

Annual Report 2004



ANNUAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Last year I asked myself the question “ We don’t seem to have done very much? “ but analysis of the facts would support a different conclusion. We again achieved a great deal as well as consolidating the previous years ideas and proposals. The words of wisdom from the President are always in the back of my mind; keep the savage amusement at bay

SUMMARY

We continue as always to make progress on all fronts, some more quickly than others. The policy of slow and steady attrition on targets gives the impression sometimes that we are making no progress but that is not the case. As always the great enemy is time and we must be aware of this and not be lulled into a false sense of security. The Museum and we should now be using the title, continues to attract interest without undue publicity thanks to the professional way in which present ourselves. This is particularly noticeable when we undertake wedding duties promotional events and have members of the public comment about us. I have not had a genuine complaint directed at us for many years and long may this continue.

EVENTS

Our running year was not quite as intense as 2003, nevertheless we still achieved a significant exposure to the general public and the general breakdown is as follows:

In round figures we turned one or more vehicles out to about 57 events, fewer than last year but still significant and to certain extent a relief. The bookings analyse into the general headings of :

Rallies	- 10
Weddings	- 5
Theme days	- 3
Promotional Dates	- 12
Misc. & Sundry	- 27

Out of region bookings comprised of :

Daimler to Sheffield
L type to Luton and Severn Valley Railway
K type to Severn Valley Railway
L& K type to Amsterdam

The Newtonian only worked 5 events and needs more exposure in 2005 whilst the L, K and Daimler took the lions share of the calendar. Promotional bookings were up and I was pleased to see that the rally scene was better attended. We also went to two NARTM meetings and we undertook 1 lecture in Northallerton. Thanks to John Gibson who ended up doing the talk on his own without the Secretary’s attendance.

VEHICLES

AHN 451B - the Daimler was programmed to be one of this seasons main performers and did this well apart from problems with fuel starvation. This turned out to be blocked filters and once we had shovelled out the crud in the primary filter and the vehicle then ran very well following the rebuild last year. We

replaced the roof lights, rebuilt the platform sub framing complete with rubber edging, serviced front ball joints, repaired the exhaust and replaced lower deck lino prior to repainting. All in all a very satisfactory result. Dave and Nigel are to be complemented with their full DCT uniform which provides a very impressive image and fully in keeping with the mood of the time .

LHN 860 - the L performed reasonably well but we were still bedevilled with the problem of brake judder. We subsequently 'bit the bullet' and have had the shoes relined, fitted new drums and rebuilt the servos. I am now pleased to report that all is well with the vehicle. Alan has also fitted an isolator switch so that we can shut the whole electrical system down when laid up or when security requires it to be done. We also suffered a charging problem which Allan put down to the dynamo. The dynamo has been fully serviced and refitted.

NDL 769G - as I said earlier the Newtonian has not done a great deal of work this year and needs to be worked in 2005. Our policy of upgrading continues and we re-upholstered the back seat and completed the recovering all of the seat swabs. Some minor mechanical work has been done and a rear axle oil seal changed. Alan Woods painted the floor and we serviced part of the hydraulic clutch system. An additional drive belt was put onto the alternator as per design.

GHN 189 - the K soldiered on with the minimum of effort. Mechanically sound we have a list of minor issues to resolve which will be picked up and sorted out in due course. She attended SVR Wartime Weekend taking the 7.5hrs of running time to transfer in her stride. Highlight of the return trip was passing most traffic whilst on the slow lane of the M6 during peak traffic time and all at 36mph!! Gear linkage needs attention and an electrical isolator fitting in order to shut the whole system down as has been done with the L type.

PROJECT WORK THE BRISTOL LS

I am always heartened by visitors saying that we have made good progress on the LS when we, at the daily work end, think otherwise. Recent arrival Derrick Atkinson has been a welcome addition to the fitting roster and I am pleased to see him settling into the team .

Salient points are chassis painting finished, door re-hung and cockpit area coming back into shape. Alan Tweedy has continued his rewiring of the rear end which was both rotten and a shambles of jury rigging plus new indicators have been fitted. Our HLF contract was extended for another year and a further renewal has been requested to take us to December 2005. This should take us close to a finish. Current progress is that axles are being replaced because we are having to move premises and also because we are now reaching this point in the restoration. The differential has been opened up and all is clean although there was evidence of past damage which had been repaired. As always a constant attrition keeps the work list constantly reducing which is very pleasing.

NEW HOME PROJECT

Following last years AGM we agreed to take a scheme forward. The working party met and finalised the building spec and the layout plans ready for submission to the Architect. We duly obtained grant from DCC for £3000 for this work having gone out to quotation and we accepted 147 Design of Hutton Rudby. Then we hit the problem of TRITURUS CRISTATUS or for the uneducated the Great Crested Newt which has a colony within 500m radius of our plot of land. Our site is not directly affected but in the sphere of influence of the colony. This has created a delay because of the involvement of English Nature but on the 28th October 2004 the DCC released the money and the Architect has been briefed. He will be reporting back before Christmas with the first 'rush' of plans

In parallel to this Ian went to the Oxford Bus Museum and saw a development, funded by HLF which is almost everything that we need. Steps are being taken to get the details of this scheme in order to make it mirror the Oxford scheme so as to make it HLF friendly. Ernie set up a second business account so that we can separate New Home matters. Next stages will be to finalise the designs, costs and specification before a formal HLF bid in the Spring.

The joint partnership arrangements are still active with Darlington Railway Museum. This will be some time off but we are very happy to see this as a long term objective. I would like to think that we are now on our way and even Ian is getting excited. At last our own roof, no rent to pay to other people and no forced moves. I am also hopeful that we will keep space at Middlesbrough to assist in the Teesside operations.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

All is well and Ernie will report on the money position. The Secretary has his new letter heads and envelopes having taken 7 years to get through Ernie's donation of 5000+. The web site continues its work, we added an activity report and updated the reference to the United Enthusiasts Club. Next stages in the web site will be to get Peter Mitchell to put those who wish onto a e-mail ring and to have the pc literate able to update the web, again under Peter's control.

PROGRAMME – SEE EVENTS PAGE

Our programme was varied, country wide and very cost effective. We can only operate a season with the help of the members and I think that all those who have been involved will agree with me that it ran well. Yes we did have one or two blips but by and large a vintage year.

Highlights must be another Dutch masterpiece by Derek Thompson and a faultless scheduling of the L and K to Luton and Severn Valley Railway. I did suggest that we dropped the SVR event in 2005 but I soon became a committee of one. Must be the WAAFS and twisted seams.

FORWARD PLAN

I don't think that the forward plan needs to be looked at for the time being. We have enough coming on stream to satisfy the goals we set ourselves. The end of 2005 will be a good time to revisit as it is due for review in 2006 in any case.

CURATORIAL ISSUES

John Wilkes left DRM in May 2004 which in theory left us without a curatorial adviser. NEMLAC however told us that he could continue for the time being and John will therefore continue to advise the Society on curatorial issues relating to the Society (but not issues relating to DRCM) which will be issues between the Society and DRCM. Next year we will look at a handover to DRCM .

We maintained our links with DRM attending Thomas the Tank, the Heritage Week and the weekend support in August. The first two weekends were fine but the August dates were poor and we need to review this to try to get it right. I am of the opinion that theme day working is the best use of the buses when the museum attracts larger numbers than normal as the weekend numbers are fairly low. The attraction of Locomotion may increase visits and we have an invite to run with the shuttle service at Shildon next year..

Phase III registration looms large in the New Year and I am confident that we will achieve this transfer smoothly from Phase II. In view of our pending New Home Project this requirement comes very much at the at the right time. So in 2005 we could have a bumper year, LS finished, new premises, new Phase III accreditation, **please note the new terminology**, perhaps a new vehicle project for members with nothing to do. With regards to the new build the issue of public access will need to be considered prior to the HLF submission and proposals incorporated into the bid

UNITED ENTHUSIASTS CLUB

Once again the UEC is grateful to Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society for our close links and especially for the major role played by the Society on our 20th Anniversary celebrations held on the 11th July 2004. The K,L and LHS all participated in the vehicle run from Bishop Auckland to Sunderland for the main event, the rally at the Stadium of Light car park. Despite the disappointing weather it proved to be an enjoyable and worthwhile occasion.

Just over a month later our Secretary Mick McCoy celebrated his ruby wedding and slightly prematurely his 65th birthday. Transport for the event was provided by GHN 189 and many guests were delighted to travel from the church to the reception on a bus that brought back many nostalgic memories for them.

A tour round Whitby's former Heather Motors routes in LHN 860, planned for September unfortunately had to be cancelled due to lack of support. However an evening excursion on GHN 189 to the unit on the 14th October was much enjoyed by our members who took part. We were grateful to John Gibson and Nick Shakesby, who not only made us feel most welcome but also patiently answered our many questions about the recent mechanical work on the L and the progress in restoring the LS coach.

We look forward to the continued co-operation between the two organisations in the future and of course seeing 304 GHN on the road.

Robert Buckley

CONCLUSION

The Society is alive and well and we make good progress in many areas. Clearly the goal is the new build which will give us good secure facilities at a price we can afford. If the Oxford experience is to be believed then it will also attract new members as we need to attract additional new blood particularly PCV holders and some members under 50 years old!!

The LS will be a wonderful addition to the fleet and I await its arrival as a job well done.

All in all a good year and with nothing seriously going wrong. I have to admit that the failure for the first time to get NEMLAC grant for a project was a smack in the mouth for me. Well always a first time for everything. That said we tapped £3000 from Durham County Council for the Architect which made up for it.