

THE CLASSIC LONDON BUS SOCIETY

Memorable days out by bus for enthusiasts



NEWSLETTER 1 - January 2008

Introduction

Dear Member,

It is with a great deal of pride that I write to so many of you as we approach our first trip in a couple of weeks time to Ensign. Despite only launching on 1 December, your Society now boasts 93 members, and a great number of you are coming along on our inaugural day out. So before getting into the details of the visit as well as other news, can I again thank each and every one of you for taking the trouble to join and supporting this new venture. It is a great relief to me as well, as I would have looked pretty stupid riding alone in an RT on Saturday week ! The fact I shall need two buses to transport you all, is particularly pleasing to me. So thank you. My commitment in return, is that I will try to provide you with a range of interesting and varied excursions to meet all tastes, and always endeavour to answer your letters or emails as speedily as possible.

I very much want this to become a Society where everybody feels they can communicate with me in terms of ideas, suggestions and comments. I have plenty of my own thoughts on trips, but it is important that I hear from you as well. So please, get in touch or talk to me on one of our days out. If there is somewhere you have always wanted to go, then the chances are others will too.

In just a short space of time, The Classic London Bus Society has attracted a fair amount of interest from individuals and organisations within the 'bus world', and I have received many kind words of support and encouragement. You will be pleased to hear, I have also had many offers to help with days out, both in terms of vehicles being made available to us, and access to places not normally open to enthusiasts, as well as requests from event organisers to run services to their rallies or running days. So I have decided to add some additional excursions to those initially advertised. As soon as anything new is confirmed, you as members will be the first to hear about them.

Buses and Steam

With a limited number of bus museums and collections to visit within our area, I'm keen to try and provide you with different sorts of excursions. One new trip I can announce today falls into that category, to the Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway in Kent. It is a 2'6" narrow gauge railway, built to carry raw materials for the manufacture of paper, and is in it's 102nd year of

steam operation. The Society will be hiring the railway for your exclusive use on Saturday 12 April. As there is no access to the general public on this day, a number of benefits not normally on offer will be made available to us.

Briefly the day will comprise:

- departure from Central London by bus
- an introductory talk and guided tour of the loco sheds
- unlimited rides on steam hauled trains for the day
- a chance to look at the museum and model railway
- opportunities for photos from the lineside
- and, this is the good bit, everyone gets to experience a ride in
- the cab of a steam train !

As many of you live in the Kent area, if it is easier for you to travel direct to the railway under your own steam (pun intended) then that is an option open to you, but please let me know at the time of booking if you intend to do so.

The cost will be just £15 for members (including entry to the railway, and reduced if traveling direct) for what I hope will be a different, and memorable day out. The Commercial Director of the railway has been incredibly helpful in making this trip possible, and agreeing to my many requests, and it would be good if we are able to acknowledge his efforts with a full bus load. You can see further details about the railway at www.skir.net and bookings are being taken by me now in the usual fashion, ie by email or letter. Please do not try and book this event direct with the railway.

The trip to Ensign

So now on to the details of the Ensign trip. There is a lot of information here, but please take time to read it carefully so you enjoy your day to the full, taking particular note of the pick up arrangements and details regarding lunch.

As mentioned in my introduction there will be two buses making the trip, one expected to be RT624, and places are still available, so drop me an email if you haven't reserved your seat and would like to come. All those who have booked should have received a confirmation, and if you had said you were coming, but now can't make it for any reason, please, please let me know so we don't wait for you.

Buses will depart from outside Embankment Tube Station at 10:45. Please arrive in good time and register with me before boarding so I know you are with us. I should be easy to spot as I shall be standing on the platform of one of the buses with a clipboard and money bag ! Some of you have paid in advance, but for others remember the fare is £10. If you haven't paid your membership fee yet, that is also £10. Once registered, you are free to board either bus, but can I suggest that to give everybody a chance to ride on both buses, if you travel out by one, you return on the other.

If for some reason on the day you are delayed and realise you will fail to get to Embankment in time, please contact me on the following number, 07505 423203. Doing so may make it possible to make alternative arrangements for you to join us. An important point to note about the phone number, is that this will only be answered on the day of trips. It is not my everyday mobile number, which I'm afraid due to work and family commitments, will remain a closely guarded secret !

The journey to Ensign's Purfleet depot should take about an hour. On board, you will be issued with a high visibility vest, which is yours to keep afterwards for future trips. You must wear the vest at all times whilst at Ensign. It is a working garage, and your safety is of the utmost importance. You will be given a tour of the site by either Steve Newman, Director of Ensign, or one of his team. Please feel free to ask them any questions you like, and take photographs or video freely, providing they are for your own private use, or to put on your websites. As a courtesy to Ensign, any commercial usage should be agreed in advance, by contacting me. There will then be the opportunity to explore the site at your leisure. As a bonus the new Eurostar line passes within a few feet of the yard, and it is quite possibly the closest point anywhere you can get to see the trains travel at speed. One important point to note is the toilet facilities at Ensign are very limited, and really for 'emergency' use only, so please do not drink too much tea at breakfast !

At approximately 13:00 we will then reboard the buses and take the short journey to The Royal Hotel Pub and Restaurant in Purfleet for a bite to eat and a 'comfort break'. There is a private room for us to use, and I have negotiated a fee of £6 for a buffet lunch including sandwiches, chips, sausage rolls etc and tea or coffee. You will be able to buy the usual range of beers, spirits and soft drinks too. I would really encourage you to take this offer up, as it will give you the opportunity to get into the warm on what could be a cold day, and meet fellow members in a comfortable and sociable surrounding. It is possible we will have a short lunchtime talk as well. However, it is important you let me know by Tuesday 29th January at the very latest if you are going to accept this invitation, as the restaurant require numbers in advance. If you are, email trips@tclbs.org with the word 'Lunch' in the subject field. As an added incentive, all those paying their £6 get entered into a free draw to win a complimentary trip to the Sittingbourne Railway as above. If this is still not enough to entice you to participate, then you can of course bring your own packed lunch, but please do not eat it in the Royal.

Around 14:00 we will board the buses again, and proceed to Rainham to pick up the former 87 route, the penultimate RT route. If there is space we will stop briefly at Rainham War Memorial for photographs, but if not, we will continue onto the Abbey Wood Lane terminus about 10 minutes away, where there is plenty of room for us to park. You can take photographs here, and the buses will do a couple of loops around the block so you can get some moving shots. If you have any specific photo requests, please just ask, and the drivers and I will do our best to oblige.

We will then proceed along the route back through Rainham, heading for Barking. Steve Newman has very kindly arranged for us to stop at Barking Garage for photographs. High visibility vests on again please, and can I really stress, this is not a garage visit, purely a photo opportunity. However tempting it may be, do not under any circumstances enter the garage or stand in entry or exit points.

And so back into Central London to drop off where we started. If it is more convenient for you to alight along our route before the Embankment, speak to your conductor. I anticipate we will be back in town between 16:00 and 16:30.

One further point, between Rainham and Central London I shall be giving out your membership goody packs. Please don't leave without one.

Finally

You will be relieved to hear it is not my intention to write such lengthy emails on a regular basis, but will appreciate on this occasion there was a lot of information I wanted to relate to you.

I very much look forward to meeting those of you coming to Ensign. I have worked hard to get the Society up and running, and to try and make the first outing as interesting as possible. I hope you will have a most enjoyable day.

With my best regards to you all.

Trevor
The Classic London Bus Society