

Update 50

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Chair

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Half-Century

50 Updates over 12 years. I was still at work for the railway in York when the first one went out in May 2007, which now seems like a distant era.



Salute to the 40s – Chatham Dockyard

21/22 September

Our special location in the former Police Museum was much better for talking to interested visitors and displaying information and artefacts than having our gazebo on the Tennis Court as we have done previously. We're grateful to the Dockyard's Richard Holdsworth and Stephen Billington for facilitating this. Overall the level of interest we've had previously at this event was maintained and we made one or two promising new contacts amongst a steady flow. Notwithstanding our new banner, the bus stop and the pop-up, the large passing audience may have been more readily attracted by the scale model tank folks with whom we were co-located (some wonderful military models – I'd never come across a 2metre-long radio-controlled German Panzer before!). We should remember, though, that the Dockyard gave us use of the building without charge. The event doesn't have a purely transport theme, so our contribution was to show how the Traction supported the Dockyard and life generally throughout the 40s. Thanks to everyone who put in a shift receiving visitors and explaining what we were about. Also to those who helped to set up and clear away. (Special mention for Gordon Mackley for displaying his now full set of models – one of every type of bus the Traction ever ran!)

GKE - Things *are* moving....!

In parallel with the work on the body we're lining up all the chassis components ready for refitting when we can gain access to the underneath. This is moving along quite encouragingly:

Brake ribbons: Material analysed and identified by Inspiratec at Rugby; new lengths supplied by BSS of Sheffield. Attention now on how to re-fix the new ribbons to the end lugs.

Brake Shoes: Re-lined with asbestos-free material. New pivot bushes in manufacture.

Bell Housing cover: Pattern-maker John Hazlehurst has produced a pattern and a core from which a trial moulding in grp has been made. This is at Faversham, and will be offered up to the bus to identify any adjustments needed to the pattern before a metal casting is made.

Seat Frames: Blasting and powder-coating completed by Wytelyne in Chatham. The first-off was displayed at the Dockyard 40s event, and a very nice job it is. The frames will go into store (thanks Medway Queen!) until the bus is ready to receive them.

Transmission items: A new "Layrub" flexible coupling for the gearbox output and overhaul kits for the propeller shaft universal joints are to hand. These items were identified from original Bristol parts lists obtained by Ian Marsh many years ago, and were still available from automotive suppliers.

Horn: GKE has a Lucas Alto electric horn. A web search uncovered a guy in Wales known as Taff the Horns who must be the world's leading expert on such devices. His - er - unique website is a stream of information about horns, interspersed with stories of sidecar-racing and personal philosophy. Worth a look for the fun of it – www.taffthehorns.com. Our horn looks OK, and just needs some new fasteners, waxed paper seals and a bit of cosmetic attention.



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.

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Interior Decorating

If ever there's a step that makes a job look as if its getting near the end its applying paint. GKE's interior began to receive its final finishes in August. We had much debate about the actual shades, also about who should paint what. The latter question was relatively simple – SEC needed to paint various interior areas and items as they went along so that things could be assembled in sequence, whereas the outside application of livery would be a once-only all-over job when everything else was done. This is lined up to be undertaken in due course by Paynes at Aylesford. Establishing the shades of green and ginger-brown was the result of much pondering and agonising, complicated by the fact that only fragments of the original finishes exist on a few items. More subtle is that those small areas themselves were subject to variation, as 80 years ago colour definition and paint technology wasn't as advanced as it is now. Add in the modern-day variables of film, camera lenses and computer screens and it all gets difficult. We hope everyone's satisfied with the final outcome!

Interior painting of ceilings, stairs and platform is now largely complete, although there are still details to attend to and fit. Beadings and cappings have been removed for painting (green). In addition, linoleum (brown, of course...) is now laid. Here are some photos taken on 16th Oct. All panels still in grey will receive rexine covering in due course.



A Plea and a Wish

Situation Vacant: Our Treasurer Paul has indicated that he intends to stand down at the forthcoming AGM. If there's anyone with experience of accounting/book-keeping interested in taking over please contact me.

Take it Easy Chris... Just to say that our restoration expert and resident engineer Chris Gibbons is recovering from a heart attack and, obviously, needs to take things easy for a while.
