Getting in gear for Busworld

The world’s biggest bus show is less than a month away. Here’s a preview of what will be on display

WHEN 15th-21st October 2015
WHERE Kortrijk Xpo, Belgium
EXHIBITION Over 400 exhibitors, including 50 vehicle builders, will be present, from 36 countries
VISITORS There were over 30,000 visitors to Busworld Kortrijk 2013
WEBSITE www.kortrijk.busworld.org

The biennial Busworld Kortrijk exhibition will be held in the small Flemish city between October 15 and 21. There will be 411 exhibitors from 36 countries, evidently an all-time record. They include just over 50 vehicle builders, some of them only offering minibuses. Sadly, there will be no British manufacturers, even though Busworld will attract more than 30,000 visitors from more than 100 countries around the world.

Although the price of diesel has fallen substantially in recent months, there will be quite a number of alternative fuel systems on offer. Mercedes-Benz will launch the Citaro with a brand new gas engine derived from the 7.7-litre Euro VI diesel engine and fitted vertically in line in the offside rear corner (see Picture A). The new engine is nearly 300kg lighter than the previous gas engine, saving weight and fuel consumption. Further weight is saved by carrying the gas in new composite tanks mounted towards the front of the roof. The company reckons that the Western European market for gas buses is around 1,000 units per annum and that the gas model makes less than half the noise of the equivalent diesel. The city of Augsburg has ordered 68 of them, including 53 articulated.

Scania says that it will showcase the industry’s broadest range of alternative-fuelled vehicles at Busworld. It has Euro VI engines that can run on diesel, CNG, bioethanol, biodiesel and biogas. One of its exhibits will be a hybrid Citywide (Picture B). Unusually for a hybrid vehicle, it has a large 9.3-litre engine, but Scania says that it is ideally suited for combined city and suburban operations with speeds of up to 60mph. It is also the smallest capacity engine made by Scania!

Volvo has nearly 3,000 hybrid buses in service or on order. The largest single market for them is the UK. The range now includes the standard hybrid, offering savings in fuel consumption of up to 40%; the electric hybrid, which requires regular fast charging throughout the day, saving up to 70% of fuel; and the latest all-electric model that recently entered service in Gothenburg. This last vehicle will be on Volvo’s stand at Kortrijk (Picture C).

BYD will be showing its first all-electric double deck bus that is due to enter service in London after the exhibition. The main activity of the Chinese manufacturer is the development and production of batteries. They have been able to save one third of the weight of their previous battery packs, while still retaining sufficient charge for a range of around 150-160 miles (Picture D).

Until recently, Irizar was best known for building luxury coachwork on a variety of chassis. The Spanish company then decided to develop a range of integral coaches, offering them in selected markets. Irizar has expanded its range to include low entry buses and interurban vehicles and also a full floor all-electric bus (Picture E). This was developed with other members of the Irizar Group and is capable of a full day’s operation without recharging.

Solaris has wide experience of alternative fuels and has more than 40 all-electric buses in service or on order. At Busworld, the Polish manufacturer will launch low entry and all-electric versions of the new Urbino city bus (Picture F). The latter will be fitted with a pantograph for...
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VDL always has a lively stand. They have added all-electric models to the Citea range (Picture G), both solo and articulated. The packaging of their equipment is particularly neat.

Bombardier is expected to promote its Primove system of contactless charging from beneath the bus. One of the benefits of Primove is that it can also charge other electric vehicles on a pay-per-use basis.

Overhead charging. Solaris says that, by using far fewer batteries, more passengers can be carried within legal weight limits.

Van Hool is better known for its luxury coaches and has benefited greatly from deregulation of the French and German markets, with megabus.com its largest customer. Its city bus range will be represented by an A330 hybrid bus for Monaco with a Cummins 4.5-litre engine and autonomy for up to 3km in all-electric mode.

In addition to vehicles, many of the leading component suppliers and service providers will be at Busworld. Cummins will be introducing its latest Euro VI ISB engines for bus applications with higher torque at lower revs. They will also meet the requirements for On Board Diagnostics that will become mandatory from the start of 2017.

Kortrijk is not the easiest place to reach, and parking can be difficult. One of the best ways of getting there is to take the Eurostar to Lille and from there it is a short journey to Courtrai, as it is known in French.

During the exhibition, the Busworld Academy will be holding several seminars. For more information log on to www.busworld.org and from there to the Busworld Academy.

Busworld is the largest and most international exhibition in the world dedicated to the bus and coach industry. It is so near our shores that it is well worth a visit!