

Company Registration Number: 05035702
Registered Charity Number: 1125980

THE THAMES VALLEY AND GREAT WESTERN OMNIBUS TRUST

(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a share capital)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
UNAUDITED

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
28 FEBRUARY 2023

THE THAMES VALLEY AND GREAT WESTERN OMNIBUS TRUST

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

COMPANY INFORMATION – TRUSTEES, DIRECTORS and PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

Year ended 28 February 2023

Directors / Trustees	Dr C J Billington Dr H M Bolt P M Delaney G G Green D T Sheppard P Snowden M J Williams
Company Secretary	Dr H M Bolt
Company Number	05035702
Charity Number	1125980
Principal/ Registered Office	Ledger Farm Forest Green Road, Fifield Maidenhead SL6 2NR
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank plc Lloyds Commercial National Clubs & Charities Centre PO Box 1000 BX1 1LT Flagstone Group Limited (investment platform) Clareville House 26-27 Oxendon Street London SW1Y 4EL
Insurance Brokers:	TH March Insurance Brokers (Museum and event insurance) Hare Park House Yelverton PL20 7LS Tollgate Private Clients (Vehicle insurance) Tollgate House 96 Market Place Romford RM1 3ER
Independent Examiner:	T W Bennett CALIBF 16 Manor Close Bradford Abbas Sherborne Dorset DT9 6RN

THE THAMES VALLEY AND GREAT WESTERN OMNIBUS TRUST

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

Year ended 28 February 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual directors' report together with the financial statements of the Trust for the year ending 28 February 2023 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Report Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) effective 1 January 2015.

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Status

The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust is a company limited by guarantee, having no share capital and registered in England & Wales on 5 February 2004. Each of the members is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 towards the assets of the company in the event of liquidation. It is a registered charity. The charity was incorporated on 22 September 2008 and is bound by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. In their letter of 8 December 2009, HM Revenue & Customs accepted The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust as a charity for tax purposes under reference XT21974 from 30 August 2008.

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the first Trustees & Directors were those persons notified to Companies House as the first directors of the Charity. All three Directors were willing to continue beyond the first Annual General Meeting. A fourth Director joined the Board on 13 February 2013 and a fifth on 21 March 2019. As subscribers to the memorandum, both also became members. Two of the first Trustees & Directors remain in post. The third's appointment was terminated as required by the Articles of Association and he ceased being a member, Trustee or Director on 27 June 2020.

The existing Directors can appoint a person who is willing to act to be a Director either to fill a vacancy or as an additional Director. One new Trustee & Director was appointed on 4 December 2020 with two further appointments on 23 January 2022. At the end of the period, the Trust therefore had seven Trustees & Directors, two of whom are first subscribers and two others are also members. With the increasing scale of charitable activity, the Board intends to appoint additional Trustees & Directors as suitable persons are identified.

The Trust's Articles of Association were formally modified on 13 and 23 November 2022 and approved by Companies House and the Charity Commission. The first changes permit virtual and hybrid meeting formats, if required, and the second provide for proxy representation and voting at meetings.

Principal Activity

The company was dormant until December 2009 but has been active since, working in furtherance of its objects.

Charity's Aims and Objectives

The principal object of The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust (TV&GWOT/the Trust) is:

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- To advance the education of the public in the history of public road passenger transport and in particular in the history of those companies and types of vehicles operated through the Thames Valley and Great Western road transport corridors

In furtherance of this object the Trust powers include:

- a) establishing and preserving for posterity a representative selection of passenger service vehicles within the Thames Valley and Great Western road transport corridors;
- b) enhancing this collection by providing secure long-term accommodation for other historic vehicles, principally those with connections to the Thames Valley region;
- c) facilitating public access to the collection;
- d) providing a focus for retention, development and training for students of all ages in the traditional crafts and specialist skills required for restoration and maintenance of the vehicles and associated relics; and
- e) raising funds (but not undertaking any substantial permanent trading activity and only in compliance with any relevant statutory regulations).

REVIEW OF THE YEAR & PUBLIC BENEFIT REPORT

At the start of the year the Trust owned the following **vehicles**:

- Four unrestored First World War period vehicles including a 1912 AEC B type which had passed to the National Omnibus & Transport Company in 1922 and then was transferred to Taunton to inaugurate a tramway replacement town bus service.
- DBL154 – a 1946 Thames Valley Traction Co. Bristol K6A double deck bus No. 446.
- NDP38R – a 1976 Reading Transport Bristol VRT/LL3 double deck bus No. 38.
- MO9324 – a 1927 Thames Valley Traction Co. Tilling-Stevens B9 single deck bus No. 152.
- LTA995 – a 1953 Southern National Omnibus Co. Bristol KSW6B double deck bus No. 1852.
- FMO938 – a 1950 Thames Valley Traction Co. Bristol LL6B single deck bus No. 556.
- LTA893 – a 1951 Royal Blue Bristol LL6B coach No. 1264.

An additional vehicle was donated to the Trust on 13 June 2022 by a Trust Supporter. It was accepted on the basis that all its restoration, maintenance and storage costs will be covered under a formal agreement with a benefactor who came forward to sponsor the acquisition.

- 974AFJ – a 1960 Exeter Corporation Guy Arab IV double deck bus No. 74 which later passed to Devon General and in 1971 to Western National Omnibus Co. as No. 274.

At the start of the year the Trust had on long-term loan from Trust Chairman, Dr Colin Billington, eleven significant historic vehicles relevant to the Thames Valley and Great Western region. The standard terms of loan agreements mean the owner remains responsible for funding storage, insurance, restoration and general operational costs. The loan vehicles comprise:

- YF714, a 1927 former Great Western Railway Road Motors Guy FBB, 32-seat, single deck bus No.1268 (on loan 1 November 2009 for 10 Year term, extended for a further 10 Year term until October 2029).

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- VW203, a 1927 former National Omnibus and Transport Co. Leyland PLSC3 Lion single deck bus No. 2407 (on loan 1 November 2009 for 10 Year term, extended for a further 10 Year term until October 2029).
- RU8805 – a 1929 Royal Blue AEC Reliance coach No. 3615, originally operated by Elliott Bros (Bournemouth) Ltd and being the only surviving vehicle from the Elliott era and the only surviving AEC Reliance (on loan 1 November 2011 for 10 Year term, extended for a further 10 Year term until November 2031).
- FTA634 – a 1941 Western National Omnibus Co. Bristol K5G double deck bus No. 345 (on loan 1 November 2011 for 10 Year term, extended for a further 10 Year term until November 2031).
- JUO992 – a 1947 Southern National Omnibus Co. Leyland PD1A double deck bus No. 2932 (on loan 1 November 2011 for 10 Year term, extended for a further 10 Year term until November 2031).
- BOD25C – a 1965 Western National Omnibus Co. Bristol FLF6B double deck bus No. 2065 (on loan 1 November 2011 for 10 Year term, extended for a further 10 Year term until November 2031).
- MOD973 – a 1952 Royal Blue Bristol LS6G coach No. 1286 (on loan 15 November 2015 for 10 Year term)
- EDV555D – a 1966 Southern/Western National Bristol SUL4A single deck bus No. 692 (on loan from 12 November 2016 for 10 Year term)
- OTA290G – a 1969 Western National Bristol VRT/SL6G double deck bus No. 1056 (on loan from 1 January 2017 for 10 Year term)
- FDV790V – a 1979 Western National Bristol LHS6L single deck bus No. 1560 (on loan from 1 January 2017 for 10 Year term).
- LTA748 – a 1950 Royal Blue Bedford OB coach No. 1409 (on loan 9 November 2019 for 10 Year term).

An additional vehicle was put on loan by the Trust Chairman in October 2022:

- 519BTA – a 1960 Western National Omnibus Co. Bristol FS6G double deck bus No. 1967 (on loan from 1 October 2022 for a 10 Year term).

The majority of the loan collection vehicles are under active restoration enabling the range of skills involved at various stages to be demonstrated to visitors. Two of these are projects being led by volunteer working groups. Four are on the road and have been used to give passenger rides at a variety of public events and been on display throughout the year.

As a collection, the vehicles span the Trust's region of operation and a 57-year period of manufacture from 1912 to 1979. As a result, they also represent a range of technologies giving an invaluable basis for heritage skills retention and training during their restoration and operation. During the year volunteer opportunities for restoration involved vehicles from the 1920s through to the 1960s (VW203, RU8805, FTA634, JUO992, LTA748, BOD25C, 519BTA). In addition to public access to the workshops as work progresses, the acquisition of restored and operational vehicles by the Trust (DBL154, NDP38R, MO9324 and FMO938), the completion of restoration of vehicles on long term loan (YF714, MOD973, EDV555D) and the availability of operational vehicles also on long term loan (OTA290G, FDV790V) has enabled the Trust to develop an intensive programme of appearances at its own and others' public historic road transport events across the region.

Other support underpinning the Trust's activities includes the Trust Chairman's commitment to make the museum facility (archive, gallery and display area) at his West Country home available to the Trust free of charge to host Trust events and displays. Similarly, facilities at his base in the

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Thames Valley, including siting of the former Thames Valley Traction Co.'s Maidenhead waiting room and ticket office and the use of former offices for archive storage and research, are available without cost for volunteer activity and to host public visits.

With the pandemic restrictions on movement and gatherings receding and the confidence of individuals to mix and organisations to plan activities returning, the Trust approached the 2022-23 year with optimism. Trustees recognised the importance of re-engaging Supporters to enthuse them and to enlist their energy to undertake the many tasks that keep the organisation running and able to educate the public in the history of Thames Valley, Great Western and successor companies.

To this end Supporters were invited to a series of **Supporter Open Days** at the Trust's Devon and Berkshire premises on **5 March and 26 & 27 March** respectively. Some 108 Supporters participated over the three days and were brought up to date with archive, vehicle, administration and event activities and opportunities for involvement as they were taken on tours around the premises. The days included lunch and the chance for Supporters to catch up with one another as well as a trip out on Trust vehicles over Gara Bridge in Devon and through Windsor and the Great Park in Berkshire. There was the opportunity to review the archive cine film recently digitised from Mike Stephens's collection. Each day concluded with a group discussion where Supporters were able to contribute ideas and suggestions as to how the Trust can expand and strengthen its work.

The **Supporters' Group** has continued to flourish with 34 new Supporters coming on board through the 2022-23 year. This is a significant inflow with many joining at events and/or seeking access to Trust publications like *To and fro*' (including back numbers).

Engagement of Trust Supporters as volunteers in **vehicle restoration and maintenance working groups** is growing, with an expanded cohort and twice-weekly sessions in Berkshire. Similarly the **archive working groups** are making significant progress.

The archive and small object collections of the Trust are held at locations in Devon and Berkshire, with any duplicate items held at both sites for security and ease of access for researchers. The work to identify, sort and catalogue additions to the archives is undertaken by volunteer teams of supporters. Archive activity in Berkshire was set back at the start of the 2022-23 year because of structural repairs to the archive office (necessitated by damage in storm Eunice on 18 February) precluded on-site work until mid-Summer.

In the year under review, six people took part in the work in Devon, which has met monthly, a total of 273 volunteer hours, whilst in Berkshire there are 10 in the team, who have met three-weekly, a total of 608 hours on site. Not all of the team are able to attend on every occasion, so some volunteers also undertake work off site, amounting to some 900 additional volunteer hours in the year concerned. The supporter teams cover a range of expertise (including a professional librarian) and specialist knowledge which is used to help in the detailed work.

Further donations have been received by the Trust at both locations, whilst work also continues to catalogue some of the larger collections received during the pandemic period. These include photographs, documents (including those that were public issue and those used internally by the originating companies), manufacturer's service manuals, various journals, newsletters and periodicals, etc), books and artefacts.

The archive collection is also becoming more widely known, and researchers are encouraged to make use of the collections by means of a personal visit or, for those for whom that is not practical, by means of questions to the relevant team. The resources available are also frequently used to assist in preparing the Trust's publications.

The Trust's registration on **The National Archives ARCHON database** (Code 3565) is an important step in raising its profile and accessibility. In addition Trustees have attended National Archives' seminars on the use of their Manage Your Collections facility in Discovery as a readily accessible starting point for third party online access.

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External enquiries have come through for example from a researcher interested in a specific collection he knew to be held in the Trust's Berkshire archive and in Devon from a Councillor interested in drawings and photographs of Kingsbridge Bus Station from which to develop a historical display of the quayside site from the 1930s to the present day. Four graphic panels were designed by TV&GWOT giving historical detail and were installed on the bus shelter in January 2023 attracting positive local and national transport industry press coverage.

A key element of accessibility is the recording and cataloguing of the collection in a manner that is consistent across the Trust locations and in line with Sector standards for accreditation. Policy and procedure development and systems to utilise secure, centralised digital storage has progressed further and remains a priority in the 2023-24 period.

If the Trust receives material that is surplus to requirements - either because it already holds copies at both sites, or because the items fall outside the Trust's remit – with the donor's agreement they can be offered for sale to raise funds towards the purchase of archival quality storage and preservation materials, or where appropriate, other archive items. The team in Devon has a particular expertise in cataloguing, listing and preparing for sale surplus donated models, and during the period under review these raised £947 from sales at the events in Penzance, Didcot, Taunton, Kingsbridge, Victoria Coach Station and Showbus described below.

A full programme of events took place through the 2022 summer season. There were some challenges due to competing events (not just within the transport heritage sector) as many individuals and organisations tried to reinstate plans thwarted for two years by the pandemic. The significant increase in fuel prices combined with the rising cost of living have been a matter of concern, but the Trust has been encouraged by the enthusiasm and generosity of owners to bring their vehicles considerable distances at their own expense to participate in events and similarly for enthusiasts and the wider public to come along.

In addition to its normal **vintage bus day events giving public rides**, the Trust took on a major programme of activities with **Victoria Coach Station to mark its 90th anniversary**. An official event to mark the anniversary, a running day, a static display and the production of a book to chart the history to date have placed significant additional demand on Trustees but have raised the Trust's profile with new audiences. With new publications and surplus material from the archive supplementing the Trust's sales stock, opportunities have been taken to attend third party events with a sales stand, widening awareness of the Trust in other regions.

The **chronology of Trust events and events attended by the Trust** through the year is as follows:

- **Friday 10th March 2022** marked 90 years to the day since the Grand Opening of Victoria Coach Station (VCS) and TfL officials, VCS staff and representatives of the principal coach operators using VCS, gathered to reflect on the hundreds of millions of people who have passed through the nation's coaching hub over the decades whether as passengers, coach drivers or staff keeping VCS operational day and night, 365 days a year. TV&GWOT organised an accompanying display of heritage coaches from the 1950s, including Trust Chairman's Royal Blue Bristol LL No. 1250, which were positioned alongside National Express's most modern Scania Caetano Levante 3 coach. Andy Byford (as Transport for London Commissioner) addressed the assembled crowd launching the **VCS90 year of celebrations**, accompanied by Andy Lord (Chief Operating Officer), Liam Wilson (Coach Station Manager) and Louise Cheeseman (Director of Buses).
- The **Penzance running day on Sunday 17th April 2022** returned to a passenger-carrying format after the fly-by adopted in 2021 to comply with COVID restrictions. 30 buses and coaches were entered and together provided 5268 free passenger journeys to local residents, enthusiasts and visitors staying in the area for the Easter weekend. The event, organised jointly with the Cornwall Bus Preservation Society, had a souvenir programme with an 18-page feature charting changes in buses and coaches around West Cornwall

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over 100 and more years as depicted in postcards since the turn of the 19th century. It also provided an account of the CBPS restoration of a Bedford YRQ to represent the local Grenville Motors fleet and included an original Modern Cornish Bus Driver's Song by Gray Lightfoot, an amusing take on Gilbert & Sullivan's Pirates of Penzance. Bus, rail and other local businesses supported the event with advertising providing encouragement for the renewed viability of these activities. TV&GWOT Trustees and Supporters took eight vehicles from the Trust's Devon base. Trust Supporters took advantage of the holiday weekend to join TV&GWOT and CBPS on a tour of the West Cornwall peninsula on the former Service 300 route.

- Given the importance of recognising the Thames Valley Traction Co. Ltd centenary which fell during the pandemic, and with the major part of restoration of the Trust's Thames Valley vehicles complete, the Trust entered all three of its Thames Valley vehicles for the **HCVS London to Brighton Run on 8th May 2022**. The vehicles parked together at the beginning and end of the day and travelled in succession making an impactful display for photographers and bystanders of the Thames Valley heritage and TV&GWOT's preservation achievements. This was the first outing for the newly restored Bristol LL6B No. 556 to which Supporters had contributed financially and with substantial volunteer effort, and some 40 Supporters joined the iconic London-Brighton run.
- On **Sunday 15th May 2022**, Trust Chairman's Western National Bristol FLF No. 1969 took a party of Supporters from South Devon to the **Taunton Vintage Bus Running Day** organised by Trustee Peter Snowden. 1969 ran services between the event base at Sheppy's Cider to both Wellington and Bishops Lydeard (the inland terminus of the West Somerset Railway), in total carrying some 284 passengers while a sales stand generated a useful level of income (until the rain came).
- Joint working with the Great Western Society, a feature of pre-pandemic operations, resumed for the **Didcot Transport Rally and Vintage Bus Running Day on 22nd May 2022**. Trust Supporter, Jonathan Radley, led the organisation and coordination of 22 buses and coaches which combined a static display with free passenger carrying services on former GWR Road Motors' routes to Wallingford, Wantage, Upton & Blewbury and Abingdon. In addition a shuttle service was operated between the station and heritage railway entrance and the rally site in Ladygrove Park so that in total some 2990 passenger journeys were given. The souvenir programme included a feature illustrated with photographs and postcards depicting GWR Road Motors' vehicles across TV&GWOT's principal territories demonstrating the links between GWR and the Trust's scope, focusing particularly in on the GWR Guy No. 1268 on long-term loan to the Trust's collection. This was the first outing in passenger carrying service for the Trust's trio of Thames Valley vehicles (Tilling Stevens No. 152, Bristol K6A 446 and Bristol LL6B 556). They were accompanied by Trust owned Reading Bristol VRT No. 38, Royal Blue LS6G No. 1286 on long-term loan, and Trust Chairman's Western National Duple 425 No. 2240, with Supporters also entering their own vehicles.
- The **Royal Blue Run from Friday 17th to Sunday 19th June 2022** commenced with a Grand Departure from Victoria Coach Station as a feature of the VCS90 celebrations. Some 16 coaches with 60 or more people travelling as passengers or crew, participated in some or all of the 3-day event which reached compass points from London in the East, Birmingham in the North, Gloucester in the East and Portsmouth in the South. The run was an intricate combination of joint Royal Blue/ Greyhound, Associated Motorways, Elliott Bros era, and Tourist (later Royal Blue) routes. Remarkably only short stretches had been covered in any of the 20 previous runs underlining just how extensive the coaching network once was. On Friday the run ended just short of Birmingham and on the second day went into the city passing Digbeth Coach Station, the home of National Express celebrating 50 years of 'white' National coaches in 2022. The fleet of coaches stopped at Gloucester's

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Historic Docks for a mid-day break and the run concluded on Sunday at Fawley Hill near Henley-on-Thames, home to the steam railway and memorabilia accumulated for posterity by the late Sir William McAlpine, courtesy of Lady Judy and the Fawley Hill Railway Society. Many photographers captured the vintage coaching scene along the way, sharing images online via social media amplifying the public engagement.

- On **Sunday 26th June 2022**, TV&GWOT contributed to the vintage bus display at **Reading Buses' Open Day** taking its former preserved VRT No. 38 which was new to Reading Buses in 1979 as well as Thames Valley LL No. 556 to showcase the restoration work undertaken by the Trust. The event raised funds for local homeless charity *New Beginnings*. Eight Supporters travelled to the event from TV&GWOT's base but many tens more were at the event and congregated at the Trust's sales stand, which provided an important local opportunity for keeping in touch as well as recruiting new Supporters and distributing educational material.
- **The Thames Valley Traction Co. (TVTCo.) centenary celebration** was thwarted by COVID restrictions in 2020 and then again a year on in 2021. Sadly plans for a large-scale event in Maidenhead for the Centenary+2 also had to be withdrawn when it became clear that there were insufficient visiting vehicles (given so many competing demands at the time) for confidence that the level of service available would be adequate to match demand. The disappointment was assuaged to an extent by a tour for Supporters of former Thames Valley depots using Bristol K6A 446 and LL6B 556. Some 42 Supporters took up the invitation with others adopting important photographer roles at picturesque points along the route. The Fifield archive team drew on its resources to chart authentic routes and extract former Thames Valley depot records for the accompanying souvenir publication. Articles by Thames Valley historian and Trust Supporter, Paul Lacey, documented the route network as it existed when Thames Valley Traction Co. operations began in 1920 and tabulated its evolution through to 1970. A leaflet produced in-house for passengers was later developed into a booklet publication to provide a permanent record with additional content recording the work to restore and maintain the Trust's Thames Valley vehicles. This booklet was professionally printed bringing revenue in on the Trust stand and via sales online.
- A **VCS90 running day** operated on **Sunday 24th July 2022** with a mix of vintage coaches (co-ordinated by TV&GWOT) operating west from VCS to Hammersmith Broadway alongside more modern Airbus service vehicles and RT and RM buses plying between VCS and the Aldwych for the London Transport Museum (co-ordinated by London Bus Museum with whom TV&GWOT worked in cooperation). The focus was on an authentic VCS experience for passengers and crews and the event was extremely successful and resulted in extensive social media coverage across diverse groups. All but one of the vintage coaches (a 1951 East Kent Leyland) were supplied by TV&GWOT Trustees and Supporters. The Trust also had a marquee and sales stand within VCS for the launch of the new book authored by TV&GWOT Chairman, Colin Billington – *VCS90 – A Celebration*. As well as the history of the coach station depicted in pictures from the London Coastal Coaches Collection held by the Bus Archive and reproduced with permission, the book included photographs of the scene in 1962 and associated with rail strikes in 1982 taken by a former employee. In addition, specific TV&GWOT themes such as the development of Express Services between the Thames Valley and London VCS and the changing colours and shape of coaches serving the West Country over the decades were featured. Popular on the day, the book has gone on to be well reviewed and has continued to raise income for the Trust at events and through online sales through the year. By the end of the year to 28 February 2023, some 342 copies had been sold.
- On **Saturday 20th August 2022** LT Routemaster buses made their annual pilgrimage to **Imber**, a village on Salisbury Plain abandoned by decree during World War II and taken

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over by the military for essential wartime purposes. Remarkably the event proceeded despite the obstacle of a rail strike facing visitors who normally arrive via Warminster station. TV&GWOT was consulted as part of the organisers' efforts to secure long-distance coach feeder services instead, although not having an Operator's license meant the Trust could not participate in a commercial service. The Trust was however invited to take Royal Blue LS No. 1286 across the Plain to Imber, a first for a preserved coach, carrying Trust Supporters. This was a fascinating excursion and gave the opportunity for the Trust to have a sales stand while also benefitting from a generous charitable donation from the organisers from this one-off format for the event.

- The **Kingsbridge Vintage Bus Running Day on 17th September 2022** saw the town return to a bustling hub for some 37 buses and coaches providing free services to locals and visitors to coast and country villages across the South Hams. 6112 passenger journeys almost reached pre-pandemic levels with a record 129 dogs carried. The souvenir programme, so popular it sold out on the day, included a 23-page feature about the Bristol-marque buses operated by the local bus & coach company Tally Ho through its history. The many photographs give glimpses of the local scene across the decades. Collaborations were renewed with the owners of Loddiswell Station who sold refreshments in aid of the local Explorer Scout Unit and with the Coleridge Community Bus, an independent service connecting remote residents to the East of Kingsbridge Estuary with the town, to which a donation was made. The event benefits from dedicated support from volunteers preparing vehicles over many days in the run-up to the event and an excursion on the Sunday to Dartmouth by bus & coach included a trip on the Kingswear ferry and Dart Valley Steam Railway so they could relax and reflect on the success of their efforts promoting the Trust and generating revenue for its wider programme of preservation and restoration.
- A **static display of vintage coaches at VCS on Saturday 24th September** was the culmination of the VCS90 celebrations. The spectacle of coaches drawn from across England, Scotland and Wales filled four of the principal running bays at VCS enabling visitors to admire the vehicles at close quarters and marvel at the lavish interiors conjuring memories of bygone travel. The event followed just days after the funeral of the Late Queen Elizabeth which had necessitated an unprecedented closure of the coach station due to road closures and relocation of services to satellite hubs. Despite this onerous recent workload on staff, the static display was accommodated with their usual hospitality ensuring the public and many retired staff, who travelled to the event from across the country to enjoy the day of nostalgia, were not disappointed. TV&GWOT organised 15 coaches to attend dating from 1947 to 1988, liaising with TfL's coach station staff and producing an event brochure sold alongside the Trust's commemorative VCS90 book. Within the display was Royal Blue Bristol LS No. 1286 on long-term loan to the Trust alongside Trust Chairman Colin Billington's Royal Blue Bristol LL No. 1250 and National Express Rapide Western National Duple 425, No. 2240.
- **Sunday 25th September 2022** was the 50th **Showbus** gathering and was held at the Hertfordshire County Showground. Traditionally the largest gathering of vintage buses and coaches in the country, the organisers were particularly keen for vehicles seen at the earliest shows to return. The Trust therefore took Thames Valley Bristol K6A No. 446 as it made regular appearances when originally in the custody of Ward Jones, now a Trust Supporter and from whom TV&GWOT acquired the vehicle. Given the nationwide participation, the Trust also had a stand in the commercial area and advertised within the programme drawing attention to the Trust and the new VCS90 book which was sold alongside surplus archive stock and memorabilia.
- **Sunday 30th October 2022** was the final Flowers Hill Depot Open Day for the year organised by the **Bristol Vintage Bus Group** many members of which also support TV&GWOT with vehicles and event preparation. The Trust reciprocated its support taking

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a sales stand for the indoor market area. The dual focus was to keep the Trust's profile in the eye of those with allied bus and coach interests while also promoting the VCS90 book

Metrics to measure success in pre-pandemic years can be re-examined in 2022-3. In terms of: (a) **passenger journeys** for members of the public carried on vintage bus services by Trust vehicles or on vehicles attending Trust events – 16,927 in 2022-23 compares with 24,758 in 2019-20; (b) for the number of **(vehicle) days** Trust and Trustees' vehicles participating in TV&GWOT events were on the road on public display - 236 vehicle days in 2022-23 compares with 262 in 2019-20; and (c) the associated **mileage** covered – 18,285 miles in 2022-23 compares with 19,731 miles in 2019-20. The differing nature and number of events in the two periods accounts for the differences.

Other measures include the sale of some 1,150 **programmes** (at £4-6) at Penzance, Didcot, and Kingsbridge events containing articles of historic interest compared with over 1,700 in 2019-20 (when there was an additional Tavistock event) and some 342 sales (£15) of the TV&GWOT **VCS90 book**, where 250 copies of TV&GWOT's Reading Motorbus centenary **book** (£12.95) were sold in 2019-20. Sales of the latter are ongoing including 19 in the 2022-23 year indicating a continuing modest ongoing revenue stream from Trust publications.

While measures through 2022-23 were not at the levels seen pre-pandemic, this reflects a degree of caution on the Trustees part, in the extent of print runs and the level of event promotion to ensure arrangements remained manageable and COVID safe. By the year end, however, the Trustees were confident that the 2022-23 performance gave a sound basis for future growth and evidenced the resurgence in public interest in TV&GWOT activity post-pandemic.

Vehicle restoration work continued throughout the 2022-23 year as described below:

- MO9324 – 1927 Thames Valley Traction Co. Tilling-Stevens B9 No. 152 – Starting/running issues were investigated and tackled with some work on the Autovac and attention to a carburettor defect. Packing of selector springs in the gearbox stabilised issues with reverse gear. Fan belt adjustments and work on spark plugs improved running / reducing mis-firing. Work to improve seat fixing and floor covering/mouldings was undertaken. A larger steering wheel, as probably fitted originally, was sourced and installed to improve driver control.
- RU8805 – 1929 AEC Reliance No. 3615 – A support system for rear of the engine and clutch housing was developed. A new driver's seat was manufactured. Roof opening vent gear, roof cove panels and air vents progressed.
- VW203 – 1927 Leyland PLSC3 Lion No. 2407 – Advertising boards were sign written, exterior painting completed and internal timber finishers installed. Cracks in the cylinder head and block were repaired and heat treated in preparation for the engine to be re-assembled.
- BOD25C – 1965 Bristol FLF6B No. 2065 – An opportunity arose to obtain new tyres, tubes and flaps to fit to the vehicle.
- LTA748 – 1950 Bedford OB No. 1409 – Extensive work undertaken by volunteers includes:
 - Preparation and painting of the chassis, rear axle, rear springs and front bulkhead as well as the engine, gearbox, water pump, fan, exhaust manifold and prop-shaft and refitting as required.
 - Fuel pump overhauled and refitted to engine.
 - Dynamo, starter motor and carburettor overhauled, tested and refitted.
 - Full overhaul, refitting and testing of rear wheel hubs and hydraulic braking system.
 - Fuel tank painted and new fuel sender unit fitted. Tank bolted to chassis.
 - New tyres, inner-tubes and flaps assembled.

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- FMO938 – 1950 Bristol LL6B No. 556 – The exterior restoration was completed early in the 2022-23 period with signwriting comprising fleet names and numbers, and legal lettering. Curved seat back panels were formed and the seats were re-trimmed and fitted.
- DBL154 – 1946 Bristol K6A No. 446 – Starting issues were resolved by refurbishing the starter motor. The front nearside body pillar showing signs of distress was removed and replaced with a completely new pillar. Repairs were made to the upper deck front dome and all affected areas were reinstated and repainted using stocks of the original matching paint.
- MOD973 – 1952 Bristol LS No. 1286 – Minor repairs (e.g. wiper motor) undertaken.
- EDV555D – 1966 Bristol SUL4A No. 692 – Electrical charging issues have been addressed with re-wiring and replacement dynamo.
- FDV790V – 1979 Bristol LHS6L No. 1560 - New front tyres fitted
- FTA634 – 1941 Bristol K5G No. 345 – Now the Trust's principal Devon-based major project involving volunteers, restoration was re-started in 2022.
- 519BTA – 1960 Bristol FS6G No. 1967 – Prepared mechanically for safe transfer to restoration workshops in Buckinghamshire and electrical systems assessed. Bodywork restoration commenced in November 2022, stripping the vehicle down and rebuilding the cab/saloon interior where the vehicle had been re-purposed as a training bus in later service life.
- 974AFJ – 1960 Guy Arab IV No. 74 – Inspected prior to acquisition and found to be in good mechanical order although some bodywork repairs / improvements and repainting required for it to be used to carry passengers at public events. Work commenced in January 2023 with replacement / rebuilding of the rear platform and repairs to the front dome.

Ahead of the Trust events and other outings through 2022 and 2023, all participating vehicles were required to have MoTs or roadworthiness inspections (as appropriate to their age / taxation class). This applied equally to Trust loan vehicles and Trustee-owned vehicles made available for use. Commercial inspection services and those of suitably qualified Supporters, particularly Trustee Graham Green, were deployed with defects and any resulting rectification required being recorded. Necessary remediation was carried out before vehicles were used on passenger service. This was a major task, particularly so since some vehicles were seeing first use since COVID restrictions had limited their use.

Despite the pandemic disruption, the Trust recovered well and continued to be **well resourced financially** underpinned by its prudent reserves policy through the 2022-23 year. The Trustees were able to limit the Trust's expenditure through the pandemic period in anticipation of unpredictable and limited opportunities to generate income while also diversifying its funding sources. As a result, although growth was set back, the Trust did not suffer financial harm from the pandemic constraints. The return to a full programme of activity in 2022-23 as described in this report introduced new ventures such as books and sale of surplus materials being pursued to ensure a broader range of income streams involving a wider range of donors / purchasers.

Generous **funding of the Trust** by its increasing number of Supporters continued, particularly with annual renewal donations in June/July 2022, which contribute to the Trust's standing and overhead costs.

The original appeal to purchase and undertake the bodywork restoration of 556 and contributions to the "556 – *The Final Push*" appeal were generally made as lump sums or monthly instalments. Those monthly contributions completed their term in 2022-23 but it is gratifying that some contributors have opted to continue their regular donations. Others are enquiring about future opportunities to provide project support and, to this end, preparatory work began to plan the

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restoration of 1953 Southern National Bristol KSW6B No. 1852 (LTA995) which the Trust purchased from Haynes Motor Museum in 2017. Now the Trust has a strong track-record in successful vehicle restorations and project execution, the aim is to augment Supporter donations with matching grant funding and work to scope the requirements and identify funding sources commenced with a view to a appeal and other funding applications in 2024.

The continuation of the revival of support from the major transport companies in the reporting year 2022-23 has been a significant contributor to the Trust's programme of events enabling public benefit to be prioritised. Further work to develop messaging that is effective in associating the pleasures of a vintage bus day out with the economic and environmental benefits of increased bus usage in daily life is underway. In turn it is hoped this will ensure relationships with the transport companies can flourish. The advertising from other local businesses around events is also valuable and new ideas are being explored to match products and services to event audiences thereby encouraging increased advertising revenue.

Other opportunities for grant funding are also being identified and pursued. A presentation of the archive cine-films digitised in the 2021-22 reporting year to a visiting group has led to promise of a donation of £2,500 from the Omnibus Society from a related legacy to help fund the digitisation, preservation and public access to other films in the collection.

The Trust **Supporters Group** was established in 2015, for anyone interested in the work of the Trust and wishing to provide financial and/or volunteer support. During the 2022-23 year the number of Supporters rose substantially from 263 at the start to 293 at the year end. This strong position reflects an almost complete renewal by existing Supporters in May 2022 and a significant influx of new Supporters throughout the year.

During the period, the Trust produced four editions of its **quarterly Supporters' magazine, *To and fro***. The magazine comprises a mix of Trust news, reports on activities and original, high quality articles on historical topics within the Trust's scope which are produced by Supporters, some of them regular correspondents. With the organisation of the Trust's archives ever improving, a growing number of *To and fro*' authors draw directly on them for research and illustration purposes. This has not only enriched the scope and depth of articles within the period but has also enhanced the magazine's role as a means of public access to our collections. The result is a high quality publication which inspires and furthers interest in our core topics, exploits and showcases the Trust's collections and has a lasting and cumulative value to Supporters. The skills and dedication of Trustee David Sheppard as Editor and Supporter Luke Farley leading design and production are acknowledged with gratitude.

The total published *To and fro*' content for the period comprised 172 pages, 23 original articles (2021-22: 32) and 338 images (2021-22: 278). In summary the content covered:

- Issue 28 (published April 2022) – The Chairman's opening Trust Traffic Notices reflect on the success of recent open days at Trust sites in Devon and Berkshire, introduce new Trustees Peter Delaney and Peter Snowden, and set the scene for Victoria Coach Station 90th anniversary celebrations alongside a full programme of Trust events in the year ahead. Erstwhile District Manager for Southern National, Martin Curtis recalls the starring role of a Western National Leyland National bus in the BBC drama Knockback set in the 1970s. From the Valleys to the 'Valley documents the extensive transfer of buses from South Wales to the Thames Valley in the late 1960s. Cornish adventures from 1990 are shared in the photographs by Supporter Nik Anthony, re-creating the scene anticipated at the heritage bus day in April 2022. The first of a pair of articles introduces the serious purpose and eye-catching poster designs produced by Royal Blue to drum up express service passengers over the years. Finally attention turns to bus tickets and the significant role of the Williamson company thanks to Peter Snowden.
- Issue 29 (June 2022) – In complementary articles with extensive illustrations recreating the vintage scene, Supporters Robert Hawken, John Howden and James Freeman,

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respectively, show West Country vehicles in Penzance for Easter, Thames Valley on the London to Brighton run in May, and a unique view from behind the wheel of the Trust's Royal Blue LS on the Royal Blue run in June. Supporter Richard Delahoy recalls new lives for three of Plymouth City Transport's unloved Leyland Nationals across the country in Essex in the early 1970s. The second part of Trustee Peter Delaney's articles 'Expressing it on a poster' follows designs through to the 1970s linking coach travel and design fashions. On the vehicle side, 'Norths star' rebuilds the history and fortunes of a former Western National Bristol SU espied in a scrap yard. Paul Lacey closes with a Stranger in the (Thames Valley) camp, the first of a series on interloping vehicles, this one from Brighton, Hove & District

- Issue 30 (November 2022) – the Chairman's Trust Traffic Notices give an express ride through the VCS celebrations, the Trust's Kingsbridge event with free passenger journeys, public engagement at Imber-bus and Reading Buses, and Trust visits hosted for historical societies and even town criers. The Trust Thames Valley Tour to mark the centenary of the Thames Valley Traction Co. had a dedicated feature. James Freeman gives his unique perspective as a driver at the Trust's Kingsbridge event in September. Route and Branch by Paul Lacey reminds readers of the ancillary work of tree-lopper vehicles for buses in the Thames Valley. Martin Curits remembers Old Friends, in the form of Bristol VRTs which he recalls from his youth growing up in Brislington near the Bristol Commercial Vehicles' works. Peter Delaney turns attention to one of a small express service operators, Link Safety Coaches, whose short-lived operations (1926-1933) ran from Bournemouth. Peter Snowden's photographs reveal the considerable extent of Alexander-bodied buses in the Southern National fleet. A round-up of anniversaries for bus operations in the Thames Valley area demonstrates the significant steps taken many decades ago.
- Finally in the period, Issue 31 (December 2022) Trust Traffic Notices include a focus on funding and also give insight to the extensive repairs to the front near-side pillar of Trust-owned Bristol K No. 446. Paul Green extends the Issue 30 feature on Bristol VRs to cover their service nearly 40 years later at Torpoint – cut away at the front and rear to give additional clearance when embarking or dis-embarking the ferry. Martin Curtis shares a remarkable coincidence as a chance view of a photograph took him back some 55 years to the formative days in the life of an industry professional (and enthusiast). The SU involved provides a link to a pair of Bristol SUL coaches operated by United Welsh, much rarer than their West Country counterparts. To fit with tradition of booking holidays at the turn of the year, Peter Delaney reviews the brochures Royal Blue produced to entice passengers. Lessons from history come from Paul Lacey's article on the Thames Valley Gas Cars of World War 2 – early hybrid vehicles.

Back numbers of *To and fro* are sold at modest cost and as 'taster bundles' on the Trust's sales stand at events as well as online via the 'Shop' facility on the Trust's website with some editions now being out of print. Sales not only generate useful revenue but also encourage wider engagement with the Trust and extend the access to material in Trust archives.

In his role as Deputy Chairman of the **National Association of Road Transport Museums (NARTM)**, Trust Chairman Colin Billington has continued involvement in the work investigating skills development and the potential for an apprenticeship scheme in light of the seven-figure legacy vested in NARTM. This work has significant relevance to TV&GWOT alongside the NARTM objectives. Detailed discussions proceeded with the Heritage Skills Academy towards establishing an apprenticeship scheme appropriate to buses and coaches and other large commercial vehicles in collaboration with the London Bus Museum (Brooklands) and London Transport Museum (Covent Garden and Acton). In addition, discussions were held with S & B Automotive Academy regarding heavy vehicle mechanical and electrical engineering apprenticeships.

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Heritage sector links have been maintained, for example with the Heritage Alliance, South West Museum Development, Digital Heritage, Charity Digital etc where training and information about resources and funding are provided through Newsletters and online courses.

The Trust continues to strive to achieve best practices in governance and operations and, to this end, applied in November 2022 to the **Heritage Compass business support programme** funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The overall programme aim is “to create a better connected, informed and resilient heritage landscape across England”. Skills in business planning, audience development, leadership and change management are delivered via a range of training, mentoring and peer learning. The Trust’s application was successful and Trustees Helen Bolt and David Sheppard were inspired by parallel sessions at the opening Symposium in Coventry on 26 January 2023. With participation fully funded, online access for all Trustees, a grant for audio-visual equipment, and access to experienced professionals from across the heritage, cultural and associated business sectors, this offers a very important opportunity for the Trust to expand its horizons and build resilience over the year ahead. The target outcomes selected in the Trust’s application were:

- A developed / re-invigorated audience development plan;
- A developed / re-invigorated income generation strategy;
- A process to manage internal culture change.

Broadening the Trust’s advisory network and grant opportunities further, the Trust joined the Association of Independent Museums at the end of January 2023. **AIM** exists to represent, connect and strengthen the UK’s independent museums, galleries and heritage organisations.

The Trust has continued to be involved with the **Land Transport Archive Network**, coordinated by The National Archives as an informal network for archivists, curators, custodians and researchers, interested in the care and use of archives relating to any aspect of any form of land transport: including vehicles, operators, personnel, passengers, manufacturers, freight and infrastructure. TV&GWOT Trustee Helen Bolt completed a survey determining archive coverage over of 93 NARTM member websites as part of the LTAN survey activity in the passenger road transport sector. Coverage was extended to design and commercial aspects, educational programmes, social media, affiliation/accreditation etc with the findings presented to TV&GWOT Trustees to help guide best practice.

The **website** is vital for the Trust to maintain ‘virtual’ contact with the public (providing up to date reference material about the Trust’s objectives and constitution, activities and events, the collection and opportunities to get involved as a Supporter as well as access to educational materials through the online shop facility). Shortly before the year end, the Trust registered with GoogleAnalytics4 to provide website monitoring data. The baseline will be established through 2023-4.

The Trust’s **social media** continued to play a significant role in its public-facing communication throughout the period, connecting both with our existing audience base and new audiences who are discovering, consuming and benefitting from our work through socials.

During the period, the Trust’s **Facebook** page was its primary social media presence. Statistical analysis of content and page performance within the period are prevented by new ‘Meta’ measuring tools, which measure only short-term (90 day max) periods, but by all measures – ‘followers’, ‘reach’ and ‘engagement’ – the page saw further significant growth throughout the period. It remained the market leader in both the Thames Valley and West Country area among those for comparable groups and charitable Trusts by a significant margin.

Significant work on expanding the Trust’s social media offering towards the end of the period, and subsequently, has dramatically increased our reach further still. In January 2023 the Trust launched a private Facebook group for its Supporters. Designed as a forum for sharing collection material as well as operational information, its purpose was to harness enthusiasm, goodwill and activity generated by the Trust’s emergency pandemic-era newsletter Service-19, in a self-sustaining way.

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The title '**Service 23**' was chosen. It has been warmly received by Supporters, many of whom have embraced Facebook (and IT in general) for the first time in order to take part in the discussions. Since the end of the period, the private page has attracted 122 members, approximately a third of the Supporters group. It will be noted that age profile and other demographics are such that many Supporters are not willing users of digital technology and are unlikely to join. However, the needs of analogue Supporters continued to be met handsomely by the Trust's flagship magazine, *To and fro*, only available in print, which features regular round-ups of the highlights from the digital discussions.

The Trust acknowledges the skills and creativity of social media lead, Trustee David Sheppard, and the technical help of the webmaster, Supporter Gerry Tormey, which underpins the Trust's success in engaging the public in the online arena. These communication routes are maintaining and increasing awareness of the Trust and helping engage new Supporters from far afield.

Opportunities to engage a wider network of individuals and organisations continued to develop throughout 2022-23 and, despite the workload, the Trustees have responded recognising the importance of the raised profile and financial income to the Trust that such activities bring. The chronology of activities covered:

2 April 2022 – Use of **Reading Transport VR No. 38** owned by the Trust to transport members of the **British Trolleybus Society** on a tour of former trolleybus routes in Reading organised by BTS member and Trust Supporter, Dave Hall - 38 BTS members took part.

9 April 2022 – Trustee David Sheppard was the guest speaker at the **South Devon Railway Association annual dinner**, held at Birdie's Kitchen in Buckfastleigh. He addressed around fifty members of the Association, including the daughter of the late Reverend W. Awdry, creator of The Railway Series, speaking about the forthcoming 150th anniversary of the opening of the Buckfastleigh, Totnes and South Devon Railway. He gave a lively account of his own 30+ years in preservation and outlined the work of the Trust, particularly its connections with the Great Western Railway and South Devon.

Stagecoach Long Service Awards - Trustee David Sheppard compèred a series of events attended by staff, industry figures and opinion formers for different regions through the year, on each occasion including an overview of the Trust's work.

29 April 2022 – Stagecoach Yorkshire in Sheffield - c.400 staff,

14 May 2022 – Stagecoach North East in Newcastle – c. 500 staff.

18 June 2022 – Stagecoach North East in Newcastle – c. 500 staff.

26 May 2022 – Trustee Helen Bolt participated in the **Francis Clark annual seminar for charities** covering latest Charity Commission developments including legal matters, prevention of cyber-crime and fraud, and updates on accounting and VAT specific to the sector. The availability of professional advisors and other charities large and small for networking makes this a valuable forum to ensure the Trust's public benefit is delivered in a compliant manner.

5 June 2022 – Trustee David Sheppard drew the raffle for **Exmouth Museum** at the culmination of the town's celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. He spoke about the importance of making history accessible and relevant in the future and gave an outline of the Trust's approach in this regard.

11 June 2022 – Use of newly restored **Thames Valley Bristol LL6B No. 556** to transport principal donors and special guests to **Alexander Devine Children's Hospice** in Maidenhead from remote parking for their 15th anniversary 'thank you' event. Some 90 passengers were carried on return trips through the day.

6 July 2022 - Trustee David Sheppard gave an informal tour of the Trust's South Devon base to retiring **Showbus** organiser, Martin Isles, and former **BBC Spotlight** Editor, Ed Goodridge, both enthusiastic followers of the Trust's work and keen to find out more about the collections.

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16 July 2022 - 24 people from the **Kingston Historical Society** visited the Trust's Devon base for a talk by the Trust Chairman, Colin Billington, about local transport history and the activities of the Trust, a tour of the archive and workshops and a trip on Trust Chairman's Bristol SUS (Western National No. 600) through the Avon Valley area of outstanding natural beauty.

22 July 2022 – the Trust's Devon facilities provided the base for 25 **town criers** from the UK and overseas to travel to Plymouth for an international competition in the City Hall and at the recently opened Box Plymouth and South & West Devon Archive. Trust Chairman, Colin Billington, used his Western National Bristol L No. 1218 to transport the town criers and consorts in their finery to and from Plymouth and between venues.

23 July 2022 – the Trust hosted the **Provincial History Research Group of the Omnibus Society** at its Berkshire base for their AGM. Trustee Peter Delaney gave a talk about the Trust's archive collection in the former Maidenhead passenger shelter now owned by the Trust and re-erected on its Berkshire site showing interesting artefacts held in the collection. The digitisation of the late Mike Stephens cine films by the Trust was of considerable interest as they feature OS Tours, some 50+ years ago - an online presentation to regional groups and potential funding of further work resulted.

24 July 2022 – Trustee David Sheppard performed the official opening of **Paignton Festival** on behalf of the BBC and Torbay Old Wheels Club. On display were his and his father's 1962 Bristol SUL4A coaches, former Western National Nos. 420 and 425 (270/5 KTA). They had been brought together to mark the 60th anniversary of their delivery that month, as explained in David's opening speech and the event programme.

23 September 2022 – Trustee David Sheppard drove a party of **GWR** Exeter depot managers, their partners and families on their (now) annual vintage bus outing. Around 50 participants enjoyed a free tour of the Exe estuary between Exeter and Exmouth, pausing for refreshments along the way. Given the late-autumn sunshine, open-top traction was provided FOC by Daniel Shears in the form of ex Riverlink Bristol VR "Molly" (WTU 467W).

7 October 2022 – some 20 members of the **National Transport Trust** visited TV&GWOT in Berkshire for a talk on the collection to see the workshops and take a tour of Windsor in Bristol LS Royal Blue No. 1286 (on long-term loan to the Trust). The tour ended with TV&GWOT neighbour, David Buck, who gave rides on his full scale railway steam engines over track in his grounds.

12 October 2022 – the **Berkshire group of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club** came by their own stylish mode of heritage transport to visit the Trust for a talk, tour of the facilities and trip around Windsor in Bristol LS Royal Blue No. 1286 (on long-term loan to the Trust). 18 BVMCC members took part in the event suggested by Trust Supporter Victor Youel.

18 October 2022 – a group of TV&GWOT Supporters worked with Trust Chairman Colin Billington to assist the **Great Western Society** repatriate a former **GWR Swindon Works fire tender** from the **Science Museum at Wroughton** to Didcot. Extensive planning in the months before, detailed risk assessments and provision of road transport meant the Trust was able to help the organisations achieve their heritage objectives.

25 October 2022 – the **Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport (Central Southern Region)**, through Trust Supporter and CILT Board member Richard Mallett, invited TV&GWOT to be represented at their regular meeting as a basis for exploring how the Trust might provide interest to members and how members might use professional skills to help support the Trust. Trust Chairman, Colin Billington attended, networking with CILT members and learning from the evening with Mark Hopwood, CBE, Managing Director of GWR.

29 October 2022 – Trustee David Sheppard provided a live commentary for the annual **Twyford & District Round Table** firework display, one of the largest and best attended in the Thames Valley. His pre-display commentary promoted the Trust's local work and events and was heard

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by around 5,000 visitors. Inspiration for potential future recruitment was drawn from the Round Table volunteers.

6/7 November 2022 – Trustee David Sheppard marked the 60th anniversary month of his preserved former West Yorkshire Bristol SUL4A, SMA 5 (811 BWR), by taking it on a trip to the city of its construction. Among the locations visited were the site of the former **Bristol Commercial Vehicles** Bath Road factory in Brislington and the nearby Chatsworth Road assembly works where SMA 5 was photographed in front of the remaining buildings.

11 November 2022 - Trustee David Sheppard compèred the **Stagecoach South West** Long Service Awards at Sandy Park Stadium in Exeter, attended by c.500 staff, industry figures and opinion formers. His presentation included an overview of the Trust's work with particular emphasis on the links between the modern day Stagecoach operation and the historical Devon General, Western National and GWR operations.

8 December 2022 – Trustee David Sheppard played a/the starring role at the **Colleton School's** Christmas Fayre, held at his former primary school in Twyford. When out of role, the opportunity was taken to connect with parents and families who well remembered his bus interest and were delighted to hear about the ongoing work of the Trust in the Thames Valley.

12 December 2022 – Trustee David Sheppard resumed his annual role as host of the **Thurlestone** Christmas Carol Concert in South Devon, including the now famous switching on of the Christmas light in the telephone box. The event was attended by c.100 local people who were informed of the Trust's activities in Devon.

15 January 2023 – Trustee David Sheppard hosted an informal visit to the Trust's Devon base for **9-year old transport enthusiast** Alfie and his mother, Bryony. Ahead of the site tour, a trip on Service 164 Rail Link between Totnes and Salcombe gave a contemporary context for the historic buses that would be viewed.

20 January 2023 – Trustee David Sheppard visited the home of accomplished **bus modeller** Nigel Roberts to view his collection and to advise on several new West Country models currently in development, including a Series 2 Bristol SUL coach. Mr Roberts generously exchanged one of his beautifully made Series 1 SUL models for an unbuilt kit, and this has subsequently featured in photographs used by the Trust for publicity of its Kingsbridge Vintage Bus Day.

25 January 2023 – an online presentation was made to the **Omnibus Society South Wales & West Branch** by Trustee Helen Bolt, based on cine film recorded by the late Mike Stephens during an OS tour in 1973, now in the TV&GWOT archive and recently digitised. The presentation combined extracts from the itinerary with memories interjected by those who recalled detail of the trip and the bus operations observed.

29 January 2023 – Trustee David Sheppard hosted a quiz for the **Riley Motor Club** at the Padbrook Park Hotel in Cullompton, Devon, where he also displayed his newly restored Austin J40 pedal car. Around 150 attendees enjoyed an after-dinner speech on heritage buses, including promotion of the Trust's work, followed by a lively music quiz.

In 2022-23, post-pandemic, the Trust was fortunate that many **volunteers** returned to resume roles in vehicle and archive working parties and in helping to plan and stage public events. This voluntary effort is the backbone of the Trust's ability to deliver public benefit and preserve the collections for posterity. Aggregate figures for the current reporting year 2022-23 show 219 individuals helped with Trust activities (205 in 2021-22), contributing 13,000 volunteer hours (2021-22: 10,500) with 148 of these (2021-22; 120) involved in crewing the 91 different vehicles (2021-22: 77) which attended TV&GWOT events. Pre-pandemic comparisons for 2019-20 are 17,300 volunteer hours recorded for 246 individuals but the numbers are affected considerably by the nature of public events undertaken.

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The Supporters' group is a primary source of volunteers, providing a focus for like-minded individuals to identify with the Trust objectives and have the satisfaction of contributing to a shared endeavour while bringing educational benefit and enjoyment to the wider public. Of the **293 people registered as Supporters** at the year end, a significant proportion have been actively engaged in working groups, participating around events, contributing as advisors or research correspondents and helping fund projects. Trustees wish to thank Supporters and other volunteers for their continuing input and help in ensuring the success and future sustainability of the Trust.

ACTIVITY & PUBLIC BENEFIT IN 2023, BEYOND THE 2022-23 REPORTING YEAR END

The strong focus on Trust resilience and sustainability has continued into the 2023-24 reporting year with Trustees David Sheppard and Helen Bolt maximising the opportunities presented by the **Heritage Compass programme** by participating in full day courses on:

- Governance
- Cash Management & Forecasting
- Earned Income
- Fundraising
- Business Planning
- Audience Development

These were complemented by sessions with the Trust's 'Critical Friend' under the programme, Cath Hume CEO of the Arts Marketing Association, and 'Mentor', Mel Larsen a marketing consultant and business coach.

In related work, Trustees ran a number of sessions to develop a fresh 5-year strategy for the Trust to inform business planning in 2023-24 for future years. Whilst work in progress at the time of this report, the Trust Vision has been re-articulated to be:

*To preserve and treasure our Thames Valley & Great Western bus heritage,
connecting people, places and the past,
bringing joy and understanding of where we have been and where we are going today.*

Five strategic goals have also been developed for the Trust to:

- *Share our **collection** treasures*
- *Realise our **audience** potential*
- *Expand our **income** streams*
- *Reinforce our **resilience***
- *Protect our **interests***

In October 2023 the Trust also applied for Strategy Support under an extension to the Heritage Compass programme, specifically to guide the audience development plan. This application was again successful and the Trust has gone on to benefit from additional training and expert input to its specific plans, all fully funded by the NLHF / DCMS.

This has been an exciting and stimulating experience with the Trust and Trustees benefitting not just from the direct teaching but from the associated opportunities to network with other heritage and cultural educational charities in different regions, operating at different scales. From early in the programme fresh ideas have been applied to the Trust's public engagement with considerable success, for example with a broader appeal in social media posts through the summer of 2023 and focused interaction with families at events like Fawley Hill in August 2023, with Trustees actively learning more about visitor interests.

Developing from Heritage Compass contacts, in March 2023 the Trust applied to the **AiM Arts Scholars Brighter Day Grant Scheme** (Supported by the Arts Scholars Charitable Trust) and

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were awarded £1,650 for a project 'Art & Design on the Buses' to develop an online exhibition of the poster artwork produced to advertise bus and coach services over the decades. This brings with it further training, software and consultancy advice to enhance the Trust's digital design capability.

As part of building Trust capabilities, an application was made to the **eBay Charity Connect** programme which provides training, on-to-one help, and free provision of a shop, discounts and other facilities for 12 months. This has an equivalent monetary value of several hundred pounds and provides a new platform for the Trust to promote events and educational publications as well as fund raising.

The **Supporters' Group** has continued to thrive into the 2023-24 year. Twelve new Supporters had joined beyond the 2022-23 year end at the time of writing. The extent of renewals in June, although over 90%, was not quite as high as in previous years with a number of people citing the cost of living being the dominant factor in them cutting back. A facility to remain on the mailing list was offered and has been taken up by most ensuring a degree of access is maintained. Sadly a number of Supporters have died since the year end. In particular Michael Plunkett who had rescued and restored Thames Valley Tilling-Stevens No. 152 and passed ownership to the Trust in 2017, died in September. His contribution to the Thames Valley heritage will long be remembered. Three further editions of the **Supporters' magazine *To and fro*** with a fourth in preparation for issue before the 2023 calendar year end.

Engagement of Trust Supporters as volunteers in **vehicle restoration and maintenance working groups** continues with twice-weekly sessions in Berkshire and sessions to suit working patterns in Devon.

Archive activity in Berkshire continues with a three-weekly cycle on site and monthly working groups in Devon.

Cataloguing the collection is a principal task for the working groups ensuring the collection is defined and readily accessible. The work applies to donated and accessioned material with surplus donated models again being offered for sale at events. This has generated some £2570 income in the first eight months of the 2023-4 year, contributing to Trust funds for expenditure to improve the archive resources and standards for collection care.

A full programme of events was planned for the summer season beyond the 2022-23 year end. Not everything went to plan due to circumstances beyond the Trust's control but there were, nevertheless, considerable successes and new opportunities for the public to engage with our rich transport heritage.

The **chronology of Trust events and events attended by the Trust** since the start of the 2023-24 year (1 March 2023) until October has been as follows:

- **3rd-5th March, the National Association of Road Transport Museums (NARTM) Members' Spring Meeting weekend.** Trust Chairman, Colin Billington, is also Deputy Chairman of NARTM which consists of almost 100 member organisations and individuals' vehicle collections. These range from national museums such as the Science Museum and the National Tramway Museum at Crich, regional and city based museums such as the public sector owned (TfL) London Transport Museum and the charity Manchester Museum of Transport, regional charities with collections used at public events such as TV&GWOT and groups or individuals owning vehicle collections, the common aim being that the owners wish to make their collections accessible to the public.

The Members' Spring Meeting consisted of a weekend of activities arranged by the TV&GWOT Chairman, including a NARTM Board meeting held in the TV&GWOT archive work room in Berkshire on 3 March, the Members' Meeting held at the London Transport Museum's Acton Depot on 4 March, which included a tour of the collections located within the Depot as well as the meeting itself. There was also a visit to Victoria Coach Station on

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5 March for a “behind the scenes” tour during which the full process from arrival and passenger/luggage unloading, fuelling, running repairs and preparation for the next journey including re-provisioning, lay-over, entry to departure terminal, passenger and luggage loading and departure was followed. The tour included the control room where arrivals and departures are planned and overseen by a large array of CCTV cameras watching all parts of the coach station and surrounding streets. A mass departure of up to 40 coaches occurs every 30 minutes on the hour and half-hour. This NARTM tour was the last event in 12 months’ of celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the Grand Opening of VCS on 10 March 1932.

TV&GWOT provided all transport to and from these venues and to hotels and restaurants for delegates over the weekend using Royal Blue Bristol LL No. 1250 and Bristol LS6G No. 1286. A total of 122 passenger journeys was recorded during the weekend.

- On **16th April 2023** the **15th Penzance Vintage Bus Running Day & VR Revival** saw 31 buses and coaches running free bus services and together providing 7535 free passenger journeys to local residents, enthusiasts and visitors together with 130 dog journeys, both new records! The event, organised jointly with the Cornwall Bus Preservation Society, had a souvenir programme which celebrated the 120th anniversary of the first Great Western Railway Road Motors service, established in 1903, running from Helston to the Lizard. A 14-page feature describes the earliest days of motor bus operations in West Cornwall which became the model for motor bus operations all over the GWR railway network. The programme also provided an account of the CBPS restoration of former Truronian Dennis Dart SLF TT03TRU, which later passed to First Devon & Cornwall when Truronian was absorbed. It subsequently was repainted into GWR livery for the 110th anniversary in 2013. It also contained the rhyme “Chill out Man” by poet and bus driver Gray Lightfoot. Chill out Man pops into a bus driver’s mind in times of stupidity by holiday motorists! Bus, rail and other local businesses supported the event with advertising providing encouragement for the renewed viability of these activities. TV&GWOT Trustees and Supporters took nine vehicles from the Trust’s Devon base to run at the event.
- On **1 May 2023** the Trust took Thames Valley Bristol LL No. 556 to **Winchester for the FoKAB (Friends of King Alfred Buses) “The Original King Alfred Buses Running Day”**. It operated on two routes from Winchester to Cheriton to the east of the City (two services) and Sutton Scotney to the north (one service) both approximately 15 mile round trips. 212 passenger journeys were recorded along with 10 dogs. With an average of over 35 passengers per journey 556’s 39 seats were filled to capacity on most journeys and singing broke out on the return journey from Sutton Scotney!
- Our planned event at **Didcot on 14 May**, in partnership with Didcot Railway Centre, had to be cancelled due to the closure of the Didcot – Oxford railway line because of the need for emergency repairs to stabilise and strengthen an abutment under a bridge over the River Thames. This necessitated a major rail replacement coach service fully utilising the rail/bus interchange which normally serves as our Didcot terminus for the TV&GWOT event services. The event was replaced with an express coach tour to celebrate the **60th anniversary** of the entry into service of the **prototype Bristol/ECW RELH operated by South Midland Motor Services** between Oxford and Victoria Coach Station. An 88 mile circular tour, using the original routes was devised by Supporter Jonathan Radley from Oxford via the A40 through High Wycombe and Beaconsfield to Denham, returning via Maidenhead and Henley-on-Thames. Five coaches representing the route history and RE anniversary took part including Royal Blue LS No. 1286 on long-term loan to the Trust. This was enjoyed by some 50 passengers and advance publicity resulted in many spectators along the route, a high proportion with cameras feeding pictures onto social media almost instantaneously! This gave great publicity to the Trust but resulted in the loss of some 4,000

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passenger journeys based on our 2019 and 2022 Didcot event figures and also the greater advertising and other advanced publicity which had been planned.

A souvenir booklet was produced rapidly using previously researched photographs from the Bus Archive. Extensively illustrated, it charted some 75 years of history from the origins of South Midland in 1921, through the development of Oxford-London express services over the decades and the changing vehicle types covering the route. It highlighted the significance of the prototype Bristol RELH / ECW coach (521ABL) which joined the fleet in May 1963. The story was continued through to the late 1990s into Oxford Tube and Thames Transit eras. The publication was popular on the day and has continued to sell well at events and on-line.

- The Trust's 2023 **Royal Blue & Associated Motorways Coach Run** took place from **Friday 16th to Sunday 19th June 2023**. The Run, with 15 coaches entered started and finished at the site of the former Salisbury Coach Station. The Run left Salisbury taking the route used by non-stop Royal Blue services to the South West, using the diversion adopted on summer Saturdays to avoid traffic delays at Honiton going via Ilminster, Chard, Seaton (lunch stop at the Tramway) and the A3052 to Exeter. Coaches then followed the Exeter – Mevagissey route across Dartmoor via Princetown to Tavistock, and via Callington to Liskeard, to complete the first day. The second day was to continue along the Mevagissey route via Lostwithiel to St Austell but, due to the aftermath of a major road accident, the coaches were diverted towards Bodmin and the A30. Eventually St Austell was reached via the A391 through Bugle. From there the route followed the A390 to Truro (particularly used in the winter season), continuing on via Redruth and Camborne to Penzance. Coaches paused in the coach park opposite St Michael's Mount for lunch (proper pasties!). The run continued to Porthleven, to then follow the first part of the route which had run from there to Minehead, via Helston, Falmouth, Truro and Newquay as far as Wadebridge for the overnight stop. On the final day the Minehead route was resumed on the A39 as far as Bude and then turned east via Hatherleigh and Crediton to Exeter and taking the stopping coach route via the A30 back to the finish at Salisbury. The run covered a total distance of 454 miles and many hundreds of people came out to see and photograph/film the coaches along the route, sharing images online via social media amplifying the public engagement, with thousands more seeing the coaches as they passed by. In total the coaches covered 8121 miles including the run mileage and travelling to and from Salisbury. 236 passengers were carried over the three days of the run.

One of the Trust's Facebook posts with an amusing image combining human, animal and vehicle interest reached an audience of 160,000. A compilation video post-event was viewed by an incredible 17k people. Capitalising on this success online and translating it to further engagement with the Trust is a priority.

- On **Sunday 25th June 2023**, TV&GWOT again contributed to the vintage bus display at **Reading Buses' Open Day** taking its preserved Reading Buses Northern Counties bodied Bristol VRT No. 38 which was new to Reading Buses in 1979 as well as Royal Blue Bristol LS6G No. 1286 which dated from 1952 to showcase the range of vehicles operated by the Trust. 1286 has wind-down front windscreens which many young people enjoyed winding down and up again! The event raised funds for the Royal Berks Charity which supports the Royal Berks NHS Foundation Trust. Seven Supporters travelled to the event from TV&GWOT's base to drive the vehicles and erect and crew the sales stand but many more were at the event and visited the Trust's stand, which again provided an important local opportunity for keeping in touch as well as recruiting new Supporters and distributing educational material.
- On **15th July** the Trust again provided a free Park & Ride service for the **Alexander Devine Children's Hospice** in Maidenhead for their 2023 fund raising event using the Trust

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Chairman's venerable Royal Blue Bristol LL No. 1250. 30 donors to the Hospice's funds were transported from the parking area on a nearby office park to the Hospice and back.

- **30th July** saw 1250 on the road again to attend the **Bristol Vintage Bus Group's open day** and rally at Brislington. The objectives were to raise funds for the Trust from the sale of surplus material donated to the Trust and copies of Trust publications and photographs, and to sign up vehicle entries for Kingsbridge. The outcomes were very positive in both areas despite torrential rain.
- The Trust was invited to take a vehicle and Trust Supporters on **19th August to Imber**, the village on Salisbury Plain abandoned by decree during World War II and taken over by the military for essential wartime purposes. LT Routemaster buses make an annual pilgrimage to run vintage bus services from Warminster across the Plain to Imber and then on to Gore Cross on the A360. This year the Trust Chairman used 1250 to take a group of 24 TV&GWOT Supporters to the event. The Trust also had an information and sales stand at Imber village for which there was much interest from the large crowds who attended the event.
- Over the **25-28th August Bank Holiday weekend** TV&GWOT took part in the **National Transport Trust Fawley Hill Vintage Transport Festival** with three vehicles on display each day. Thames Valley 1927 Tilling Stevens B9A Express No. 152 and 1946 Bristol K6A No. 446 were on site throughout and Royal Blue coaches 1250 and 1286 were used on alternative days to ferry Trust personnel to and from the site, joining the display. The Trust's information and sales stand proved to be very popular and many young people received their first vintage bus ticket straight from the ticket machine and model bus to start their collection – which is where enthusiasm starts! A display of local photographs with buses drawn from the archive attracted significant attention. Trustees also surveyed the interests and motivations of visitors to the stand to inform the Trust's audience development activities.
- We had high expectations for our **Kingsbridge Vintage Bus Running Day** event on **16th September** with a record vehicle entry and record numbers of event programmes purchased prior to the event day. Sadly the forecasts of fine weather, a week before, evaporated during the preceding week and, on the day, heavy rainfall persisted without let-up. This was only the second of our sixteen Kingsbridge events to date which have suffered from significant rainfall and on the previous occasion the rain stopped by early afternoon. We estimate that some 2,500 passenger journeys were lost due to the conditions. However one bright spot was that the event achieved an all-time record in the number of dogs carried at any Trust event of 140, which was 50% of the 2023 overall total to date of 280. The total number of passenger journeys recorded was 5073.

Production of the souvenir programme was supported by a wider number of local businesses than in previous years, demonstrating the significance of the event for the community. The content included a feature on Tally Ho Coaches 100 years since its founder first began transporting passengers. 60 years since the Brent-Kingsbridge branch line closed was marked with a short history of the service and the event included trips on the parallel rail-replacement route. The main article gave further illustrations and a detailed narrative describing the history of Kingsbridge Bus Station, complementing the now permanent display panels in the bus shelters.

The John Hobbs Memorial run to Dartmouth on 17th September included a visit to the Britannia Royal Naval College for a heritage tour and museum visit enjoyed by 30 Supporters who had volunteered at the event the previous day.

At the start of November 2023 our major events for the year have taken place. Metrics for the 2023-24 year to date are as follows: (a) **passenger journeys** for members of the public carried on vintage bus services by Trust vehicles or on vehicles attending Trust events – 13,577 (2022-23 16,927);

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(b) for the number of **(vehicle) days** Trust and Trustees' vehicles participating in TV&GWOT events were on the road on public display - 205 vehicle days in 2023-24 compares with 236 in 2022-23; and (c) the associated **mileage** covered – 17,725 miles in 2023-24 compares with 18,285 miles in 2022-23. As recorded above, two events (Didcot and Kingsbridge) were affected by adverse external factors beyond our control. Without these two factors we are confident that overall passenger numbers and other metrics would have been back at pre-pandemic levels. With the addition of two additional Trustees in 2022 we plan to further develop our events programme for 2024 to significantly expand our public benefit activities.

Opportunities to engage a wider network of individuals and organisations have proliferated beyond the year end and Trustees have responded recognising the importance of the raised profile and potential financial income to the Trust that such activities bring. In the 2023-24 year to date activities have included:

21 April 2023 – Trust Chairman Colin Billington made an online/Zoom presentation to 25 Members of the **Aldershot & District Bus Interest Group**. This covered:

- An introduction to the Trust constitution, objectives, range of events, archives and other activities and custodianship of Colin Billington's 1927 Great Western Railway Road Motors Guy FBB No. 1268, the only preserved GWR Road Motor.
- The history of GWR Road Motors over the period from inauguration of the first road motor bus service from Helston to the Lizard on 17th August 1903 until the passing of the Railway Road Transport Acts of 1928 which brought about a merger of Great Western Road Motors operations with those of other major operators in the GWR territory and with the acquisition of major (up to 50%) shareholdings in such companies.
- The history and preservation/restoration of No. 1268.

19 May 2023 – Trustee David Sheppard hosted the **Yorkshire Star awards in Sheffield**, attended by c.500 bus industry professionals and opinion formers. His presentation at the Mercure St Paul Hotel included an overview of the Trust's work.

20 May 2023 - Trustee David Sheppard hosted the **Stagecoach East Midlands** long service awards, attended by c.500 staff and opinion formers. His presentation at the Lincolnshire Showground included an overview of the Trust's work.

8 June 2023 – Trustee Helen Bolt attended the Francis Clark annual **Legal and Accounting Charity Support seminar** in Buckfastleigh taking advantage of expert advice opportunities to validate TV&GWOT's approach to accounting software, independent examination, investment of reserves, VAT registration etc while also benefiting from networking with other charity finance and governance teams.

10 June 2023 – Trustee David Sheppard joined Supporter Luke Farley in a trip to **Winkleigh Airfield Car Show** with his former Western National Mercedes 811 Minibus No. 357 (L357 VCV), where the Trust's activity was promoted. Meal break relief was provided on the site shuttle bus, operated using a former Southern Vectis Bristol VR.

24 June 2023 - Trustee David Sheppard compèred the **Stagecoach North East** Long Service Awards in Newcastle, attended by c.500 staff, industry figures and opinion formers. His presentation at the Hilton in Gateshead included an overview of the Trust's work.

17 July 2023 - Trust Chairman Colin Billington made an online/Zoom presentation to 27 Members of the **Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT)**. This covered:

- The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust - custodians of GWR Guy FBB No. 1268, the only preserved GWR Road Motor
- GWR Road Motors 1903-1933
 - Inauguration Helston-The Lizard 17th August 1903
 - Rapid expansion across the GWR network, initially as feeders to the railway, then providing local transport

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- Vehicle and route development
- Statutory powers to operate, formation of joint ventures and wider investment in bus companies
- 120 years on – a new focus on integration by today's GWR in partnership with local authorities and local bus operating companies and progress to date
- Restoration of 1927 Guy FBB No. 1268 (YF714)

The talk prompted lively discussion amongst the industry professionals on current public transport policy. A write-up has been included in the CILT magazine.

2 September 2023 – Trustee David Sheppard compèred the **Stagecoach East** Celebrations in Cambridge, attended by c.200 staff, industry figures and opinion formers. His presentation at The Belfry included an overview of the Trust's work.

10 September 2023 – Trustees Colin Billington and Helen Bolt attended the **Devon General Remembered** event in Newton Abbot to meet volunteers and distribute advertising leaflets to promote the TV&GWOT Kingsbridge Bus Day the following weekend.

15 September 2023 – Trustee David Sheppard compèred the **Stagecoach London Awards** at the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden, attended by c.500 staff, industry figures and opinion formers.

7 October 2023 - Trustee David Sheppard compèred the **Stagecoach South Awards** in Portsmouth, working with former First Western National Managing Director Marc Reddy, now in his new post as MD of the UK's Bus Operator of the Year, Stagecoach South.

14 October 2023 – An online/Zoom presentation to the **Friends of King Alfred Buses** by Trust Chairman Colin Billington covering:

- The circumstances and coincidences which led to his life long interest in road and rail passenger transport with the primary focus on West Country major bus and coach operators covering the period from age 6 until the acquisition of his first and second preserved vehicles (Royal Blue Bristol LL6B No. 1250 and Western National Bristol SUS4A No. 600).
- The Trust's background and purpose, what the Trust currently does and equipping it for its long term future.
- Public Transport Integration (road & rail), origins (GWR), 1928-1933 mergers and integration, 1948 railway nationalisation, 1969 formation of National(ised) Bus Company, 1980s break-up of NBC and denationalisation, formation of large bus groups, greater public sector involvement

28 October 2023 – Trust Chairman and **National Association of Road Transport Museum** (NARTM) Deputy Chairman, Colin Billington attended the Association's AGM at Kirkby which was hosted by a group with a focus on predominantly modern vehicles giving important insight to the commitment of younger enthusiasts. Important topics included the availability of insurance for heritage vehicles.

In the months beyond the 2022-23 period end **vehicle restoration work** has continued:

- MO9324 – 1927 Thames Valley Traction Co. Tilling-Stevens B9 No. 152 – A fuel leak on the autovac tap was repaired. Starting/running issues were further investigated as the battery was found to be self-discharging due to a short in the offside internal lighting circuit. This was repaired and 152 completed the return journey to Fawley Hill without any issues.
- RU8805 – 1929 AEC Reliance No. 3615 – Very good progress has been made on building the engine using parts from several engine relics. The roof mounted luggage container walls and surrounding fairings have been fabricated and duck boarding to keep luggage above potential rain water levels has been constructed and painted. More work has been undertaken on the sunshine roof mechanism and the side drainage channels have been recovered from storage and are being refurbished.

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- VW203 – 1927 Leyland PLSC3 Lion No. 2407 – Now that the vehicle chassis and bodywork are complete, painted and fitted out, the original registration (VW203) has been confirmed by the DVLA with the issue of a new V5 registration document. Rebuilding of the engine is progressing well and we are working towards completion for the 2024 season. Remaining tasks include installation of roof mounted goods and luggage rack, seats, roof access ladder on rear of body and saloon lights plus signwriting of fleetnames, legal lettering and body lining-out.
- LTA748 – 1950 Bedford OB No. 1409 – Extensive work undertaken by volunteers includes: repair of front step, preparation of the body exterior for coach painting, front wings and bonnet panels painting, interior lighting re-wiring work
- FMO938 – 1950 Bristol LL6B No. 556 - After use on several events during the summer the engine oil pressure reduced at higher running speeds from 40 to around 18psi. This is being investigated. Replacement of electrical cabling is planned.
- MOD973 – 1952 Bristol LS No. 1286 – Steering box seals were replaced to eliminate leaks which entailed complete box removal and reinstatement of panels post-repair. As 1286 is one of the most frequently used vehicles in our Thames Valley area activities it has full inspections several times a year.
- LTA995 – 1953 Bristol KSW6B No.1852 – Preparation has commenced for a major restoration of this Trust- owned vehicle which has been in dry storage since being acquired from Haynes Motor Museum. Trustees Colin Billington, Graham Green, Peter Delaney and David Sheppard, and Supporters Alan Neale and Lionel Tancock have inspected the vehicle and tested electrical and mechanical systems. A costed restoration plan and identification of potential funding sources will be completed early in the 2024 New Year and a funding appeal will be launched in the first quarter and funding proposals are being prepared to both national and regional funding bodies
- FTA634 – 1941 Bristol K5G No. 345 – Major bodywork led by Supporters in Devon has involved removal of deteriorated panels (revealing wartime re-purposing of panels when bomb damage had been repaired). Replacement Zintec side panels, wing and corner sections have been manufactured and are now being fitted.
- 519BTA – 1960 Bristol FS6G No. 1967 – Major bodywork restoration continued with the reconstruction of the cab / saloon structure and relocation of controls to reinstate the in-service condition. Extensive repanelling is complete and the refurbished radiator re-installed. Preparation is underway for painting and internal lining.
- 974AFJ – 1960 Guy Arab IV No. 74 – Panel and other bodywork repairs have continued.

Ahead of Trust events and other outings, all participating vehicles are required to have MoTs or documented roadworthiness inspections (as appropriate to their age / taxation class). This applied equally to Trust loan vehicles and Trustee-owned vehicles made available for use as well as third party owned vehicles. Commercial inspection services and those of suitably qualified Supporters, particularly Trustee Graham Green, were deployed with defects and any resulting rectification required being recorded. Necessary remediation was carried out before vehicles were used in passenger service.

The former **Thames Valley Waiting Room and Passenger Shelter** was treated to a complete exterior repaint to retain its smart appearance as a meeting room for group visits to the Trust's Berkshire site while also ensuring the timber structure and cladding are fully weather protected.

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The Trust's **online activity** has had increasing focus beyond the 2022-23 year end. Google Analytics data has confirmed the vital role the website plays in the run up to events in terms of publicity, advance programme sales, providing event details. Ensuring clear and succinct web communication is the focus for the 2024 events programme.

The Trust's social media activity has also continued to develop beyond the reporting period. The Trust's **Facebook following** has grown to 2,898 (+12% year on year), though engagement has grown significantly following the implementation of a 'family focus' in posts reflecting insight from our Heritage Compass training. As noted above, Royal Blue Run coverage resulted in the Trust's most-viewed social media post of all-time, depicting Trustee Mel Williams holding a Cornish pasty in front of a coach with a seagull on its roof, which reached more than 76k users and received almost 1500 reactions. The themes of local identity, characters and comedy were identified as key. The increased audience stayed to view content across the weekend, and videos of the coaches were watched more than 17k times.

Trust launched its **Twitter (now X)** presence as a tool for business (and particularly archive) networking and also to communicate information. This was launched ahead of our 2023 Royal Blue Run and offered operational updates throughout (such as route diversions and timing guidance) which complemented our more creative offerings on Facebook. A modest following of 78 has been achieved, but the use of X is likely to accelerate as the Trust implements its new audience plans in 2024. Individual Trustees have also been making more extensive use of **LinkedIn** for Trust networking purposes.

It will be noted that, in common with most comparable organisations, the Trust's virtual following far exceeds the number actually subscribing as Supporters. During the period, several initiatives were launched (and are ongoing) to translate virtual interest into volunteering and financial support, including the use of 'teaser' content to promote opportunities to help or spend. However, the Trust recognises that a major appeal for many social media users is the ability to engage free-of-charge and without commitment, and therefore material growth in this area is not unlimited. The Trust is therefore content to continue serving this sizable audience primarily as a means of enhancing access to our collections and therefore public benefit.

RISKS

The Trustees of The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust are fully aware of and implement policies to address any/all risks as appropriate. The risk management strategy comprises:

- A regular (at least annual) review of the principal risks and uncertainties that the Trust faces in terms of its overall operations and with respect to specific activities;
- The establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified; and
- The implementation of procedures designed to minimise or manage any potential impact on the Trust should those risks materialise.

This work has ensured that financial sustainability in the short (1-3 years) and medium (3-5 years) term is assured because of the reserves held, the funding terms of loan agreements, and securing of commercial advertising associated with key events which all serve to protect the Trust from financial risk.

With growing inflation and rising interest rates in the 2022-23 year, Trustees explored different investment instruments other than high street banks to limit the risk of reserves being devalued by interest rates significantly below inflation. The approach is cautious balancing the need for capital protection under the Financial Services Authority scheme and access to funds to spend on the Trust's charitable work, with good rates of return on term investments. Advice from specialist financial advisers has been obtained as this is not an area of Trustee expertise. At the end of the

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period, the Trust/Trustees went through a due diligence process to move reserves to Flagstone Group, a cash deposit platform providing seamless access to a large number of banks/products with competitive interest rate returns. The Trust's investment policy ensures there is no exposure to equity risks or poorly rated banks, while significantly reducing the risk of reserves being eroded by poor returns.

Non-financial risks related to health and safety are under constant review. For workshop activity competence is assessed and work supervised as appropriate and expenditure is made where necessary to ensure that equipment is maintained to the required standards. Public educational events such as those offering free passenger rides follow best practice guidelines such as those issued by the National Association of Road Transport Museums. It is recognised that safe and professional conduct of such events is also critical to managing reputational risk and measures are therefore addressed in earnest. Although the Trust does not expressly deal with children or vulnerable adults directly, safeguarding is addressed as a priority with focus increasing as the scope and audience for Trust educational activities are broadened.

The principal risk identified by the Trustees for ensuring the level of activity for public benefit is sustainable remains the potential for some Trustees to become over-burdened. Spreading the workload more widely is a continuing priority and more achievable with the expansion of the Board to seven Trustees at the end of the previous reporting year (2021-22). Recruiting additional Trustees to bring specific skill sets and oversee initiatives related to their expertise remains a priority. The Supporters group was established expressly to provide a pool of volunteers willing to help in a variety of ways. There has been considerable success with help at events and with regular working groups established at both Devon and Berkshire bases to work on archives and on vehicles. Team Leaders are being identified to take responsibility for organising the Trust's work in specific areas which is a deliberate policy to manage risks and over-dependence on individual Trustees. Direct approaches to Supporters to help in specific (administrative) areas are also being made to broaden the available expertise and remove the risks of dependence on individuals. Allied to this are measures to expand and diversify the Supporter base, particularly identifying where younger people feel they have a role, in order to ensure the extent and vigour of Trust activity is sustainable.

The Covid pandemic, war in Ukraine (particularly affecting fuel prices), increasing restrictions on diesel vehicles for environmental reasons, cuts to culture funding, the cost of living crisis, and digital developments (e.g. cyber security and artificial intelligence) are all examples of unforeseen threats and impacts which together represent external risks for the Trust's future operations. While their emergence cannot be controlled measures to protect the Trust and mitigate the consequences can, and the Trust's new Strategy developing at and beyond the 2022-23 year end includes a goal to be proactive in understanding risks, influencing debate, and anticipating controls.

Most risks whether directly or indirectly have a financial consequence. It is therefore essential that the reserves policy provides adequate cover. The policy, together with Trustee actions, protect the Trust and the level of necessary reserves has been set accordingly. The complement to this is to ensure Trust income can be maintained and an explicit priority in the strategy emerging at the 2022-23 year end is to extend and diversify the Trust's fund-raising and income generation activities.

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PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Charities Act 2006 introduced the requirements for charities to demonstrate they provided public benefit. In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have recognised this and considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'Public benefit: the public benefit requirement (PB1)', 'Public benefit: running a charity (PB2)' and in preparing this report 'Public benefit: reporting (PB3)'. Due consideration has been given to both 'benefit' and 'public' aspects.

The Trust provides diverse opportunities in-person, at home and online for a wide range of people to **benefit** from the educational insights to the Thames Valley & Great Western road transport heritage that underpins so much of passenger transport today. Through our risk management controls, potential harm (e.g. to persons or the environment) is minimised such that the benefits clearly outweigh any potential for resulting detriment.

There are no restrictions on who can benefit from the Trust's activities and the different formats through which educational insights and experiences are offered ensure widespread **public** access. The Trust's activities do not give rise to personal benefit to any party, including to Trustees none of whom receive remuneration in that capacity. Where services are provided by related parties as permitted by the Trust's governing documents, independent Trustee decision making is transparent, regularly reviewed in the Trust's interests, and fully reported in notes to the statutory accounts.

The Trustees have reviewed the objects, goals, services and objectives of the Trust in this light and can confirm that, as set out in this report, The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust continues to deliver public benefit in compliance with Charity Commission guidance.

Trustees & Directors

The Trustees who are also Directors who served during the period were:

Dr C J Billington
Dr H M Bolt
P M Delaney
G G Green
D T Sheppard
P Snowden
M J Williams

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POLICIES

Pay policy for senior staff

The Directors/Trustees comprise the key management personnel of the Trust in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the Trust on a day to day basis. All Directors give of their time freely and no Director received remuneration in the year in respect of their responsibilities as Directors and Trustees. Details of Directors' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in Notes 9 and 10 to the accounts.

The Trust has no employees. Work carried out by volunteers and Supporters is done without charge.

Investment policy

The Trustees have adopted a cautious policy on investment, and available funds (restricted and unrestricted) have historically been held in an interest-bearing account with Lloyds Bank plc. The investment policy and security of reserves is under regular review by Trustees and a proportion of the reserves were placed on a 30-day money market deposit via Lloyds Bank to secure a better rate of interest in May 2018. Alongside this an automatic sweep between instant access current and deposit accounts maintained free cash liquidity for the remaining funds while maximising deposit interest. The sweep facility was removed by Lloyds for all account holders in 2021. Due to wider economic circumstances in that period deposit rates were depressed but that same uncertainty undermined confidence in other financial instruments, so alternatives were not pursued.

Into the 2022-23 reporting year, inflation driven by international and domestic factors, has not been matched in the interest rates of return offered by the high street banks and, in consultation with professional financial advisers, the Trustees have pursued alternative platforms providing access to better interest-bearing accounts which still offer the security and flexibility required for the Trust reserves. Funds adopted on the Flagstone Group Ltd platform are restricted to those offering FSCS protection and no account has more than the guaranteed £85,000 amount invested. The distribution across instant access, notice and fixed term accounts reflects the pattern of expenditure in previous years, coupled with risks no greater than judged by Fitch A or BBB credit ratings.

Reserves policy and going concern

The cumulative current reserve funds at the end of the 2022-23 period are £192,283 (2021-22: £195,023) in the Restricted Funds and £106,906 (2021-22: £87,973) Unrestricted Funds. The Trust's policy had been to hold unrestricted reserves to a level: (a) sufficient to cover risks outside the Trust's control (e.g. inclement weather) associated with the major events carried out by the Trust within the year; (b) to provide for the development and expansion of the Trust's educational and training activities; (c) to build up reserves to provide match funding as required by grant making bodies for future projects; and (d) sufficient to cover standing Trust costs (insurance) including for Trust-owned vehicles (e.g. storage, routine maintenance) if benefactor funding ceased. Previous vehicle acquisitions (e.g. Southern National Bristol KSW 1852) and future potential underline the need for significant reserves to be held to address (c) in particular. The Trustees had therefore considered that the appropriate level of reserves should be at least £50,000 when major projects are in the offing particularly in view of high levels of current inflation. The prudence of this policy has been confirmed with the Covid pandemic when restrictions on activity from March 2020 meant that all the Trust's public events and gatherings (the principal mechanism for delivering public benefit and raising funds) for the 2020-21 financial year had to be cancelled and were only slowly restarted in 2021-22 finally recovering through 2022-23. The reserve funds mean the Trust is able to cover its standing support costs and develop new ways to engage the public and generate fresh revenue streams whilst also progressing the Trust's objects with advance funding held in restricted funds for this purpose.

In view of the ongoing uncertainty about Covid and the potential emergence of other similar pandemics, as well as the impact on the economy and uncertainty over future charitable giving and leisure practices for the general public with the cost of living crisis, plus inflation impacting future costs, the Trustees now consider reserves of at least £80,000 should be maintained and built on

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where possible for the foreseeable future. The policy will continue to be reviewed annually with a view to reducing the reserve level once funding risks reduce and reserves are committed to projects with public benefit.

Five of the seven restricted funds have zero or positive balances at the year end. In the case of RF1.0 for work on loan vehicles, the positive balance is supported by formal commitments from benefactors to provide financial support sufficient to cover all outgoings on restoration projects and associated educational/event activity. The purpose for RF2 has expired and the fund closed with zero balance.

Funds RF3 to RF7 relate to Trust-owned vehicles. The policy is to secure donations to fund the ongoing care and maintenance of these important vehicles but where there is a shortfall beyond the asset value for this to be funded by a transfer from general unrestricted funds. RF3 ring-fences funding for Thames Valley No. 446. The fund has a positive balance but reserves were depleted in the 2022-23 year to fund essential structural repairs to make it safe for continued use for public benefit. Remaining reserves and anticipated income will not cover the full standing costs for the coming year and a contribution from general unrestricted funds will be required. In the cases of RF4 (Reading VR No. 38), RF5 (Thames Valley No. 152) and RF7 (Thames Valley No. 556) shortfalls in direct funding to the restricted funds have been offset in 2022-23 by such contributions from general unrestricted funds. RF6 (Southern National No. 1852) has a small negative cash balance but has a notional fixed asset value of £1,000 (reflecting its purchase price). RF7, relating to Thames Valley No. 556, has a negative cash balance but again equivalent to its (conservative) capital valuation based on purchase price (£5,000) and funding pledges to cover the restoration costs beyond the year end, more than offset the shortfall. These fund movements are reflected in the out-turn figures stated at the start of this section.

The policy on expenditure is not to commit to any item of expenditure unless income is guaranteed or can be covered by existing reserves taking due account of risks and uncertainties involved.

The Trustees have reviewed the circumstances of the Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust and consider that adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities of the Trust for the foreseeable future. The Trustees are of the firm view that the Trust is a going concern.

This report was approved by the board on 25 November 2023 and signed on its behalf.

Dr C J Billington
Director