



Chairman's Update ... That Was the Day That Was!

Once again, we were blessed with lovely weather for our Open Day, held on Sunday 30th July 2023. The event attracted our highest level of attendance ever, with over 1,000 visitors joining us on the day.

The team of volunteers had an extremely busy day, with positive comments and feedback for their efforts from our visitors, which included the Provost of Aberdeenshire and the Deputy Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire. It was also very pleasing to all involved that our Chair, Gordon Mills, who is recovering from a period of illness, was able to join us for most of the day; it was great to see you Gordon.



Thanks again to my fellow Trustees for the preparations for the day, and to the helpers and supporters who made it all happen across a range of differing roles. We are grateful to the exhibitors and to those who brought buses from as far as Edinburgh. And to Grampian Transport Museum for the use of the Bristol Lodekka, for the use of their arena which was smoothed out at the end of the proceedings by a live Steam Roller, and for their help with marshalling. We certainly have set ourselves a big challenge to repeat this success again in 2024 – come and join us!

The Editor

A Little Knowledge is

From the early 1950s Aberdeen Corporation Transport (ACT) engaged university students as relief conductors on their tramcar and bus services during the summer season. The students concerned were exposed to the full range of duties expected of any conductor and most seem to have survived if not thrived on the experience of dealing with the wide range of public who were public transport users at the time. One former student conductor recalled never having been so fit as a result of ascending and descending stairs all day.

On first being engaged, students would spend time learning the job during their Easter break, their turn on the duty rosters starting in earnest on the university's summer break. One former student recalls his own start with ACT in the Easter break of 1958. He and his fellow student trainees had to report at Mannofield depot which by that stage had been downgraded to become a store for spare buses and no longer had its own staff. ACT were within weeks of abandoning its tramway system and concentrating all bus operations at King Street. The instructor for the session did not arrive at the appointed hour and the bright young minds debated how they could fill the time. One of the group announced that his father was a bus driver and knowingly or otherwise had made known to him how to start a bus. The technique was then demonstrated with total success. The tranquillity of the depot was now broken with noise, a rising level of fumes, and a sense of panic when it was revealed that nothing had been learned as to how to stop an engine.



The teller of the tale had the wit to hurtle across the road to a bus stop and seek advice of the first ACT driver he came across. When that driver had finished laughing he demonstrated that an engine could be stopped by pulling back on the accelerator pedal. This gem of knowledge was brought back to the depot where it was shown to work. To the relief of the throng the training inspector had still not arrived and when he did appear nothing was said about the level of fumes.

After graduation, former student conductors entered careers in a wide range of professions. Indeed one such student later in his career returned as General Manager of one of ACT's successor companies. As for the hero of the hour in this Mannofield misadventure, he ultimately became a surgeon.

An ACT student conductor who is one of a number who are supporters of the Trust, caught on camera in 1969 by the late Bill Philip

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

A grand day out ... and a trophy as well!



Bus 74

And so it began, another early Sunday morning start. Having not driven buses for a living for many years, it seemed odd to be getting up early to go and drive a bus. But that was the schedule for the day, and so off to the 'depot' at Alford it was.

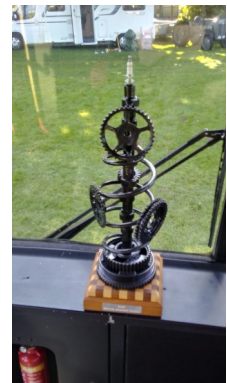
Today's steed was former Grampian Leyland National number 74, ready and waiting for me when I arrived. After the usual formalities, a quick familiarisation with the controls, a check that we had plenty of flyers and it was off to the classic vehicle show Oldmeldrum.

As it turned out, we were probably the biggest vehicle there, apart from one or two traction engines, and having been misdirected on the way in, we certainly made an entrance. Having parked up and set up, and consumed the obligatory cup of tea, it was quickly obvious that the bus was of interest to visitors old and young, especially as one of the few 'interactive' exhibits that people could actually get inside; the cynic in me wondered if we'd suddenly become even more popular should the black cloud hanging in the sky decide to deposit its contents on the show.

Having driven the Trust's AEC Swift to Stonehaven a few weeks before, I had to admit, I'd been surprised by the National; I'm not sure how exactly, but I was expecting a much more modern driving experience. Nonetheless, it drove well and didn't miss a beat. It wasn't unpleasant, and no doubt was a revelation to drivers in its day. On the cross-country run from Alford, the bus kept up with traffic as well as could be expected on rural A- and B-roads that it wasn't really designed for.

The Trust hadn't entered a bus into the Oldmeldrum Rally for a few years, so it was very pleasing when we were advised that 74 had been awarded first place in the Class 16, Special Interest Category, and winner of the B.H.P Special Interest Trophy. The judge in this section was very impressed with the quality and effort that had gone into the restoration of the Leyland National ... well done to all involved.

All in all, a good day out, even if I did manage to spend a small fortune on cups of tea, snacks, and a burger... As the weather draws in, I'm sure next season will be upon us very quickly and look forward to seeing the Trust's buses out and about again.



B.H.P Special Interest Trophy!

Thanks go to Jonathan Welch who kindly provided this article.



History in Motion ...

At the last Trust Open Day on 30th July 2023, the ever-popular model of Aberdeen tram 13 made:

- 420 circuits of its track,
- Reached a maximum speed of 8 feet/second,
- travelled an actual 2 miles.

Thanks to Neal Murray for providing these statistics, and working with the rest of the team in keeping these trams running, as well as improving the infrastructure they run on ... fantastic job guys!


Celebrating 40 Years of Grampian Transport Museum

To help celebrate the 40th birthday of Grampian Transport Museum at Alford, The Bus Collection and First Group Heritage Trust added to the display with the Albion and PA171, at the event held on 23rd July 2023. Also on display as part of the Alford Cavalcade was the museum's Bristol Lodekka double decker. In addition there were a number of vintage cars and steam engines.



 https://twitter.com/buses_at_alford

 www.facebook.com/thebuscollectionatalford

 thebuscollectionatalford@outlook.com

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