

Newslink

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of

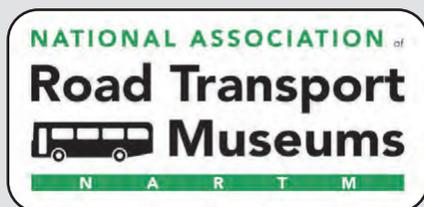
Road Transport
Museums



N A R T M



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Chairman's Corner

You will all see that this issue of Newslink looks a little different to the recent ones. We had an editorial team of myself, Ray Bignell and Gerry Tormey which worked very well, with input from other members, for several years. Very sadly, as reported in Newslink 124, Gerry passed away suddenly on 1st December after a spell in hospital. An appreciation of Gerry's life and all he did for NARTM appears later in this issue.

Just thinking of Gerry's input to Newslink, he was the oil that made it happen; he didn't have to create any content because others did that, but he did have the expertise to use Microsoft Publisher to transform articles submitted in Word format into a magazine ready for print. That is the expertise we are now missing, so if anyone can help, now is the time to speak up please. Although members of the NARTM team were able to work together to bring you Newslink 124, which Gerry had started to compile but sadly became too ill to complete, the experience highlighted that we need to look for others to assist with the production of Newslink on an ongoing basis, and really would appreciate support from anybody reading now who can help.

Gerry had a template he used for each edition of Newslink which could be replicated in Publisher or a similar package; equally, a new incumbent may wish to take the opportunity to start afresh and create something new. NARTM has a set of brand guidelines which would help to keep the feel of the magazine 'on brand' but, otherwise, we are very open to new ideas.

For this issue, our friends at Brightsea have stepped in to work their magic and transform individual files into the magazine you see. Just to emphasise it one more time, we really do need a volunteer to pick up the quarterly job of compiling the magazine. Don't miss this opportunity to shine!

Website

Gerry was also our Webmaster, and had the same function with a number of NARTM members. Your Board has decided that, rather than trying to get access to the existing website, we should create a new one, compatible with phones and tablets and with improved functions. David Sheppard has taken on the overall design project using the Wix platform and we hope to have at least the bones of the new site ready to unveil at our Spring conference in March. Once launched, we will be looking for a webmaster to keep the site fresh and administer updates for us. The site will be produced in such a way that only a little specialist knowledge will be required for this role, and we can provide some basic training to get you underway. We'd love to hear from you if you are able to fill this position please.

Security systems

Aside of the Newslink situation Gerry's passing is a matter of concern for all NARTM members. We all fall into the trap of keeping files on our own computers, or not securely sharing passwords with trusted colleagues. Gerry was very computer savvy and security conscious so I believe he

Front and Rear Covers: For many years the pride and joy of the late Gerry Tormey was his Bristol SUL coach, 274 KTA. Read more in Gerry's obituary (beginning on page 5).

used security system generated passwords to safeguard his documents - but at the present moment we don't have access to that. He had built up a huge database of Bristol vehicles alongside hosting the NARTM vehicle database. We have access to the latter, but probably not the former and it would be a tragedy to lose all that hard work. And apart from this, how many of us hold secure access to bank accounts and third party systems such as the Motor Insurers Database, but haven't shared those log in details with trusted colleagues? I have mentioned one time passcodes before - they need to be sent to a personal mobile, but what if that mobile is my personal one, and not accessible to my colleagues, should I suddenly not be around any longer? And don't think that could only happen to very elderly people - Gerry was in his mid-sixties, so not old at all.

All these security procedures are in place for our security and that of our organisations, but it does make life difficult when trying to recover access after a colleague has passed away. For obvious and understandable reasons, banks and others are not keen to give a new colleague access without a lot of form filling and identity verification. I am still working through the aftermath of a colleague's death in autumn 2023 and have realised that one bank account does send codes to my own phone, so I will change that.

NARTM Updates

In more cheerful news, our new NARTM Grant Scheme will go live in February and we'll repeat the instructions here and again when we forward the application form in February ahead of application time in March and April.

Importantly, we also can announce to members that we are very pleased to welcome our new President, James Freeman of the Friends of King Alfred Buses. James brings a wealth of experience as a leading light in FoKAB for many years and as a leader in the bus industry. He of course replaces Peter, Lord Hendy, who was obliged to resign when he was appointed Minister of State at the Department for Transport last summer. James has written a short autobiography which you will find later in this issue.

We also welcome Paul Statham from Oxford Bus Museum to the NARTM Board and Andy Hamer, based at Hooton, who will run the NARTM Survey this year. You will already know that Steven Booth of Glasgow Vintage Vehicle Society is now our Membership Secretary and we have had another very positive enquiry. If you were at the autumn conference you will remember Maxson who had made the thought provoking video about the future of both older and much newer buses. He is working with James Willmott to contact major bus operators. Congratulations are also due to Maxson as he now has a full time job with Coach and Bus Week Magazine and, of course, he appeared among other guests (including our new president James Freeman, Katariina Mauranen from the LTM and Alan Lambert from the Southdown Omnibus Trust) in the latest episode of The Bus Inspectors - NARTM's flagship podcast celebrating our movement and your work as members. So don't feel left out or think that NARTM is doing fine with all those folks who have been there for years and our new colleagues; we are doing fine, but also need all the help we can get to share the ever increasing workload. Especially if you can help with Newslink or managing the website. (HINT!)

Gerry Tormey 1958 - 2024

An obituary by David Sheppard

With great sadness, NARTM has lost one of its key players, Gerry Tormey, who died in December 2024 after a long but defiant battle with cancer. Gerry joined the board in August 2010 as a Director and Trustee and had been an active supporter of NARTM, and several of its member organisations, ever since. Although Gerry was a private man, rarely photographed, both he and his activities as a volunteer were very well known within bus preservation circles. A lifelong collector, record-keeper and preservationist, his voluntary work was supplemented by an incredible depth of knowledge and a seemingly insatiable thirst for more. His contribution to the heritage bus movement was therefore far reaching and is deserving of wide recognition. He was also a good friend to so many of us.

Gerry was born in Lambeth on 7 April 1958 and grew up in Quorndon, Leicestershire, where he attended De Lisle Catholic Science College. He joined the Royal Navy in 1974, serving for 22 years and retiring in 1996 as a Chief Petty Officer. Gerry then settled in Hampshire where he became an area manager for Fujitsu, taking charge of all the MOD computing infrastructure along the South Coast until his retirement in 2018. However, as you will read, his voluntary commitments to IT support continued well beyond!

Gerry's interest in buses and coaches initially centred on collecting records, photographs and ephemera, but gained a new focus in July 1999 when he purchased former Western National Bristol SUL coach No. 1224 (274 KTA) for continued preservation. 1224 had recently been through an unhappy spell with an operator in Dartford, during which its seats had been swapped and it had started to look a little careworn. SU fans therefore took a keen interest in the intentions of its new owner, who immediately showed his true colours by re-trimming the seats to original specification, renewing the window rubbers and polishing the exterior to such an extent that it soon required a new coat of paint - and it soon received one! Gerry was to be a model owner for the next twenty years.



Former Western National SUL No. 1224 (274 KTA) certainly flourished in Gerry's ownership, receiving a re-trim, new window rubbers, a repaint and much mechanical work and maintenance which allowed it to be rallied extensively. This was reflected in 2018 when it received the "Best Bus" award at The Provincial Society's annual rally at Stokes Bay, Gosport - organised by Gerry himself! Here, Gerry makes a rare appearance on camera as he receives his award from Marc Reddy, then Managing Director of First South West, and the Lady Mayor of Gosport in 2018-9, Diane Furlong. MALCOLM AUDSLEY

Gerry's professional work in IT was supplemented by a passion project on which he embarked soon after buying his coach (when the internet was still quite fledgling), to produce an online history of all 181 Bristol SUs. I recall watching the launch of the site with great excitement, as pages of dates, depot allocations, and disposal details – each one meticulously researched, picked-out and compiled from PSV Circle records by Gerry – suddenly became available at the touch of a button. Examples from his extensive photograph collection were also displayed and many enthusiasts were so impressed that they flocked to Gerry offering to fill any gaps they could with knowledge and contributions from their own collections. Gerry was, indeed, a pioneer of bus heritage research online, creating a concept and setting a standard which many others have since set about following with their own research sites. In doing so, he also helped to create a user-expectation which has made the internet a first port of call for so much vehicle research today. Gerry's SU pages subsequently grew into his famous Bristol Commercial Vehicles website, the definitive online database of many types built in Bristol and a daily site to visit for many enthusiasts across the world.



Gerry's dedication to 1224 presented itself in many forms, from this Little Bus Company kit-built model he finished himself, to a much larger radio-controlled model he began building from scratch in 2013. Following a thorough test drive of the chassis around Gerry's living room, construction of a body began, although it is not known whether it was ever finished.

In addition to his own websites, Gerry acted as webmaster for several NARTM member organisations. An early adopter of Microsoft FrontPage – an editing platform for website design launched in 1995 – Gerry used his coding skills to design, create and maintain countless websites including The Provincial Society (of which Gerry was a founding member, serving as membership secretary and rally organiser); the Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust (TV&GWOT, of which Gerry was an active Supporter); The Leyland Society; the West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust; and, of course, NARTM's own website. These were all meticulously maintained by Gerry in consultation with the various Trustees and Boards, whose updates would always be administered at lightning speed. I recall standing in the queue for customs at St Pancras International station and taking the opportunity to send Gerry an

update for the TV&GWOT website. Moments later, as I was retrieving my phone from the little tray on the other side of the scanner, it beeped with the reply "Now done, please check"!

As a Trustee of NARTM, Gerry showed skill, efficiency and meticulous attention to detail. He created and maintained NARTM's definitive database of the 'national collection' of heritage buses and coaches in preservation. As such, he found himself volunteering as a co-ordinator and IT lead for the Scoring & Grading project and, along with Ray Bignell, became a dynamo which energised us all. On this project in particular, we will miss Gerry's matter-of-fact sense checks, his 'no nonsense' approach to getting things done and also his guaranteed pastoral support whenever it was needed. He was also quick to embrace anything new. Gerry and Ray were always among the first to consume a new episode of The Bus Inspectors podcast, often staying up late for the task, and as a prolific listener to podcasts of all kinds Gerry always provided informed and useful feedback which I will miss greatly.

Gerry loved the outdoors and took long walks daily. I'd often call him from my desk-chair or sofa only to experience the shame of finding he was in the middle of an ambitious trek – and never out of breath. He was also a motorhome owner and enthusiast, usually planning his holidays

well in advance of taking them but occasionally allowing himself to be impulsively swept where the wind blew him. Being Gerry, he liked to understand the Wi-Fi and 5G provision in the parts of the country he was planning to visit, so became a prolific user of an app which dynamically reported the download and upload speeds in every given area of the UK! It was, therefore, of enormous frustration to Gerry whenever the bi-annual NARTM conference ran into problems with poor Wi-Fi signal because every venue had been meticulously vetted in advance!

Gerry endured a prolonged struggle with his health in his later years, initially with arthritis which eventually prevented his driving of 1224 and prompted him to pass on the coach to preservationist Mike Ellis in 2020. He later received three rounds of treatment for cancer, heroically and with minimal interruption to his many commitments. Very sadly, during a routine hospital appointment in late 2024, Gerry discovered that the cancer had returned and spread. He never made it home, and died in hospital on 1 December.

For all his magnificent contributions, his good humour and unstinting support wherever it was needed, we all have much for which to thank Gerry. We'll certainly miss him.



Gerry commissioned a painting of 1224 from artist Dave Stooke, a former traveller-owner of ex. Western National SUL bus No. 637 (351 EDV). They went in search of the perfect location in the New Forest and eventually settled on the spot shown here. Although it appears to be photograph this is, in fact, a work of art by Dave's brush. DAVE STOOKE

News and information from other organisations

Only a few items this time, but thanks as usual to Joyce Jefford for supplying this regular news feed.

From the Museums Association

ACE announces review of Museum Accreditation scheme

Geraldine Kendall Adams

Arts Council England (ACE) has announced a review of the UK-wide Museum Accreditation scheme. The review hopes to make the Accreditation process as effective and intuitive as possible Museums Association

The arm's-length body has secured significant investment from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to improve the usability and accessibility of Accreditation and ensure the scheme better reflects the sector's priorities. In a blog announcing the review, Emmie Kell, the director of museums and cultural property at the arts council, acknowledged the difficult financial circumstances facing the sector.

"We know that your operating environment is really challenging at the moment," said Kell. "You have told us that Accreditation should function as a useful check and challenge, and we are determined to ensure that is the case.

"That's why, during 2025, we will work with you to understand and review where we can improve your experience of Accreditation, and how we can increase the value of participation over the coming years."

Kell added: "We will work to better understand both the function and form of Accreditation. We want the process to be as effective and intuitive as possible for colleagues putting their time into completing it. Likewise, we want to ensure it reflects both your organisation and UK partners' priorities - in areas ranging from equality, diversity and inclusion to environmental sustainability."

The review will not impact access to the Accreditation scheme, which will remain open throughout the process.

ACE runs the scheme with three other national partners: Museums Galleries Scotland, the Northern Ireland Museums Council and the Welsh Government. It recently published improved applicant guidance in relation to the 2018 Accreditation Standard, with the aim of making it easier to follow and more accessible.

"Understanding that we need to improve the usability and accessibility of Accreditation will guide our work going into this review," said Kell. "It has already informed the guidance refresh and website redesign to make it easier to find the most useful information.

"This approach - one of co-design, user-focus, improved communication and collaboration - will guide us as we get underway with a wider review of Accreditation in 2025."

The scheme was previously reviewed in 2018 and 2010.

From 'Historic', the magazine of the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs

Legislation

Lindsay Irvine

Aside from cost and resources, there is the issue of liability and the problem of "No good deed goes unpunished ". This is more officially expressed through the legal principle that whether given in the course of professional business or "off duty" in a social setting, a professional can be liable for advice he provides if a duty of care can be said to have arisen.

The leading case is *Hedley Byrne & Co Ltd v Heller & Partners Ltd [1964] AC 465*. Whilst the background to the case is in a business setting, it has been held as authority for the need for professionals to take care when providing advice off the cuff or in a social setting. If the recipient is aware of their expertise and acts to their detriment in relying on their advice, the provider can be liable if it was negligent even though free gratis perhaps at a party. The good news is the case also confirmed that a properly worded disclaimer can discharge the duty.

Whilst I have discussed this principle in the context of the Federation, I think it is relevant to club officials who are asked for advice. I have in mind particularly those who assist with completion of a V765 form or provide a report for a reconstructed HV or are asked to give valuation advice. Where such actions are performed, proper professional skill and care must be exercised, backed up as far as possible by facts and cogent evidence with any limitations on knowledge or evidence highlighted. In other words, the task should not be approached casually but with appropriate seriousness. Just because it is a club matter and not a business issue does not necessarily reduce the possibility of a duty of care arising.

Where historic vehicles of considerable potential value are involved (and indeed more broadly) clubs may wish to check and procure if necessary the relevant liability cover. I am pretty confident club archivists and registrars invariably approach their tasks seriously but be aware of the "Can I just have a quick opinion/bit of advice?" situation and caveat any response carefully...

Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency

DVLA

Ian Edmunds

As I wrote my words for the last edition of Historic, I noted that the Federation had just received notification of a revised date for the Historic Vehicle User Group (HVUG) meeting that had been postponed from late June due to the election. This meeting duly took place in September and although there is so far little concrete news to report we continue to be encouraged by what DVLA are telling us.

The meeting was informed of one very interesting statistic concerning the Call for Evidence (CfE). DVLA received around 1,400 responses which is an unprecedentedly high number. They told us that the previous CfE they issued, concerning driving licenses, had only received around 50 responses. It was explained to them that some of the 1,400 responses were themselves the distillate of thousands of individual opinions so, even if they didn't before, DVLA now understand that the historic vehicle community comprises a large number of individuals who are very passionate about their hobby and in some cases their business.

One very encouraging piece of information was that the change of Government has had no effect on activities within DVLA to review the registration process for historic vehicles (amongst others). The CFE was a part of this long-running process which actually started some time ago. Although nearing completion, this review is still ongoing. When completed it will require the approval of the DVLA hierarchy before the proposals can be disclosed. Once this approval process is complete DVLA will share the conclusions with the HVUG, either in a scheduled meeting or, if necessary, in an extraordinary meeting.

Once all parties are agreed, the new procedures will be shared more widely and FBHVC will bring you this news at the earliest opportunity.

I am also very happy to report that via DVLA Corporate Services Manager Dudley Ashford we are beginning to re-establish the useful and constructive relationship with the Agency that we had up to a few years ago. Amongst other things this enables me to seek resolution of individual cases where a club or an owner has reached an impasse with DVLA. The Terms of Reference for the HVUG specifically exclude discussion of individual cases in the group for reasons of privacy and data protection. For the same reasons I will only refer to general principles rather than a specific vehicle or club in this column. In this context I must emphasise that DVLA do have certain obligations and restraints on what they are able to do and that such individual resolutions may not always be what the vehicle owner was hoping for.

I will close for this edition on a somewhat different topic. Recent correspondence has suggested that there may be a degree of misunderstanding with regard to the DVLA online Vehicle Enquiry Service (VES). This was instigated after the demise of the tax disc, primarily to provide a check on whether a vehicle is currently licensed and, in some cases, the MoT status. As the name implies, the intention is to provide limited information about a vehicle. Unfortunately, it is not an exhaustive means of checking on a registration number. For example, vehicles which have been inactive, i.e. not licensed, for a period, are archived to a file that VES does not access, and numbers held on retention will also not appear on VES.

Membership report

Hello!

I'm pleased to report that all renewals have been completed with the last ones coming in just after the Autumn Conference. Many thanks to everyone.

We have another new member which takes the total to 95. Tyne Tees Heritage Trust have now joined. They were founded in 2019 and celebrate the rich transport heritage of the North East. Please welcome them to the NARTM fold.

We are aware that there are a number of road transport heritage organisations who aren't currently NARTM members. We will be making contact with some of them in the near future to see if they would like to join and enjoy the benefits that membership brings. If there are any you know who you think might be interested in joining then please drop me a line at booth@gvvt.org.

As ever, if there are any changes with personnel, contact details or other information for your organisation then please drop me a line at the email address provided.

All the best,
Steven Booth

James Freeman

A concise autobiography of our new President.

As your new President I can't possibly hope to step into the giant shoes of my predecessor, Lord Peter Henty, so things will have to develop in their own way. That said, I am enormously honoured to be asked to take up this role at a critical time in NARTM's development as the Bus Inspectors are getting the bit between their teeth and taking us towards the point where we can offer the world some real data about the contents of our collections.

I must say that I had been considering how I might contribute in a more structured way than hitherto to the work of the Association, but the suggestion that I should become President was certainly not what I had bargained for! Still, I had no hesitation in accepting the challenge and I look forward to supporting the NARTM team as we go forward together.

For those who don't know me, I am 68 and have been interested in buses all my life. That interest took me into a career in public transport, from which I retired some four years ago, though I drive PCVs part time for my local operator here in Winchester, Stagecoach.



Our President James in the cab of Southern National 1218 at Kingsbridge, Sept 2022. Image by Cathy Craig



At the launch of 77 biogas powered buses for First West of England at Lawrence Hill, Bristol on 13 February 2020 (just before the lock-down!) with left to right Giles Fearnley (First UK Bus MD) and Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees with James. Photo First WoE



King Alfred Leyland Tiger Cub 104 has been in preservation since 1981. Here it is, performing at a New Year's Running Day 1 January 2020 - Photo by Stephen Bigley

After starting as a bus conductor in 1974, I was lucky enough to get onto the National Bus Company's Senior Management Training Scheme and was sent in 1978 as a trainee to South Wales Transport in Swansea. From there my career developed from one thing to another. My first "command" was as Manager and then Managing Director of NBC-owned Shamrock & Rambler Coaches in Bournemouth. Later, at privatisation, I had the opportunity to lead the highly unusual employee buy-out of Provincial in Fareham, which became People's Provincial Buses.

From there I moved to Badgerline and later had roles in Travel West Midlands, based in Birmingham before moving to Stagecoach, where latterly I was Managing Director of Stagecoach East in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. In 2007 I had the chance to become CEO of municipally-owned Reading Buses, before gravitating to First West of England Ltd, running the buses in Bristol and Bath, the area in which I grew up.

As a youngster I had been fascinated by the unusual buses in Winchester, where I often visited relatives. Early on, I recognised that the independent King Alfred Motor Services was something different and indeed in many ways unique and I came to know it very well, through frequent visits to the city. When the company was taken over by NBC-owned Hants & Dorset in 1973, my school report even mentioned that "we'll probably all be better off from the death of Old Alfred". Of course, the opposite was the case.



As CEO of Reading Buses it was highly unusual, but not unknown, for James to take to the wheel. The last such occasion was a week before he finished, captured here by Brian Coney on 25 September 2014.



At Reading James introduced a significant biogas operation. Here he is at the inauguration of the gas station at Reading's Great Knollys Street depot with Baroness Kramer, Minister of State for Transport

After researching the history of the firm for a book eventually published with my friend and colleague Robert E Jowitt in 1985, inevitably I came across a King Alfred bus in Llanelli while working for South Wales Transport. The purchase of this 1959 Leyland Tiger Cub in 1981 set a path to the formation of the Friends of King Alfred Buses (FoKAB) which this year celebrates its fortieth birthday. The first Running Day came as soon as 1983 and these have become famous over the years as FoKAB has built up a collection of now sixteen vehicles, the oldest of which is a 1929 Leyland Lion.

Over time, I have been involved with other preservation projects, not least the rescue and restoration of a 1961 AEC Bridgemaster from Leicester. In addition to FoKAB I belong to nine other NARTM members. It's worth listing them: The Aldershot & District Bus Interest Group, British Trolleybus Society, East Anglia Transport Museum, Leicester Transport Heritage Trust, London Bus Preservation Trust Ltd, Medstead Depot Omnibus Group, Swansea Bus Museum, The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust and the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft.

I believe that it is essential the bus and coach preservation movement has a strong and united voice and that our Association offers us all the ability to swap knowledge and experience for mutual benefit. I look forward to doing whatever I can to support the officers of NARTM in furthering these aims over the coming years, and to meeting as many of you as I can on the way!

James Freeman



At First West of England, James launched a revolutionary look and feel for buses between Bath and west Wiltshire in 2018. This bus is in front of majestic Bath Abbey. Photo First WoE

NARTM Grant Scheme

As announced at the Autumn Conference, NARTM is to run a scheme to provide small grants of up to £2000 to its members.

The details are set out below in the text of the announcement and have not changed since the previous Newslink. The Application Forms will be sent out during February 2025.

Who will run the Scheme?

NARTM Directors will be in overall control and will make the final decision on awarding grants. A small team of NARTM members' representatives would be needed to help administer the scheme, after the first round. If the NARTM member a director represents applies for funding, that director will not be involved in the relevant decision making process.



Who will be eligible to apply for a grant?

NARTM members who have paid their subscription for the current year and who have been members for at least two full years. Initially at least the scheme will only be open to NARTM members with Charitable status or which are not for profit organisations.

When will the scheme begin and when will grants be awarded?

The scheme will be open for applications twice a year; during March and April and again in October and November. It will have two cut off dates each year, on 30th April and 30th November. The first cut off would be at the end of April 2025 and applicants will be advised of their success or otherwise about six weeks later.

What will be the value of the grants?

Up to £2000 per application and with up to 10 successful applications per round. The grant will cover the cost of VAT on items purchased, if the applicant is not registered - within the maximum grant of £2000.

What will be covered by the grants?

Purchase of specific items of equipment including workshop equipment, archive materials, display equipment, items to improve accessibility to collections.

Funding of training courses for volunteers, including first aid, food hygiene, fire marshal, front of house and media skills.

Specific items needed for vehicle restoration projects, but not overall funding for a project other than in its final stages to assist completion. For projects with a total value of over £2000, £2000 will be the maximum available under this scheme.

In exceptional circumstances, subject to the other criteria being met, grants may be available at shorter notice to cover emergency repairs due to storm damage for example, if those repairs are not covered by pre-existing insurance.

What won't be eligible?

Funding for running costs, stock purchases, salaries, energy costs, overheads and long-term projects.

How to apply?

There is a simple application form to complete to give basic details of your organisation, what you are applying for, how it will benefit your organisation, members or visitors. Use up to a maximum of 200 words in each section. The form and notes will be available early in 2025 in the members' area of the NARTM website.

What next?

Applicants will be advised in a timely manner if they have been successful or not, usually within six weeks of the cut-off date. Evidence of financial security – copies of accounts for example – will be required from successful applicants, once all applications in that round have been considered.

Applicants bank details will then be requested so that the grant can be transferred online to a nominated bank account.

And finally

Once the grant funding has been received, there will normally be a period of up to six months to purchase the relevant items of equipment or undertake training. Within a month of the end of that period, NARTM will require copies of suppliers' invoices to show proof of purchase. We will also need a short report to show what has been achieved as a result of receiving the grant and what it has improved or enabled. Those reports may be published in Newslink and also as NARTM press releases; two or three relevant images should accompany the feedback.

If the project is delayed, the applicant must inform NARTM of the delay.

If the project is not able to go ahead within the specified six month period, then the grant funds must be returned to NARTM.

We hope that this scheme will be of interest and use to almost all NARTM members, subject to the simple conditions set out above. Please apply in the spring and we look forward to assessing plenty of applications.

The Frost Report - by David Sheppard

Just think - if you weren't so heavily involved with old buses, you'd probably be using this edition of *Newslink* to stoke a roaring hearth beside you as you relax, contentedly toasting your toes by the fire...



As it is, I suspect we find you defrosting after another long, winter's day at the museum. Us, too. The winter months have been some of the most productive so far for NARTM's project to score and grade the UK's historic buses and coaches. Somehow resisting all hibernation instincts, 'The Bus Inspectors' have been donning their head torches and coats to more than double their rate of inspections while days are short and cold. Like you, they know that everyone else's off-peak season is actually prime-time for 'getting things done' at bus museums and collections.

Since our last round-up of scoring visits to the **Leicester Transport Heritage Trust, Medstead Depot** and the **British Commercial Vehicle Museum** in Leyland (see *Newslink* 123), 'The Bus Inspectors' have commenced and/or completed scoring at the **North West Vehicle Restoration Trust** in Kirkby; the **Roger Burdett Collection** in Coventry; the **Southdown Omnibus Trust** at Amberley Museum; **Barrow Transport Museum Trust**; the **London Transport Museum's Acton Depot**; the **Hooton Park Bus Owners' collection**; and the **City of Portsmouth Preserved Transport Depot**.... and, by the time this edition of *Newslink* lands, several others will have joined this fast growing list.

As you'll know from your own winter work on vintage buses, it can be a challenge to get out and started in the cold season; but, as well as being productive, the scoring and grading visits usually turn out to be great fun for all concerned. The icy environs of museums and storage facilities in winter have been tempered, without exception, by the warmth of the welcome we have received from representatives who are keen to help us with the project. Those who'd expected an OFSTED-style school inspection



are quickly relieved by what is evidently designed to be a collaborative exercise to evaluate and record the historical importance of the vehicles themselves. Owners, curators and other volunteers are briefed on the aims and criteria of the scoring exercise and actively encouraged to contribute to discussions about the significance of their vehicle(s). There are some aspects of the scoring which can be determined through office-based research using NARTM's definitive database of preserved buses and coaches (for example, is the vehicle a unique survivor of its type?); but there are many other aspects for which the deep, specialist knowledge of owners and museum representatives is invaluable in teasing out the detail which distinguishes one vehicle from any other.

The two most recent sessions I've attended - at Acton in late-November, and at Hooton in mid-January - were both great examples of this collaboration in practice. At Acton, our lead scorer for the day was Paul Statham, accompanied by Peter Pool, his fellow Trustee from Oxford Bus Museum. Paul arrived for the session armed with pages of preliminary research about the vehicles he would be viewing, together with points he wanted to clarify and comparisons he would need to make on the day. We were met by the London Transport Museum's Senior Curator Katariina Mauranen (Kat), who would provide the on-site expertise required to guide Paul through the evaluation of each vehicle in turn.

During this first session at Acton Depot, it was decided to focus mainly on the LTM's comprehensive array of early motorbuses for which Kat's deep knowledge and understanding of the evolution of the London bus would be essential scoring tools. At Acton, this evolution is ably demonstrated by vehicles ranging from B340, a 1911-built example of the London B-Type, through a 1920 London K-Type, to a 1926 NS-Type and beyond.



The task of interpreting, understanding and comparing vehicles built more than a lifetime ago reminds us of the fundamental need for The Bus Inspectors' grading project. The way in which we value history, artefacts in particular, is constantly changing. There are precious few people left in our world, if any, who can remember these early motorbuses in service. They no longer evoke first-hand memories of their service days as they once did when the B-type was first set aside by LGOC for preservation - remarkably, 100 years ago! Aside from their intrinsic appeal and the wonderful experiences they can offer in preservation, their value to society today (and tomorrow) stems largely from the stories they tell, their relationship to the things we do know from our own lives, and their potential to connect us to the past for our greater understanding. As more and more of the nation's preserved buses are now making this transition from living memory into the not-so-relatable past, The Bus Inspectors have a timely mission to evaluate which ones tell the most important stories, both about the evolution of buses and coaches themselves and how they've shaped our world today.



The scoring session at Acton was, for me, testament to the joy of building new associations with older vehicles through tracing their part in the wider story. Inevitably, as a starting point, we are drawn to what they have in common with the buses and coaches to which we do relate. Within the early motorbus collection at Acton, we see familiar design features – enclosed cabs, four-wheel braking, pneumatic tyres – emerging, evolving, in some cases failing, in others becoming standard or even so successful that they have been retrospectively fitted. Suddenly, the more familiar STL, RT and RM-Types look remarkably modern and there is a sense of inevitability about aspects of their design which we might otherwise have thought to be revolutionary. That's context for you!

At Hooton Park, there were other lessons to be learned from scoring the extensive collection. This group of locally-based private owners is among NARTM's newest members, joining shortly after The Bus Inspectors project was publicly launched in 2024 and very enthusiastic about the inclusion of their vehicles. Our project leader, Ray Bignell, worked with scorer Mike Cammack across a cold January weekend to make great inroads into the scoring of this vast collection at its base, shared with the Hooton Park Trust. Our guide was David Jones, himself a new recruit to The Bus Inspectors scoring team but also a leading light among the knowledgeable vehicle owners at Hooton. Like Paul at Acton, Ray had spent many hours preparing for the visit and came armed with his homework.

The collective fleet at Hooton contains vehicles from across the eras with origins all over the UK. Predominantly, there is a very strong and satisfying north-west flavour as many vehicles have local connections to The Wirral, Merseyside, North Wales and Cheshire. It was this aspect I found most striking as an observer of the scoring, since there are many vehicles at Hooton which demonstrate significant regional influences in bus design and evolution. The NARTM scoring system tends to reward vehicles which were nationally 'more typical' (on the sound basis that, if you imagine trying to represent the evolution of the bus using a very small number of vehicles, the 'more typical' specimens would tend to be more useful than the one-offs). But, among the many other scoring criteria, the system also recognises the importance of 'regional



Andy Hamer kindly provided lunchtime transport at Hooton with his 'DOG'.

significance'. This allows for the fact that buses are, by their very nature, local - and those which are not typical on a national scale may nonetheless hold a very particular significance to where they were built and/or operated - and therefore to the wider bus story. A BMMO-built vehicle is a clear example; it may not be typical of bus designs across the UK, but the contributions made by BMMO to British bus development would certainly be worthy of recognition in any telling of the story.

Several 'regionally significant' examples at Hooton relate to small independent and municipal operators such as Stalybridge, Hyde, Mossley & Dukinfield Transport Board (yes, that is a single



operator, and henceforth we'll refer to it as SHMD!). Their fleet is well represented at Hooton by a centre-door Daimler CVG6, a single-deck Atkinson Alpha, also with a centre door, and a Northern Counties bodied Bristol RE. In these basic descriptions alone, the vehicles are far from nationally typical; but they admirably demonstrate the idiosyncrasies of SHMD and indeed, the degree to which local management of such operators had the freedom to experiment and implement ideas in which they believed. The centre doors of the Daimler and the Atkinson were a bold attempt to speed up boarding and alighting (which looks good on paper, but was less effective in practice), while both the Atkinson and the RE were built to cater for large numbers of standees, the local vision for how bus transport should be done. Experiments like this did, indeed, happen all over the country, and whilst the ideas they trialled (and in some cases laboured!) may not always have caught on, both they and their protagonists have a place in the story of the bus. We'll be picking up the theme in a future episode of The Bus Inspectors podcast.



Which reminds me, before I let you get back to your Swarfega, our fifth episode of the The Bus Inspectors podcast is now in production, due for launch in early March. As well as following the scoring and grading project itself, the podcast so far has tackled many topical issues which underline why we're doing it - the changing interests of the generations, the need for succession planning in our movement, the difficulties of storing preserved buses and coaches, the value of names and traditions in today's bus industry - to name but a few. When you get to catch up with Episode 4, launched over Christmas, you'll hear about the challenges of preserving more modern vehicles, and the resulting gaps which many of our museums will recognise. There's also a look at how others use grading in order to prioritise their heritage, with Tim Hedley-Jones from the Railway Heritage Trust. Plus, there's a chance to hear deliberations behind the scenes during our scoring visits to Amberley and Acton... Listen now, for free, at TheBusInspectors.com (also available on Apple podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, etc.)



NARTM SPRING CONFERENCE

Saturday 29th March 2025

This year's Spring Conference will be hosted by the Eastern Transport Collection, who are based in Hellesdon, near Norwich. The venue for the conference will be the Wensum Valley Golf and Country Club.

Overnight accommodation at the Wensum Valley Golf and Country Club has been arranged at a discounted rate for NARTM members. This is only available by phoning the hotel, using the number which will be confirmed in a separate notice of meeting to be sent out about the same time as this magazine arrives. An evening meal with a limited menu choice will be available on the Saturday and details will be on the booking form which will be sent out separately.

The Saturday programme will begin at 10am with a trip on one of the Eastern Transport Collection's buses from the Club to their base, which is about 15 minutes' drive away.

We will return to the Club in time for a buffet lunch from 12.15 and the Conference will begin at 1pm.

There will be a presentation by the ETC about their recent change to becoming a CIC and also about their recent move to Hellesdon. Discussion sessions focussing on sourcing vehicle spares and funding will be part of the afternoon programme.

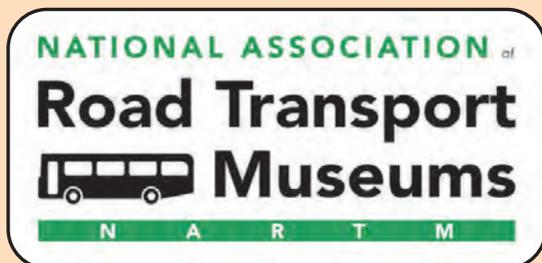
After the Conference there will be an evening meal for NARTM members and guests

Unfortunately, while the facilities and rooms are excellent, the Wi-Fi signal strength is not good so we will not be able to offer a chance to join by Zoom this time.

On the Sunday morning a trip from the Club to the Eastern Counties bus garage near Norwich to view their new fleet of electric buses and to have a talk about how the new buses have been introduced into service.

Full details along with directions and a Booking Form will be sent shortly and we look forwards to welcoming you to the meeting.

Dave Stubbins



From other magazines

From 'Enterprise', the magazine of the Isle of Wight Bus and Coach Museum

We must always be prepared to adapt and try out new ideas in order to raise extra income. One such idea was a one day end of season event which they called 'WinterRyder'. Luckily it proved to be very popular with many more visitors than expected. Bus trips were provided from within their own collection, and they were particularly pleased to attract a different type of audience, no doubt prompted by the stall-holders, Santa's Grotto or listening to the 'Scottish Fiddlers'.

Following keenness from the front of house and café teams, the Museum experimented with opening each Thursday and Sunday up to Christmas, on a reduced hours basis. So far it has proved to be well worth while during November. However, a later notes says the winter opening trial finished at the end of November. Always worth trying new ideas.

From 'MDOG', the newsletter of the Medstead Depot Omnibus Group

There is welcome news of quite a lot of maintenance work taking place on the buses at Medstead and much of it has been in conjunction with James Eastwood of Troopers Lodge in Gloucestershire.

The latest magazine pays a fitting tribute to Tim Stubbs, who has recently celebrated sixty years since he bought his Aldershot and District Dennis lance K3, no 145. On 5th November, Tim took 145 back to its former home at Totton near Southampton with a group of friends. Tim is of course well-known to NARTM as the creator of our database of buses and coaches and it was good to hear from him over Christmas and to see him still very much involved with 145 and his other buses.

From the Albion Magazine

The Albion Club attended the Albion Automotive works in Scotstoun, Glasgow on 3rd October 2024, the day before production ceased and almost 125 years since the Albion Motor Car Company began production The Club took the magazine editor's Albion LH463 for a final photo with some of the final members of staff. A sad day.

From 'KBMT News', the magazine of the Keighley Bus Museum Trust

Having purchased their Riverside building, members are getting to grips with the backlog of property maintenance and are moving spares from the main floor into new racking in the undercrofts, which is all good housekeeping. New lighting is being installed and members are invited to 'sponsor a light', at £30 a time. They are also making some impressive progress with the vehicles on site.

From 'Wheels', the magazine of Leicester Transport Heritage Trust

Another group sorting spares into racking, now said to be 80% completed. A time consuming part of this has been constructing padded racking for glass storage. They are also working on a number of Leicester buses and offsite, a contractor has almost completed the body framework for their 1956 Leyland Tiger Cub and it looks very impressive.

From 'Terminus', the magazine of the Eastern Transport Collection

Yet more progress on vehicles to report here. The group have bought a set of nearly new vehicle lifts which will help progress when they are have arrived and training has taken place. An unreliable Perkins 6.354 engine from their LH537 was rebuilt but promptly seized up. A replacement engine was found with Roger Burdett's help and also a firm who can overhaul it. Another stroke of luck was that a different engineering firm offered to rebuild the first engine free of charge as a project for their apprentices. Win Win!

THE BUS INSPECTORS

“It’s lifting the lid off something none of us have dared talk about so far...”

LEON DANIELS OBE



Episode Four - Spanners to Keyboards

36 min [Latest Episode](#)

What does the future hold for our bus museums and collections? The Bus Inspectors uncover the challenges of preserving our modern bus history and hear why there are some gaps in our national...



Episode Three - Names and Traditions

38 min

How important is heritage to today's bus industry? The Bus Inspectors are joined by Andrew Wickham and Anthony Delaine-Smith, two respected figures in contemporary bus operation, to discuss heritage...



Episode Two - Old Barns to Brooklands

36 min

Where would you keep a vintage bus? We follow the human journey of bus preservation from 1950s' teens with buses kept in old barns, to today's purpose-built transport museums. The Bus Inspectors me...



Episode One - The Nation's Historic Fleet

35 min

The UK boasts 10,000 historic buses and coaches, each with stories to tell - but can they all live on forever? The Bus Inspectors are joined by Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill and guests to discuss the...

Hear the first four episodes of our podcast at

TheBusInspectors.com



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