

Update 42

Special Edition

25 August 2017
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Chair

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Like the traditional bus story, nothing happens for a while, then several things come together. Four pages this time, as there are things to report, things to explain and things to request. So quite a bit to digest, but I hope it shows things are moving forward on all fronts.



GKE 68 – Testament to Youth

Since the last Update in mid-June at South East Coachworks' team of young Coachbuilders have taken up our job with a will and made some real progress. Junior Coachbuilder Bradley and Apprentice Owen, overseen by Senior Coachbuilder Tom, have fitted covings inside the roof and at the upper deck floor, window pans, internal side panels, the plywood screen at the rear of the upper deck, roof vents and the rear external panel including the number plate box. In addition a superb job has been made with the manufacture of a complete new stairs unit. The stairs are an example of where some soul-searching was needed to reach a "repair or replace" decision. However the extent of corrosion and damage to the stairs was significant and the lads rose to the challenge.

SEC have a policy of engaging youngsters on the strength of suitable projects on which they can develop a range of skills. The scope of work needed on GKE is enough to form the basis of Owen's training programme. The arrangement between SEC and ourselves benefits from low hourly rates acknowledging the future payback to SEC in terms of the acquired experience of the young Coachbuilders. Chris Gibbons is monitoring the work on our behalf and is very satisfied with progress.



We have committed a sizeable proportion of our available funds to the work at Faversham. This initial allocation is drawn from the refunded VAT paid on the work done at New Romney on the body structure. The refund was agreed with HMRC, with emphasis on the application of the refunded sum to further restoration work.

We're a CIO!

At the last AGM the membership agreed to transfer the Friends organisation to Charitable Incorporated Organisation status. After a considerable amount of work by Len Randall, we were advised on 21st August that our application to do so had been successful and we would be added to the Register of Charities as such. Our new Charity number is shown at the head of this Update. Special thanks are due to Len for his diligence in bringing this about, especially given his health problems throughout the exercise. An explanation of what this status means, and what we need to do now, is given on page 3.

The Quest for Funding

Back in June we submitted applications for grants to both the Rochester Bridge Trust and the City of Rochester Society. Both these locally-based organisations make grants to projects that meet criteria relating to local history and heritage.

The level of grants available from these organisations is modest compared to the HLF, but we are grateful that both are prepared to consider applications from FoCT. Decisions are based around the calendar of the respective committees, and we should hear the outcome of both applications during September. The CoRS application seeks funds for defined aspects of the bodywork restoration, whilst the RBT request is in support of work to overhaul chassis components.

Development Partners

In Update 41 we mentioned we were about to contact some specialist business development consultants who the London Transport Museum had suggested might be suitable to support our next HLF application, this time for Resilient Heritage funding. As a result we have engaged Development Partners, based in Oxfordshire and led by Judy Niner. DP have wide experience of setting up future development plans for many heritage organisations large and small, including the Brooklands and LT Museums, and the National Railway Museum.

DP's remit is to write for us an application to the HLF for funding to draw up a plan of work aimed at establishing the form of our future organisation. The Trustees will be supporting DP's Faye Clews with the drafting. Submission of the application is targeted for mid-September.

The scope of the work to be planned will cover the care and operation of GKE 68, making available our collection of relevant items of all kinds, the governance structure of FoCT, marketing the Medway Heritage Bus and ongoing funding. The resulting plan will define the content of a second bid to the Resilient Heritage Fund for further, increased, funding to implement the Plan. This two-stage process is encouraged by the HLF in their guidance.

40s Weekend at Chatham Dockyard

This year its on Saturday and Sunday 16th and 17th September. We'll be there again, with our marquee and replica bus stop; also with some further improved displays telling the story of Chatham Traction, the Friends and the Medway Heritage Bus.

We had great fun last year, meeting dozens of people with some sort of interest in the buses and signing up some of them. However, spreading the message for two days can be wearing, so we need more volunteers.

Just a couple of hours on one of the days can be very rewarding!

Contact Wendy if you'd like to join in – 07717 318110 wendymesher@blueyonder.co.uk



Heritage Slot

Not forgetting Chatham Traction's roots, a nice postcard shot at the foot of Canterbury Street in tram days.

There's an M&D timetable case on the lamp post, so around 1920 maybe?

The lamp standard also carries a sign promoting the Grand cinema, which used to stand on the corner of Skinner Street and Jeffery Street.

Beyond the tram, some of the houses on the left became the Pavilion dance hall. How solid and dependable the Bank looks.....



Change to a CIO

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation is a form of legal entity for non-profit organisations with powers similar to a limited company but without the need to register as a company as such at Companies House with all the bureaucracy that entails.

The new main benefits of being a CIO are that we now have a legal 'personality', so:

- We are able to conduct business in our own name
- We have limited liability so that our members and trustees would not have to contribute personally in the event of financial loss
- We can hold the charity's property – the vehicle[s], cash, our museum items, etc. – in the charity's name rather than through trustees and members in their own names as nominees.

These advantages are already available to limited companies; charities can be formed as companies, but then they must be registered with both Companies House and the Charity Commission. In contrast, a CIO only needs to register with the Charity Commission, using much the same procedures and documentation as we have in recent years since we formed the original charity in 2009.

In essence, as far as the members and supporters are concerned, our new Constitution that was endorsed at the 2017 AGM will allow us to operate just as we did before in effect but with some added checks and balances for the assurance of good operating practice.

CIO Implementation

The slightly tighter regime required of CIOs means we need to review, and record, our operational procedures for the day-to-day running the Friends. Whilst this may seem rather burdensome it's important, when charitable organisations receive public funding directly, via funding bodies and through tax concessions, that there is a basis against which they are held accountable.

Our new Constitution sets out the top-level requirements for the operation of the organisation, but some more detail is required to fully define how our various activities are conducted. The areas to be covered include the appointment of Officers, the conduct and recording of operational meetings and the maintenance of records. These procedures are currently still at draft stage but should be fully established in time to be presented to the membership at next year's AGM.

Legacies and Collections

Heritage movements everywhere are beginning to address the situation where those people who set up or supported the earliest preservation activities are starting to wonder how best to ensure their legacies, both financial and in the form of collections, might be passed on to further the cause which they helped to initiate.

Financial Legacies

Regular life time donations or a provision in their own wills are two clear ways individuals may benefit the cause. Without having detailed knowledge of the financial circumstances of our members, it's likely that there are some individuals who are without dependants and who may not have made any provision for events after their death. In this case we would encourage such folk to do so.

Collections

The Friends have yet to formalise a policy on this subject, but as with financial legacies the clearest advice is to define in a will what should happen to what might be a lifetime's collection. However we have been offered material by surviving relatives who simply heard that we might be interested and many fascinating small items such as photographs, long service certificates, documents, etc. have reached us this way.

Meanwhile we can still say that we are pleased to hear of any historical items of all kinds relating to Chatham Traction, its predecessor trams, or successor bus operation under M&D where it relates to

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Medway up to 1970. Our unwritten policy to date has been to note the existence and whereabouts of such items or collections, and take possession of them where the wish is to pass them on sooner rather than later. It remains our full intention to make all such items available as appropriate contributions to the historical record. What we need to do to achieve that is part of the Resilient Heritage exercise we have initiated.

One final point.

When considering making provision in wills it's important to properly identify the intended recipient by registered charity title and number. If this is not made clear executors might become confused as to the intended recipient in the absence of such information.

If anyone would like to discuss legacies further, please do get in touch.

To finish, a trip back to the 1930s.....



Leyland TD1 KR 8141 of 1931 swims along Luton Road after a deluge on its way to the Dockyard. It's probably at the foot of Albany Road. This must have been before drainage improvements reduced the effects of heavy rainfall on a road running along the bottom of the Luton valley. Or is that a burst pipe on the right.....?