

# Cumbria Classic Coaches NEWSLETTER

www.CumbriaClassicCoaches.co.uk

**MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR**  
**From All at Bowber Head & Cumbria Classic Coaches**

## FLEET NEWS

Having bought the AEC last year we thought we'd expand the car fleet this year and we chose a new friend for Poppy. We happened to come across a 1937 Austin Taxi for sale and thought it would please staff and passengers alike!

Restorations and repairs this year:- Well the reupholstery on Florence was completed and the seats are absolutely sumptuous. Colin has done another fantastic job. Anthony has kept busy renewing woodwork on various buses, a never ending task. We all want him to make a start on the Commer restoration though and if anyone wants to email and encourage him.....

Routes: Barnard Castle is very popular, summer and winter and we have a fan base of regulars who come every week, we have changed the route slightly for 2010 and have a shorter stay in Middleton. We have also changed the Hawes route to match the Barnard Castle timings on the early part so we now leave Bowber Head at 10.10am. The Klipper route was not operated this year but we hope it will return next year with the reopening of K Shoes.

We seem to have had an interesting year of bookings, working in Scotland on weddings, for the BBC and even taking the Bristol open topped to be inside the NEC in Birmingham in February.



## BOWBER HEAD NEWS

The commune at Bowber Head just seems to get bigger. Fab news this year, Pensri's son Mai has been able to move over from Thailand to live with Ant and Pen. Mai is 12 (13 in 2 weeks!) and already a hit with the girls at school, he's into motorbikes and football but we'll get him into buses yet. Finn, Alison's eldest has started to do a spot of conducting and Sam is still determined to dismantle an engine and see how it works. Claire has a new garden to play in and achieved distinction on her photography course which we are all really proud of. Alison decided not to go back to Uni this year as the signmaking business is simply too busy for her to spare the time.

## "Tilly" - DLX 214

**AUSTIN Lowloader Taxi**  
 1861cc 4 cylinder 12hp,  
 Ex Windsor Cab

It started because of Anthony's obsession with ebay. He's always checking the ads looking for bike parts, buses, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow and cars. Last year we nearly had an Ikea double decker parked outside for him to live in. This year he was trawling for classic cars and noticed a vintage taxi for sale. With it being an Austin Anthony mentioned it to Gordon but Anne wouldn't let him have yet another vehicle. When the auction ended we thought no more of it but then the Taxi was re-auctioned. Anthony was in Thailand at the time and happened to mention it to me... an hour after the auction finished!

Being on my own in the office and bored I thought I'd investigate further to see if the Taxi had reached the asking price. It hadn't, so the next day we went for a look, it was up in Glasgow. Of course it is fatal going for a look, the Taxi was in pristine condition, the engine sounded sweet and being a commercial vehicle it fitted in very well with our operation. So what if there's no window



where the driver sits or no door on the passenger side in the front, we can all wear coats! It was perfect, we made an offer and within a short space of time were the proud owners.

Returning it to Bowber Head the next people to be surprised were Gordon and Anne. When Anne saw the Taxi she fell in love with it, Gordon rapidly got the driver's uniform and likes nothing better than driving about on a Sunday afternoon, picking up passengers whether they want to go or not!

The Taxi originally operated in the Windsor area of London. During the war it likely saw service with the auxiliary fire service towing a waterpump. Often the Taxis got to the scene quicker than the fire engine as the drivers had the "Knowledge".

It withdrew from service in 1959 and was exported to Nevada to be in Harrah's motor museum. Re-Imported to Britain in 1991.

The Taxi has a Landulet fold down pram style hood in the back and seats 5 passengers including 2 on jump seats. It has an original Taxi meter, illuminated 'For Hire' sign and old taxi licence plate on the back. Lucky for the driver, and unusual for us, it also sports a 4 speed synchromesh gearbox and a great 25ft turning circle.

Already a hit with the customers the most exciting passenger so far was last Saturday when Queen Victoria headed Brough Christmas Procession waving from the back! Oh and Father Christmas when he agreed to pose for our Christmas card photoshoot!

Alison



## THE ROAD TO RETIREMENT

Everybody at Bowber Head seems to think that I jump at every opportunity to appear with the buses on TV or film because I am an egotist or something. This is, of course, not true. It is just that I am more adaptable than the others and look so presentable in H.D.

BBC Breakfast TV wanted a 60 year old bus (and similar age driver!) to be used as a roving studio to interview people whose retirement plans had been dramatically affected by the recession. They wanted the bus at locations at Derwent Water, Bowes Museum and the Forth Bridge at the beginning of March.

Things could have gone very wrong but for our expertise, local knowledge and contacts thus :-

1. Derwent water frontage was being re-tarmaced so we arranged for Glenridding Steamer Pier on Ullswater to be open.
2. Bowes Museum was covered in scaffolding and containers so we arranged for Eggleston Hall to be open.
3. The BBC had no luck organising a group of retirees at 05.00 am in the Lake District so we persuaded some friends to appear who represented redundancy and anarchy all at the same time.

Driving the bus up the A1 to Edinburgh for the 3<sup>rd</sup> day was a revelation. I didn't realise so many people watch Breakfast TV, we were flashed by motorists all the way and a Police patrol car flagged us down in Northumberland just so the officer could take photographs of the bus. I thought I was being stopped for speeding at 38 mph!

The Forth Bridge car park at North Queensferry was like an ice rink at 05.00 am and a passing motorist who was more interested in the bus and crew than his driving, just spun around 3 times and stopped before he would have run over a camera, tripod and lights because I shouted at him at the top of my voice.

The 3 days were good fun and we are now fully registered passenger transport contractors to the BBC.

William



## LONG DISTANCE WEDDINGS

Anthony has fitted the Leyland Tiger 'Alex' and the Bedford Recovery wagon with towing brackets for our car transporter. This means that we can trailer the Rover or the Taxi to an event that also has a requirement for a single deck coach.

We had such an occasion in September at the beautiful little village of Luss by Loch Lomand. I drove the Kendal Klipper with the Rover in tow and Alison drove 'Rosie'. We made the event into a family and friends getaway long weekend by taking Tony and Christine Wilson and Claire.

Tony was the wedding chauffeur, driving the Rover, a job he has a natural bent for and Alison and I drove the buses, collecting guests from all over the place. We parked all the vehicles and trailer at a super farm B & B at Balloch and the farmer's wife used the buses for a photo shoot of all local wives for their Balloch newspaper. We used the B & B as H.Q. from which we ventured out around Lock Lomand, Helensburgh and Gare Loch in the Rover after the wedding. It was a very successful trial which I am sure will be repeated soon.

## SHETLAND HOLIDAY 2010

Next year we are planning a trip to Shetland in June to coincide with Shetland's classic vehicle rally, Claire and Will and a couple of friends visited Shetland in the Rover in 2008 and were very impressed and had a thoroughly enjoyable time. So they decided to share the opportunity to go with all their friends (for a small fee of course). This will be an 8 day tour as we don't go that fast. We are taking the AEC double decker. A short lowdown on the itinerary reads thus; 2 days travelling to Aberdeen where we catch the overnight ferry to Shetland, drinks and dinner onboard then 4 days exploring Shetland and visiting the rally and ferry then 2 days meandering back. Please call for a flyer if you are interested.

## Gordon's Retirement

The finish of this year's Hawes bus service at the end of September was also the official start of Gordon Harris's retirement from klippyng and other duties for Cumbria Classic Coaches. After 4 years of fantastic service looking after the general public he is already missed by many of our regular travellers. Gordon's energy and enthusiasm is inspiring and his caring way, and sense of humour has made many a trip on the bus truly something special.

Speaking personally the time I have spent with Gordon has always been a pleasure and the help he has given me on some quite large rebuild projects has been invaluable, in both practical help and advice and also keeping my butterfly brain focused on the job in hand. After a lifetime in the transport industry his encyclopedic knowledge of buses, trains and taxis is amazing and he can talk for many an hour to other enthusiasts.

On the big retirement day the newspapers were in attendance to interview probably the most famous klippy in the country, all that remains is to say a very big THANK YOU to Gordon for everything he has done for CCC and the Hamer family.

Anthony



Family photo time this summer, unfortunately Pen and Mi were in Thailand!