



Newsletter

ISSUE TEN

SPRING 2020

Chairman's Update ...

Well it seemed like all was going well planning and arranging an Open Day on June 28th and organising a trip to the Shetland Classic Car show with our AEC Swift 22. We also had plans for more local events, rallies and possibly the return of "Speedfest" at Alford. Then, within the space of three weeks, we had our world turned around by the pandemic! We thought at first it would be possible to keep our work on restoration going at our Alford workshops but these hopes melted away as the seriousness of the situation came clear and for the last few weeks we have been locked down at our homes. The speed of developments has meant that there was little time to try and organise taking tools and equipment to our homes and getting on with some practical "Homework". Who knows when we are likely to return to some sort of normality?



Due to the ongoing situation, we have decided to postpone the Open Day to later in the season but putting a date on this would be entirely speculative at this time. Further information will be provided in due course via our website.

There have still been developments since our last News-letter in workshop progress and I thought you may be interested to learn of these here. One innovation caused by the current crisis is the use of "Zoom" to hold an on-line video trustees meeting. Difficult at first but once you get going, not too bad as long as you don't try a lot of the possible functions of the system.

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

Are you sitting comfortably? (1)

Aberdeen Daimlers 11 and 14 came to us from another group having sat in the open air for twenty years.

Bus 11 had been hailed by bricks and stones and had not any glass remaining and 14 had had most of its mechanical units stripped and left inside the saloon. The seats for both buses were in a heap in the saloon of 14. These were of different types and we piled them up in our store being a little uncertain, at the time, which was which. The restoration of both the buses started in late 2018 and we have become more interested in the seats over the last year.



Bus 11, having been re-bodied in 1958 by Alexanders with a coach body, we were pretty certain what we were looking for, that is coach type seats with two separated head rests. The remnants of a severely rotted rear seat helped us there. There was a baker's tray with the seats containing a pile of hardwood sticks and one or two pieces of plywood. In a spare moment, I went through these and realised that someone had been here before and had stripped a seat back out of 11. They had taken it back to all its parts and started to manufacture replica pieces of timber.

I managed to put back together the seat they had stripped, and this gave a very good idea of how to make new units. The parts they had made will be very useful, It is surprising that the construction is entirely timber except for an aluminium sheet clad piece of timber that runs along the front of the seat and braces the two sides, the cast aluminium leg that goes on the gangway side and a smaller steel leg that sits on the bodyside seat rail. Unfortunately, we will require to make new plywood sections for most of the seats and possibly more hardwood braces. I believe that the seats we had in 11 were predecessors to the standard Alexander "Y" type seat that we all know in the bus industry. As for the moquette panel on the front of the seat back and the cushions, it will be hard sourcing similar material but there are "Heritage" patterns available of a similar colour. I just hope we don't have to buy half a mile!



The Bus Collection at Alford is presently closed to visitors and will reopen once the Scottish Government has indicated it is safe to do so. You can view our vehicles and information on our website: <http://thebuscollectionatalford.co.uk/>

Are you sitting comfortably? (2)



Daimler 14 was substantially rebuilt by Aberdeen Corporation firstly to front entrance and later on with coach or dual-purpose type seating. The 14-restoration group are restoring the bus to its original state and at first did not think that the seats would be appropriate for future use. In sorting out the seats for 11, it became apparent that the seats that had been fitted to 14 were totally different to those on 11 although they were trimmed in the same moquette.

These seats were based on an oval tube frame with plywood seat backs fitted again with hardwood frames, this time without individual head rests. At this stage we are not sure if these seats can be of any use in the restoration. They are slightly narrower than those on 11 and could be converted into bus type seats with an extended top rail and bespoke seat back to a pattern that complies with any photographic evidence that can be found.



The current state of isolation has prevented any further work on the seats from 14. There is one mystery that perhaps there is an explanation to, amongst all the seats for the two buses there was one seat pair that was totally different to all the others. These had a totally different red moquette and the cushion was sprung like an early armchair rather than using foam rubber or plastic. The cushion was trimmed with flutes from front to back of the seat. Looking through the PSV Circle fleet history it is noted that 14 was up seated by two when it was in its latter days with MacLennons, did they find a pair of old seats from an even older bus to improve the capacity?

Are you sitting comfortably? (3)

The restoration work on bus 160 came to a grinding halt almost ten years ago when the search for seat frames for the saloon proved negative. It was decided to try and get some frames to pattern made and many bus industry contacts were used to identify someone who would be interested in doing this. In the meantime, we acquired bus 289 the body of which was produced within a year of the current body on 160. The downside of this was that 289 had been sold by Aberdeen Corporation without upper deck seats! Armed with a sample of the correct seat I tracked down a supplier who my research suggested could make the seat frames and possibly produce the leather upholstery and base boards also required. After several attempts to do a deal when it was even offered to have seats for both buses produced. I failed to get any interest in doing the work. Basically, the traditional bus seat manufacturers had either gone out of business or turned over to producing designs currently in use.

Many people said to me that they had a stock of old seats and I followed up on these and in fact, we have a few hundred seats in our own store. I quickly learned that there is no such thing as a standard seat frame. The unique features are:

- ◆ Inboard seat bolt position (gangway side)
- ◆ Outboard seat bolt position (side wall rail) These can be vertically bolted or horizontally fixed
- ◆ Height of the seat rail
- ◆ Angle of the seat back
- ◆ Top rail -Stainless, painted or plated.
- ◆ Top rail Single or double rail
- ◆ Top rail – Flat or curved
- ◆ Top corner grips on one side, both or none.



After all the research I could not find any second-hand seats on offer that came anywhere near the originals. In the last few years we have finished most of the mechanical restoration of the bus with the rear axle, brakes and springs renewed, there remains the painting of the bus and fitting of hand poles (dependent on the seats) to be carried out plus several minor fixes.

The final chapter of this story may now be edging closer! We were visited by a contractor carrying out work on a bus for the Scottish Vintage Bus Museum at Lathalmond who looked at the bodywork on PA171 The Ex Bluebird Leyland Tiger PS1 to help with their project. They have convinced me that our seating is a job they could do, and so they have taken a seat away and are in the process of making a sample. We are looking forward very much to an end to our dilemma as soon as possible.

Web: [HTTP://WWW.THEBUSCOLLECTIONATALFORD.CO.UK](http://www.thebuscollectionatalford.co.uk)



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This innocuous looking seat is what we have sought for so long.

