

ON THE BUSES



Next month's Coach & Bus Live, at the NEC, Birmingham, is the biggest event this year for the PSV industry. John Challen picks out some of the engineering highlights

When the NEC's doors open from 2-3 October for Coach & Bus Live 2013, visitors will experience a show with some new features, as well as the usual masterclass

sessions and strong line-up of exhibitor products. For example, the organisers have added a Live Showcase Arena, described as providing demonstrations of new bus and coach models, as well as presentations from industry experts.

Meanwhile, across the halls there will be more than 200 exhibitors, many of which will be debuting products that could help bus and coach operators, as well as their workshops, improve their efficiencies and cut costs.

Optare to show five vehicles

Two electric- and three diesel-powered vehicles will grace the Optare stand. First up is a Solo EV, powered by a 150kW, 2,380Nm Magtec P144 electric motor, with two battery packs, each comprising 26 lithium-ion, magnesium phosphate batteries.

There will also be a 10.4m Versa EV, using the same technology and powertrain, as well as an 11.7m diesel-powered variant. Power for this latter model comes courtesy of Cummins' six-cylinder ISBe engine, delivering 201bhp and 700Nm of torque, matched to an Allison 2100 Series five-speed automatic transmission.

Optare's new small bus for the mobility sector, the Bonito – which is based on the Fiat Ducato Maxi body – will also be in attendance, while a Euro 6 version of the Solo SR will also appear on the company's stand for the first time.

Fuelling solutions

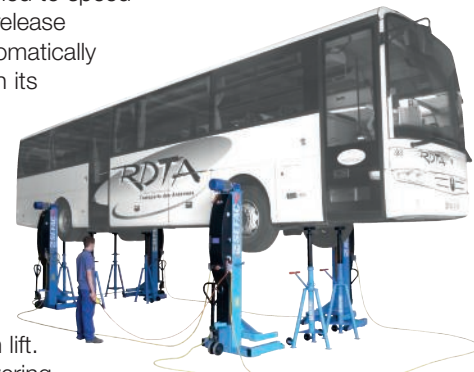
Fuel management technology supplier MIS Fuel Monitoring (Merridale) is to show a range of pump dispensers, as well as stock control, security and supervisory systems at Coach & Bus Live.

New developments include a vehicle communications data link that is designed to speed up depot fuelling. The snap-on, quick-release device enables the fuelling point to automatically authenticate each vehicle, together with its recorded mileage.

Merridale will also be showcasing FuelWorkS, a web-based system that offers fleet administrators a dashboard overview of their fuel stock status.

Wireless mobile column lift

Sefac will exhibit the company's new SW2 7.5-tonne wireless mobile column lift. The firm has now acquired patents covering operational safety systems to allow for the safe use of multiple sets of SW2 lifts, allowing maintenance to be reduced "to a minimum", according to the company, and so reducing lifetime costs.





Driver risk management

DriveCam claims to protect more than 400,000 drivers with its front-facing videos, and the company will demonstrate how businesses could also benefit from its driver risk management programme. The firm says that its combination of a video event recorder with predictive analytics software to identify drivers most at risk makes it possible to change behaviours before they result in collision costs and/or wasted fuel.

As well as reducing vehicle damage, employer liability and personal injury costs by up to 80%, DriveCam also claims to offer the potential to reduce fuel costs by 12%.

Euro 6

Unsurprisingly, Volvo's Euro 6 coach range will take pride of place on the Swedish manufacturer's stand at Coach & Bus Live. Volvo says it will be using the show to demonstrate key aspects of its new range, focusing on reduced fuel consumption, improved performance, and refinements to the firm's vehicle and owner support package.

Volvo says the B5 Double Deck range, consisting of both hybrid and conventional diesel models, will deliver fuel savings and better performance than its predecessor, thanks, in part to a gross weight saving of 1,000kg.

GreenRoad launch

GreenRoad will unveil its ECM (engine control management) solution for passenger transport at this year's coach and bus show. Its latest offering promises to be easy to use, providing an intuitive interface that gives operators advance notice of maintenance and fuel efficiency.



GreenRoad will also demonstrate its advanced tracking software, which uses colour-coded icons, as well as 2D and 3D mapping, to show vehicle and fleet status and history. It also sends alerts every time policies are violated.

Individual attention

MAN Truck & Bus will be showing its exciting new EEV (enhanced environmentally friendly vehicle) compliant Neoplan Starliner Individual, which was designed with German airline Lufthansa. A luxury coach that MAN says is already attracting much attention from operators across Europe, it is sure to create a stir.

MAN will also be showing its redesigned CitySmart diesel midibus in Euro 6 format. Meanwhile, MAN Competence Centres will be on hand to help interested operators catch up on the latest in vehicle telematics and their benefits, in terms of fuel and R&M cost savings.

New bus catalogue

Visitors to the Knorr-Bremse stand can register for the company's new Bus Catalogue (2013/2014 edition) and learn about the importance of fitting OE (original equipment) brake pads and associated components to their vehicles. The braking and control systems manufacturer says it will have several experts on hand to help visitors at the show, as well as products to view.

Drive Alive with Novadata

Details of the recently launched Drive Alive training courses, aimed at helping professional drivers improve their daily use of commercial vehicles, will be available on Novadata's stand. The courses, which count as seven hours towards Driver CPC, address some of the essential basics of best practice for drivers.





Fuel for thought

Independent oil company Prax Petroleum will show off its range of diesel, biodiesel, gas oil and kerosine options, all available from its terminals at Dagenham, Immingham and Cardiff.

A supplier that counts Stagecoach, London United Buses and Arriva among its customers, Prax says all its products are independently tested, comply with RTFO legislation and meet UK standards.

More lifting technology

Among products on the Tecalemit stand will be 7.5-tonne wireless mobile column lifts from Finkbeiner. The columns have a “revolutionary design” and, with the option of running up to 10 in parallel, the longest and heaviest vehicles can be accommodated, either inside or outside a workshop.

Into the pits

Aftermarket equipment supplier Weber UK will be displaying several products at the Coach & Bus Live show, including pit jacks and support stands, air hydraulic trolley jacks, lifting air bags and a low-entry bottle jack.

New this year is the GD200-2, a 20-tonne air hydraulic twin-ram pit jack, with two individually-controlled rams. The company will also be exhibiting an air hydraulic floor running pit jack, the GGD150-U.

Training on tap

VDO will be offering advice and information about its range of training courses that cover tachograph learning for drivers, workshop technicians, fleet managers and enforcement agencies. Training to City & Guilds and Driver CPC standards is the best way to ensure that staff avoid infringements, due to a lack of knowledge about tachographs, says VDO.



Diagnostic developments

Operators are being invited to discuss their changing requirements for service and diagnostic tools with Texa at Coach & Bus Live. The company believes that the vehicle coverage offered by its Multibrand diagnostic tools makes it ideal for workshops maintaining mixed fleets.

Texa's Axone Truck Service tool provides a solution for smaller fleets and mobile service vehicles, while the company believes its Axone 4 provides a complete tool, along with technical and service information, for larger workshops and specialist service technicians.

Refuelling requirements

AID Fuel Cards will be talking about refuelling requirements for coaches and buses, as well as two products it launched earlier this year. Its euroShell and Esso commercial vehicle fleet fuel cards have proved popular with both large and small fleets, as market conditions make nationwide weekly pricing even more attractive.

A cut above

Unwin Safety Systems' new floor-cutting service helps vehicle workshops produce better quality minibus conversions, more quickly and more cost-effectively, it claims. Later this year, Wilker UK is to convert 10 minibuses a week for care home operator HC-One, which ordered 235 minibuses. Unwin is supplying its Innotrax floors. These will be cut to shape and profile, and delivered upside down in two half-sections, making them easier and quicker to move and install.

Web-based wonders

TomTom Business Solutions is bringing its latest fleet management system – Webfleet tachograph manager – to Birmingham next month. The company describes its system as an “all-in-one solution that allows businesses to manage driving time compliance efficiently”. Remote and manual downloading is supported, while it also offers the option of archiving and analysing tachograph data, to comply with national and European legislation.

Ammonia generator

Baumot will be promoting its BNOx system with ammonia generator, which helps reduce NOx and particulate matter. The unit can be retrofitted to Euro 3 vehicles, allowing them to be upgraded to Euro 5/6 emission levels, according to the company, at a fraction of the cost of a new vehicle.

The generator converts AdBlue into gaseous ammonia outside the exhaust stream, providing almost instantaneous mixing, it is said – ready for injection directly in front of the SCR (selective catalytic reduction) catalyst, achieving NOx reductions in excess of 80% above 220°C. 