

Update 44

The Power of Memories

30 April 2018
Richard Bourne
Chair

richard@thebournes.me.uk 01904 766375

I'd always hoped this whole thing would reach a point where the uphill slog eases and it gains a life of its own. It now seems to be happening.....



Return Ticket

Recently, lasting recollections of early bus spotting days coupled with a strong desire to see GKE 68 back on the road prompted a private donation of £40,000 to the restoration funds. Needless to say this very substantial boost will greatly help the task. Discussion with South East Coachworks has confirmed that the continuity of funding that it provides should mean a significantly shortened timescale for the work, easing the task of meeting the June 2019 date.

Cabbage Island

Fame for Luton! The Icon Theatre Company, based in the Brook Theatre (the old Town Hall, or the "Tahn Aw" as we called it...), are currently running a project focussing on Luton, its history and community. They are seeking input from former residents and locals with stories to tell. Our Wendy has been in touch and learnt that they had received many mentions of the buses and Luton Depot and are consequently keen to have them as part of the story. If you'd like to contribute contact their Project Manager Sam Fentiman-Hall on 01634 813179, email samicontheatre@outlook.com, or drop in to their next reminiscence session on Tuesday 8th May from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Brook Theatre.

The Funding Quest continues...

Still to come are the overhaul and re-installation of the chassis components (see below). And in due course there are further costs and contingencies for the bus to operate according to FoCT's vision and for the organisation to be sustainable. Based on an updated schedule of work on the mechanicals and a contingency sum identified through the Development Partners exercise we will arrive at an end project cost. Our recent major donation is a demonstration of confidence in achieving a successful product, and with a firm target we can make directed approaches to other possible sources.

A previously-prepared application to the Transport Trust (<http://www.transporttrust.com>) is under evaluation. The Trust awards relatively small amounts, which can be targeted at particular features. And it will expose the project to the TT's wide range of contacts.

Progress with the Unseen

With any vehicle the visual and physical appointments and styling of the bodywork are as nothing without the mechanical (and electrical) means to allow the thing to move, and some of GKE's vital elements are now receiving attention. The radiator is now with CPA at Grantham, who have expertise in repairing and restoring commercial and vintage radiators. The fuel tank and exhaust system have been set aside at Nu-Venture pending inspection to establish the work needed. Meanwhile Ian Marsh is identifying which clutch and gearbox components need to be replaced or obtained. The vacuum brake servos have been removed and are ready to be taken to a specialist overhauler.

The plan is to attend to chassis items individually whilst GKE is at Faversham. Then when access can be provided to the underside all the mechanical elements can be brought together in one operation. Ian Marsh is hoping we can organise somewhere comfortable for such work. As Ian says "Otherwise, Lo! - the engineering department get to work in a cold oily shed through the winter!" There speaks bitter experience.....

FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION

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The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Everyone currently on our address list will have by now received a communication seeking consent to continue our communication with you. This is in response to the GDPR, which is due to come into force on 25th May. A new Privacy Policy supports this. I should add that the process needs a positive response to allow us to continue sending you Updates and other notifications. We've had around 100 positive responses so far, but with some notable gaps... Before the GDPR comes into effect we will need to have reviewed our contact database and updated it with the responses received. It's likely that we will lose some people, but on the other hand we shall know that everyone who's responded positively is firmly behind us!

Resilient Heritage

The exercise being undertaken by Development Partners to produce an action plan for a sustainable Medway Heritage Bus is due reach a conclusion in mid-May. After an introductory meeting with all the Trustees last year, and a £10k Resilient Heritage fund award from the HLF in December, the exercise began at the end of January. The work has looked at FoCT's current capabilities, and the characteristics of Medway as the context in which we will operate. Some interesting ideas are emerging, with GKE and Chatham Traction as the focus, but also with the bus as a special setting for "non-bus" events. So whilst being conscious of the need to maintain enthusiast appeal we might add some flexibility to broaden the scope for revenue-earning. Mobile Village Hall anyone?

Looking Like a Bus Again

Those who visited SEC in February will have been impressed by the progress made. The re-appearance of external panelling really makes a difference, and styling details can evoke many a memory. The waist mouldings and the arc-shaped trim astern of the nearside front wheel compete with the ventilation slots in the front roof dome. However for me it'll be the twin mirrors on the lower deck front partition! A little way off yet, but such details are getting closer.



AGM

The 2018 Annual General Meeting, postponed by two weeks due to the weather, was duly held in the presence of 20 members and friends who had braved the slightly improved conditions. Due process was followed to formally accept reports of last year's activities, following which those present were "treated" to a rogues-gallery presentation intended to reveal in pictures many of the people who have individually helped us along over the last ten years.

Diary Date

Faversham Transport Weekend 12th-13th May.

Part-sponsored by South East Coachworks this is another opportunity to show progress with GKE 68 to a wider audience. As last year we'll be there on both days, stationed close by the bus inside SEC's workshop. Confidence amongst our wider audience that we do really mean to pursue our aims to fulfilment has been growing and we need to build on that whenever we can. We could do with one or two more people to help on the day. This basically means spreading the word by engaging people in conversation and promoting our project. If you are able to give us some of your time to do this on either day please contact Mike Hodges on 01227 772311 or email to michaelrhodges011@gmail.com.
