



Chairman's Update ...

The last month has been dominated by moves around the garage, trying to arrange for one or two pressing jobs to be completed in the workshop. Having two major jobs going on in the workshop simultaneously is difficult to handle. Both the major jobs have ground to a halt for various reasons and it will be useful to have a change of pace. We have removed AC68 to the garage where it should be possible to carry out one or two jobs at ground level. In the place of AC68, we now have New World First 2004 the Plaxton Pointer bodied Dennis Dart which has come back to fit new rear air bags, a job for the wheel lifts and chassis jacks. With many buses out of the garage, we took the opportunity to have a good clean up and positioned buses much better for access to battery compartments etc.

The wiring renewal has yet to be completed on AC68 so we isolated the power from the electrical control board and shorted out the starter to get her fired up, You have heard the expression "one step forward and two backwards", well this proved to be the case. We found that the AH470 engine is pressurising the cooling system, getting water in the oil and oil in the water! Full investigation has yet to be done but we will need to look at changing the cylinder head gaskets and checking the heads for cracks. It may also be possible that the cylinder liners on this "wet liner" type engine have become porous. I can see that the engine may have to come out and have a complete strip down.

It is not all bad news, we had a request from the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Trust for a visit to ourselves and GTM. This fitted in with our current "level 1" status of Covid restrictions and so a visit took place on Saturday 19th June. Splitting of the limited party into two groups kept us within guidelines and the visit all went very well. I enjoyed meeting up with old acquaintances from the group and it was a good chance to network and find out how others are doing. They were very interested to see progress on number 11 kindly donated by RVPT some years ago. It was good to have a "day off" from normal working day routines and re-start the events calendar.



Stay Safe ... Stay Well! Gordon Mills, Trust Chairman

Above – The beautifully restored Leyland Leopard/ Weymann dual purpose coach of RVPT

Lost Skills ...

February 2021 marked 90 years since the closure of Aberdeen Corporation's tramcar route to Torry. The city terminus was at the top of Bridge Street, cars going to Torry thus having to set off downhill. The technique of leaving the Bridge Street terminus with the brake on was passed on many years ago by the late Inspector Pat Oliphant who had worked on the route.

All Aberdeen's electric tramcars had at least two different brakes. At minimum there was a hand operated brake that applied cast iron brake blocks to the wheels, and an electric brake that used the tramcar's motors as generators, releasing the power generated through the car's starting resistances. On leaving the Bridge Street stop, notch 3 of the 5 notches of electric brake was first engaged on the power controller, then the hand-brake was released. The car then started to run away downhill towards the sharp left hand bend into Guild Street. An electric brake does not stop a tramcar but is very good at slowing things down; well short of the curve into Guild Street the electric brake started to bite and just as the corner was reached, speed had been gently reduced down to the speed limit for the curve. It is not now known whether this driving practice was officially sanctioned but it would certainly have reduced brake block wear!



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

IZZATAFACT: It was Aberdeen Corporation's policy from 1937 that its service buses have pre-select gearboxes. These (epicyclic) gearboxes, with a "fluid flywheel" in place of a friction clutch, made gear changing easier (and faster) for drivers, hence Aberdeen's long term loyalty to the Daimler and AEC marques. Leyland's alternative design in the early 1930s was a torque convertor transmission which was successful for a time but at the expense of heavy fuel consumption and the generation of much waste heat.

Possibly because of patent rights, it was 1953 before Leyland offered its own design of epicyclic gearbox, and it was used with a centrifugal clutch.

Aberdeen's Leyland Tiger Cubs – Pioneers of One-Man Operation - Continued

That same year (1966), the first 6 Tiger Cubs were taken into stock. For single decks, Alexander's principal customer offering, was their now commonplace "Y" type bodywork. It then generally came in two styles. If customers wanted a straight service bus, the "Y" type shell came in multi windowed configuration with short window bays incorporating top slider vented windows as well as some fixed glass. A front entrance/exit was fitted ; 30 foot long versions had seats for 45, while 36 footers accommodated 53.



If an operator specified dual purpose or coach type seating, the panoramic windowed design was the standard offering. Interior ventilation was provided by forced air blowers and opening skylights. Depending on length, seating was for either 41 or 49 and the front entrance/exit remained standard.

To meet their particular needs, Aberdeen Corporation decided in modern parlance, to "pick and mix" ! They selected the panoramic window style of the coach version in a 30 foot long shell, but specified service bus seats to obtain a seating capacity of 43. In a further radical departure from normal practice with the "Y" type body, the Corporation also wanted the fitment of a central exit door as used on its new Daimler Fleetlines. This layout as applied to one person operation, was intended to create a more natural passenger flow between those boarding and paying the driver, and those alighting which would ultimately offer commonality of layout for passengers on the city's buses. No other two door "Y" type bodies using the coach shell, were ever built by Alexanders.

The new Tiger Cubs were outshopped in a rather plain version of the livery used on the fleet's post war Daimler half cabs. The main body panels were painted cream, with only the roofs treated in green, and whilst beading was applied to panels, the resultant appearance was quite bland. Attractive Tiger Cub head Leyland badges were mounted on the front demister intakes, the front wheels carried Leyland's attractive aluminium nut protector plates with green inlays, and the rear hubs were fitted with matching alloy covers.

The overall appearance, enhanced by Alexander's reverse rake panoramic side window styling was sleek and neat. Aberdeen municipal crests, which could beneficially have been larger, were applied midships while large green fleet numbers were applied to front and rear panels. The cream lower panels looked clean and fresh when new but exposure to road dirt soon took its toll. By the early 1970s, green painted skirt panels were applied to the single deck livery on the Tiger Cubs and AEC Swifts which subsequently followed and this deeper colour helped to disguise road dirt.

Interiors were light and airy in appearance thanks to the large saloon windows. The stairwells and doors were originally picked out in red, while seat material used red borders to surround the pale grey seat back and squab inlays. In a 30-foot-long two door bus, accommodating seats for as many as 43 made the seat pitch quite tight added to which the buses were licensed to carry a further 20 standees. In time, the areas of red paintwork within the saloon became pale grey across all the Cubs, and Swifts.

In this body layout there was only space for two leaf entry and exit doors, and as the Tiger Cub's engine was under the floor, the step entrance and exit levels were quite high. The arrival in service of these buses just pre-dated a larger scale swing to the use of rear engined saloons in which, step levels could be slightly reduced. An initial batch of 10 of these arrived in Aberdeen only 2 years after the first Tiger Cubs had taken up duty.

In summer conditions passengers must have stewed as there were no opening side windows and while fresh air blowers were installed at the front, these only delivered what might be described as a mild breeze. Only the regular opening and closing of the doors, especially the centre exit, provided any worthwhile fresh air ingress into most of the saloon.

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