

THE CLASSIC LONDON BUS SOCIETY

Memorable days out by bus for enthusiasts



NEWSLETTER 7 - September 2008

Introduction

Dear Member,

I set out to write a quick note, and I'm afraid it's turned into a monster ! Apologies for that but there is a lot of new information here, so make a cup of tea, read on and send your bookings in!

As expected our Craven's trip has proved to be a popular trip. With it being such a long day for passengers and heavy work for the drivers, we are not going to load the buses to capacity. Consequently places are running low, so if you haven't booked yet and want to join us, please let me know soon. If you are coming, all the information you need to enjoy your day is at the end of this Newsletter.

Charity initiative

Between now and December, TCLBS will be raising money for charity. Starting with a quiz on our Cravens Day, and culminating with a Christmas Lights Tour by RT in a parade of heritage vehicles, I'd like to ask for your support.

Now you might be wondering why we are doing this, we are after all a bus society.

Well firstly, let me just assure you I'm not going to constantly come around rattling a tin under your nose demanding you put your hard earned in. Times are tough enough at the moment and I fully appreciate that. Our fundraising is intended to be an extra fun element to our day, so hopefully you won't even realise you are lighter in the pocket ! If you don't want to join in there is no pressure to do so.

We are doing it because my day job of running events in the corporate world tells me it can be incredibly rewarding for the organisation undertaking the fund raising. I've seen the sense of satisfaction and pride it gives the people involved. Of course the intention is to make a noticeable difference to the recipients too, and it does, particularly if you pick the right charity in relation to the amount you feel you are going to raise.

It has always been part of my ethos for TCLBS to:

- Operate the Society with integrity
- Treat members respectfully
- Be recognised as a responsible organisation

Supporting a charitable cause builds on those values with the added benefit of giving an interest to unite us, away from our passion for buses.

So the intention for the remainder of this year is to raise money for a charity called Rainbow Trust. It is a charity which provides practical and emotional support to families who have a child with life threatening or terminal illness. Last year they supported over 1,000 families. I've selected it because we are going to have a bus in the 'London by Night and Christmas Lights Vintage Bus Tour' full details of which are below. Quite a few of you I met for the first time on John's bus when I was a guest on it last year, so you will be aware of the evening and the charity. 19 heritage buses took part in 2007 and the owners and their guests helped raise a very commendable £935. I think with a little bit of imagination we could really do our bit for them this time around.

However going forward, what I'd like to have is a 'Charity of the Year' whereby we identify a charity and adopt it for a year, raising money on some of our trips or by other methods. And this is where I need your input. If anyone has a suggestion for a charity we can help during 2009, please let me know. My personal feeling is that it should be a smaller charity at a local level, rather than a huge national one, but if you think otherwise then again get in touch. I shall be asking three or four members to help me narrow the field down, and then I will let you all have the chance to vote to decide which charity we support.

London Christmas Lights, and all in a good cause

This is a long way off yet, but you may wish to get it in your diaries. As mentioned above, on the evening of Saturday 13th December, we will be running a bus (likely to be an RT) in the annual 'London by Night and Christmas Lights Vintage Bus Tour', organised by Gill and John Hinson of the Self Preservation Society (not to be confused with a similar run held by The Routemaster Owners Club, normally the week before). This is a private event for vehicle owners and their friends and families, and not a free service for enthusiasts. Usually starting around 17:30 from within Hyde Park, the journey around London takes about two hours, with a stop along Blackfriars Bridge to stretch legs and take photos. Last year was a clear, crisp evening, and 19 heritage buses took part in the parade. London at night looked superb, and a good evening was had by all.

As well as being a fun night out for all (and your families are very welcome), the evening also raises funds for the children's charity, Rainbow Trust. I shall be handing over all the 'fares' collected to the charity, and it is suggested that a donation of £10 per adult, £5 under 16s will secure you a seat on the bus for the evening. I'd prefer it if on this one occasion I could ask for payment in advance. You can send me a cheque made payable to The Classic London Bus Society, pay on line (details on the membership page of the website www.tclbs.org), or give me cash on any of our other trips. I'd love to fill the bus, so please reserve your seat. I will be providing some light festive food to put you in the mood, holding a raffle, and if someone is prepared to sponsor me enough, I'll even dress up as Santa for you !

Other trips

A reminder that for anyone wishing to come with us to Carlton Colville for the running day and after dark service on Saturday 13 September, you need to book your own train ticket on the 10:00 from Liverpool St to Diss, and return on the 21:27. We will be met at Diss and transferred to the museum for a fare of £5. Museum entry is £6.

On Sunday 12 October, we are heading off to the Castle Point Museum on Canvey Island again, this time for their annual running day. Our bus departs from outside Embankment Tube at 10:00. The fare is £10 and is open to members and non-members.

Bits and bobs

Firstly Peter Terry has brought to my attention that the 1938 tube stock is out again on Sunday 14 September. This time it is accompanied by renovated Metropolitan Railway electric locomotive 'Sarah Siddens' built in 1923 and not seen in passenger service for seven years. The trip is based in the Amersham, Harrow and Watford area, and tickets must be pre-booked by calling 020 7565 7298 (that's the museum number I believe, not me!) and cost £20/£25 depending on where and when you travel. Thanks to Pat Dennis at TfL for confirming all of this, and you can see the full timetable at <http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/whatson/131.aspx>

Secondly, you will no doubt be aware of megabus and their fares from £1. Maybe not so megatrain, also offering heavily discounted fares on South West Trains and East Midlands. A limited number of routes from London are offered, but they do include places such as Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester, Derby, Bristol, Bath, Exeter, Southampton and Bournemouth. When I checked out the fares, there were few at £1, but most seemed to be £4-£6 each way, still a huge saving over the standard rate. It might be useful to someone one day.

Cravens Day 21 September

For those on the Cravens trip, this is for you.

Our scheduled departure time is 10:15, so please arrive in good time. As luck would have it, Sunday 21st September is also the day for 'London Freewheel', when some 40,000 cyclists are expected to descend on Central London to ride on a 12km traffic free route. Road closures include the Embankment from Tower Bridge to Charing Cross, Trafalgar Square, The Haymarket, Lower Regent St, Piccadilly and restrictions at Hyde Park Corner. So it is inevitable that it will take you longer than usual to get to Victoria if travelling by bus.

The Cravens will be at Victoria Coach Station from approximately 09:45 until our departure at 10:15 and we expect to be in Bays 2 and 3. When you arrive, please come and see me as usual so I can tick you off (as in put a tick next to your name on my sheet as opposed to shouting at you!)

Once registered I'm sure you will want to take some photographs prior to boarding. The Operations Manager at VCS has been incredibly helpful to us, and we may well wish to start another trip there in the future, so please adhere to, and respect, the following points, which are there for your safety:

- 1) Please bring and wear your high visibility vest (those who have not been on our trips before will be issued with one). Wearing the vest will help keep you safe, but you need to be aware of vehicle movements at all times. Wearing a vest does not make you immune from having an accident - it just makes it easier for the coach driver to see you before he mows you down !
- 2) Keep clear of the vehicle entry point to the coach station. Bays 2 and 3 are immediately in front of the entrance, so there will be coaches driving in directly behind our buses before turning to go into their appropriate bays. As with all the bays in the coach station, ours are marked with a white outline box. The back of this box is the boundary line, and you must not stray beyond it.
- 3) You may visit other bays to take photographs, but again you must stay within the confines of the white outlines.
- 4) Please do not impede the daily workings of the facility, and if asked to move by a VCS marshal, please do so.

Now you have two choices. You can board the buses in the bay before we pull away, or follow the buses on foot as they complete a small circuit to enable you to get some additional photographs, and get on after that. You will not be able to jump on and off.

You may wish to look at a map for this bit. When the buses pull away they will pose in the exit to the Coach Station in Elizabeth Street, side by side, and you can take photographs from the pavement opposite. The buses then turn right into Elizabeth Street, cross over Buckingham Palace Road, left into Bulleid Way and left again into Eccleston Bridge Road, where again you may wish to photograph them. They then turn right into Buckingham Palace Road, and will stop at the bus stop opposite the Grosvenor Hotel to allow you to board. This is a much shorter distance than it sounds, but it will give you the opportunity to take photographs of the buses on the move. Then it's off for the day, hopefully not getting delayed too much by the traffic.

One thing we have to do in order to comply with Private Hire and tachograph regulations, is ensure the drivers have a 45 minute break during the day. This has to be taken away from the vehicle, not sitting on it, or letting someone else drive. So after much head scratching, we decided the best place to stop was picturesque Croxley Green, scheduled to be at 13:21 by sheer chance there are a couple of pubs overlooking the green ! I'm not going to organise a buffet lunch as we have done before, but you should at least have time for a drink if you want one. There is no guarantee you will be able to order food, as they be full with bookings, but if you are successful, you do so at your own risk that it will be ready and eaten within the allotted time.

There are going to be plenty of chances to stretch legs and take photographs throughout the day. One of the highlights is sure to be the stop at Harrow Weald Garage, where the buses will be parked together in the entrance. To be clear on this, it is not a garage visit, purely a photo stop, and you will be asked to disembark before the buses pull into the garage. When we did our dry run last week there was not a single vehicle inside the garage as they are kept in a yard at the rear, so don't bother hiding under your seat in the hope of getting a sneaky look !

Once we leave our last stop at Uxbridge, the buses will take separate routes when back in London, stopping at all the mainline stations between them to ease your journey home. The last two drop offs are scheduled for 18:00, and the timetable in the programme will tell you which bus you need to be on.

Finally, as part of our new fundraising initiative as outlined above, there will be a 16 page souvenir programme available for sale at a cost of just £1 with all the proceeds going into the charity pot. The programme includes an excellent article on the history of the Cravens RTs and the routes we are travelling on, a timetable which traffic permitting we will do our best to adhere to, and numerous photographs of Cravens in their heyday. Your day will not be complete without one, and it's pretty much compulsory to buy a copy! We will also be having a competition on board. It will be quick and easy to enter, and there will be a fantastic prize for the winner. So please, bring along an extra pound or two, and join in.

Whew. I think that is it for the Cravens Day.

The end at last

If you got this far, well done !

My best regards to you all.

Trevor