

## VINTAGE TAXIS ON DISPLAY *by Mark Cooper*

On 5th April 2009, the London Bus Preservation Trust's annual spring bus and coach gathering took place at Wisley Airfield in Surrey, and once again the London Vintage Taxi Association was delighted to take part. The association's members displayed 13 taxis, the oldest being a gleaming, meticulously restored 1934 Austin High Lot. Like several of the other vintage taxis on display, this 1934 taxi still earns its keep from weddings and film hire.



1934 Austin High Lot... Calvin Candy  
LTI TX4... Gary Zylberszac

from the left;  
Austin 12/4 Low Loader... Doug Cheshire  
Austin FX3D... Stephen Dimmock  
Austin FX4Q... Martin Hayter  
Austin FX4D... Bob McPhail  
LTI TX4... Gary Zylberszac

The line up also included a 1936 Austin Low Loader, two Austin FX3s, three early Austin FX4s, a Mk7 Beardmore and the first prototype Metrocab, as well as several more modern cabs. As well as Taxis, the event showcased around 300 vintage buses and coaches, including the very first and very last of the 'RT' models, which were the predecessors to the iconic Routemaster, which was also very well represented.

Austin 12/4 Low Loader... Doug Cheshire  
Austin FX3D... Stephen Dimmock

The show continues to grow in size year on year, and for the first time this year also included a display of vintage fire engines and other emergency vehicles from days gone by. A big collectors' market also takes place at the event, with wares ranging from every spare part you could want to restore your own vintage bus, to scale models for those who can only ever dream of owning the real thing!

## LEARN MORE EARN MORE WITH CAB GUIDE COURSE

Many drivers who have studied The Cab Guide Course report that not only did they enjoy the course and the different areas studied but they are also earning more money as a result. The course is co-ordinated by Graham Woodhouse, himself a taxi driver and a guide. He explained: "This course is a certificated course in conjunction with the City University, aimed at for Black Cab Drivers. Those guides who get their badge at the end of the course are then able to undertake tours in their taxis. This is a great way of tourists being able to enjoy London. Every guide has a unique way of guiding and can also tailor tours to specific needs."

During the course a variety of areas are covered including the history of the cab trade. Visits are arranged to various establishments such as Museums. During the past few months, the guide course has made visits to places such as The Museum of childhood, The Science Museum and The War Rooms. The groups have been given an insight into the work of these diverse places and in some instances have been able to enjoy areas which are not normally on view. An inside knowledge of interesting Museums is essential for advising tourists of places to visit. This is also true for London Taxi drivers in general who are frequently asked about places to visit by ordinary fares. Described as both extensive and intensive, the course covers the History of London, Architecture, Great Fires & the Blitz, Lost Rivers & Villages together with many other subjects. This assists drivers to present the great city of London to both passengers & visitors, in an entertaining and informative way. Guest speakers from University Collage London, the National Trust, and the Taxi Trade give talks to the students, with printed hand-outs for every lesson and visual aids to assist lessons.

If you would like to know more about the next available course starting September, please contact Graham by telephone on 07968-791117 or email him at [cabguide@sky.com](mailto:cabguide@sky.com) and he will be pleased to tell you more!

## CUTTING CONGESTION

Statistics calculated by Transport for London for 08/09 show that 300,000 road works were undertaken by utility companies in London. Although much of the work is essential, more congestion is caused because of poor planning. There are some cases where a lack of co-ordination means roads are dug up more often than needed. For example on Holloway Road in Islington, there were around 500 sets of works in just 1 year. Cannon Street was excavated 71 times over a 6 month period, with a total duration of works of over 2 years. At the moment utility companies only have to notify highway authorities when they want to dig up a road.

Now Boris Johnson has persuaded utility companies to sign up to a code of conduct to cut the delays and congestion caused by roadworks. Utility firms working in London will provide information boards where they dig up the roads and work outside peak hours where possible. Thames Water, now carrying out a massive programme of work to replace the capital's water mains, have told the Mayor that they are ready to begin covering trenches that are not being worked on with high strength plates. This should help ease congestion by allowing the use of whole stretches of road that would previously have been coned off. The Mayor is keen that, if successful, other companies follow their example.

Londoners are being encouraged to play their part in making sure the companies keep to the code by reporting works that have no signage, are untidy or unattended for a number of days, to the Transport for London website. Boris Johnson said: "By making these pledges the utility companies have agreed that the simply incredible situation of their being allowed to dig up any road in the capital with little notice and even less coordination must now end. The aim of the code of conduct is better coordination and far less disruption for Londoners.

"Possibly the most significant development is Thames Water's agreement to cover trenches that are not in use with plates that will allow these roads to be used as normal. If other companies follow suit we can keep people moving not fuming."

David Owens, Thames Water's chief executive, said: "Although roadworks are unavoidable as we carry out vital work to update London's network of worn-out Victorian water mains, I share the Mayor of London's vision to keep the capital moving. That's why, as we sign up to his new Code of Conduct, we are making road plating mandatory at our Victorian mains replacement sites across London, so as well as keeping water flowing under the streets, we're helping the Mayor keep traffic flowing above them."