

FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1174323

www.chathamtraction.org.uk

Update 62

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Richard Bourne

Chair

Constant change

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As work on the bus moves ever more into the detail so the profile of other things begins to evolve into something larger. Early moves into Medway Heritage Bus territory start to reveal the breadth of contacts we shall need to develop to exploit possibilities fully. There are other bodies and projects doing things in Medway and joining that network must be a priority.



Preparing for Service

The Medway Heritage Bus will need a lot of groundwork before it becomes established as a local community asset. A start's been made, however, after University of Kent's Darren Weir offered Wendy and me two possible routes towards making our first moves. An event at UoK Canterbury on 7th June introduced an initiative to widen their impact on community heritage activities through "impact acceleration". However this seems not be for us at present as there was no suitable candidate from UoK. The second is the setting up of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP). This would involve UoK, a Graduate and FoCT working to apply the Academics knowledge via the nominated graduate (who would thus gain experience) to the benefit of the "customer" organisation. Wendy's submitted a project outline for the MHB.

Seats!

On 1st August South West Upholstery delivered to us the seat backs and triple side seats, completing a superb job which I know will draw many admiring remarks when its eventually seen in the finished bus. SWU were very helpful, great to work with and we'd recommend them. They've posted some photos on their Facebook page and I've used one here. Big thanks to Andy, Abbie and all the guys down in Brizzle!

<https://swupholstery.co.uk>



The Paint Job - 2

The recent advent of no less than three "Tribute" buses has excited the bus-watching fraternity around Medway. The finest, surely, has been Nu-Venture's Chatham Traction liveried Enviro 400, causing much head-turning in the locality.

Previous discussions with prospective painters for GKE were with commercial organisations. However, we heard that the execution of Arriva's M&D tribute bus was led by Gillingham Painter James Dawkins. James is both a bus modeller and enthusiast, so and we invited him to Aylesford to see if he'd be interested in painting GKE. I think he'd have started work that afternoon if the timing had been right, but we discussed locations and sequences and methods of work leading to a conclusion that he'd be pleased to do the job at N-V's garage.

Meanwhile, as part of making GKE road-legal*, we need the "STOP" panel on the back of the bus to be both present and functional. The panel was glass, painted black on the back except for the characters forming both the "STOP" legend and the direction arrows. These have to be in translucent red and orange paint respectively. James's fellow painter at Gillingham is Phil Paine, who was a signwriter back in M&D days, and he's agreed to do the panel for us.



**Registered Historic vehicles, which includes GKE, do not need "MoT" testing provided they still conform to their original specification. Running lights, including the STOP panel, were part of GKE's batch of vehicles when built. As, incidentally, were "trafficators".....*

Meanwhile back at the depot

Since the previous Update in April, Ian and James have each had a well-earned break. Back at the bus, Ian has identified the nature of the niggling issues discovered on the engine, and is working his way through them. James has fitted and piped up the fuel tank, fettled the windscreen wiper motor and done a wonderful restoration job on the head and sidelights. A big step in early June was the first check on the engine starting gear. With a borrowed battery and no fuel in the tank the engine was cranked over for the first time, just to check that it did. And did it? Of course! See:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDblYJ35FWs>.



People

As mentioned previously, the FoCT committee was beginning to look a bit thin on the ground. However Gordon Mackley and Stuart Smith have started to attend our meetings to see if they could stand being there more in a more permanent capacity! Both are long-term FoCT members and have each chaired other charities.

With the arrival of two potential new Trustees the committee needs to review its collective capabilities once again, so that responsibilities for different aspects of the project might be allocated according to the skills available. This was last done as part of the Development Partners exercise of 2018 which produced our business plan. We are at present lacking in experience in education, community projects and communication and we need to be more proactive in seeking out these skills.

Just a Minute

During the course of each year the committee reviews its performance against the Charities Commission's Governance Code. We realised at the last meeting that we had not implemented a decision to make the minutes of our meetings available to members if they wish to see them. This is an invitation, then, for anyone wishing to see minutes of FoCT Committee meetings from now on to contact our Secretary Mike Hodges (details below).

Bookworm Corner

A couple of AGMs ago we were asked to circulate to members lists of donated books before disposing of them more widely. We've recently acquired the collection of deceased transport specialist Brodie Jackson. Mike is going to generate a list, which can be sent on request.

We'll Meet Again.....

...at the Dockyard's Salute to the 40s Weekend, Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th September. We've asked for the same pitch as last year, just inside the doorway to No.1 Smithery courtyard.

We're going to ring the changes a bit on what we display, but the intention as ever is to draw attention and attract more support.

If any FoCT members or supporters who are visiting this event care to drop by and perhaps spend half an hour talking to anyone who looks interested that would be great support for the regular volunteers.



FoCT Secretary

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