



## Chairman's Update

Welcome to Issue 38 of the Aberdeen and District Transport Preservation Trust Newsletter. I

I am delighted to report that we have now vacated our storage facility at Whitecairns and brought our fleet and maintenance activities together at our purpose-built facility in Alford. This vital work helps secure the Trust's long-term future. Centralising our activities in Alford will allow us to make better use of our limited resources, improve the management and maintenance of our cherished fleet, and reduce our costs.

The achievement was made possible by the outstanding efforts of George Mair and our dedicated team of volunteers, Willie Benzie, Doug Duthie, Donald Balance, Jamie Glendinning, Alex Macleod, Jason Grant, Graham Smith, Willie Thomson and Mark and Adam Neilson. Over many months, they spent hundreds of hours planning, organising, categorising, relocating where possible, and disposing of the vehicles, surplus parts, and equipment accumulated over the past 15 years. On behalf of the Trustees, our heartfelt thanks go to all those who made this milestone possible.

## Other News:

Preparations are well under way for our Open Day on Sunday, 5 July 2026. Building on the success of previous years, the event will offer the public a chance to get up close to our wonderful range of heritage vehicles. There will also be a variety of stalls and attractions, including rides around the museum test track and tours of Alford. We hope to see you there!

*David Liston, Trust Chairman*

## Workshop Update ...

Due to the focus on vacating Whitecairns, work on our various restoration projects has been limited this period. There have been quite a number of vehicle moves, the Leyland Tiger Cub (ACT 10), AEC Reliance (ACT 14), the little Mercedes Benz coach and tramcar 15 all moving out. Taking their place are Leyland Atlantean (GRT 345), Leyland Tiger coach (GRT 55), and First Group Heritage Trust's ex Hong Kong Dennis Dart, Bluebird School Bus and Scania low floor single deck.

**ACT 11** - With support from the Alford Men's Shed, the team restored the beading on both sides of the vehicle, including the rear swoop. A Men's Shed member, Richard Alkey, used his expertise in reshaping aluminium, heating it to the correct temperature to make it pliable, and carried out the work exceptionally well. The front brake shoes have been relined and fitted back in place. The brake drums have now been skimmed, so we should now be able to rebuild the brakes and hubs on the front axle and move on to the rear axle. However, the project has had a setback with the discovery of a failure of an old weld repair to the engine block.



**Bus 14 (Daimler) at SVBM, Lathalmond** The installation of the hydraulic and fuel pipe runs is near to complete. Now for the vacuum pipe runs! The fuel tank and vacuum tank have now been installed, and the radiator stone guard has been refurbished.

## Tramcar 15... an Update:



On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April the car was rolled out into the open thanks to volunteers and professionals, then lifted on to a low height trailer. Movement to Halt-whistle took place the following day where it was craned off onto the ground at Stanegate's yard. The day after, a telehandler was used to lift the top deck off, allowing the lower saloon to be drawn into Stanegate's workshop.

Stanegate have since carefully removed and stored surviving exterior panelling, more fully exposing the side pillars and ribbing. Structural timber has been tested for integrity and staff have been primed to look out for any original cable and wiring, and other hidden items.

## ***The Last Years of the Trams in Aberdeen (Part 2 of 2)***

The city's tramways were down to two routes in 1956, Hazlehead and the Bridges. The next to go was Hazlehead /Woodend (Kings Gate) to either Castle St or Sea Beach which was done in stages. The first section to go was Castle St – Beach in late September of 1956, followed by the private tram track from Woodend to Hazlehead in early October, and finally Castle St – Woodend in mid-November.

Then there was the “Suez Crisis” of November 1956, the worst disruption to the country's fuel oil supplies since WWII. To save fuel oil supplies, various tramways in the land deferred tramway abandonment, Aberdeen joining this club. Reopening of the Woodend section was thwarted by the prompt dismantling of the tramway overhead but the Castle St. - Beach section reopened in mid-December. Fate then played a hand in mid-March 1957 when a power feeder to the route failed, and it was back to buses. The Suez Canal was opened again in March 1957.



*The Last Car to Hazelhead Waits in Castle Street...*

Fifteen buses were bought in 1956, all Daimler CVG66s with Metro Cammell bodies seating 62. Ten trams were withdrawn, some retained as spares in Queens Cross Depot, a few broken up at King Street Depot. The closure of these routes passed with very little public interest.

Now to the final stage of the tram scrapping programme on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1958, when the last and busiest route was replaced by buses. That was the “Bridges” (Bridge of Dee – Bridge of Don), along with the two feeder bus routes, 12 Bridge of Don – Balgownie and 13 Bridge of Dee – Garthdee. These, and other bus route alterations, meant that forty buses were bought. Twenty-five of these in 1957, being twenty Daimler CVG66s with Metro Cammell 62 seat bodies and five A.E.C Regent Vs with Park Royal 66 seat bodies. To convert the “Bridges” in 1958, twenty A.E.C. Regent Vs came with 66 seat Metro Cammell bodies, bringing to one hundred the total number of buses bought to support the tram conversion programme and to augment the fleet. There were forty trams withdrawn in 1958, bringing that total to eighty-nine since the start of the programme. Between 1954 and 1958 there were also nineteen pre-war buses withdrawn, making a total of one hundred and eight buses and trams disposed of, a net loss of eight vehicles.

Despite various rescue attempts none of the trams withdrawn after World War II survive; trams that were left in 1958 were burned on the Private track at the Beach shortly after the last route was abandoned. There are two pre-World War I trams still in existence, both at collections in Alford Aberdeenshire. The horse car used on the Last Tram parade, and electric car 15 of 1901 which is now being restored to its late 1920s condition. Of the tram replacement era buses, two survive, 207/209, two of the Gardner engine A.E.C.s with Crossley bodies; both are in very poor condition.

These articles are only a very brief history of the last few years of the Tram in Aberdeen. There are many books, articles etc. on Aberdeen buses and trams, too numerous to mention here, but look out for “Fae Dee to Don and Back Again” published by First Aberdeen in 1998.

*Photo Courtesy of FGHT*

*Thanks again to Peter McCutcheon for producing this article.*

***The Gordon Mills MBE Bus Collection at Alford is holding an Open Day on  
SUNDAY, 5th July 2026 - 1100 TO 1600 HOURS.***

***Events will take place in the grounds of the GRAMPIAN TRANSPORT MUSEUM, Montgarrie  
Road, Alford AB33 8AE. Please enter via Gate 5 at the end of Watchmakers Lane.***

***If you would you like to help us, or become a member, please get in touch - see below for  
contact details.***

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



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