NEWSLETTER

No. 21 December 2021

Chairman's Update …

Our building at Alford is currently full of buses and the garage area has been under pressure to accommodate more and more equipment. Our aim is usually to confine repair work to the workshop and to store equipment not in constant use at the edges of the garage out of the way. Normally we have a full restoration going ahead in the inner workshop bay and running repairs carried out alongside in the drive-in bay.

This was made long enough so that we could fit No1 our GRT "Bendybus" with a clear metre at either end of it! This has meant that on occasion we have managed to fit three buses in the long bay (two smaller ones). We also have our storage building which currently has nine buses and a truck for tram 15 stored. This all means that we are now "full up" and juggling the parking is becoming a bit of an art.

Bearing all the above in mind, it became a little difficult when after looking for the last ten years we have been lucky enough to find a reasonably priced power guillotine that is going to help tremendously with the panelling of bus 11, our current major restoration. Unfortunately, this equipment takes up a space of about three metres square putting more pressure on space in the garage. I believe we have managed to cope with this by pairing parked vehicles according to length so that there is a minimum of wasted space.

Wishing all of our volunteers, friends and readers a very Happy Christmas and all the very best for 2022!

Gordon Mills, Trust Chairman

FLYING ABOUT THE TOWN??

There has been an unexpected follow up to the article in "Newsletter 20" about Aberdeen's tram and bus stops. It emerges that the Aberdeen Corporation Transport (ACT) painters who were responsible for buildings and structures, as opposed to vehicle painters, had the job in summer of touring the ACT network to refresh the appearance of stop signs, their respective poles, etc. The touring was done on foot, the necessary painter's materials being carried on a two wheeled barrow, sometimes known as a "hurley".

Although responsibility for stop signs was ceded by ACT in the 1970s, the barrow survived and found its way to the care of Grampian Transport Museum thanks to Grampian Regional Transport. The barrow's large wire wheels are said to have been a pair of landing wheels from a primitive aircraft that crossed the North Sea locally in a blaze of publicity. First thoughts were that the flight concerned was that of the Norwegian Tryggve Gran who made the first powered flight across the North Sea in July 1914; the flight was from Cruden Bay to near Stavanger, Norway. However, this theory has to be discounted; Gran's flying machine needed all its wheels to take off and to land, and the aircraft, still with wheels, is in the Norwegian Technical Museum, Oslo.

Here then is another transport mystery; might any readers be able to help, please?

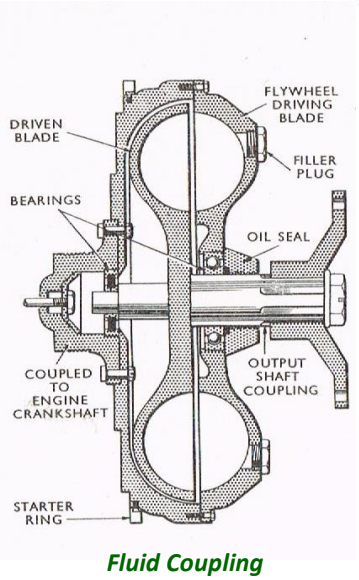
The Bus Collection at Alford is open again to visitors, please check our website for further visitor information: http://thebuscollectionatalford.co.uk/

TORQUING NICELY 1: An Introduction to the Fluid Flywheel

An article in "Newsletter 20" about epicyclic gearboxes referred to a "fluid flywheel" being used to transmit engine power to the gearbox. To demonstrate the concept of the fluid flywheel, consider a half-filled cup of tea and a teaspoon held between the fingers. Stir the tea vigorously then relax the grip on the teaspoon but not letting it fall. The swirling tea drags the teaspoon around with it.

In a vehicle with this type of drive, the engine rotates the flywheel part which holds transmission oil, and that drags with it the driven, "runner", part contained within the construction of the flywheel. Hopefully the attached cross-section of a typical fluid flywheel will help understanding. At engine idle speed, there is much slip taking place, hence little transmission of engine power, but as engine revs are increased, drive to the gearbox increases smoothly.

Unlike a friction clutch there are no wearing parts in a fluid flywheel except at the seals between the rotating parts. Of course, there has to be a snag, and the snag is that there is always a small degree of slip even at full engine power between the driving input and the driven output. Any slip manifests itself as waste heat that must be dissipated and slip also causes a slight increase in fuel consumption.



Fluid Coupling

History All Around ...

Transport history is also a repository of social history. In an illustration of this point, a notice to passengers from earlier years has been uncovered during the restoration of the Trust's 1948 vintage Aberdeen Corporation single deck bus 14. The notice reads "No Smoking in Front of This Seat".

Since the days of horse traction, smoking was not permitted in the lower saloon of tramcars, and this practice was continued on double deck motorbuses across the country by order of local bye-laws. These obligations were subsequently taken over by national (UK) legislation from the 1930s when it was also mandated that smokers should occupy the rear seats on a single deck bus.

This segregation on single deckers survived until bus operators started to ban all smoking on all their vehicles. It was a gradual process that had at least one false start in Aberdeen. A total ban on smoking in all public transport in Scotland finally came into force in 2006.

Obituary - John Bain

We were all saddened to learn of the passing recently of John Bain. John had volunteered to come and help us and he had a background of Accountancy in the oil industry and had also been a senior manager of an offshore facility. We had great hopes that he may be able to help with managing the trust with these experiences.

To get to know us better John started to come and help in the workshops on Wednesdays and Saturdays but, this was interrupted by the Covid lockdown in 2020 and further by the 2021 lockdown. He became ill in July this year and sent his apologies saying he would contact me again in September, alas this was not to be.

John had experience of driving an HGV horsebox and I managed to arrange a session of driving our Leyland National on a quiet day on the track. He responded by saying that he had ambitions to drive an Aberdeen bus for many years and was most grateful for the pleasure it brought. Although we only knew John for a few short months he was starting to become "one of the Alford team", we will miss him. He passed away on 20 September 2021.

Yes, we do require volunteers to help us keep our fleet in a good condition, assist with vehicle refurbishment, or a range of other tasks. If you think you could help, either in person or by making a donation, please contact us at: thebuscollectionatalford@outlook.com

https://twitter.com/buses_at_alford

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