

FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION

Update 15

Wednesday 23rd March 2011

Much Promise in the Spring!

2011 AGM

At 14.30 hours on Saturday 21st May in the Visitor Information Centre, 95 High Street, Rochester.

Hear from your Trustees, and enjoy a guest presentation from Mike Hodges!

Body-Building

We're currently considering two possibilities for speeding up the restoration of GKE 68. In December South East Coachworks of Faversham expressed interest in carrying out the work. More recently Roy Gould of New Romney emerged as an alternative. Clearly a commercial arrangement would be necessary in either case. There are other considerations too, and discussions continue to see how this might work. Be assured that we haven't forgotten our wish to keep the project local, involving anyone who wants to contribute, and a move away from the security and generosity of the present arrangements at Nu-Venture is by no means decided.

Funding

Changes to the rules and scope of Heritage Lottery Fund grants coupled the need for substantial funds to support a commercial restoration arrangement have led us to begin the process of applying for a HLF award. The application will need to be able to demonstrate a significant benefit to the community as a result of the project. We are pleased, therefore, to have had promising discussions with Dr Kate Bradley of the Social History department at the University of Kent.

Meanwhile, back at GKE...

Engine Away

GKE's engine was moved to Ray Harrison's premises at Chartham on 7th March. Thanks to Paul Baker for providing the transport, and to the guys at Nu-Venture for their assistance with loading the engine onto Paul's trailer. An initial assessment of the engine will follow, allowing agreement of the scope of work needed to put the engine into good enough shape for its intended usage. This work will be 50% funded by the grant from the Rochester Bridge Trust.

Pillars Fitted



Brian Missons and Rob Murray have now fitted four of the new body pillars – three on the near side, one on the off. This will have stabilised the structure of the lower deck. The next task is to lift the lower deck floor and establish the condition of the cross-members. These form the base of the body structure and, so far as can be seen at present, appear to be in reasonable condition.

The pillars have been bolted in position, allowing temporary removal if necessary to remove or replace cross-members or intermediate floor supports.

GKE Afloat

Through our links with the Medway Queen folk we attended the “Party on the Pier” at Gillingham on 12th March. The event was held on board the former Lightship LV21, which is becoming an Arts centre. We met some interesting people with the prospect of some useful support in the near future. Our thanks to John Kempton of MQPS and Päivi Seppälä of the LV21 Project for inviting us along.



Up Next

M&D 100

Detling Showground, 9th April. Our marquee will be located in the new building, featuring one or two special exhibits as well as an updated leaflet and display material. We should also have a new range of sales items. Full details of this big event are available from Richard Lewis at Arriva on 01622 697000, or at <http://www.arrivabus.co.uk/MD100/>.

Medway Festival of Steam and Transport

Historic Dockyard Chatham, 24-25th April. This has tended to be our flagship event and our marquee will be there again this year. We understand the Immense Singing and Dancing TITAN will rock up during the proceedings! Whether or not it's a Nu-Venture Titan remains to be seen.....

Meet other FoCT Folk

Helping on any of these three public days or just stopping by as a visitor is a chance to meet other Friends. Unless you've already done so please contact David if you're able to do a stint on the stand.

All the best,

Richard Bourne
Chairman

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The Friends of Chatham Traction was formed in March 2007 to restore, exhibit and operate as an educational resource the sole surviving Chatham Traction bus, GKE 68.

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