

LONDON VINTAGE TAXI ASSOCIATION JOINS THE COUNTRY SET!

On Sunday 13th September the LVTA attended the Windsor Classic Car Show held at Queen Victoria's Review Ground in Windsor Great Park, which at the same time was the venue for the third and final day of the National Carriage Driving Championships organised by the British Horse Driving Trials Association, the previous two days having seen the dressage competition and the cross country marathon sections.

Under a patchwork blanket of low, but thankfully harmless rolling clouds, eight cabs assembled at a pitch marked 'London Taxi Club' (sic) whereupon Gary Zylberszac expertly erected his 'instant marquee' and LVTA events secretary Martin Hayter took charge of both the positioning of the cabs and the presentation of the regalia stall. The display of cabs was complemented with the arrival of two Windsor licensed taxis who's owners had arranged to join us for the day, they

made for welcome additions to the line-up, and we hope that they enjoyed themselves sufficiently to join us again at future events. A steady trickle of visitors visited the display, several with stories to tell of memories of cabs owned by their fathers and grandfathers, and several more enquiring about the practicalities of owning a retired cab for their own private use.

The varied array of vehicles at the show were mostly single owner-entrants, ranging from Rolls Royce limousines through to Minis, although a few small car clubs were also represented. All the vehicles on display were very much 'classics', and almost all were either restored or maintained to their original condition, with a noticeable lack of testosterone-fuelled modifications! The atmosphere was dignified and relaxed, with many owners happy to chat endlessly about all aspects of their particular marques. Apart from

the Classic Car Show, the main attraction of the day was of course the Carriage 'Cone-Driving' event, where contestants have to negotiate an obstacle course against the clock through a series of traffic cones, with tennis balls precariously balanced on top of each one, with penalties for every one knocked off!

All the carriage drivers and their grooms were immaculately turned out, as were their carriages, horses and ponies, and every single one exuded real passion and pride in their performances, whilst also demonstrating remarkable precision, skill and judgement as they thundered between the cones with just inches to spare...

In all it was a thoroughly enjoyable day, with a far less commercial feel than many car shows, but with the added bonus of magnificent demonstrations of real 'horse-power' without the usually associated amplified noises and fumes!



75 YEARS OF SERVICE FOR LOST PROPERTY OFFICE

TfL's Lost Property Office (LPO) is one of the largest lost property offices in the UK. This year it is celebrating 75 years of service. The LPO handles almost 200,000 items a year left behind on buses, London Underground, London Overground, DLR, licensed taxis or in the Victoria Coach Station. Last year the most commonly forgotten objects were books (36,852), bags (28,550) and items of clothing (27,174).

The LPO has seen more than its fair share of unusual items over the past 75 years; a stuffed puffer fish, human skulls, breast implants and a lawnmower are just a few of the stranger items handed in. Located on Baker Street, the LPO takes pride in its link to its famous fictional neighbour Sherlock Holmes, even naming the computer system staff use to log all lost items 'Sherlock'.

Staff at the LPO use their own detective skills to try and reunite lost property with its rightful owner, directly contacting them if any form of identification is found with the object. There have been occasions where

staff have gone a step further to return items, managing to track down the next of kin for two urns of ashes that had been in the LPO for years even though there were just a few words written on the urns.

Julie Haley, TfL's Lost Property Office Manager, said: "It is great to be celebrating 75 years of the LPO. I have been here for five years and love being reminded how honest Londoners are when they hand in lost property. The look on customers' faces when they get back something they thought was lost forever is very rewarding. Reuniting two urns of ashes with the families who had lost them was particularly heart-warming - it was very emotional for all of us. Having said that, all items are important to their owners and returning even the smallest of items can make a big difference. I know some people think if they've lost something on public transport they'll never get it back but I'd like to encourage them to give us a call. You never know - we might just have it here, and 'Sherlock' will help us find it."