

FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1174323

www.chathamtraction.org.uk

Update 64

31 March 2024

Richard Bourne

Chair

The Next Phase

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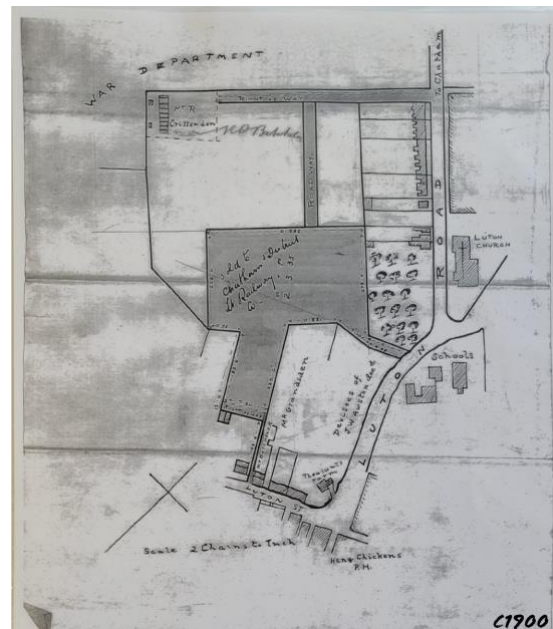
AGM Summary

A fair attendance, slightly down on recent years, but still a good proportion of members. We were able to report that the organisation was in good health, and that our bank balance is sufficient for remaining restoration work on GKE 68. This is now, we believe, fully itemised with routes to completion established for most items. The proportion of the total cost of restoration to date (£336k) that has been met by individuals' subscriptions and donations has risen to 60% (£197k).

The meeting accepted the Chairman's Report on behalf of the Committee, and the Financial report for 2003. It also appointed Stuart Smith and Gordon Mackley as Trustees and re-elected someone called Richard Bourne for a further 3 years.

Guest Contribution

Our invited AGM speaker this year was Lutonian and local historian Jim Patmore. Using some fascinating images Jim described changes that took place involving ownership of land in Luton, an area of which eventually became home to the depot and generating station for the Chatham & District Light Railways Company - the trams. The name of Richard Batchelor came up frequently in the story. He was, amongst other things, the owner of a large tract of land to the south-west of Luton which it was proposed would become the "Avenue Estate". This development never came about, and the land was sold off for other uses. The dark shaded area in the centre of this plan was purchased by the Tram company as its operational base. Landmarks on the plan are Luton Church on the right-hand side, and the Hen & Chick(en)s at the bottom. The date is 1900.



Move Right Down Inside Please.....

At the end of last year we decided that overall progress of the project should for clarity be separated into two streams: A-completing restoration of the bus, and B-identifying and assembling the elements of the Medway Heritage Bus. The former we've reported on in some detail from the outset, but we've recognised that we should now "get inside" the various issues that we need to pursue which together will create the MHB.

On the day before the AGM Wendy and I had a very useful chat over coffee with Richard Holdsworth, lately of the Dockyard. Richard gave us his view of what we could pursue now in order to set groundwork for some key areas, and we'll be taking these forward:

- Small organisations operating alone can find things tough. Seek partnerships and share resources.
- Build contacts in the education world (some contact names provided) and organise a pilot visit to a Primary.
- Update and acknowledge funding bodies that have contributed and seek contact with others (suggestions given).
- Seek to have a more active online presence through social media and a refreshed website.
- Identify all relevant regulatory and legal requirements for intended uses of the bus.

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A Welcome Younger Input!

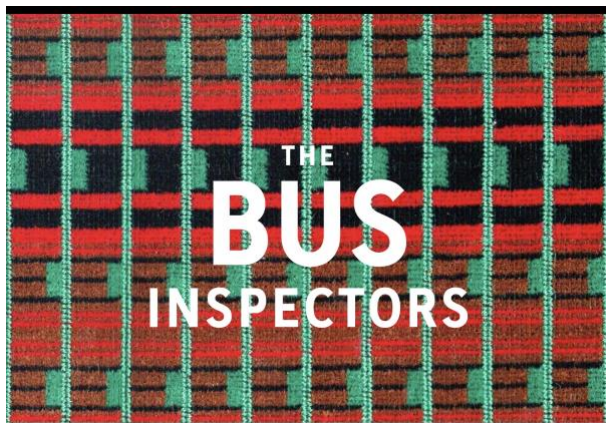
Tilley Hughes contacted us at the end of January via our website having only recently learned of our existence. She has had a long-time interest in buses and attends rallies and other gatherings. In her words she "was born in Gravesend, then grew up in Medway, travelling on Bristol VR'S, MCW Metrobuses, Leyland and Volvo Olympians, that were all often allocated for my School Bus No.174, back in '1995', onwards". Very pleased to welcome you Tilley.

Finlay Brook has joined as a 13th birthday gift from his grandfather, who is none other than our President David Swan. Finn is interested in both buses and trains - what a fine chap!

Bus Inspectors

The Friends subscribe to the National Association of Road Transport Museums (NARTM), whose recent new logo is shown at the foot of this Update. The Association is the representative body for organisations or individuals with collections of historic buses and coaches, goods vehicles and other large road vehicles who wish to make those collections accessible to the public. With just under 100 members NARTM represents the large majority of UK road transport collections which combine to include more than 3000 historic vehicles. We're currently drawing on NARTM's knowledge of the legal requirements for a range of potential uses. The organisation follows developments in relevant legislation and can advise on best practice for inclusion in policies and procedures.

An interesting recent move has been the start of the Bus Inspectors project. This is described as "a mission to make sure the historical significance of each bus is properly understood and documented for generations to come". The exercise will begin with the vehicles in the care of NARTM members but will be extended to include the whole "population" of qualifying vehicles which are said to take the total to around 10,000!



Have a look at the Bus Inspectors website thebusinspectors.com

And you should definitely listen to this, the first of a promised series of associated podcasts!

thebusinspectors.com/podcast

Chatham & Maidstone



Routes Tour

Saturday 11th May, tour details TBA

Courtesy of Nu-Venture, the Bus Club are promoting a tour of former Chatham Traction and Maidstone Corp. routes using N-V's C&D and MC Tribute buses. The tour will include a visit to view GKE 68.

FoCT members are invited. Contact Mike Hodges if you're interested - details below.



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