

# FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1174323

[www.chathamtraction.org.uk](http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk)

## Update 47 New Year Greetings

31 December 2018

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Chair

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I'm sorry we didn't get a Christmas message to you all this year. I hope you nevertheless managed to enjoy some peace and fellowship in these crazy times.



## Farewell to Bob

Over 200 people attended Bob Ratcliffe's funeral in Rochester Cathedral on 20<sup>th</sup> December. He really was "Mr Rochester", having been involved in just about everything that happened in the City he came to love. An Architect by profession, Bob had a special liking for mechanical things that moved, on land, sea or in the air, so helping to progress the restoration of a bus was a natural place for him to be. He was on the last Traction service back from Borstal in 1955 and had a miniature destination blind made in 1944 by his Father. Many memories, now no more.



## Speaking of which.....

Everybody has memories. Where we lived, where we've been, where we worked. Bob's would probably have filled several volumes, but we should all think about whether our families would like to know. So write some of it down, you don't have to be a great author! And do all those tiny black-and-white photos in an envelope at the back of the drawer have who it is, where, and when it was written on the back? If either the memories or the photos have anything remotely to do with Chatham Traction so much the better!

## Opportunities to help launch The Medway Heritage Bus

These opportunities are still available for enthusiastic individuals with experience in Marketing and Communications, Education and Finance. We'll be casting the net a bit more widely in the new year. (The December 7<sup>th</sup> cut-off date no longer applies.)

Details are available through the website [www.chathamtraction.org.uk](http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk) (click the bar at the top of the Home page), or from either Wendy or myself. Please spread the word amongst your friends and acquaintances.

## More on the Bus

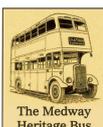
### Current status (late December):

Things are still moving on. Much of what happens isn't readily visible, let alone photogenic, but these pics show the new special window pans\* made by Brad at SEC for the upper deck front-most side windows, and the distinctive vent



grille panels above the lower deck windows (by B.A.C. at East Farleigh). The grilles seemed often to have been replaced by plain panels, probably after damage, our GKE had only one on the near side! All the panels are new, the old ones having been nibbled by metal moth.

\*The pans (not panes!) carry the special rubber mouldings which in turn hold the glass.



The Friends of Chatham Traction was formed in March 2007 to restore the sole surviving Chatham Traction bus, GKE 68, as an educational resource – the Medway Heritage Bus.



City of Rochester Society



The Rochester Bridge Trust

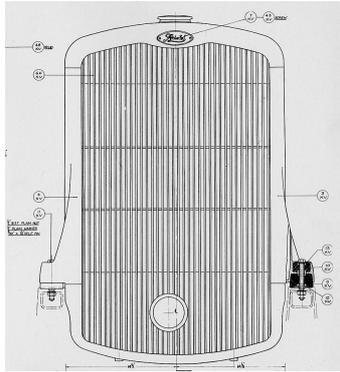


heritage lottery fund  
LOTTERY FUNDED

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Update 46 November 2018

## Radiator Mounts



Several components on the Bristol chassis have either rubber bushes or mounts to provide flexibility or reduce vibration. A typical example is the radiator, which is carried on rubber mounts supported by the front end of the chassis. Being a natural material rubber is prone to lose its properties over time and all such items need to be replaced. Panelling on the front and left side of the cab, and the bonnet top and side panels can't be finalised until the radiator is in position. This in turn requires the availability of new rubber mounts, which for a 1939 design are not readily available! However in this case NARTM came to the rescue. Their "Mart" facility, where items wanted or for sale are advertised, came up with an offer of some specially-made sets of mounts actually

intended for Leyland chassis, but suitable for a Bristol with some adjustments to the complementary metal components (bolts, washers and sleeves).

## Seats

Those that subscribed to the seat fund will, I hope, be pleased to hear that things are happening. Malcolm Spalding is leading an exercise to prepare and paint the metal frames. A frame wire-brushed by hand is to be compared with a sand-blasted version to see if the extra cost of the latter is justifiable. The metal cappings along the top of the seat backs have been removed and sent for chrome-plating. Lastly, we took the plunge before Christmas and placed an order for moquette. The pattern is a re-creation by Camira Fabrics of Mirfield, W Yorks, of the original 1930s pattern used by M&D and its subsidiaries at that time. Camira apply a minimum



quantity requirement to such "heritage" fabrics, which means our commitment is for several times the amount we actually need. However we have definite requirements from two other owners of contemporary M&D buses to buy a quantity from us, and there are a number of other potential users who may be swayed to commit once the material is available. As a fallback does anyone know of a small theatre or meeting room that needs its seats re-covered?!

## Paint

It shows how far we've come when we need to start talking about paint. We've had preliminary discussions with David Payne & Son, Coachbuilders and Painters of Aylesford, about our needs. Payne's Pete Rogers came to South East Coachworks in mid-December to talk with SEC and ourselves about sequencing, and who would paint what. It was agreed that SEC would paint the interior as they could carry this out area by area as the finishing work allowed, or required. An early priority is to paint the window pans to provide protection before installing the glazing. When the inside is complete and painted, the bus will be moved to Aylesford for Payne's to apply the livery.

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## Diary Dates

### AGM Reminder

2019 Annual General Meeting - Saturday 2nd March, Avenue Tennis, Featherby Road, Gillingham ME8 6AN. 14.00 start with a summary of the year and (we hope) a special appearance. Formal AGM at 15.15. Full details will be circulated in February.

### Don't Forget!

Gordon Mackley's talk on Chatham Traction and GKE 68 to the Model Bus Federation.  
**13.30, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at Maidstone Baptist Church, Knightrider Street.**

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