



NEWSLETTER

No. 15 Winter

2021

Chairman's Update ...

Hi everybody! The good news is we are all reasonably well and anxious to get back to the practicalities at Alford. Unfortunately, we have not had the green light to do so and must stay at home for a while yet.

Some commercial businesses are still at work and it is good to hear from the Daimler 14 group that there is progress on the CD6 engine being worked on in Leith. The engine for Daimler 11 is also in need of some new bearings and we may follow on with this job.

The engineers say they have people who are able to work on Leyland O.680 engines and therefore we may have a company that can recondition the four Atlantean engines we now need. It sounds a tall order financially but once done; all four vehicles can be available for use for many years. It is now twenty years since the Atlanteans plied the streets of Aberdeen and I for one am missing them!



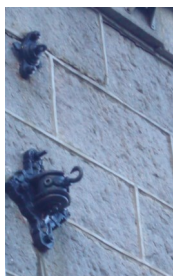
Our financial year ends on 31st August each year when we then have nine months to submit an annual report to OSCR (The Office of the Scottish Charity Register). Fortunately this is a job that can be done from home and our 2019/2020 report has now been submitted to OSCR.

Stay well ... Stay Safe!

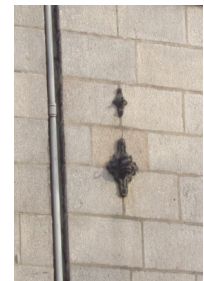
Gordon Mills, Trust Chairman

Power From Above ...

When Aberdeen Corporation's Woodside tram route was electrified in late 1899, power was transmitted through overhead "trolley" wires. Trolley wires were usually supported by "span" wires held some twenty feet above the tracks from either a tubular steel pole (a "traction pole") or from cast brackets ("wall rosettes") screwed into a suitable wall. Traction poles often survived tramway closure for street lighting but the last of Aberdeen's have now gone. If you know where to look, the cut outs in granite kerbstones show where they were once sited. However, there are still many wall rosettes in place in the city, and there are even some in Cults and Bankhead from the former Aberdeen Suburban Tramways that closed in 1927.



Tramway electrification did not happen with universal support. There were other overhead wires being used about the turn of the twentieth century, principally for the embryo telephone network. Concern had been expressed nationally about the risks from accidental contact between other wires and live tramway overhead, and tramways were obliged to erect "guard wires" in inner city areas. The guard wires were electrically earthed and were supported by the same traction poles as the trolley wire or by a much smaller version of the wall rosette fixed some 18" above the main rosette. By about 1905 it had been concluded that guard wires were not necessary, and they soon disappeared, but many of the small rosettes are still in place.



Tramway electrification using overhead wires was also opposed on aesthetic grounds, and in Aberdeen this resulted in two attempts to foster "surface contact" power supply. Surface contact involved a continuous series of contacts in the roadway between the rails, a contact being "live" when, and only when, a car with live power pick up equipment was above it. A trial installation was made on the tracks across the Links and, pending the results, electrification of Union Street was delayed. This is why Aberdeen tramways had, for about a year, three unconnected electric tram routes, each with its own depot. The Links installation was not successful and its American promoters, McElroy Grunow, were invited to leave town.

The Bus Collection at Alford is presently not open to visitors, please check our website for further visitor information: <http://thebuscollectionatalford.co.uk/>

AEC's Post Second World War Part 3 - One Person Operated AEC's ...

In the 1960s most major operators were moving away from crew (driver plus conductor) bus operation to one person operation (OPO). Aberdeen was no exception. There had been OPO. buses here since the early 1950s, but only in a small way. It was in 1966 that Aberdeen Corporation seriously started to replace their crew operations.

Prior to this, various OPO single deckers had been trialled, being of AEC, Daimler and Leyland manufacture. Aberdeen decided to use two types. Firstly Leyland, then AEC. The AEC's were to dominate the purchases between 1966 and 1972.



The first AEC's bought for OPO work exclusively, were 10, 43 seat two door Alexander W type bodied Swifts in 1968, No's. 15-24 (JRS 15-24F). Also, in 1968, 2, 45 seat single door Alexander Y type bodied Reliance's, No's. 13/14 (LRG13/14G) were taken into the fleet to upgrade the Tour fleet. Following on in 1969, 15 more 43 seat two door Alexander W type bodied Swifts, No's 25-39 (NRG 25-39H) were acquired. These were different from the first batch of Swifts, as they had a higher driving position. To accommodate this a Y type front was fitted instead of the fussier W type front.



In 1970 a further 45 seat single door Y type Reliance No.40 (PRG 40J) was bought for the Tour fleet.

The last batch of AEC's bought new were 12, 43 seat two door W type Alexander bodied Swifts, between 1971/72, No's 48-59 (SRS 48-59K), again fitted with a Y type front, but to a more modern style.

Also, in 1971, 4 AEC Reliance's with 41 seat two door Roe bodies were acquired second hand from Leeds City Transport, No's 44-47 (44-47 KUA). They were new to them in 1964. These were bought to help speed up the conversion to OPO.

The last Swifts were withdrawn in 1982, with the last Reliance departing a year later. Not many of the OPO AEC's were sold for further use, be it for service or otherwise, there being 17 in all. The rest going for scrap.



By the time the last AEC's were purchased, agreement had been reached to use double deckers for OPO in service. After that time, apart from 23 Leyland Nationals and 3 Ford Midi buses, double deckers were bought. When the council sold Grampian Regional Transport in 1986, there were only 11 single deckers, but 192 double deckers, 8 coaches and a minibus.

In all 143 AEC's were bought. Seven still survive. They are, Regent Vs 207/209, Reliance's 14/40 and Swift's 22/26/56. All now owned by Aberdeen & District Transport Preservation Trust.

(ADTPT Collection Photos)

Guest Writer - Peter McCutcheon

Workshop Update... We are starting to think of what most needs to be tackled when we get back to work. The first thing will be to assess the state of all our batteries; last year's lockdown caused three buses to suffer from failed batteries and we got away with buying four six-volt batteries. We left the rewiring of AEC Monocoach AC68 pretty much in the middle of the job and we will have to pick up the threads from there. Most of the saloon wiring has been replaced now, the original had frayed and worn away, it remains to refit the saloon lights and replace the cover plates that hide the wiring. The switch panel and the dashboard had a wooden (plywood) base, and these had delaminated and fallen apart. New stained and varnished pieces have been made and will shortly have to be fitted.

Much of the interior of Daimler CVD6,11 has been refurbished, but we still have to find some aluminium extrusion for the gangway finishing. The lighting has to be refitted but the pillar lights need frosted glass lenses, we have one as a pattern. Next in line is refurbishing the entrance door and the second-hand emergency door that has to be modified. The exterior will move forward soon as we propose to paint the roof from the front dome to the rear waist-rail. Re-panelling of the exterior will have to wait until we can obtain a suitable power guillotine; we have looked at two but not been successful yet. **Can anyone help?**



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