

FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION

Update 12

Monday 12th July 2010

Grant from the Rochester Bridge Trust

- Our application has resulted in the offer of 50% funding for the overhaul of GKE's Gardner engine. This recognition will further our aims considerably by helping to attract further funding from elsewhere, and we are very grateful.
- Negotiations will be opened shortly with a specialist Gardner company based near Canterbury.



New Contacts

- We have begun to think about eventual uses for the bus once it's restored. Moves have been made to contact those working in areas where our bus and its own history might help foster in Medway folk the sense of belonging to a rich past.
- An approach has been made to the University of Kent's Social Sciences faculty with a view to understanding their work on local history and the collection of memories.
- We have also recently joined the Chatham World Heritage Site partnership.

Pillars of Society

- On the practical side of things the quest for replacement body pillars has continued and we have made progress.
- Although their own West Brom 174 was rebuilt with new pillars, friends in the BCM Transport Group have offered to contact descendants of the Black Country metal forming companies of the 1930s to see if there is any chance of resurrecting the original patented method of construction.
- Joburg 589 trolleybus group are making slow progress but with a different method of construction than that used for the BCM bus. Both are welded up from folded sections (3 pieces for 174, 4 for 589), whereas the original was formed from a tube.
- We have now opened discussions with Avery Engineering in Maidstone, who have given us a budget price for the items. Brian Missons and Rob Murray will remove a pillar from GKE for Avery to use as a pattern for a prototype replacement pillar.

Film

- By the goodwill of Andrew Patching, Frank Wright's stepson, we are now in possession of some 8mm cine film which Frank took. Content is as yet unknown, but we are in contact with SE Film Archive at Brighton University who are able to reproduce the film contents in digital format and can retain such film for posterity.

Annual General Meeting

- The 2010 AGM was held at the Friends Meeting House in Rochester on 15th May. The meeting format of formal business, update on progress with GKE and a guest speaker on a related topic seemed to work. Around a third of the subscribing members were present.
- The accounts for 2009/10 showed that we had balances of £4532.01; the reduction from last year's figure of £11085.30 was due to the purchase of equipment from the Awards for All grant.
- Paul Kemsley has had a good response to the renewal request and the completion of Gift Aid forms. Membership is still gently increasing, with very few non-renewals.
- Separate Friends of Chatham Traction (FoCT) insurance would be set up.
- It was agreed that a vote of thanks should be extended to Nu-Venture Coaches and

Norman Kemp for their generosity in accommodating GKE 68; this had transformed the project.

- The Executive Committee and Postholders were elected as follows:
Trustees Richard Bourne, Chairman
 David Swan, Treasurer and Minutes Secretary
 Norman Kemp
 Bob Ratcliffe
 Phil Gates, Liaison with M&D and East Kent Bus Club
 Richard Ratcliffe, Corporate Fundraising
Postholders Geoffrey Foord, Financial Examiner
 Roland Graves, Restoration Adviser
 Mike Hodges, Archivist
 Paul Kemsley, Membership Secretary and Gift Aid nominee
- Geoff Abdey asked the meeting for help with setting up and manning the FoCT presence; there was scope to do more fundraising and publicity but more help was needed.
- Copies of the full minutes and accounts are available to Members on request.

Still Room for More Inside

- Nu-Venture's "Skipper" Titan will be attending the Friends of the East Kent Rally, part of the Kent Mining Festival, at the Fowlmead Country Park on Bank Holiday Monday, August 30th. FoCT members are invited along, especially if they are prepared to help erect and staff the marquee! Please contact David Swan.
- The Dockyard's Easter Steam and Transport Festival was attended successfully, with the new marquee to the fore! However we were not able to make the Vintage Vehicle event at Detling Showground. We also had a presence at the Chatham Model Railway Show in the Dockyard on 12th-13th June.

Exciting Times

- At last, some real physical work on GKE is in prospect and the project is being made known to a widening circle of people and organisations.
- We'll try to keep you informed as things progress. Meanwhile my thanks as ever for your continuing support.

All the best,



Richard Bourne
Chairman

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