



Chairmans Update ...

Sunday, 13th July saw us hold our annual Open Day at Alford. Once again, we were blessed with great weather which always helps to bring the public out to see our wonderful collection of vehicles as well as the numerous stalls and exhibits that we had on show. The value of the donations given to the Trust by our visitors was an all-time record, this despite the numbers of folk through the gates being lower than at last year's event.



Thanks go to Mark & Ollie for their help with photography.

Successful open days are all about prior planning and preparation and I'd like to take the opportunity to thank everybody who gave their time and effort to make our Open Day a success. In particular, thanks to First Bus and Stagecoach who supported the event by exhibiting vehicles, Grampian Transport Museum for allowing the use of their arena, and folk who brought visiting vehicles to add to the variety.

This year's Open Day was again marked with a special event. The Trustees agreed to permanently honour Gordon's memory by renaming the Bus Collection '**The Gordon Mills MBE Bus Collection at Alford**' and we were honoured that Gordon's daughters, Heather and Helen, were able to attend the renaming by unveiling our new banner.

Work now begins on the preparations for our 2026 open day so watch this space for further updates...

David Liston, Trust Chairman

Meanwhile back in the Workshop ...

ACT 11 Daimler CVD6 – The team have refurbished and fitted the rear corner panels and the cab offside panel. The side window has also been installed, and bottom half of front screen is in place with the top half of the screen to be fitted. Both front side lights are now in place. Costing still to be obtained for new wheel bearing sets and brake linings.



After much discussion with the engine overhaul contractor, AGRA of Dundee, the firm have confirmed that they will not be able to complete the work, this despite the significant sum already expended with the firm. The team are now in the process of arranging recovery of the engine back to Alford where the task will be completed.

GRT 209 Leyland Atlantean AN68 – The engine fault that had seen the bus out of service for a few years has been rectified. The fault was traced to cracks in the cylinder heads which are a Leyland design weakness with this type of engine. A new fault has since been found with an air valve which was due to perished seals. Despite having several kits in the store at Alford, none were the right ones, and the team is now in the process of contacting potential suppliers for a full kit.

ACT 14 Daimler CVD6 (Housed at SVBM, Lathalmond) – One of our volunteers attended an upholstery course and has now produced all the seat cushions for bus 14 in Ambla imitation leather. The badly scuffed leather seat backs obtained from a donor bus have been miraculously restored to good condition and have now been fitted to the seat frames.

GRT 74 Leyland National 10351/2R – The rear exit door valve has failed due to seals inside the valve being perished. There are spare parts in our facility at Whitecairns which will allow this fault to be repaired in house.

If you would like to sponsor one of the Trust's projects, please get in touch by email at the address shown overleaf.

Balmoral Family Event ...

The Trust attends various events in the area where the presence of a historic bus would be appreciated. For a number of years this Trust and the First Group Heritage Trust have been invited to bring representatives from our respective collections to Balmoral Castle to add to the range of attractions offered to visitors. This year the two Trusts were invited to attend a Balmoral Family Event on the 26th July.



Photo courtesy of Joe Mackie

A grand spectacle of four buses was sent, these being in order of age: Albion ACT 79, Leyland Tiger PA 171, Leyland Leopard GRT 61, and Leyland National GRT 74. It was Leyland Tiger PA 171 that did all the work when the collection arrived, being used to offer trips around a three-mile circuit of the Balmoral Estate. The other vehicles remained on static display in front of the castle. The circular tour was very well used by visitors, the photo stop part way along the route offering impressive perspectives of the castle and its grounds. At the same spot there were also some photogenic highland cattle. The trip proved so popular that PA171 full seated loads were carried and the total passengers carried on the day was 247.

It was indeed a rare day for all participants, and the Trust also gained some new supporters.

Tramcar ACT 15 ...



A good few years ago a benefactor promised the proceeds from the sale of a house to fund the restoration of the Trust's tramcar to running condition. True to his word, the Trust has now received a six-figure sum to progress the project. A quest is now underway to find a suitable contractor to carry out the work.

The intention at this stage is to concentrate resources on restoring the car bodywork to an operational standard. The refurbishment of the running gear, traction motors, etc, will be undertaken as separate exercises as funds permit.

Aberdeenshire Doors Open Days – 20/21 September 2025 (1100 – 1600) ...

In case you missed the Open Day, the Trust will be participating in this year's Aberdeenshire Doors Open Day. During the weekend visitors will receive a guided tour around the collection and have the opportunity to view bus preservation work in progress.

There will be plenty of photo opportunities as visitors will be permitted access to many of the vehicles on display. Weather permitting there may be an external display of vehicles with the possible of experiencing a "wee hurl", an adventure for all ages to enjoy!



Izzatafact:

Over the years there have been various learned references to the importance of transport systems to society. Here is such a reference from earlier times:

"There are three things that make a nation great and prosperous –
a fertile soil, busy workshops, and easy conveyance of men and animals from place to place."

Lord Francis Bacon (1561 - 1626)



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