



# Newsletter

ISSUE NINE

WINTER 2019-20

## *Chairman's Update ...*

It is this time of year, when we are making our return to The Scottish Charities Regulator, that we reflect on the last season and what we have achieved with restoration and repairs. It was a busy year for events, and we have set out on major projects in the workshops.

The events season was dominated by the display at Castlegate and the Open Day at Alford which, thankfully was dry again and both these were a big success with numbers up from last time.

We were asked to do three days at Balmoral during 2019, carrying visitors from the gate to the visitor centre, these days are thoroughly enjoyable and help to keep the wheels turning, all were completed without any problems. We were helped this year by Graham Davidson who is one of the rare breed of "crash gearbox" drivers and is now familiar with PA171.

The "Blast from the past" event at Thainstone Mart was attended by Leyland National 74 and received much attention being the only bus there. This show is well attended with a tremendous atmosphere and well worth a visit. The BA Stores Open Weekend and ploughing competition was plagued by rain however, taking a bus to these venues always provides a dry zone where the public can come out of the wet and see what we get up to, 131 was our entrant this year.

The workshops have been very busy with Daimler CVD6 number 11 in for full restoration and much progress has already been achieved. Daimler 14 similar to 11 but with some of its original Walker bodywork has gone to Lathalmond where it also is undergoing a full restoration into its "as delivered" layout. We are very pleased to make this possible and grateful for the enthusiasm the group have for the project.

On similar lines we now have a team of experienced tramway restorers helping to plan and arrange the restoration of Car 15 our 1901 electric tram.

We put Leyland Olympian 131 and Mercedes Bendy-bus No.1 up for PCV MoT earlier in the year; and to get FirstGroup Heritage Trust Daimler through MoT, we renewed both front springs and shock absorbers.

*Gordon Mills, Trust Chairman*

## *Fae Dee to Don and Back Again ...*

Some 21 years ago, Dr Mike Mitchell prepared "Fae Dee to Don and Back Again" for First Aberdeen. The book is an account of Aberdeen's public transport services run by the Corporation and its successors, copies can still be purchased at £15.00 each—contact us via our website, address shown below.



Since then, Dr Mitchell has continued his researches into Aberdeen and the North East's local public transport history and in the past few years he has had articles on Aberdeen's tramway history published in "Tramway Review" magazine. In issue 254 of June 2018, to mark 60 years since closure of the city's tramways, an account is given of the major changes in the Corporation's thinking about its tramways which saw new cars ordered in 1946 yet tramway abandonment was started in 1951. The most recent issue of the magazine, 259 of September 2019, records extensive interviews with the late Norman Sinclair who was employed in ACT workshops from 1934 to 1982. A future issue will feature the late Pat (Peter) Oliphant who was an ACT tram conductor, motorman and inspector between 1922 and 1956.

**The Collection Centre at Alford is open to visitors at the Grampian Transport Museum at certain times, with Trust personnel available to explain the significance of the items on view.**

**Please see website for further information: <http://thebuscollectionatalford.co.uk/>**

## ***“Future Projects” ...***

The Trust has collected a number of buses that represent the history of transport in our area for future restoration in order to become part of the collection. Amongst these is a Daimler Fleetline CRG6LX delivered new to Aberdeen Corporation Transport in 1971 as number 124, PRG124J. It was an 18'6" wheelbase bus 33' long and at that time the longest double-decker type in the fleet and one of a batch of 20.

Features of the Fleetlines in this batch were the 150bhp Gardner 6LX engine, power steering and air assisted handbrake. The Alexander bodywork featured rounded front and rear domes a centre exit and central staircase. This batch of Fleetlines was considered sluggish due to their lower power (than contemporary Atlanteans) and additional seats. They were normally used on the Bridges routes where they would not do much hill climbing.

The bus was sold by Aberdeen City Transport in 1982, a relatively short life, to Moffat and Williamson of Gauldry Fife. They removed the exit door and replaced it with inward-facing seats on the lower saloon. Two buses from the batch were sold to Ford of Althorne, Essex in 1984 and they also bought a further scrap bus from the same batch (with the exit door still intact). Eighteen years later, 124 was acquired by the Trust for preservation. The bus came out of service back to Aberdeen under its own power.



Restoration of the bus will involve repainting, rebuilding the exit door area and much more detail work. We were able to strip parts from the scrap bus at Fords' and have also been given redundant parts by First Aberdeen when the new depot was being built. This should lead to a fairly quick project when the time comes!

We do not have plans to schedule the work on 124 just at present however, if you have skills to help or know someone who does then we shall be very interested to learn more. Come and have a look at the bus on one of our working days if you like (usually Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday).

**Contact Gordon Mills on 07889 159822.**



## ***Tramcar 15 — Andy Steel (1946 — 2019) ...***

Over the last year, the Tramcar 15 Project Group has benefitted greatly from the input of Andy Steel. He was a career railway engineer, sometime General Manager of West Midlands Metro, a technical expert who facilitated the opening of the new Edinburgh Tram line, and someone who has shared his time and expertise with other tramway restoration groups.

Andy had visited Alford and the store on a number of occasions, most recently at the start of October when an inventory of parts was prepared of the truck obtained for 15. Tragically and unexpectedly, Andy died from a massive heart attack a few days later. Our sympathies are with his wife Jill, his family, and his many friends.

### ***“STOP PRESS”***

***This year's Open Day will take place on Sunday, 28th June 2020, from 1100 to 1600 hours in the grounds of the Grampian Transport Museum, Montgarrie Road, Alford, AB33 8AE.***

***Come and join in the fun, bus rides, display stands, food and refreshment and .....***

***IT'S FREE ENTRY!***



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