

THE  
*Bus*  
COLLECTION  
AT ALFORD



# NEWSLETTER

No. 13 Autumn

2020

## ***Chairman's Update ...***

We are still here and working away on our restorations but, there is little chance to do anything else at the moment due to the current restrictions.

One of the things I am missing is the steady stream of visitors to our workshops, particularly in the summer months, to have a look at the buses and see what developments there are in the workshop. A chance to catch up with old friends, former drivers and others who have been following our fortunes is always welcome. You never know what you are going to learn about bus operations in Aberdeen in the past, a spot of reminiscence is good for the soul and sometimes gives a break from the task we are grappling at the time. I would just like to say we miss you!

Our trip in the Aberdeen Mercedes bendy bus was bedevilled by a recurrence of the fuel blockage problem we thought we had defeated. Despite that we managed to get a number of photo opportunities around the town and the article by Jonathan Welch should appear shortly in Bus and Coach Week. I didn't realise at the time that there would be more Mercedes Benz bendy buses plying the streets of Aberdeen shortly.

We will continue to work away at Alford for as long as the pandemic allows and my message to our followers is – ***Keep safe, keep well and look forward to better times!***

***Gordon Mills, Trust Chairman***

## ***Workshop Round-Up ...***

Our two main projects are continuing to make good progress.

The single-deck Daimler 11 is moving along nicely with work being done on the bodywork both frame-wise and interior. We now have received timber for most of the remaining framework and this is being fitted. The framing above the canopy is complete and the next job will be to replace the panelling underneath the canopy. We have a rebuilt front nearside wing and the front offside outer wing complete and ready for fitting. The inner offside front wing which really forms most of the cab floor is ready for final completion of many of the brackets that attach it to the cab front, and side framing as well as the removable floor panels under the driver's seat. Getting all these parts to fit neatly will be a complex job coming up shortly.



Externally, the wooden framework is all fitted, and work is just complete preparing the roof for a coat of paint. New front ventilators are to be fabricated and we have to find a replacement sunroof/ventilator, these can be fitted after painting. The gaping hole in the rear nearside corner has been repaired, this area forms part of the rear dome.

Our "other" project the Bluebird AEC Monocoach has been the source of much consternation. There were two areas of burnt out wiring in the cab however, as we looked into these, we found that most of the body wiring needed replacement. Dating from 1955 the best wiring available comprised mainly of twin core cable with rubber insulation and an outer lacquered, cloth coat. At most of the points where the cable passes through body sections it has become severed and where the cable connects to lights etc the rubber has perished and is falling off. Amazingly, most of it worked!

We are working through the circuits to replace the cables with modern twin core. We have also decided to renew the rear light loom with a sealed conduit running along the chassis. Some of this originally was run along the back of the offside luggage rack and disappeared into the space between the inner and outer rear domes – impossible to replace easily!

**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.s Post Second World War Part 1 ...

After the Second World War the transport infrastructure in Britain was in an extremely poor state. The Government of the time decided to nationalize the majority of the transport systems, creating the like of British Railways, British Road Services for lorries, British Inland Waterways for canals and taking over the largest bus companies. In Scotland this would eventually become the Scottish Bus Group. This left, on the bus side, the smaller independent operators plus the four municipal operators, Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow.

All the bus companies wanted to modernise and expand their fleets, Aberdeen being no exception. The Corporation decided to have two different types of chassis for its bus fleet, these being A.E.C. and Daimler.



There were two different types of A.E.C. chassis delivered, both being the Regent III chassis, one was the "RT" type the other the "Provincial" type. The "RT" was the chassis that was being supplied to London Transport, who eventually ended up buying over 4800 of the type. The most noticeable difference with the "Provincial" was the higher driving eyeline and also the radiator was higher on the "Provincial". The first to arrive in December 1946 were six "RT" types No. 17-22 (BRS 517-522). The next deliveries were four more "RT" types, No. 23-26 (BRS 523-526) during March 1947. In June 1947 five "Provincial" types arrived being 27-31 (BRS 527-531). All the buses had 56 seat Weymann bodies. 27-

31 were different from the other deliveries at the time as they had half drop side windows, non-standard for Aberdeen. These were soon replaced by the usual sliding windows.



The last Regent III's to arrive were ten "Provincial" types, again with Weymann 56 seat bodies, but to Aberdeen standard design, they were No. 16,46,47,49,51-55,85 (DRG 416,446,447,449,451-455,485), using up vacant fleet numbers. They arrived during June 1949.

All these buses were withdrawn either in 1966 or 67, to be replaced by rear engine double deckers or one man operated single deckers, (they would now be referred to as one person operated buses), but that's another story for future articles.

( ADPT Collection Photos)

Guest Writer - Peter McCutcheon

## Waiting for one ... three turn up ...

Less ubiquitous than the vehicles used, but still unique to a city's public transport system, were items of transport related street furniture. One such item was waiting shelters for passengers.

In the early days of Aberdeen Corporation's electric tramways, shelters were provided at selected terminal points on the network, the shelters being the saloons of recently displaced horse tramcars. Such recycling was not unusual elsewhere in the country, but when these relics in Aberdeen were withdrawn their replacements were to a unique local design. The Corporation's "rustic" shelters were quite substantial wooden affairs and from research by Mike Mitchell there were eventually 14 of them, the first appearing in 1912, the last in 1936.



Hazlehead

Two of the original shelters now survive, one at the former Hazlehead tram terminus, the other at Footdee at what used to be the bus terminus. However, there is another survivor but in miniature. It is part of the supporting scenery on the model tramway layout inherited by First Group Heritage Trust from Aberdeen Corporation and it is occasionally on display at the Collection Centre, Alford.



Footdee Shelter




Model Tramway Shelter

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