

London Transport Service Vehicles in Miniature.

By Clive Greedus

One way to enjoy past memories, be they recent or distant, is to recreate them in miniature. Fortunately it is possible to obtain a surprisingly large variety of LT service vehicles by making and modifying kits and old toys. '00' scale (1/76) is probably the best to use as there are so many bus and railway models, and buildings in this scale that can be used to set the scene. Most of the models and kits I have listed below are generic and were not specifically designed as LT service vehicles, though there are exceptions. The Classic Models Austin LD01 van has decals to produce 1300AS with LT lifts and escalators lettering, but do be careful to correct the registration from 200HXE to 200EXH! The ABS (ex Model Bus Company) models of the Mercury tower wagon, Regent tree lopper, Bedford mobile canteen and Militant breakdown tender are all specifically LT models, but sadly, the canteen is presently out of stock, and the Militant has not been re introduced yet. Maybe ABS needs the encouragement of more potential orders to produce them. MBC originally made these and they still produce the decals.

The ABS kit of a Boxer lorry is based on the 10 ton version with thin mudguards like the Terrier and was originally one of my own products, and I can guarantee that the dropside bolster body is suitable for LT as it was drawn from a Ford D series at Parsons Green! (I also produced their Sherpa and Marina vans in the 1970s in between driving Central Line trains).

Two manufacturers are planning on bringing out exciting new models this year. "Roadscale (Retired)" are planning a limited production kit of an AEC Mercury dropside lorry based on 1070/1/2Q, whilst EFE is to produce the original Thames Trader cab on a variety of lorries from the end of this year. Further off I have heard of a proposal to produce kits for trolleybus breakdown tender Cubs and Albions, 114W wire lubricator, and a book of plans of 50s service vehicles. Obviously, the more interest there is, the more chance of seeing these ideas come to fruition.

So whether you are into 'white and blue', 'cargo grey', 'Chiswick green', or just red, theres plenty of LT service vehicle modelling to keep you busy!

List of 1/76 scale model kits and conversions for CDS vehicles

* denotes not currently in production

AEC Mercury tower wagon (75-96Q)	ABS
AEC Mercury (1953) cab	*Roadscale, Marquis
AEC pre war cab	Coopercraft, EFE, Lledo
AEC Q mobile gas unit (1035CD)	conversion from OOC Q
AEC Regent tree lopper (969-73J)	ABS
AEC Regent tower wagon (722-33J)	conversion from inaccurate OOC model?
AEC Regent turnover vehicle (1036TV)	ABS pre-war RT
AEC Militant breakdown tender*	*ABS
AEC/Leyland Ergomatic cab	EFE
Austin K4 (900-16/22AS)	Canterbury Miniature Commercials
Austin 503 (979AS, 1066-9AS)	cab from Peter Young
Austin LDO1 1 ton van	Classic Model Co.(with LT decals), Langley Models
Austin LDO2 30cwt half tilt	conversion from Langley
Bedford OLB/C/D	*Roadscale, Canterbury Miniature Commercials, Springside
Bedford KZ 30cwt	conversion from Coopercraft ML 2ton
Bedford OSS Mobile canteen (700-709B)*	ABS
Bedford OSS prime mover (953B)	*Roadscale, Canterbury Miniature Commercials, Springside
Bedford A (BL1/2)	cab from Canterbury Miniature Co mmercials

Bedford TK	EFE
Bedford HA 6cwt van	Taylor
Chaseside shovel loader (KLB 876)	Langley
Dodge Commando	Peter Young
Fordson E27N tractor	Langley, Springside
Ford E83W 10cwt van	Canterbury Miniature Commercials
Ford E83W Utilecon	conversion from Canterbury
Ford 300E 7cwt van	John Day
Ford 400E 15cwt van	*Roadscale, Minix
Ford Utilabrake	Lesney
Ford 105E Estate car	R. Parker
Ford 307E 7cwt van	R. Parker
Ford Transit Mk1 van	John Day, *Efsi
Ford Transit 150 van (1970)	ABS
Ford Transit 160 van (1978)	ABS
Ford Transit van & dropside (1994)	Beacon Models
Ford Thames 7V	John Day
Ford Thames Trader	*Roadscale, *Lesney, Marquis, EFE later in 2004
Ford D series	Langley, ABS
Guy Vixen mobile gas unit (1311CD)	ABS, EFE later in 2004
Karrier Gamecock (restyled)	Peter Young
Leyland Beaver tipper	cab from Lledo
Leyland Beaver machinery carrier (1010L)	cab from Lledo, trailer conversion of Langley 25ton low loader
Leyland Boxer/Terrier	ABS
Leyland PD3 breakdown tender	cab from ABS "St Helens" parts or from OOC PD3 bus
Leyland Sherpa van*	ABS
Ransomes & Rapier Mobile crane (352/3R)	Langley

Suppliers

*denotes production halted

ABS Models 36 Field Barn Drive, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 0ED
 Beacon Models. From Model Buses 55 Talbot Fields, Telford TF6 6LY
 Canterbury Miniature Commercials, 8 Hever Place, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7QP
 Classic Model Co. 71, Windsor Rd, Batley, W. Yorks WF17 0JS
 Coopercraft. From model railway suppliers and from 17a Barclay Rd, London E11 3DQ
 John Day, 104 St Peter's Close, Moreton-on-Lugg, Hereford HR4 8DW
 EFE. Available widely from toy and model shops.
 *Efsi (Holland) Secondhand at swapmeets etc.
 Langley Models, 166 Three Bridges Road, Crawley, Sussex RH10 1LE
 *Lesney. Secondhand at swapmeets etc.
 Lledo. Available widely from toy and model shops
 Marquis Models, The Old Marquis, London Road, Wollaston, Northants NN9 7QP
 MBC Decals, Cres-Mor, Perranuthnoe, Penzance, TR20 9NR
 *Minix. Secondhand at swapmeets etc.
 OOC (Corgi). Available widely from toy and model shops
 R. Parker, 19 Oakland, Malvern Wells, Worcs. WR14 4JE
 *Roadscale
 Springside Models, 1&2 Silverhills Buildings, Decoy Industrial estate, Newton Abbott, Devon, TQ12 5LZ
 Taylor Precision Models Unit 235, Stratford Workshops, Burford Rd, London E15 2SP
 Peter Young, PO Box 618 Roma Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4003 (Australia)

Kit Reviews

All '00'-scale car/van modelling is fiddly, so tweezers and magnifying lenses are a useful aid. Gold LT transfers are available from MBC, registrations numbers from the Little Bus Company and Modelmaster, whilst small white numbers can be extracted from BR railway wagon tare weights and letterings. For "Chiswick green" one needs to use a small sealable jar and mix greens, with red, yellow, and black as necessary whilst comparing with a colour picture of a real vehicle, (such as 351X at the LT Acton Museum). Be warned that the Bedford canteens wore different shades of green.



In LTE days a yard at the back of a bus garage or trolleybus depot was always worth a visit just in case any service vehicles were hiding there. Here in 1961 we find Ford 100E van 1100F, E83W van 791F, and Austin LDO1 van 1110AS just waiting to be "copped" and underlined in the ABC! The models, which still require another visit to Chiswick for a little more detailing, are reviewed below.

"Classic Models" Austin LDO1 Van

For a price of £4.95 this is great value and makes a charming little model. It's a simple box construction, with separate parts for floor, seats, wheels and steering wheel, but some liquid plastic adhesives won't work on the hard plastic, so be warned. The model lacks the small lights beneath the headlights but these can be added by drilling holes and inserting shortened pins. But ensure the pin heads are nicely domed, as some cheap pins have poorly formed heads. All LT vehicles had nearside fog lights and these can be cut from plastic card with a leather punch – which can be bought from some "pound shops" and can cut discs (and holes) of various sizes.

The model has decals for a grey liveried van (though the HXE registration needs correcting to EXH), but if you are modelling one of the older green liveried vehicles you will need to remove the side indicators and replace them with a representation of the semaphore type. A small piece of thin plastic strip (obtainable from model stores) stuck in place and painted silver, can suffice.

“Canterbury Models” Ford E83W Van

A one-piece body of either resin or white metal simplifies construction and makes into a delightful model. The floor has the seats attached, whilst wheels, axles, and steering wheel are the other parts to fit. All Canterbury Models were originally made without glazing and this is why a little ingenuity may be required to cut and fit the front screen.

“John Day” Ford 300E Van

A one-piece white metal body, a floor with seats and wheels attached, and a vacuum formed glazing unit, make this the simplest of kits to construct. It lacks a steering wheel, so it's a good idea to obtain one, and a ready source of these and other car detailing parts is Taylor Precision Models. The glazing is good, but would be better still if it was the flush fit type. The quarter lights need representing by plastic strip, tape, or a thin paint line, a fiddly job but worthwhile. When doing any fine paint detail, make sure you use the finest brush and have a wooden cocktail stick to lick or dip into white spirit to tidy any errors. When assembled, check the rear end does not have a heavily laden appearance. If it does, this is easily remedied by bending the rear floor down slightly to lower the wheels.