

# FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1174323

[www.chathamtraction.org.uk](http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk)

## Update 68

4 Sept 2025

Richard Bourne

Chair

## Short but Sweet

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### Can GKE go to the Ball...?

The weekend of 20/21 September will see Chatham Dockyard's final "Salute to the 40s" event. We've attended all of these since 2016, each time meeting new people. Some had relatives who worked for the Traction, others were just interested, but it all helped our cause. We were occasionally favoured by the organisers in terms of location, and the bus operation's part in keeping the 'Yard working during the war years was recognised.

The special nature of this year's event was, perhaps, an opportunity to bring GKE along too. The Dockyard asked if this was possible, and offered to meet any expenses in so doing. We had a deep think, looked at what was still left to do on the bus, what was currently underway, and what level of disturbance moving the bus, even just for one day, might result from doing so. This question was also relevant to N-V's operations and likely disturbance resulting from having to move GKE from its usual corner. Regrettably we've decided to decline.

The 40s event, we decided, was basically for the Dockyard and the absence of our bus is unlikely to spoil anything. We will, in any case, be present with a stand as usual.

**Our thanks are due to the organisers of the 40s Weekend and to the Dockyard as a whole for the opportunities over some years to communicate with a wider public.**





## Still to Come.....

Meanwhile, FoCT and its supporters can look forward to events of our own in the coming months. Firstly, in the near future.....

## Recognising 70 Years

The Chatham & District Traction Company was the re-named Light Railways Company which had built and operated the tramway system around Medway since 1902. An Act of 1929 enabled a move to bus operation, and included provisions regarding the future ownership of the Company. Bus operation was to begin on 1st October 1930.

The local authorities were given the right to purchase the Traction bus operation after 30 years. However in 1954 Maidstone & District (who were already the major shareholders) moved to obtain an Act to merge the Traction operation into their own company. This was successful and the merged organisation became a reality at midnight on 30th September 1955. From that date the independent bus operation based at Luton was, after 20 years, no more. The 30th September this year will be 70 years on.



### CHAPTER xiv

An Act to transfer the undertaking of the Chatham and District Traction Company to the Maidstone and District Motor Services Limited and for other purposes. [27th July 1955.]

**W**HEREAS the Chatham and District Traction Company (hereinafter referred to as "the company") were incorporated by the Chatham and District Light Railways Order 1899 by the name of the Chatham and District Light Railways Company and under the powers contained in the Chatham and District Traction Order and Acts 1899 to 1929 are empowered to provide and are now operating services of stage carriages within the boroughs of Chatham and Gillingham and the city of Rochester in the county of Kent:

And whereas the Maidstone and District Motor Services Limited (hereinafter referred to as "the Maidstone Company") a company incorporated under the Companies (Consolidation) Act 1908 operate an extensive system of services of stage carriages or express carriages in the counties of Kent and Sussex including services within or running into or through the said boroughs and city:

And whereas the issued share capital of the Company consists of one hundred and six thousand ordinary shares of one pound each and all of those shares except nine hundred and fifty are held by or on behalf of the Maidstone Company:

And whereas with a view to the better co-ordination of the services serving the said boroughs and city and the more efficient and economical administration and operation of those services it is expedient that the company's undertaking should be transferred to and vested in the Maidstone Company together with all outstanding debts and liabilities:

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Chatham Traction's operational base at Luton Depot became part of Maidstone & District's empire at midnight on 30th September 1955. We'd love to hear from anyone who remembers the event, or had family members who were involved, and how they may have been affected. Contact either our Secretary Mike (email or post), or myself (email or phone)



**To mark this anniversary we're arranging a small event for 30th Sept this year involving Nu-Venture's CT Tribute bus and a trip to Luton.**

The bus will leave Stop D19 at Chatham Bus Station at 11am and will run to the site of the former Luton Depot entrance, now "Tramways". Contact Mike Hodges if you'd like to go.

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*Richard B.*

MEMBER

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