WE KNOW

on the ground, Edwards Coaches aren't afraid of innovation – they have a comprehensive GPS tracking system in place to look at the key performance indicators of their drivers. The motion sensors detect dangerous events such as hard steering, speeding, and jumping on the brakes, showing which of their drivers are truly performing at the high standard that's been set over their long company life, and which needed a little bit more training. They are also keen to improve upon the size of their carbon footprint - “What we've tried to do as a business is to buy the latest, most efficient carbon friendly engines that we can – years ago you used to stand next to a coach and

there'd be black smoke coming out of the back, now you can stand next to a coach and you won't even know it's ticking over. We're trying to recycle and just generally be the best company that we can.”

The company is currently celebrating its 90th birthday this year, with two high profile agreements involving big companies, new coaches, and a few planned events all in the pipeline. “For a business to start off 90 years ago and still be flourishing and profitable and healthy, still offering something to the community and value for money, is a really big achievement.” explained Jason. “We've got a 90th birthday party coming up, and we've got something like 300 cus-

tomers, suppliers, and VIPs all attending. We'll be testing out the new Mercedes coaches on arrival too, so they'll be the first to travel on those, we'll have an open day with face painting, choirs, hot dogs, and we'll just be trying to give something back to the community and support local charities.”

The company is proud to have been awarded Coach of the Year award for the second year in a row, along with many other accolades such as Welsh Coach of the Year, Tourist Coach of the Year, and being nominated as one of the top 1000 best companies to inspire Great Britain by a major newspaper.

“For us we are just passionate about what we do – it's not just a job, it's what we've been brought up with and it's what we know. It's one big family business and your name doesn't have to end with Edwards to feel like you own a part of it.”

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