

A GREENER FUTURE

One of the first large scale technology “Show and Tell” events to be held in the UK took place at Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire on 28th October. Over 100 organisations were either exhibiting technology or showcasing vehicles with low carbon technology. Hosted by Cenex, the UK centre of excellence for low carbon and fuel cell technologies, and supported by the Technology Strategy Board, the Government body that is driving forward innovation in low carbon vehicles, the event gave visitors the opportunity to learn more about the various options available today and what is being worked on for the future.

Perhaps one day anyone doing the Knowledge might be seen riding an electric powered scooter and then move on to an electric powered taxi. The scooter is reality and Cab Direct’s popular E7 taxi is now available in an electric version. Although this vehicle is not an option for the taxi trade in London as it does not meet the CoF, the vehicle shows that the technology has been developed and for some taxi drivers, the benefits of driving the electric E7 could mean financial savings. There were a variety of electric vehicles available to test drive and Taxi Globe tested an electric Peugeot mini bus which the E7 is based on. The first thing that is noticeable is the quietness of the vehicle. The E7 will be powered entirely by Lithium-ion batteries which have been developed and supplied by Europe’s leading independent manufacturer, Dundee based Axion Holdings plc. These give the electric E7 a range of up to 100 miles from a single charge and a top speed of 60mph. Other vehicles which are being used as taxis outside of London include the Transit and Transit Connect, both of which were being shown as electric vehicles at the event.

But it is not just electric vehicles which were being shown. ATX1 which has already completed some trials in service in London was on show. This gas powered taxi attracted a good deal of interest on its static display outside, whilst the CRMT stand inside the venue allowed visitors to find out more. The Nissan TD27 indirect injection engine has been converted to run on LNG, Liquid Natural Gas, bringing the initial Euro 1 engine

to Euro IV. This means the driver benefits from lower fuel costs, reduced emissions and a great reduction in engine noise. Studies are on-going. Hybrid vehicles were also part of the exhibition. Some private hire companies in London are already running hybrid fleets. Clean air is a topic which has been greatly debated and the number of exhibitors at this event show how much work and investment is being made in the area. With over 33 million vehicles on the roads of the UK today, an additional 6 million more than 10 years ago, road transport accounts for 25% of the UK carbon dioxide emissions. Citroen UK Ltd had a ride and drive facility at the event. This brand has a wide range of vehicles available today with not only award winning safety features but also some of the most environmentally “green” vehicles.

Around 800 delegates attended the event. Technology Strategy Board Chief Executive Iain Gray said: “Low carbon vehicle technology is exciting, practical and most importantly, real. Such vehicles are already on our roads and as the technology continues to improve rapidly they will only become more effective and more widely used.” During the event, the TSB unveiled details of a £10 million investment plan, co-funded by the Department for Transport, which aims to see up to 100 innovative ultra low carbon demonstration vehicles on Britain’s roads by the end of next year. This is one of the initiatives announced by the Government today to encourage a mass market in electric and hybrid



cars. The ultra low carbon vehicle demonstration competition will see the 100 innovative cars on the road in several locations around the UK.

