



# NEWSLETTER

No. 27

May 2023

## **Chairman's Update ... May 2023.**

The team at Alford are getting on well with installing the new seating in Aberdeen Corporation Daimlers 11 and 160, and a supplier of Aberdeen Corporation green paint is being identified in preparation for completion of the restoration of 160. Away from Alford, our contractor has made considerable progress with the refurbishment of the Daimler engine for ACT 11. It is also good to report that electric control items for tramcar 15 have been obtained.

We are also getting on with the arrangements for our Open Day (see panel on page 2 for further details). We are keen to build on our success of last year's event, where we had the highest number of visitors to our events (800), so fingers crossed that we get fine weather and lots of visitors ... remember it is free to enter!

Disappointingly, at the time of preparing this Newsletter, our chair, Gordon Mills, has been taken ill. He is now home following a spell in hospital, and will take some time off to recuperate. We very much hope that he will be well enough to come along and join us on the Open Day.

**The Editor**

## **It's an I'll Wind ...**

In the 1920s and 1930s there was much new public sector housing in the suburbs of Aberdeen and, inevitably, this impacted on the services provided by Aberdeen Corporation's tramcars and buses. New housing in the Powis, Hayton, Woodside, and Middlefield districts in the later 1930s saw the Corporation (i) extend the Woodside tram route to the then city boundary at Scatterburn and (ii) start short workings to Woodside Fountain, both changes taking place in July 1938. To give an indication of the level of passenger demand to this part of the city, in the mid-1940s there was a tram from the city centre to the Fountain every 90 seconds.



**Car 99 leaving Scatterburn at the site of the present day Haudagain traffic hotspot. Photo: Richard Wiseman**

However, the extension to Scatterburn did not get universal approval.

The earlier Aberdeen Suburban Tramways route to Bankhead from Woodside had been superseded in 1927 by a variety of private bus operators and all of these had gradually been absorbed by the railway backed Scottish Motor Traction bus company's local subsidiary, W Alexander. By coincidence, the suburban railway services to Dyce and Culter were withdrawn in 1937, Alexander providing alternative buses.

The rules of the day were that fares on the Scatterburn tramway extension were at Corporation levels and these were lower than Alexander's. Alexander protested to the Area Traffic Commissioner that the trams were abstracting passengers previously carried by their buses, and that the tram fares were so low that folk would make a saving by walking to/from Bucksburn and the Scatterburn. Alexander's protest was thrown out.

But all was not lost, either for Alexander or for passengers. Unlike Dundee and Glasgow Corporations, Aberdeen Corporation did allow Alexander to pick up and set down local passengers within the city boundary, but at a protective fare. As Alexander's stops within the city were less frequent than the Corporation's, passengers could enjoy a slightly faster ("limited stop") journey for their higher fare. This arrangement applied on Alexander's Culter – Aberdeen – Dyce route (known to bus crews as "The Track") until the 1970s.

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

## Bearing Up ... A Sequel!

In the June 2020 'Newsletter', there was an account of the start of work on the engine for the Trust's ex Aberdeen Corporation Daimler CVD6 single decker number 14. The main problem identified at the time was extensive chemical corrosion of two of the fourteen main bearing shells. As replacement shells are unobtainable the decision was taken to have the defective shells taken back to base metal then built up in white metal and machined to size. White metalling of bearings used to be a skill commonly available throughout the country, but it is now rare to find folk able to practice the skill reliably. By a quirk of fate it was later confirmed that these shells were a good fit when all the bearings had to be removed for examination following the discovery of another fault.

When the engine was first reassembled following the machining of the cylinder heads and the engine block, the engine was started, engine oil circulation being monitored. On initial startup oil pressure was "nae bad"/acceptable but soon collapsed to c5 psi - "nae eese"/unacceptable. Additionally, it was also observed that there was but a dribble of oil emitting from the rear cylinder head rockers and nothing from the front ones. The engine was returned from whence it came where it was found that:

- ◆ the internal oil feed to main bearing number seven was leaking badly due to a defective olive on the oil feed pipe. The oil feed to this main bearing is also the feed to the camshaft and then to the cylinder heads and their rockers.
- ◆ the oil feed to the rockers of the front cylinder head was being restricted by (i) the use of a non-waisted securing stud and (ii) from old, solidified oil within the rocker shaft oilways.

There were other problems in revitalising this engine, one other being mentioned here: clearing loose scale/corrosion from water galleries within the cylinder heads. Both heads were badly affected, and the scale was gradually reduced to an acceptably low level by a combination of applying air pressure, bottle brushing, vacuum extraction, and the use of an ersatz vibration table. The "vibration table" comprised a stout wooden bench. A cylinder head with its face down to the surface of the bench was lifted a few inches above it then dropped. Scale dislodged was then cleared and the process repeated until scale ceased to be produced.

The restoration of life to this engine has been a "gey tyauve"/struggle but it has now been test run in a free-standing state with oil pressure recorded as 35 psi. It is now ready to be reunited with the bus.



Pic of 14's engine set up to test run with "temporary radiator".

### IZZATAFACT:

Electric tramways played a significant part in the evolution of the UK's electrical supply industry, being a major consumer of electric power for most of the day. In 1905 and 1906, the tramways in Aberdeen consumed half the power sold by Aberdeen Corporation Electricity Department and remained the Electricity Department's biggest single customer for some time thereafter.



**The Bus Collection at Alford are holding an Open Day on  
SUNDAY 30TH JULY 2023 — 1100 TO 1600 HOURS**

**Events will take place in the grounds of the Grampian Transport Museum, Montgarrie Road, Alford  
AB33 8AE.**

**Activities include, Vintage Bus Rides around the track and Alford, Vehicle Displays, Stalls, Guided Tours  
around the event, Talks and much, much more! Watch our for further information at:**

**<http://thebuscollectionatalford.co.uk/>**

**Come and join us for a free fun day!**



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