



THE  
*Bus*  
COLLECTION  
AT ALFORD



# NEWSLETTER

No. 33

December 2024

## Chairmans Update ...

It is almost 12 months since our founder, Gordon Mills MBE, sadly passed away. As many of you know the very existence of our bus collection is due to Gordons's passion, hard work and desire to protect and preserve representative examples of local public transport in the North-East of Scotland. As a consequence of Gordon's passing, we can no longer rely on the generous funding he provided to support the bus collection, and we have to turn our attention to identifying alternative methods of raising funds to support the Trust. This includes increasing opportunities for the public to see our collection at Alford, at local events across Aberdeenshire and further afield. We do this to show our vehicles and generate interest in the Trust as well as trying to raise funds.

As a reminder - any and all sums are most welcome. And so much better if you can expand the benefit for us of your donation by the 25% HMRC refund, with a simple gift aid form signature. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all of our very generous donors who have contributed to the welfare of our Trust over recent months. Every penny donated is greatly appreciated – Thank You.

In parallel to our fund-raising activities, we are also extremely focused on cost management. This includes but is not limited to; reviewing our running costs to ensure they are the most efficient possible, assessing our utility contracts, and ensuring that, as a registered charity, we are receiving maximum financial relief where applicable.

In addition, we are assessing the refurbishment and restoration programme we have currently to ensure that it matches our current level of resources. We are also having to re-assess the overall size and variation of the fleet of buses we have to ensure that it is as fit for purpose and manageable as possible.



***Wishing all of our volunteers, friends and readers a very Happy Christmas and all the very best for 2025!***

***David Liston, Trust Chairman***

## Open Day 2024 ...

Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> August saw us hold our annual Open Day at Alford. The weather was kind to us with sunshine throughout the day, which contributed to a fantastic turnout.

Open Days do not just 'happen.' They are the culmination of hundreds of hours of demanding work by our volunteers to prepare the fleet and buildings, set up stalls, arrange catering, hold safety briefings, historical presentations on the day, and more. So, I would like to take the opportunity to formally thank every single person who gave their time and effort to make the event a success – Thank You. I would also like to thank our visiting bus contributors for supporting our Open Day. In particular, First Bus, Ian Forbes, Richard Huxman and Neale Elder and their respective teams who came many miles and provided a wonderful array of vehicles, alongside our own fleet of vehicles, for the public to explore and ride upon.



This year's Open Day was particularly poignant as it was our first one since the passing of the Trust's founder, Gordon Mills, MBE. To honour Gordon's memory, our team of volunteers worked extremely hard to complete the refurbishment of Gordon's treasured Daimler CVG6 – ACT160 so that it could be formally relaunched on our Open Day. To recommission ACT160, we were extremely pleased that both Gordon's daughters, Heather, and Helen, were able to attend to cut the ceremonial ribbons.

The event was extremely well attended by both young and old and everyone else in between! We had just over 1000 visitors throughout the day, including our invited guests, Sir Moir, and Lady Lockhead. In total, almost £1,500 was raised on the day which is a fantastic result for the Trust and a testament to the hard work and effort by all concerned. Work now begins on the preparations for our 2025 Open Day which will be sometime next summer. Watch this space for further updates.

**The Bus Collection at Alford is open again to visitors, please check our website for further visitor information:**  
<http://thebuscollectionatalford.co.uk/>

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## ***That Was a Weekend That Was ...***

Back in March 2024, the Trust received an invitation to participate in the Aberdeenshire Doors Open Days on 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024. We had never participated in this event before, so were quite concerned about what the level of public support for this event would be.

We received significant support from the Doors Open Days team, lead by Clare Tierney. This included posters, banners, visitor questionnaires, balloons and other supportive items. Additional folk volunteered to be guides and we agreed to participate in the event over the two days, along with the Alford Heritage Centre and the Alford Valley Railway.

Whilst we were concerned about the level of interest and the number of visitors we might see coming through the doors, we decided that this was an excellent opportunity to gain wider knowledge locally and further afield of the Bus Collection and transport history in both Aberdeen City & Shire.

Well, we were certainly surprised by the just under 500 visitors over the two days, given we were open from 1100 to 1600 on both days. We certainly managed to achieve wider knowledge of our collection, as well as public transport provision over the years from trams to modern day electric buses.

# DOORS OPEN DAYS 2024

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## ***Come and Join Us -***

Would any locally based reader care to become a volunteer Guide to show visitors around the Trust's collection at Alford?

The Trust's present volunteers are deeply engaged in vehicle restoration and other tasks, and it would be good to have a pool of dedicated Guides to show visitors around the collection and explain what the Trust is all about. The main working days would be in the summer season on Wednesdays and Saturdays between 10:00 and 16:00 but these times can be adjusted to suit.

If you like meeting people and have an interest in local history, this could be just the role for you. And we'll train you up to be at least one lesson ahead of a casual visitor. **If you want to know more, please get in touch by email - address shown below.**

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## ***Workshop Update -***

The following advances in the restoration of Trust vehicles can be recorded:

**ACT 11: Daimler CVD6** - Good progress has been made finishing saloon interior and cab fittings. The wheels and hubs have been removed from the front axle to allow the wheel bearings to be inspected. Both ACT 11 and ACT 14 have Daimler engines and both require sets of rear engine mounts which are proving difficult to source.

**ACT 14: Daimler CVD6, at SVBM Lathalmond** - The saloon has now been glazed with the wood trim fitted and painted. Ceiling vent grills have been fitted and a start has been made on cutting and laying the floor lino.

**ACT 26: AEC Swift, at GVVV Bridgeton** - The integrity of the main air system has been tested.

**ACT 160: Daimler CVG6** - 160 was launched as planned at the Open Day in August. Two minor fuel system faults have since been identified and corrected.

**GRT 209: Leyland Atlantean AN68** - Investigations have started into an engine fault.

**GRT 318: Leyland Atlantean AN68** - 318 has been transferred from First Group Heritage Trust to this Trust. It has a major engine fault, but the Trust's spare Leyland 680 engine has been refurbished and will be installed in 318.

**TRAMCAR 15** - Enquiries continue to source a pair of English Electric DB1 controllers.

**If you would like to sponsor the Trust's latest project, please get in touch by email: address shown below.**



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