

Update 49

15 July 2019

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Chair

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National Award for FoCT

The Transport Trust is Britain's only national charity dedicated to the preservation of all modes of transport. Part of promoting this aim are the Trust's Restoration Awards "to assist those projects of a high standard which are well advanced but which need a little extra help to cross the line". Given the stage we had reached with GKE 68 last year we thought we might qualify and Wendy put together an application. This was successful, and in April we received a cheque for £1000. FoCT was one of six restoration award recipients at the Trust's Award ceremony held on 17th June at Brooklands Museum. We were presented with a certificate by the Trust's patron HRH Prince Michael of Kent.



Credit for all this goes to everyone involved from the early work at Aylesford through to the current efforts on both bodywork and mechanicals. The eventual educational aims counted too, but nothing would have progressed without the full breadth of support there's been from the outset. So a collective award from a significant body, which can only help achieve our aims.

Timescales

"About two years" had become a tongue-in-cheek answer to the often-asked question, given the unknowns and variables around any restoration exercise. It was after much consideration that the Trustees felt we should try to firm things up a bit, hence the reference in Update 48 to discussions around a launch in September. The Law of Universal Cussedness always lurks in the background however.....

Since the turn of the year there has been a reduction in the rate of work at Faversham. SEC took on a very demanding commercial job (fitting out a new double-deck coach as a restaurant) which stretched them considerably, and not surprisingly GKE took a back seat. To be fair SEC waived the agreed monthly charge for four months but with the "Bustronome" out of the way we now need to discuss how we can help them re-establish momentum.

You'll have sensed that a date for GKE becoming presentable is an open question again, but easing the timescale has helped in other areas. The logistics of identifying, locating and either procuring or arranging the repair of various components takes a lot of time and effort. Some examples are outlined below, and hopefully show how diverse this can be. We have, though, had the good fortune to have available the contact networks of Chris Gibbons, Ian Marsh and Malcolm Spalding, exploiting the wonderfully unlikely situation whereby whatever piece of kit it is there will be someone somewhere who has a spare one or can repair or re-make it!

More on the Bus

Some examples of GKE components currently being progressed:

Steering wheel: Ready to go to specialist restorers near Ramsgate.

Brake ribbons: These flat strips of metal transmit the braking force to the rear wheels. Given the age and condition of the originals we thought it best to replace them. However we're having to work from first principles to find the correct material. Samples from the originals have been sent to a materials testing laboratory at Rugby.

Gauges: Speedometer and vacuum gauge are with Auto Restoration Services at St Austell.

Autovac: The device which lifts fuel from the main tank on the chassis up to the engine bay. The inner workings have been overhauled by Autovac Ltd at Aldermaston (descended from the original Stockport company set up in the early 20th century).



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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Gearbox cover: The dome-shaped casting which sits on the floor at the front of the lower deck. The item is unique to each chassis/body type combination. The original was stolen for scrap many years ago so there isn't another to copy. We've engaged John Hazlehurst, a pattern-maker in Lincolnshire, to produce a pattern from which a new casting can be made.

Moquette: Camira fulfilled our order for the correct pattern moquette at the end of February, the sixteen 25m rolls being retained in their warehouse pending our delivery instructions. We have agreements for the onward sale of seven rolls, plus three being retained for our job.

Seat Frames: To be blasted and powder-coated by Wytelyne in Chatham. This is being done *gratis* as the manager is a bus enthusiast (mostly around north-west operators of old)!

Plan? What plan?

Our Business Plan includes a first year whereby some introductory work (e.g. to set up links with other bodies) can take place alongside getting GKE to a usable state. This is followed by a further five years of developing use and exposure. The plan exists as a sequence and is not tied to start at any particular time, so taking a little longer to get to the start point won't affect it. We are, though, still aware that time marches on for us all!

Faversham Transport Festival 18/19th May

This event has in the past introduced many new contacts and lots of interest. This year's was no different. Fascinating to hear some folks' stories and discover circles of acquaintance. For all the good work done on the bus over the time at Faversham



we at last presented GKE with a much more familiar "face". With the radiator fitted it recreated a more memorable sight. Only needs headlights for the full effect!

Marjorie

I'm sorry to report that Marjorie Farrow, one-time conductress at Luton and Gillingham, died peacefully over the May Day holiday. She was a very early subscriber to the cause, having made contact at the time of the 2005 Dockyard event, and she attended the first visit by members to Nu-Venture following the arrival of GKE from Barnsley (in December 2007). Together with son Neal, Marjorie was a regular attender at AGMs and other events.

An Appealing Prospect

Our latest Appeal for funds, launched in April, is aimed at securing some final details for the bus (it will need destination blinds, some signwriting, etc...), equipment to deliver its educational role (sound and video equipment, with power supply : don't worry, it'll be discreet!) and means yet to be established of creating and storing learning material. The idea of the appeal is that we might all pass details onward to our friends and relations, email address lists, social media friends and anyone else we can think of. Wendy is organising a second print run with an updated content and we'll let you know when its available.

One final reminder that all donations made by on-line transfer, regular or otherwise, should now be paid into our CAF bank account. The old Co-op Bank account will be closed soon. Paul can supply details if necessary:
pgke68@btinternet.com, 01954 719694.

Richard B.