

Travel without tears on Peter's pram bus

GETTING on and off buses can be a hassle for mums with prams, especially if they have shopping to cope with as well as a temperamental child. But as ERIC BAXTER now reports, a local company has received an award for its efforts to introduce travel without tears.

IT'S a journey most mums could do without . . . travelling by bus from outlying schemes to Greenock town centre can mean a whole lot of hassle when you've a baby in tow.

And the return trip is always worse when you're trying to cope with 'junior' AND a load of shopping.

But Greenock's Harte Buses are helping to take the tears out of travel, and their specially adapted pram bus has received a national award.

HOUSE OF LORDS

The service was commended in the national 'Bus Good Practice Awards' — and owner Peter Harte received a certificate at a ceremony at the House of Lords.

The pram bus, which has double-width doors, a wide aisle and a reduced number of seats, allows children to remain in their pram or push-chair. It runs daily between Greenock and Midton.

Harte were nominated for the award by Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive.

The awards were introduced last year by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities to reward ideas for improving bus services.

Harte were the only Scottish nominees this year. The competition organisers commented: "Harte is a small bus company established over six years ago.

"The company has converted one of its Mercedes-built minibuses into a pram bus which allows babies to remain safely in their pram during a journey.

"The minibus operates on an advertised set of journeys within the main timetable and has a conductor to assist mothers boarding and alighting

Adapted coach boosts safety

And the judges said: "This innovative approach to marketing and the provision of customer facilities merited commendation.

MANAGER

"Anyone who has tried to get a pram and child on a bus would agree!"

Mr Harte said today: "The idea for the pram bus came from my brother Robin, who is transport manager.

"There were so many people coming on our buses with prams that he thought it would be great



ABOVE: Mum board the pram bus. **LEFT:** Pete Harte receives his commendation from Lord Clinton Davis.

them." The commendation was presented to Peter and his wife Fay by Lord Clinton-Davis, president of the Association, and the Hartes were congratulated by Labour Party transport spokesman, Brian Wilson MP of Cunninghame North.

Peter said: "He said it was a really memorable day for us — we spent the last hour sipping champagne on the sunny terrace of the House of Lords overlooking the Thames!"

'The award was not only for us but also for our dedicated workforce and our customers'

PETER HART