

From Neil Jones 17 June 2010

In response to Andy Bagshaw's query regarding the 14 SYT Dennis Domino's, here is the info I have from a website I created about 8yrs ago:

Built at the Hestair Dennis factory at Guildford in 1985 the 7.8m Domino SDA1202 is, in essence, a scaled down Dominator. A midibus developed for intensive urban work, it has a Perkins T6.354.4 turbocharged engine with Maxwell Automatic transmission, front radiator, full air suspension and power steering. Bodied by the new Optare factory in Leeds (formerly Charles H Roe), they sported front ends with shallow radiators, flat vee-shaped windscreens and four bay windows. Seating was for 33 people with front entrance/exit door (B33F).

The Domino's were numbered 41 - 54 in the SYT fleet and allocated registration numbers C41-44 HDT, B45 FET, C46-54 HDT. Interestingly, registration number C45 HDT had been allocated to the prototype trolley bus, sponsored by SYPTE and local industry, located in Doncaster thus No. 45 having a B registration plate.

The registrartion numbers, chassis & body numbers allocated to the Domino's are:

C41 HDT - SDA1202/102 - 05

C42 HDT - SDA1202/103 - 02

C43 HDT - SDA1202/104 - 03

C44 HDT - SDA1202/105 - 04

B45 FET - SDA1202/106 - 01

C46 HDT - SDA1202/107 - 06

C47 HDT - SDA1202/108 - 07

C48 HDT - SDA1202/120 - 08

C49 HDT - SDA1202/121 - 09

C50 HDT - SDA1202/122 - 10

C51 HDT - SDA1202/123 - 11

C52 HDT - SDA1202/124 - 12

C53 HDT - SDA1202/125 - 13

C54 HDT - SDA1202/126 - 14

They began service in a livery of Cameo Cream, Chestnut Brown & Red with 'NIPPER' fleet names. The dates of entering service and garage allocations were:

41 - 08.08.85 - HE

42 - 24.09.85 - HE

43 - 19.08.85 - HE

44 - 20.08.85 - GR

45 - 19.07.85 - GR

46 - 21.08.85 - RM

47 - 23.08.85 - RM

48 - 22.08.85 - RM

49 - 21.08.85 - RM

50 - 04.09.85 - DR

51 - 04.09.85 - DR

52 - 04.09.85 - DR

53 - 04.09.85 - DR

54 - 04.09.85 - DR

Garage codes:

HE - Herries Road (Sheffield)

GR - Greenland Road (Sheffield)

RM - Rotherham (Midland Road)

DR - Doncaster (Leicester Avenue)

The Domino's primarily served services from Sheffield City Centre to inner city suburbs, to the North East of Sheffield around Hillsborough and Rotherham/Doncaster local services.

Service operation:

N1 Sheffield - Skye Edge
N2 Sheffield - Burngreave/Pitsmoor
N3 Sheffield - Broomhall
N4 Sheffield - Heeley Green

N5 Hillsborough - Broomhill
N6 Hillsborough - Loxley
N7 Hillsborough - Loxley
N8 Hillsborough - Crookes
N9 Hillsborough - Lower Walkley

N11 Rotherham - Bramley Grange
N12 Rotherham - Greystones
N13 Rotherham - Ulley
N14 Rotherham - Kimberworth Park
N15 Rotherham - Brampton

160 Doncaster Inner Circle

Towards the end of 1986, several Domino's spent some time demonstrating with MerseyBus in Liverpool and in 1987 further demonstration took place with Yorkshire Rider, in what might be called the vehicles 'home town', of Leeds. After the various stints on demonstration, the Domino's returned to SYT.

This was not the end of the Domino's travels, in the mayhem after deregulation, SYT had a stake in Compass Bus in Wakefield. Several Domino's were transferred here and ran in an identical livery, albeit with blue skirt. The Domino's returned back to South Yorkshire after SYT sold its stake in Compass Bus.

By early 1990 the services, for which the vehicles had originally been purchased, had changed and a new minibus network of services had been developed. All the Domino's migrated south to Sheffield, where they were repainted and allocated to Greenland Road Garage. Repaints were in the 'Little Nipper' livery of Yellow roof & window surrounds, white lower panels and red skirt. All carried Little Nipper fleetnames.

Seating was also reduced to B25F, with standing room in bay 2 and a hand rail across the window for standing passengers. This allowed the Domino's to be classed as 'Minibuses', due the reduced seating. Hearsay, at the time, suggested that drivers were initially demanding 'big' bus rates for driving the Domino's, obviously the rate of pay would be the same as for minibus drivers after the seating was reduced. The services that the Domino's were mainly allocated were M10/M11 to Wybourn, M26/M27 Manor Circle, M45/M46 to Herdings and 96 to Tinsley.

Their lives with SYT was starting to look rather bleak and in September 1990, the Domino fleet was transferred to Leadmill Road Garage in exchange for its allocation of Dodge S56 minibuses. The Domino's were employed on the Dronfield area network, services 14/15/15A/16 to Dronfield & Chesterfield (Royal Hospital), and on City service M60 to Lodge Moor Hospital.

During the winter months of 1990/1991, SYT made the decision to withdraw their Dennis Domino fleet. In February 1991, the Domino's were withdrawn from service. The final withdrawal dates are as follows:

41 - 22nd February 1991
42 - 19th February 1991
43 - 23rd February 1991
44 - 19th February 1991
45 - 18th February 1991
46 - 21st February 1991
47 - 18th February 1991
48 - 7th February 1991

49 - 23rd February 1991
50 - 4th February 1991
51 - 21st February 1991
52 - 22nd February 1991
53 - 12th February 1991
54 - 20th February 1991

No. 49 worked the final journey by this batch of vehicles, on Service 15.

1615 Sheffield-Dronfield-Chesterfield (Hospital)
1735 Chesterfield (Hospital)-Dronfield-Sheffield

(These dates have been re-produced by kind permission from TRANSPIRE, The Chesterfield Bus Society, www.transpire.org.uk)

Disposals of the withdrawn vehicles took place quite quickly:

41-44, 46-47, 51, 54 were sold to Stevensons of Uttoxeter for the 'Pacer' operation in Stockport.

45, 48, 49, 50 were placed in the SYT reserve fleet at Bootham Lane Garage in Dunscroft, Doncaster. These vehicles were sold to PVS, Carlton in 1996 and scrapped.

52 was initiall sold to W. North (dealer), initially for scrap, but was sold on to Motts of Aylesbury.

53 was reallocated to Greenland Road Garage and placed back into regular service, before being sold in 1993.

Domino's purchased by Stevensons of Uttoxeter, ran in Stockport until September 1992. They were then placed in the main Stevenson' fleet and received full fleet livery. Fleet numbers were allocated as follows:

C41 HDT - 222
C42 HDT - 223
C43 HDT - 224
C44 HDT - 225
C51 HDT - 226
C54 HDT - 227
C46 HDT - 228
C47 HDT - 229

Stevensons sold the Domino's late 1992, early 1993.

Unfortunately, only 4 Optare bodied Dennis Domino's survive today.

C41 HDT is in Local preservation in Sheffield

C42 HDT is believed to be part of the backdrop, on the Nemesis ride at Alton Towers Theme Park!

C43 HDT was scrapped in 1996

C44 HDT was also scrapped in 1996

B45 FET was scrapped in 1993

C46 HDT is also in local preservation in Sheffield

C47 HDT was scrapped in 1995

C48 HDT was scrapped in 1997

C49 HDT was also scrapped in 1997

C50 HDT followed its sisters in 1997

C51 HDT was scrapped in 1996

C52 HDT was scrapped in 1999

C53 HDT is preserved by an enthusiast at The Sheffield Bus Museum. It remains in the livery of its last operator 'Mercury'

C54 HDT was scrapped in 1996