

Update 54

3 November 2020

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Chair

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Is that the end we can see.....??

Inching forward, but cash is the key.

Richard B.

Difficult times, but things have nevertheless moved on. The need to maintain distance between individuals, and to avoid “unnecessary” travel and crowded places has affected our ability to progress GKE’s restoration through personal visits. This is not to say such visits haven’t happened, but they’ve been made only after rather more weighing up of risk than before. Everyone involved is conscious of this, both our guys and SEC’s. Chris Gibbons, Malcolm Spalding and I all have reasons for being extra careful, but Chris has visited SEC and other suppliers from Bognor to Borough Green by arrangement, and Malcolm has made trips to our chosen upholsterers in Bristol. Paul Baker in true style has continued to fetch, carry and organise for us amongst his many other involvements. And Ian Marsh, with James Hodgson, has put in shifts on the mechanicals. I’ve not been down to Kent since the AGM on 7th March, neither have I been near a train over the same period. These situations combine to be a bit of a wrench having made frequent trips back to Kent since 2007, and previously having spent 40 years engineering trains. However the Committee’s familiarity with Zoom has gone from zero to comfortable!

The Appeal

- You will, I hope have received by now an individual posted-out letter containing details of a final appeal for funds to complete GKE 68’s restoration. The sum involved might seem out of reach but I hope the following describes how we planned to achieve it.
- Reviews of progress at Faversham in the early summer drew the conclusion that we could list the remaining work quite accurately, and so get a good handle on the cost to completion. We’d drawn up a funding plan earlier in the year which consisted of notional contributions from a number of sources, and the order in which we should pursue them. Such a plan guarantees nothing, of course, as it depends on expectations and chance as much as accurate estimates and convincing applications.
- Included in the plan were approaches to two charitable trusts, Swire and Garfield Weston. Swire’s heritage funding programme recalled the words of Chatham Dockyard’s Richard Holdsworth at the last AGM - regeneration through restoration, and safeguarding endangered skills. We applied, but were unsuccessful. Garfield Weston funding looks for significant amounts already having been raised, and a plan in place for the remainder. This one was successful, and an extra £10,000 will be coming our way shortly.
- We have one or two “irons in the fire” in relation to local donor organisations, but the other major component of the completion funding was an appeal, to supporters, to local interest and through social media. The appeal letter we’ve just sent out was the first step, and we’ll be working to extend the coverage.
- Just to clarify, the earlier Seat Appeal has been absorbed into the final push. However those that donated to this fund will still be recorded as having done so, which was a promise at the time. Anyone else wishing to direct a donation specifically at seats will be similarly acknowledged. Some other items are available for nominated sponsorship. See next item.



Restoration
Award



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

FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION

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GKE : Appealing subjects

There's a lot of work still in fettling smaller fittings, and sourcing replacements for a few missing items. Some tasks require the involvement of someone who has accumulated detail knowledge and a supply of bits. Others need new parts to be made. Some folk do this stuff as a hobby, others as a means of income. And lockdowns affect people in different ways. Currently we have GKE's vacuum gauge and speedometer away with a specialist instrument restorer in Cornwall, and shock absorbers in Croydon. A significant amount of work is with a chroming company in Borough Green. This all adds up to some very diverse activity, where it is often difficult to predict costs. Some specifics:

Needing refurbishment (especially, as required, new lamp holders and/or terminals):
Saloon lights, Bell pushes, Headlights, Switch and Fuse panel

For Chroming:

Drop-window frames and catch components, Saloon light bases, Emergency exit handles and levers, Destination blind handles, Cab windscreen frame

Items needed

One saloon light base and shade, two bell pushes, rear light, rear "STOP" and indicator panel, trafficators, Destination blinds

Sponsorship Opportunities –

Any of the items above could be the subject of directed sponsorship. Examples would be headlights (2@£250 ea), Drop-window frames (14@£500 ea). Contributions can also be ascribed to seats, as previously advised. **Please get in touch if you're interested.**

A Tale of Down Under

Ian Marsh and Paul Baker have both been progressing work on the chassis. One of the heavier operations was to re-install the gearbox. The 'box was taken out in 2010. GKE was at Nu-Venture at that time, and the gearbox was removed through the dismantled bodyside using N-V's portable engine hoist. It has since been cleaned and inspected, ready to be re-installed. Here it is back with the bus at SEC in August this year, together with reconditioned springs and a new clutch plate, all ready for re-fitting.

Paul Baker had transported these items down to Faversham, and left the gearbox on a trolley so that it could be moved under the bus, the front of which had been jacked up onto stands (which we bought in 2009 with our first HLF grant!).

Paul removed the front axle (like y'do....) using a special timber frame, allowing the gearbox on its trolley to be rolled under the bus. Lifting it into position at the rear of the engine involved removing some of the shiny new seat frames, assembling an engine hoist inside the lower saloon and carefully slinging the gearbox so that it "sat" at the right attitude to line up the bolts. All done successfully by Ian and James, with no damage to the nice new interior.



James Hodgson's blog describes several of the chassis-related jobs he and Ian Marsh have carried out. The style is James's own, and entertaining it is! It's also an excellent record of unseen but vital work.
<https://forum.retro-rides.org/thread/211037/1939-bristol-k5g-weymann-body>