



NEWSLETTER

No. 30

November 2023

Chairman's Update

The past weeks since our last Newsletter have been extremely busy, with a great deal of progress being made on our vehicles in the workshops as follows:

ACT 11 - The last of the reupholstered seating has now arrived and will soon be fitted now that the lining fabric has been applied to the rear dome. The seat reupholster, Union Upholstery of Larbert, applied the lining fabric on the 15th of November. Window glass has now been delivered and is in the process of being fitted to each of the windows on the bus. Finally, good progress is being made by the Trust's contractor (AGRA) in overhauling the Daimler CD6 engine for this vehicle.

ACT 14 - (at Scottish Vintage Bus Museum, Lathalmond). An electrical control panel for the saloon lighting has been produced and fitted. A similar panel for the chassis electrical systems is now being prepared. All fixed glazing for the saloon has now been installed on the bus and some fillets installed. Unlike ACT 11, the glazing for this bus is mounted in the body using an older, traditional, method which has the glass edged by a rubber channel and held in place in the bus body by wooden fillets screwed in place ("direct glazing").

ACT 160 – All the handrails on both the upper and lower decks have been installed. Mud flaps have been fitted to both the front and rear axles. The bus has been cleaned, inside and out, in preparation for it being repainted.

Of course, this is just an insight into some of the work undertaken, with vehicle cleaning, servicing and ad-hoc work taking place on an ongoing basis. Sincere thanks to all our volunteers who assist with this work. It was also very pleasing during this period to have a couple of visits from Gordon to let him see the progress being made, as well as providing some useful tips and guidance to us all.

The Editor

The Bona Fide Traveller ...

Many factors have seen this country's demand for travel by public transport decrease since the national peak in 1948/9. A minor factor in the decline has been the more recent changes to licencing laws that have rendered the "bona fide traveller" extinct.

Under licensing acts over many years the sale of strong drink on the Sabbath day was restricted. The bona fide traveller was one who could legally partake of alcoholic refreshment at a hostelry on a Sunday if the journey to the licenced premises was more than three miles from their normal abode. A journey taking in a hostelry was not intended to be for the sole purpose of visiting the hostelry, hence the term "bona fide traveller". The reality was that demand for travel was increased on Sundays by a certain strand of the population and all transport modes had to cope.

Given the limits of the Aberdeen city boundary, Aberdeen Corporation Transport could not directly satisfy the needs of the city's drinking class on Sundays, although the Corporation Transport's tours that went outside the city boundary could well have been of interest. Also of interest in its day could have been Aberdeen Suburban Tramways' services into the county but the expanding number of services by private bus operators definitely held attractions.

A stark example of this form of travel demand is the recollection by Roger Atkinson of a Sunday morning journey by a Sutherland bus from Aberdeen to Peterhead in 1947. Roger was then on national service and on detachment in Aberdeen. The bus was a double decker which left the Mealmarket Street stance for Peterhead very heavily loaded. At the Blairton Inn, Balmedie, a former coaching inn which is now the "Cock and Bull", there was a mass exodus. He was left as the only passenger.



*Three Ex Sutherland Double Deckers in Alexander Colours
Seen at the Mealmarket Street Stance in the mid 1950s.*

Photo Courtesy of Allan Condie.

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

Aberdeen Corporation Transport ... Buses with Chassis by Crossley of Manchester

Aberdeen Corporation Transport (ACT) had been buying single deck buses since 1920. During the 1920's double deck bus technology had improved significantly. By 1930 they had decided to acquire double decker's, and to that end they tried different demonstrators.

There were three different chassis types trialled, Crossley, Leyland and Thornycroft. Of the three, Crossley Condor GE 7974 with a Brush 52 seat body was first. It was new in January 1930 and was demonstrated to Glasgow Corporation, hence the Glasgow registration. It was bought in June 1930 after the trial and given the fleet number 81. Withdrawn in 1937, it was sold to Greigs of Inverness. Two other Crossley Condors, RG 1675/6 with Crossley 48 seat bodies were used by ACT, between November 1930 and March 1931, but were not bought and never received fleet numbers. These may have been loaned by Crossley whilst the first batch of buses were being built.

The first batch ACT received were 14 Crossley Condors with locally built 52 seat bodies by Walker. Unfortunately, they were found to be overweight, and the seating had to be reduced to 48 over a period. They were supplied between February and June 1931, numbered 85-90, 82/3, 91-96 RG 1790-1803. Withdrawn between 1937-1939 they were not used by any other operator and eventually scrapped.



At about the same time (1931) seven Crossley Arrow single decker's with 26 coach seat Cowieson bodies were bought for Tour work. Numbered 97-103 RG 2210-2216 they differed body wise from other single decker's by being front entrance rather than the usual rear entrance. On the outbreak of World War II they were downgraded to bus work and put on normal service duties. The first to be withdrawn was 97 RG 2210 in 1941 it went to the Ministry of Works and Building in London. The others were withdrawn between 1944-1946 and were sold to London and Suburban Commercial Vehicles Ltd London who exported them to the Netherlands by 1947.

All the above buses, both single and double had petrol engines.

The next batch of Crossleys bought were 8 more Condor double deckers with 44 seat Walker bodies, supplied between October and December 1933. These had Crossley diesel engines, the first batch supplied with that type of engine, numbered 9-16 RG 3671-3678. They lasted until 1946/47 and then sold to Thomson Dealer of Dundee. All bar No 16 were sold on to other operators, with one, No 10 lasting until 1956 as a Showman vehicle.



Crossleys fell out of favour after 1933 until 1950 when 10 Crossley SD42/7 single deck coaches with Brockhouse 29 seat bodies were bought to restart/upgrade the tour and coaching duties. Numbered 86-95 DRG 686-695, they had a short lifespan with ACT and were withdrawn between 1955 and 1956. All were sold to W.T. Bird Dealer, of Stratford-on-Avon who sold them on to other operators. One, No. 90 DRG 690 lasted until at least 1966 as a mobile shop in Bexleyheath.

Crossley Motors was purchased and incorporated within AEC in 1948, with Crossley chassis production ceasing in 1952.

Photographs are from the A & D T P T collection.

Thanks go to Peter McCutcheon who kindly provided this article.



Yes, we do require volunteers to help us keep our fleet in a good condition, assist with vehicle refurbishment, or a range of other tasks. If you think you could help, either in person or by making a donation, please contact us via:

thebuscollectionatalford@outlook.com

 https://twitter.com/buses_at_alford

 www.facebook.com/thebuscollectionatalford

 thebuscollectionatalford@outlook.com

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