

THE
Bus
COLLECTION
AT ALFORD



NEWSLETTER

Autumn 12

September 2020

Chairman's Update ...

This has truly been a remarkable year for all the trouble the Covid 19 virus has brought us. Not only has the whole events and activities programme had to be cancelled but restoration work had to be halted during the national lockdown period.

We were just getting back to work and seeing some real progress for the first time this year when the Aberdeen "cluster" of infections crept up on us, and we had to stop work again. We nevertheless managed to keep up with Trust matters via the internet video meetings and are now back at work at Alford, hopefully for long term.

Work on behalf of the Grampian Transport Museum on their Bristol Lodekka was just about complete, we had a test booked and had just got the Tachograph calibrated. On the day of the test The DVSA (The testing agency) cancelled all testing and could not proceed. At this stage, we do not know if there will be any chance if the proposed bus use will take place.

One small light on the horizon has just emerged, we are planning to take GRT No.1 on a run around its former haunts in Aberdeen in order to take some good photographs with former First Aberdeen driver, and now journalist with Coach and Bus Week, Jonathan Welch.

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

Workshop Round-Up ...

We have been moving on with the restoration of the Daimler CVD6 single-decker 11 and the painstaking replacement of body-side woodwork is largely complete. Inside the covings and body sides have been covered with new red and cream "rexine" and the rear seat has been re-installed. Work is now well advanced with laying new linoleum flooring throughout the saloon. Outside the bus, the roof has been prepared for paint and work on the entrance step is moving along.

The brake hydraulic system has been refurbished by a contractor and all of the piping has to be replaced. We had to halt work on this so that we could continue with bodywork.

We felt that our second workshop bay should have a predominantly mechanical job allocated to it so that our mechanics could keep busy. We tried to extract 345 "The Last Atlantean" out of our store but, at the last minute a failed oil cooler on 121 causing a massive leak prevented getting it out. A quick change of plan was made and instead we took AC 68 the Ex-Alexanders AEC Monocoach up to Alford. Once in the workshop a relatively straightforward job brought the clutch back to working order and new slave and master cylinders have just been received for it. The other known issue on the bus was overheating and inadequacies of the cooling system. All of the cooling system hoses are to be changed and we have found that the heaters had all been by-passed. The two under seat heaters were very solid and both working so they are both being restored, and all heater system hoses replaced. After some effort, a very rusty demister unit was removed and that too will be refurbished shortly. Paintwork on the Monocoach is very shabby, we are hoping that a good clean up will make it more presentable for the time being. Meantime the mechanical units are to be serviced, the chassis greased, and the braking system checked over.



I am afraid that the lockdown has caused some of our batteries to reach the end of their days and we are in the process of renewing some of them. Buses awaiting restoration will have to wait for new batteries.

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

A.E.C. Pre Second World War ...

In this series of articles, we will look at the different chassis bought by Aberdeen Corporation Transport between 1920 and 1975.

The first that we look at is A.E.C.s, or to give it its full name, The Associated Equipment Company of England. The first to be bought was a Q type single deck chassis in 1935. This was unusual as the engine was located on the offside of the chassis between the front and rear axles. It was an ex demonstrator and numbered 21 registration number RG 5021 and had a locally built Walker body with 39 seats and a rear entrance. This was followed by another 10 with the same design no. 22-31 (RG 5622 -5631). The final two Qs came from the Rover Bus Company which was taken over by the Corporation in the same year being numbered 104/105 (RG 4539/40).



In the following year, the Corporation changed to the Regal chassis, which was front engined, again bodied by Walker but with 35 seats. These were 51-55 (RG 6851-6855). The first A.E.C. double decker was another ex-demonstrator, this time a front engined Regent chassis with a 56 seat Park Royal body. Numbered 107 (DHX 125), it was acquired in early 1936.



They must have liked the Regal chassis as by late 1937, early 1938 they bought 12 more with Walker bodies being 124-135 (RG 8124-8135). In the months before the outbreak of war another 10 single deck Regals with Walker bodies were



bought, but this time only with 34 seats no. 35/41-45/56-58/81 (ARG 35/41-45/56-58/81) and also 5 double deck Regents this time with Weymann 54 seat bodies no. 3/4/6-8 (RG 9803?4?6-8). With both the single and double decks of 1939, they used up some vacant fleet numbers.

During the war, a vast amount of buses were commandeered by various Military Departments from most bus operators, and Aberdeen was no exception. Of all the A.E.C.s bought pre-war, only Q's 104/5, Regals 124-129/131-135, 41-45/57 and Regents 107, 3/4/6-8 survived.

The last Q, 105 was withdrawn in 1948, the last of the Regals 131/134 in 1958 when the tram services were abandoned, and all the pre-war Regents were withdrawn in 1959. Interestingly the last two Regals lived on, complete, less some seats, as snow-ploughs until September 1964.

Guest Writer - Peter McCutcheon

Tramcar - Seat Update ...

As a result of the appeal in the "Press & Journal" in early July for information about any surviving tramcar seats, the Trust has now been told of four examples. These four are in addition to the example lodged with Grampian Transport Museum some years ago. Very generously, some of these seats have been donated to the Trust.

What has been found from examination of the five seats is that whilst at first glance they all appear to be the same, they differ in detail. The differences are not only in the steel framework but also in the profile of the wood for the seat slats. The questions now are, which one of these designs is appropriate for car 15, and might there be any more seats out there? The Trusts finest detectives are now on the case!!



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