

**Company Registration Number: 05035702**  
**Registered Charity Number: 1125980**

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**THE THAMES VALLEY AND GREAT WESTERN OMNIBUS TRUST**

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

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**29 FEBRUARY 2020**

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**THE THAMES VALLEY AND GREAT WESTERN OMNIBUS TRUST**

**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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**COMPANY INFORMATION – TRUSTEES, DIRECTORS and PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS**

Year ended 29 February 2020

<b>Directors / Trustees</b>	Dr C J Billington Dr H M Bolt G G Green R D Rampton D T Sheppard
<b>Company Secretary</b>	Dr H M Bolt
<b>Company Number</b>	05035702
<b>Charity Number</b>	1125980
<b>Principal/ Registered Office</b>	Ledger Farm Forest Green Road, Fifield Maidenhead SL6 2NR
<b>Bankers:</b>	Lloyds Bank plc Lloyds Commercial National Clubs & Charities Centre PO Box 1000 BX1 1LT
<b>Insurance Brokers:</b>	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
<b>Independent Examiner:</b>	T W Bennett CALIBF

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# THE THAMES VALLEY AND GREAT WESTERN OMNIBUS TRUST

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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## TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT – STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Year ended 29 February 2020

The trustees are pleased to present their annual directors' report together with the financial statements of the Trust for the year ending 28 February 2019 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 Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) effective 1 January 2015.

**Company Number**                      05035702

**Charity Number**                      1125980

### 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 and remain in post. A fourth Director joined the Board on 13 February 2013 and a fifth on 21 March 2019. 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.

### 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 is:

- 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

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- 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.

During the year no further vehicles were acquired by the Trust.

At the start of the year, the Trust had on long-term loan from Trust Chairman, Dr Colin Billington, ten significant historic vehicles relevant to the Thames Valley and Great Western region, namely:

- 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).
- 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).
- FTA634 – a 1941 Western National Omnibus Co. Bristol K5G type double deck bus No. 345 (on loan 1 November 2011 for 10 Year term).
- JUO992 – a 1947 Southern National Omnibus Co. Leyland PD1A double deck bus No. 2932 (on loan 1 November 2011 for 10 Year term).
- BOD25C – a 1965 Western National Omnibus Co. Bristol FLF6B double deck bus No. 2065 (on loan 1 November 2011 for 10 Year term).
- MOD973 – a 1952 Royal Blue Bristol LS6G coach No. 1286 (on loan 15 November 2015 for 10 Year term)
- EDV555D – a 1966 Southern 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).

Loan agreements were put in place for further 10 year terms for the first two listed vehicles (1268 and 2407) when the original agreements expired on 1 November 2019 to provide for continued public benefit (see above).

One additional vehicle from the Chairman's collection was placed on loan to the Trust as follows:

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- LTA748 – a 1950 Royal Blue Bedford OB coach No. 1409 (on loan 9 November 2019 for 10 Year term)

At the start of the year, three vehicles were on long term loan to the Trust from Trustee, Richard Rampton, namely:

- CRD152C – a 1965 Reading Corporation AEC Reliance with Neepsend single deck body No. 252 (on loan 1 April 2014 for 5 Year term).
- GRD576D – a 1966 Reading Corporation Dennis Loline III with East Lancs double deck body No. 76 (on loan 1 April 2014 for 5 Year term).
- GRX140D – a 1966 Thames Valley Traction Co. Bristol FLF6G double deck bus No. D40 (on loan 1 March 2015 for 5 Year term).

The first two listed agreements expired during the period and the third expired immediately beyond the year end. Terms could not be agreed for the loans to be extended.

At the start of the 2019-20 year the Trust continued to have on loan a significant Thames Valley vehicle first loaned during 2015 in connection with the celebration of the centenary of motor bus operation in the Thames Valley (TV100). This is:

- FMO938 – a 1950 Thames Valley Traction Co. Bristol LL6B single deck bus No. 556 on loan from a private owner.

As a collection, the vehicles span the Trust's region of operation and a 75 year chronology from 1912 to 1987. 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. In addition to public access to the workshops as work progresses, the acquisition of restored and operational vehicles by the Trust (DBL154, NDP38R and MO9324), the completion of restoration of vehicles on long term loan (YF714, JUO992, MOD973, EDV555D) and the availability of operational vehicles on long term loan (OTA290G, FDV790V, FMO938) has enabled the Trust to develop an intensive programme of appearances at its own and others' public historic road transport events across the region as described below.

**Other support enabling 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 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 to host public visits.

The variety of **restoration work** undertaken on Trust owned and loan vehicles during the year reflects the differing condition and form of construction of the vehicles and included:

- MO9324 – 1927 Thames Valley Traction Co. Tilling-Stevens B9 No. 152 – work continued with the aim of completing the two major items for which funding had been raised through the Trust's funding appeal in 2017: the overhaul of the extremely noisy worn gearbox and the installation of a battery charging and voltage regulation system. These were completed just after the financial year end. Further significant problems were revealed with the rear axle and brakes on which work started within this period and continued after the year end as described below.
- VW203 – 1927 Leyland PLSC3 Lion No. 2407 – work commenced on preparation for external body painting in September 2019 with primer and undercoats applied to the roof and window surrounds. More than 200 timber internal window finishers were stained and six coats of varnish applied to give a mirror-like finish.
- RU8805 – 1929 AEC Reliance No. 3615 – work was continued by the Trust's body construction team through the year on the driver's cab, nearside front canopy and front

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destination blind box, which are the most intricate and complex parts of the body. Lower body panelling was also underway. Procurement of bodywork fittings such as lighting, roof luggage rack, seat leg castings, side destination gear, internal trimming materials and many other items was in progress.

- LTA748 – 1950 Bedford OB No. 1409 – this vehicle was moved out of storage into the finishing shop in August 2019 when it was raised on axle stands to facilitate chassis restoration.
- EDV555D – 1966 Bristol SUL4A No. 692 – finishing work, including authentic sign-writing, was completed enabling the bus to debut at the Historic Commercial Vehicles Society London to Brighton run on 12 May 2019. It was judged First in Class of post-1949 buses and coaches which is a tribute to the high quality of work undertaken by Trust Supporters and specialists in the restoration.

In parallel with restoration activities maintenance of the operational fleet has continued. For example:

- OTA290G – 1969 Bristol VRT/SL6G No. 1056 – replacement of gear box output drive mitre box bearings and oil seals, gear box air supply unloader valve and engine cooling fan due to on-road failures.
- Pre-event roadworthiness inspections and servicing of DBL154, FMO938, MOD973, EDV555D, GRX140D, OTA290G and NDP38R.

With restoration of both Trust owned and loan vehicles well advanced and public access opened up, the collection has continued to expand its coverage and variety of motorised passenger transport from the 1910s to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

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 2019-20 year the number of Supporters rose from 210 to 223 with many actively involved in Trust activities. As well as a continuing increase in volunteer hours involved in vehicle restoration, maintenance and preparation for events, the regular working parties established in 2017-18 to catalogue our growing archive holdings both at the Trust's registered office and at its West Country base, have flourished.

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. The latter are produced by Supporters, some of them regular correspondents, who are able to make full use of the Trust's archives and their own collections to research and illustrate their topics. 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.

- Issue 16 was published in April 2019 and remembered the Millbrook Steamboat Company, 90 years after incorporation, which was a significant provider of both river and road transport on the Rame Peninsula in SE Cornwall. It also covered the Red & White legacy in the form of the Lydney-bodies Regals and visualised the colour of small batches of pre-war coaches taken by the Thames Valley where only black and white photographs remain. The measures to identify suitable refreshment stops for Royal Blue services were described, drawing parallels with preparations for TV&GWOT's authentic Royal Blue preserved coach run taking place in June. The edition included the first part of what proved to be an extremely popular four-part series, carried through the year describing '30 Years' Service'. This amusing and enlightening account of *To and fro*' Editor and TV&GWOT Trustee David Sheppard's developing passion for buses and preservation from boyhood to

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more mature years. Trust Traffic Notices included a round up of restoration activity including insight to Supporters' completion of loan vehicle 692.

- Issue 17, published in June, recorded 692's prize-winning inaugural journey on the HCVS London to Brighton run. It also provided stunning photographs from TV&GWOT's record breaking events at Penzance and Didcot at the start of the 2019 season. One historical article described the genesis of Royal Blue on the Birkenhead-Didcot-Newbury-Southampton axis, running perpendicular to the more familiar Paddington to Penzance one – a fitting precursor to TV&GWOT's late June Royal Blue run which in 2020 was venturing north to Liverpool and down through Wales.. Another article, timed to coincide with the social season, illustrated the mammoth task of transporting race goers from the railhead at Windsor to Royal Ascot from the 1920s to '50s. In '30 Years' Service' David Sheppard progressed from child to apprentice bus owner with all the delight that transition brings.
- Issue 18, published in September, provided a stunning reminder of the 24 coaches, 650 miles and 16 counties of TV&GWOT's ambitious Royal Blue Run 2019. This was complemented by a Supporter's illustrated memories of a touring holiday through Western National territory in September 1980. There were reflections on the 'Day out in the Late 1960s' staged by TV&GWOT in Tavistock in July and the special events supporting Reading Buses and marking 100 and 110 years since the first GWR Road Motor Services to Dartmouth and Salcombe. A series of vintage West Country postcards, each featuring contemporary buses gave that 'Wish you were there' feel while historic research provided evidence of the emergence of local 'express' services for travel around the Reading area. In addition the destiny of Thames Valley MW 866 was revealed solving a mystery from an early *To and fro*' edition. Editor David Sheppard's progression through teenage years was matched by growth in the family fleet in part 3 of the account of '30 Years' Service'.
- Finally Issue 19, published in December, featured TV&GWOT's celebrations marking 100 years since the first Reading Corporation Motorbus service was inaugurated including transport for a civic reception and public running day. The fun had by all at the Trust's Kingsbridge running day in September was captured in pictures. From a historical perspective, Thames Valley joint working on the Reading to Guildford route was described from its origins in 1954, long before the merger with Aldershot & District. Articles also continued ideas seeded in the previous edition charting the post-war development of local 'express' services around the Reading area, the Supporter's tour continuing into North Devon with photographs evoking the scene some 40 years ago and an up to date perspective on Editor David Sheppard's '30 Years' Service' in bus preservation (so far).

Within the period, there were 41 original and exclusive features in *To and fro*' (+2 on the previous year), of which 18 were historical articles that drew directly on the Trust's archives for research and illustration (+1). The magazine featured and interpreted 273 images (+13), of which 157 were historic and/or from the Trust's archives (+38).

Back numbers of *To and fro*' are sold at modest cost on the Trust's sales stand at events and via the 'Shop' facility on the Trust's website with some editions now out of print. Sales encourage wider engagement with the Trust and extend the access to material in Trust archives.

During 2019-20 a number of the **public events** from 2018-19 were repeated and expanded, for example at Penzance (April 2019) and Kingsbridge (September 2019), in both cases attracting even greater numbers than in previous years. Also in this year the Trust was involved in organising and supporting several one-off special events and other events where the Trust's experience in event organisation, publicity and optimisation of educational opportunity were brought to bear to enhance the public educational benefit and attract even greater participation of vehicle owners and the general public. Details of these are as follows:

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- 13th April 2019 - a free shuttle bus service in support of Great Western Railway's open day at Long Rock Depot in Penzance, Cornwall, using Supporter Luke Farley's former Western National Bristol VRT No. 1200 (LFJ 844W). Leaflets were distributed and 838 passengers were carried
- 21<sup>st</sup> April 2019 – 12<sup>th</sup> Penzance Vintage Bus Running day organised by the Trust in association with the Cornwall Bus Preservation Society. Exactly 6,800 passenger journeys were recorded; a small increase on the previous year's record of 6,763. There was extensive local press coverage and an illustrated history booklet was prepared by the Trust. This included a history of the liveries of buses operating in an around Penzance from the GWR chocolate and cream of the GWR Road Motors used on the first service to Newlyn and Marazion in October 1903, through the green and cream following the merger with National in 1929, to the variety of liveries for different routes introduced with the First Kernow brand from 2016 onwards. This was illustrated by photographs, from the Trust's extensive archive and contributions from Trust Supporters.
- 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – participation in the Winchester Vintage Bus Running Day using the Chairman's 1952 Royal Blue Bristol LS6B No. 1286. 159 passenger journeys were recorded on services to Bishop's Waltham and Alresford
- 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – participation in the Historic Commercial Vehicle Society's London to Brighton Run using the Chairman's 1966 Western National Bristol SUL4A single deck bus No. 692 on its first outing since completion of an extensive restoration. 692, which is on long term loan to the Trust, carried 17 Trust Supporters on the run and was judged to be First in the Class for post-1949 buses and coaches.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 – 4<sup>th</sup> Didcot Transport Rally & Vintage Bus Running Day organised by the Trust in association with the Great Western Society's Didcot Railway Centre. Vintage bus services were run over former Great Western Railway Road Motors' and Thames Valley Traction routes to Wantage, Upton and Blewbury, Abingdon and Wallingford. A total of 24 buses and coaches attended the event and 3,373 passenger journeys were recorded. Sponsorship of the programme produced by the Trust was provided by the local subsidiary of the Go Ahead Group, Thames Travel.
- 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 – 26 vintage coaches took part in the 19<sup>th</sup> Royal Blue Run which was organised by the Trust. This year's run took place over four days, the first of which was a positioning run for coaches based in the South of England linked up at Henley-on-Thames with a former Associated Motorways route from Portsmouth to Birmingham operated jointly by Royal Blue and Midland Red.

On the second day 15 coaches started the run from Birmingham's Digbeth Coach Station by kind permission of National Express who locked down all movements within the coach station to enable the large numbers of enthusiasts and the general public congregated there to enjoy and photograph the spectacle of the coach station filled with historic coaches. At 09:30 National Express orchestrated a traditional 'mass departure' of the coaches which then followed, as far as Lichfield, part of the former Elliott Brothers Royal Blue route from Ilfracombe to Derby that operated in the early 1930s. The continuation from Lichfield via Newcastle under Lyme, Knutsford and Warrington to Liverpool was part of the route started by Tourist Saloon Coaches from Southampton. Tourist (including this service) had been absorbed in the Royal Blue network in 1935 when the route was extended back from Southampton to Bournemouth. After a stop at the bus and coach terminus at Mann Island the day was completed by travelling to Chester using the Queensway/Birkenhead tunnel under the Mersey and then via Ellesmere Port into Chester. This route forms part of the Liverpool – Cardiff service started in 1965 and operated jointly by Western Welsh and Crosville and was included in Associated Motorways timetables, becoming part of the Traws-Cambria network.



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The third day, now with 21 coaches, continued on the Traws-Cambria Liverpool – Cardiff route as far as Newtown going from Chester via Wrexham, Oswestry and Welshpool. From Newtown the 2020 Royal Blue Run route continued south via Llandrindod Wells, Builth Wells, Bronllys and Brecon to Merthyr Tydfil where the summer evening included a trip on the recently extended Brecon Mountain Railway.

The fourth and final day started with a positioning run climbing over the mountain on the A4061 and descending to Treherbert which was the terminus point for a Treherbert to Cheltenham route which was part of an Associated Motorways service that had its origins with Red & White and Royal Blue in the Elliott Brothers' era in the early 1930s. From Treherbert the route went down the valley via Porth to Pontypridd and then via Nelson, Ystrad Mynach, Pontypool, Usk, Raglan, Monmouth, Ross-on-Wye and Gloucester for Cheltenham. 22 coaches were involved for part or all of this day. The aggregate mileage for all participating coaches over the four days was 5,522 miles, not including the distance travelled from home base to the starting point on days during which each coach participated except for those coaches based at the Trust's registered address. The maximum mileage per coach was 576 miles. 255 passenger day journeys were recorded over the four days of the run. Innumerable bystanders, spotters and photographers saw, recorded, waved and smiled at the coach cavalcade as it passed through the cities, towns, villages and beautiful and spectacular English and Welsh countryside en-route.

- 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 – Anniversary run to mark the centenary of the first Kingsbridge to Dartmouth motor bus service. Two former Western National double deck buses, 1960 Bristol FLF6G No. 1969 and 1979 Bristol VRT/SL3 No. 1157 each ran on three return services between Kingsbridge and Dartmouth with a total of 178 passenger journeys being recorded
- 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 – participation in Reading Buses annual Open Day with the Trust's former Reading Transport Bristol 'Jumbo' VR No. 38.
- 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019 – Tavistock Vintage Bus Running Day 'A Day out in the late 1960s'. Thirteen buses and coaches of the types which operated in Tavistock 50 years ago, all but two from the Western and Southern National fleets and one each from a Devon and a Cornwall independent operator provided services on original routes to destinations such as Yelverton, Calstock, Princetown, Two Bridges, Lydford and Milton Abbot. Exactly 2,500 passenger journeys were recorded.
- 21<sup>st</sup> July 2019 – Anniversary Run to mark the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Kingsbridge to Salcombe motor bus service using newly restored 1966 Western National Bristol SUL4A No. 692, a type which ran on this route between 1961 and 1979.
- 27<sup>th</sup> July 2019 – participation in Boconnoc Steam Fair in Cornwall representing the Bristol VRT type and Western National operator within the static display with Support Luke Farley's No. 1200.
- 4<sup>th</sup> August 2019 – participation in the Devon General Society centenary rally and running day at Newton Abbot race-course. The Trust took two vehicles: 1983 Devon General Leyland Olympian double deck No. 1814 which has the distinction of having the very last chassis built at Bristol Commercial Vehicles before the plant closed and production was transferred to Leyland and 1980 Leyland Leopard No.3547, originally delivered to Western National for Royal Blue service and later transferred to Devon General. 1814 operated on services to Bovey Tracey and Chudleigh and carried 428 passengers.
- 25<sup>th</sup> August 2019 - participation in the Plymouth Citybus Preservation Group rally and running day at Milehouse Depot with the Chairman's 1933 Western National Bristol H No. 137 which operated free bus services between Milehouse and the Tamar Bridge visitor centre. 198 members of the public were carried during the day.

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- 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019 – the Trust organised its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Kingsbridge 7'6" Vintage Bus Running Day. For this year, the A379 road along Slapton Sands had been repaired following extensive storm wave damage during the 2017-8 winter so that services to Blackawton via Strete and tours to Blackpool Sands could be reinstated. However due to a width restriction on the principal road to Hope Cove caused by temporary scaffolding and road subsidence on the road into East Allington Village, services to both of these destinations had to be cancelled a few days before the event. Alternative services to Moreleigh Village and Thurlestone via South Milton were put in place, both being genuine routes not previously used at the Running Day. 42 vehicles operated in service carrying a new record total of 6,644 passenger journeys.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019 – with the re-opening of the A379 across Slapton Sands the Trust was able to reinstate the John Hobbs Memorial Run to Dartmouth primarily in thanks to visiting bus crews and Supporters who had volunteered for duty at the Running Day. 42 people rode on five buses on the run and then joined the Trustees for a Dart River cruise on PS Kingswear Castle, the only remaining coal fired paddle steamer operating in the UK.
- 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> October 2019 – participation in the Isle of Wight Bus Museum's 'Beer & Buses' weekend using the Chairman's 1980 Western National Bristol VR No. 1203. 935 passengers were carried by 1203 over the two day event.
- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019 – support to Reading Buses for a civic event marking the Centenary of the first Reading Corporation motor bus service between Caversham Heights and Tilehurst. A modern day bus and the oldest surviving Reading bus, preserved by the British Trolleybus Society, ran along the original route carrying dignitaries for a photo call and eventual unveiling of a celebratory cake in Reading Town Hall.
- 8<sup>th</sup> December 2019 – the Trust organised a mini running day centred on St Mary's Butts in central Reading with five preserved Reading buses from different eras (including TV&GWOT's Reading Jumbo VR No. 38) re-tracing the original route out to Tilehurst and Caversham Heights. Some 1,596 passenger journeys were recorded. TV&GWOT also launched its first book at the event "100 Years of Reading Motorbuses" – a collaborative venture researched by TV&GWOT Supporters using the Trust's archive records, Supporter expertise and photographs, and early ledgers held by Reading Buses.
- 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> December – weekend of events taking Thurlestone pensioners to Carols Down the Line on the South Devon Railway (by Western National Bristol LWL), participating in the National Trust's Coleton Aglow (travelling by Western National Mercedes 425) and touring Plymouth and the Rame peninsula (by Western National Bristol VR).
- 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – The Trust marked the actual day of the National Omnibus and Transport Company (NOTC) centenary with a blog article, explaining the significance of NOTC to many of the subsequent bus operations with which they may be more familiar. The article and associated publicity generated 246 online engagements, including further discussion of NOTC, its territory and vehicles. This was intended as a pre-cursor to the centenary tour of NOTC operating centres from Chelmsford to Penzance being planned for summer 2020.

During the 2019/20 year the Trust accommodated a number of **organised visits and tours** which included:

- 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – Merseyside Bus Club – 28 members visited the Trust's Berkshire base as the finale to a 3-day tour of locations of public transport interest.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 – A Reading Transport Group excursion of 40 members travelled to Bristol on Royal Blue LS 1286 from the Trust's loan collection. The visits coordinated by the Trust

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took in the Clifton Rocks Railway and Clifton Suspension Bridge. They were hosted locally by Trust Supporter Peter Davey who also provided access to his extensive Bristol Tramways and Bristol Omnibus Collection.

- 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 - A staff social outing of 23 people from Great Western Railway's depot in Exeter, using Supporter Luke Farley's Bristol VRT No. 1200 (LFJ 844W).
- 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019 – Wessex Transport Society – 15 Members travelled to South Devon for a talk and tour of the facilities.
- 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019 – Great Western Society, Kingskerswell, South Devon – talk to some 38 members of the Great Western Society and Trust Supporters about 'Great Western Road Motors' showing a combination of historic photographs and findings of recent fleet research.

In summary, the **final total during the year of passenger journeys for members of the public** carried on vintage bus services by Trust vehicles or on vehicles attending Trust events **was 24,758** Trust and Trustees' vehicles and other vehicles participating at TV&GWOT events were on the road on public display on **262 (vehicle) days** covering some **19,692 miles**.

The Trust also maintains 'virtual' contact with the public through its **website** (providing up to date reference material about events, the collection and opportunities to get involved), a **workshop blog** (providing lively illustrated accounts of recent events) and a **Facebook** page (providing real time updates on trust activities). In addition to the website, which continues to be the principal point of first enquiry and summarises the Trust's objectives, organisation, activities, collections, events and opportunities for volunteers, we communicate immediate news and responses to queries and comments through Facebook and our workshop blogs provide greater detail of ongoing activities.

Although the website hosts have discontinued their statistical monitoring, from measures of event programmes and other publications sold through the website, Facebook referrals from the website and email contacts originating from the website, it is clear that interest is continuing to rise. The concept for an entirely new website has been developed and will be loaded onto a new platform once Trustees are certain there is volunteer capacity to maintain it. An advantage will be that full statistical information will once again be available however the indicators are that the current website continues to perform satisfactorily.

During the 2019-20 year, the Trust's **Facebook following grew from 1,571 to 1,813**. These followers are Facebook users who have elected to receive our updates and so receive a notification whenever we post material on the page. Since the end of the period, the Trust's Facebook following has grown to 2,037. This following is significantly higher than for other groups posting in related areas (by a factor of 1.5 to 4.5).

Many more users receive the Trust's content virally as a result of both organic and strategic sharing of our posts. Our average post reach in the period was 2,061. However, some posts far exceeded this and our highest reaching post in the period advertised Penzance Running Day to **36,401 individual users**.

During the 2019-20 year, posts on the Trust's Facebook page have generated **99,742 reactions** from Facebook users (compared with 80,837 in 2018-9, 59,218 in 2017-8, 22,701 in 2016-7 and 13,600 in 2015-16). This quantifies the users who have actively engaged with our content by clicking to see more or express a 'like', posting comments or sharing. Countless more will have seen them but not reacted.

The Trust acknowledges the invaluable help of the webmaster, Supporter Gerry Tormey, and social media lead, Trustee David Sheppard, for their considerable success in engaging the public in this

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area. These communication routes are increasing awareness of and consequent participation in Trust events as well as engaging new Supporters from far afield.

TV&GWOT Chairman, Colin Billington, is also Deputy Chairman of the **National Association of Road Transport Museums** (NARTM). He also performs two specific functions for NARTM in a voluntary capacity – (1) the development of strategy for and management of NARTM's lobbying of regulatory bodies and responses to relevant public consultations, and (2) responsibility for NARTM guidance to its members on the provision of free bus services in furtherance of the charitable aims of NARTM's members.

Colin and Helen Billington participated in the NARTM Spring 2019 Conference hosted by the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Trust in Blackpool and the AGM in Southampton in October hosted by the Southampton and District Transport Heritage Trust at the Brickworks Museum at Bursledon, Hants. The principal regulatory topics discussed were (a) the introduction of Low Emission Zones for which each local authority area is setting their own rules although most are granting exemption for 40 year old historic vehicles and (b) the consultation on the Department for Transport proposal to ban the use of tyres more than 10 years old on heavy vehicle including buses and coaches. In the latter case there is a proposal included to exempt Vehicles of Historic Interest, i.e. those over 40 years old but the implementation of this exemption is subject to the outcome of the consultation which may overturn this proposal. The research carried out on behalf of the DfT does not demonstrate any link between tyre age and likelihood of failure and has been limited to studies on a type of tyre which is not generally used on VHIs and which have different degradation processes. NARTM also supports extending the proposed exemption to non-commercially used buses and coaches over 20 years old as the likelihood of failure of tyres on these vehicles has been shown by DfT accident causation statistics to be extremely low. The Government response to the consultation was published beyond the year end (on 15 July 2020) and is described below on Page 16.

Trustee David Sheppard, in particular, has brought his communications and broadcasting skills into play on numerous occasions to the benefit of the Trust. Some examples are:

- 28<sup>th</sup> July 2019 – opening of the annual Paignton Classic Car Rally in South Devon (c.2000 visitors), which he attended with his Bristol SUL No. 420 (270 KTA). The event was recently named among the UK's top ten rallies by the national magazine Classic Car Weekly. An overview of the Trust's work was given in his opening presentation, and reiterated in the prize giving later in the day. A record fundraising total was reported for this year's event, benefitting several local charities.
- 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019 - compèred the Stagecoach East Long Service Awards in Cambridge, attended by c.200 staff, industry figures and opinion formers. His presentation included an overview of the Trust's work which was especially appreciated by former Tilling group and National Bus Company employees from the United Counties and Eastern Counties companies.
- 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019 - a live commentary for the annual Twyford & District Round Table firework display, one of the biggest and best attended in the Thames Valley. His pre-display commentary promoted the Trust's local work and events, and was heard by around 4,000 visitors.
- 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 - Trustee David Sheppard compèred the annual Thurlestone Christmas Carol service in South Devon. Leaflets for the Trust's work were circulated amongst the local people (150+) who attended.
- 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – Trustee David Sheppard gave an informal tour of the Trust's South Devon base to fellow BBC radio presenter Bill Buckley. Bill has a lifelong interest in buses stemming from his childhood in the West Midlands and, as a current BBC Radio

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Berkshire (and former BBC Radio Devon) presenter, takes a keen personal and professional interest in the Trust's work. Bill Buckley gave an effusive account of his visit on his social media channels, seen by his thousands of followers.

- 30<sup>th</sup> February 2020 - Trustee David Sheppard compèred the Stagecoach East Midlands Long Service Awards in Lincoln, attended by c.400 staff, industry figures and opinion formers. His presentation at the Lincolnshire Showground was given alongside the company's heritage vehicle, a former Lincolnshire Bristol SC4LK, and included an overview of the Trust's work.

An additional radio appearance on Radio Berkshire was made by Trust Chairman Colin Billington:

- 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020 – follow up to the successful Reading Motorbus Centenary event mounted by the Trust in Reading in early December the interview focused on reminiscences of local buses and the Trust's work to engage and enthuse the public in the Berkshire area.

All opportunities for the public to ride on vintage buses and coaches at events are provided by the Trust free of charge. This ensures the Trust is compliant with vehicle licensing regulations but also enables all within the community to take part, whatever their means. Funds for mounting such events are raised through sponsorship and by selling bespoke programmes which contain historical articles relating to the area and services as well as details of each event. These are modestly priced (£4-£6) and over **1,700 programmes** were distributed in relation to the Penzance, Didcot, Tavistock and Kingsbridge events in the year. Facilities to buy them by post or online (cheque or PayPal) and from local outlets such as the Penzance Travel Centre and Kingsbridge Information Centre in advance, enable the public to plan their involvement and enhance their enjoyment of each event. We are grateful to these centres and other outlets for disseminating event information without charge.

For the Reading centenary, instead of a programme, copies of the newly published book were sold (£11 on the day, £12.95 subsequently). Some **175 book sales** were linked to the events over the centenary weekend with a further **70** online sales coming through in the year from surrounding publicity. These more than cover the printing costs and encourage the Trust to develop this route for providing public access to the Collection. Prior to the year end TV&GWOT registered with the Paypal Giving Fund and as a Charity eBay seller thereby qualifying for exemption from fees on fundraising and donations using these online platforms.

Our website provides an important reference for the public about events and regular social media posts contribute significantly to the extent of direct and virtual engagement with events as described above.

The Trust has enjoyed strong support from the major transport companies operating in its area of activity from Paddington to Penzance. Thanks are due to First Group, Plymouth Citybus, Tally Ho Coaches of Kingsbridge, Transport for London (Victoria Coach Station), Stagecoach South West, Reading Buses and Thames Travel. Both local and regional press and broadcasters help to publicise the charitable activities and events which encourages greater public interest and involvement.

In addition to the work of the Trustees, all the foregoing activities rely on **the voluntary help** from others who increasingly have come forward to marshal at events, prepare and crew vehicles giving rides to the public, and work on maintenance and restoration projects as well as other essential tasks. **246 individuals helped** with Trust activities in 2019/20, **contributing 17,300 volunteer hours**. Some 210 of these volunteers were involved in crewing the 121 different vehicles which attended TV&GWOT events. As noted above, following on from its formation in 2015, the Supporters' group has continued to provide 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. 223 people were current registered

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Supporters at the year end. We wish to thank our Supporters and other volunteers for their enthusiastic help.

Trustees also take a role when called on for significant life events. Trustee David Sheppard gave a eulogy at the funeral of his friend and TV&GWOT Supporter, Trevor Leach on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020. He gave an account of Trevor's lifelong contribution to bus preservation, including his dedicated support of TV&GWOT since its inception, in particular the restoration of his former West Yorkshire Bristol SUL4A No. SMA 5 (811 BWR), a regular attendee of Trust events.

**Beyond the period end**, a number of the 2019 **events** were scheduled to be repeated and expanded, for example at Penzance (April 2020) and Kingsbridge (September 2020). With 2020 being the centenary of the formation of the National Omnibus & Transport Company (NOTC) on 13 February and of the Thames Valley Traction Company (TVTCo.) on 10 July, both of which are central to the heritage TV&GWOT preserves, special events were also planned.

Organisation and planning of a trip to launch TV&GWOT's "SU60" celebrations, commemorating 60 years of the Bristol SU bus and coach design was substantially completed in February 2020 (within the 2019/20 period). The trip, planned for 29 March 2020, would recreate a 1974 tour by the now-defunct Plymouth Bus Club, in which a Bristol SU coach (No. 1207) was hired and used to traverse the former Western National Kingsbridge depot routes across the South Hams. The two original organisers, now TV&GWOT Supporters, worked closely with Trustees to research and plan the route and timetable. Photographs of the occasion from their collections were used to create a souvenir booklet, with the intention of recreating each photograph on the day. The event has been postponed due to Covid-19 but plans are 'oven ready'.

The Trust's annual Royal Blue run was to be an epic five-day venture starting as is traditional from London's Victoria Coach Station and travelling to Essex to the original NOTC headquarters before continuing back across the country through Hampshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire taking in the principal NOTC depot towns. A rolling programme of pop-up exhibitions was planned for each town, at publicly accessible venues chosen for high footfall. Exhibition material was planned to celebrate both the local transport heritage while also placing it in the context of the NOTC centenary. This was to give local relevance to the public, offer a visitor trail between venues, and provide a link to the Royal Blue coach run spectacle that would pass through the towns in mid-summer. Planning was advanced and a National Lottery Heritage Fund bid was being finalised.

For the TVTCo. centenary in July, a vintage bus running day centred near the original station terminus in Reading was planned. A Trust Supporter and TVTCo. expert was bringing out a new pictorial history to coincide with the anniversary and the Trust was working with other Supporters, several with direct experience of the industry, to produce a book describing the public transport enterprises that served the market after the TVTCo. entity disappeared with the ascendance of the National Bus Company in 1971.

These approaches to the centenary events are novel and both were designed to provide for wider public engagement and to advance the educational purposes of the Trust. However, the Covid-19 pandemic took hold and it became clear in March that the Trust had to cancel plans for large gatherings or for offering public rides in the confines of preserved buses and coaches.

The Trust acted early and decisively and despite some disappointed observers the decisions have been vindicated by the ongoing restrictions on movement through the remainder of the year. In particular the early decisions have ensured the Trust has not forfeited expenditure on preparations even though a large number of volunteer hours had been expended on planning and preparation for what would have been the Trust's largest events programme in its history.

Other 2020 planned events that were affected included a special one-off event "Belles and Buses" was being planned for May in conjunction with the Northern Belle Trust to celebrate the bus and ferry links of the Rame Peninsula. Plans had also been underway for TV&GWOT to support the

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Great Western Society with its transport heritage event at Didcot in early summer. All such events were necessarily cancelled.

Rather than miss the important milestones, the Trust is hoping to run the NOTC and TVTCo. events in 2021, as *Centenary+1* celebrations which, given the extreme circumstances, should be forgivable.

Although the Trust's traditional mechanisms for public engagement have been thwarted beyond the 2019-20 year end, efforts have nevertheless focused on alternative ways to provide educational material to Supporters and the wider public. These have included:

- A blog article (on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020) to mark the closure of Taunton's historic bus station prepared collaboratively by Trust Chairman Colin Billington and Trustee David Sheppard. Colin gave a personal account of the bus station's role in forming his own interest in buses and coaches, as well as its significance as a terminal through the decades. Nine of Colin's own historic photographs were published for the first time. The article and associated publicity generated 523 engagements online, and hard copies were distributed to Supporters without internet access as part of the Trust's KIT (Keep In Touch) initiative during full Covid-19 lockdown.
- A virtual bus running day on the Trust's public Facebook page coinciding with the Penzance event date, which combined video footage from 12 vehicles at previous events in the form of a quiz
- A virtual Royal Blue run over the intended June weekend, each day offering video clips (many previously unseen) of previous runs
- The launch of an appeal to acquire and restore the Thames Valley Bristol LL 556, previously on loan to the Trust, to enable it to take pride of place in the *Centenary+1* celebration
- Preparation and dissemination of a report explaining the remarkable engineering steps taken by the Trust to rectify issues with the 1927 Thames Valley Tilling-Stevens bus 152 which had been funded through an appeal launched in 2017.
- Development of an informal *Service-19* monthly Newsletter to engage and unite Supporters particularly through periods of isolation and restriction. It grew from a 'keep-in touch' newsletter built around the Trust's blogposts marking the NOTC Centenary on 13 February and closure of the Taunton Bus Station posted on 27<sup>th</sup> March. With some six 20-page editions to date, these have included a variety of themes around the Trust's core interests and developed a dialogue of queries with a sharing of knowledge to provide answers. Distribution by post and email ensured inclusivity.
- Weekly Zoom sessions hosted by Supporter Luke Farley and Trustee David Sheppard (from April to June) to unite their friends and fellow Supporters during lockdown. Themed 'show and tell' opportunities resulted in slideshows and discussion of artefacts from the various collections of those on the call. These were greatly appreciated by all who took part, some of whom were new to the world of online video conferencing. The concept was promoted by the Trust Chairman Colin Billington to the NARTM committee and samples were presented as a feature to the virtual attendees from around the UK at the NARTM AGM on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

All these are mirrored with coverage on the Trust's website to help promote awareness.

Some low-key appearances were made to attract public attention when opportunities arose, although passengers were not carried and there was minimal personal interaction at stops:

- 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – the Chairman, together with other Trustees, took his Western National Bristol FLF No. 1969 to Kingsbridge Bus Station to meet Coleridge Community Bus Trustee, Chris Newland, with their bus to make a donation to the Coleridge Bus Trust in recognition of their participation in the 2019 Kingsbridge Vintage Bus Running Day. FLF No. 1969 was then driven along the John Hobbs Memorial Run route from Kingsbridge to Dartmouth again providing a surprise spectacle to cheer local residents and holiday

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makers. A press release with photographs raised the charities' local profiles, reassuring residents that the vintage bus running day would return to the town for the public to enjoy in future years.

- 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – participation with the Trust's Thames Valley Bristol K No. 446 in the national Showbus 'flyby' run which replaced the static event normally attracting several hundred vintage buses. Organised remotely with some 76 individual vehicles making their own way in both directions along the route between Beaconsfield and Wheatley using the A40, the convoy was impressive maintaining TV&GWOT's public and sector profile. Bristol K No. 446, new in 1946, was the oldest vehicle on the run and was featured prominently in the enthusiasts' press.

Since the end of the period, three further editions of the **Supporters' magazine *To and fro*** have been produced unaffected by the Covid-19 pandemic, albeit with the focus on historic articles in the absence of outings or events to cover. These three editions contained a further 32 original and exclusive features, of which 17 were historical articles. They featured and interpreted 169 images, of which 132 were historic and/or from the Trust's archives.

The Trust's collections have necessarily been closed to the public, so there have been no group visits to either our Thames Valley or West Country facilities since the 2019-20 year end.

The Trust has continued to engage with NARTM, in particular clarifying the outcome of legislative changes on tyres and measures applicable to heritage vehicles. The Government response to the consultation on the proposals to ban tyres more than 10 years on heavy vehicles (buses, coaches and heavy goods vehicles [HGVs]) was published on 15 July 2020 and confirmed that the exemption proposed in the initial consultation document for Vehicles of Historic Interest (i.e. vehicles more than 40 years old which have not been substantially modified during the past 30 years) would be carried forward into the proposed legislation, although the exemption would not apply to commercially used vehicles nor to HGVs where the exemption would only apply to HGVs built before 1960. The NARTM submission to the consultation had been prepared by TV&GWOT Chairman, Colin Billington, following wide consultation with NARTM members. This had further proposed extending the exemption to non-commercially operated buses and coaches over 20 years old as this was the age at which, typically, vehicles became available for preservation, having been withdrawn from commercial use. This proposal was not included in the Government's proposals for further legislation so will result in a significant financial barrier to ongoing preservation of vehicles built less than 40 years ago. At the time of preparing this report the revised legislation has not been published. Colin Billington has also participated in the NARTM committee and AGM meetings online. Dissemination of sector guidance via NARTM for museums and archives has been a valuable guide for Trust actions in relation to post-Covid opening.

Other links have been forged, for example with the Archives and Records Association, which have produced a variety of webinars and online training courses which Trustees have participated in to advance skills and knowledge required for the Trust both in general and specific to Covid-related measures. A place was secured on The National Archives' Novice to Know-how certified course on digital preservation skills to further enhance Trustee skills.

Engagement of Trust Supporters as volunteers in archive and vehicle restoration and maintenance working groups was put on hold with lock-down at the start of the current Trust year. A further consideration has been the vulnerability of individuals as many volunteers are retired, some with underlying health conditions. With the easing of restrictions work in both areas has re-started for volunteers who wish to return, albeit with smaller groups, dispersed work fronts, social distancing, quarantining materials, additional cleaning and sanitisation.

The Trust's archive and small object collection has received significant material as collectors and people who formerly worked in the industry have sadly died or are no longer able or wishing to care for it. The Trust has prepared and disseminated a 'Legacy Guide' to ease the process for potential



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donors or benefactors and the Trust. Increasingly the archive is providing a comprehensive basis for research and production of educational material relating to the public transport heritage. Recording and cataloguing the collection continues to progress with collaboration between Berkshire and Devon bases and work to standardise storage and referencing practices. Trustee Helen Bolt is self-funding attendance on the MA in Archival Practice at Plymouth University (January 2020 to July 2022) to help establish up to date best practices for the Trust to adopt.

The appeal launched in July 2020 to purchase and restore Bristol LL Thames Valley 556 which had previously been on loan to the Trust achieved its initial target within a few weeks and 556 was brought into TV&GWOT ownership. Commencement of the restoration activity is noted below.

Despite work restrictions, restoration progress has been made:

- MO9324 – 1927 Thames Valley Traction Co. Tilling-Stevens B9 No. 152 – the installation and testing of the battery charging and voltage regulation system was completed just before the Covid-19 national lockdown. Following removal and disassembly of the rear axle, the axle beam was taken to Imperial Engineering at Cheshunt for repairs to the stub axles and manufacture of wheel bearing spacers and replacement wheel studs. This work was completed following the lockdown. The axle was then rebuilt in the Trust's workshops with new wheel and differential bearings and re-lined brake shoes and re-installed within the chassis. Following this, the front axle was disassembled in-situ and components inspected. This will be rebuilt before the year end. The final piece of work, now nearing completion, is the overhaul of the magneto ignition system and replacement of the rubber flexible drive coupling, thereby completing the major mechanical restoration of this vehicle so that it will be able to take centre stage at the proposed 2021 Thames Valley Traction Company 'Centenary + 1' event in 2021. A report describing the complex work undertaken on 152 was prepared and circulated first to principal donors then more widely to engender support for future projects.
- RU8805 – 1929 AEC Reliance No. 3615 – work has continued on the driver's cab, nearside front canopy and front destination blind box, which is now nearing completion. Work is now focussing on upper body and roof panelling, installation of the opening sun-roof and construction and installation of the roof mounted luggage container which had been removed following withdrawal from service and sale to a farmer near Cannington, Somerset in 1949. Procurement of bodywork fittings such as lighting, seat leg castings, internal trimming materials and other items has been delayed by the pandemic but at the time of writing is now proceeding.
- VW203 – 1927 Leyland PLSC3 Lion No. 2407 – work continued on external body painting with completion of top coats and varnishing of the roof and window surrounds and undercoating of the waist rail and lower panels has been completed together with painting of numerous other parts for the roof luggage rack, roof mounted side advert boards, seat pedestals and mounting brackets, passenger door, entry steps and life guards. New engine valves have been manufactured so that the engine rebuild can now proceed.
- FTA634 – 1941 Bristol K5G No. 345 – work has started on chassis and mechanical overhaul on this vehicle at the Trust's Devon workshop. 345's engine had not turned since the bus's recovery in 1973 from a field in West Sussex by the West of England Transport Collection. It had been used as a site office at a brickworks in the area since 1961. The engine had been removed from the chassis shortly before the lockdown and has since undergone a complete rebuild and is now ready for re-installation in the chassis. Following the ending of the lockdown, one of the Trust's Devon based volunteers has been refurbishing the front part of the chassis and engine bay which is now ready for the engine.

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- LTA748 – 1950 Bedford OB No. 1409 – work has proceeded on chassis restoration with the removal of major components (e.g. wheels, brake drums and hubs, half shafts, brake servo, fuel tank, prop shaft) for refurbishment.
- FMO938 – 1950 Bristol LL6B No. 556 – following success of the appeal to fund the restoration of Thames Valley LL No. 556, it was moved to a professional restorer to expedite the work and is being monitored by the Trust's project team. The body framework has been exposed with rotten and damaged sections being replaced. Body corner panels and roof domes have been removed for repair or re-manufacture by a specialist and the correct passenger seating is being sourced.
- BOD25C – 1965 Bristol FLF6B No. 2065 – this vehicle is undergoing a complete restoration but work had been paused whilst the body building team focussed on the rebuilding of AEC Reliance No. 3615. However, 2065's engine had been rebuilt in parallel with the body restoration and, following attachment of the gearbox, was re-installed in the chassis in October 2020. This will enable 2065 to be moved to vehicle lifts for further chassis restoration.
- OTA290G – 1969 Bristol VRT/SL6G No. 1056 – the Trust joined an initiative to have seating material (moquette) manufactured to original specification to suit this vehicle. The material arrived in July 2020 and since then all of the seat backs and squabs have been sent to a specialist for re-trimming.

In parallel with restoration activities maintenance of the operational fleet has continued. For example:

- Roadworthiness inspections and servicing of DBL154 and FDV790V.
- The owners of several privately-owned vehicles brought regularly to Trust events have had the vehicles inspected and funded rectification work (e.g. steering joints, tyres etc.) in readiness for future use.
- With the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, to be reinstated later in the week of finalising this report, the majority of the Trust's vehicles have not been used for Trust activities for over a year. Therefore the Trust has implemented a plan to regularly start and test vehicles to ensure that electrical, hydraulic, air and fuel systems remain in full working order. Battery trickle chargers are now in use on operational vehicles.

In July 2020 the Trust accepted an offer to acquire, without charge, 1951 Royal Blue Bristol LL6B No. 1264 which had been bequeathed to another road transport heritage charity, The Oxford Bus Museum, but which fell outside their sphere of interest and collecting policy. The vehicle had been abandoned in a Devon field since 1979 but is remarkably complete with the potential to provide some parts for 1929 Royal Blue Reliance No. 3615 currently undergoing restoration by the Trust. It is the Trust's intention to store this vehicle in the dry to preserve it for potential restoration in the future. Social distancing and other restrictions added to the complexity of the recovery but it succeeded without incident and video shared on the Trust's Facebook page and publicity on the website resulted in significant enthusiastic responses picked up and disseminated in the enthusiasts' press.

The Trustees have continued to meet to the schedule set out at the turn of the calendar year, albeit for the most part on-line. The Trustees' workshop deliberations on future priorities from the end of 2019-20 have been documented in a TV&GWOT 5-year strategic plan. It is subject to ongoing review in light of the pandemic effects but implementation of measures to strengthen the Trust have commenced. Financial security, alternative ways to sustain Supporter and public engagement, and new team leader and Trustee appointments have been priorities. The involvement of younger people (children, teenagers and young adults) is an important aim and the Trustees are seeking specialist guidance and what might be possible alongside appropriate safeguarding. In addition

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digital maturity has been tackled with the acquisition of Trust computers to provide for secure, central access and storage for archive material and records. The Trustees remain mindful that the hitherto normal focus on large gatherings to learn about the Trust's transport heritage may not even be possible in the next financial year 2020-21 depending on the success of measures to contain and eliminate Covid-19. They are therefore actively progressing ideas for alternatives to engage the public, sustain interest and remain financially viable should the resumption of normality be further delayed.

Where the Trust has enjoyed strong support from the major transport companies operating in its area of activity from Paddington to Penzance these firms have faced considerable challenges beyond the Trust's 2019-20 year end. They have been consulted and kept abreast of decisions to cancel Trust events which previously were seen to promote public transport past and present and in all instances the Trust's approach has aligned with their expectations. No monetary support has been sought from these companies in the pandemic circumstances.

Despite the pandemic disruption, the Trust continues to be well resourced financially benefitting from its prudent reserves policy. The Trustees have been able to limit the Trust's expenditure in anticipation of no income from public access events. Trust Supporters have been particularly generous with donations when renewing support in May/June 2020 and some have provided supplementary donations to cover the exceptional costs of producing and distributing the special Service-19 newsletters. The number of Supporters has continued to grow thanks to the Trustees' efforts to maintain the Trust's public profile through novel means. The appeal to fund the purchase and restoration of the Thames Valley LL 556 met its target within a matter of weeks enabling this important aspect of the Trust's work to continue equipping it for an impressive emergence from the pandemic when more normal activities can resume.

### **Risks**

The Trustees of The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust are fully aware of and implement policies to address any risks appropriate to the Trust. 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.

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 running days follow best practice guidelines such as that issued by the National Association of Road Transport Museums. It is also recognised that safe and professional conduct of such events is critical to managing reputational risk and measures are therefore addressed in earnest.

The principal risk identified by the Trustees for ensuring the level of activity is sustainable remains the potential for Trustees becoming over-burdened. Spreading the workload more widely is helping

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ensure the burden on Trustees is manageable and will enable them to fulfil their strategic as well as day to day roles. 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 during the year and regular working groups have been established at both South Devon and Thames Valley bases to work on archives and on vehicles. Work is continuing to develop this valuable resource further enabling team leaders to take responsibility for organising the Trust's work in specific areas. This is intended as a stage in identifying potential additional Trustees and has been prioritised in the strategic plan.

The widespread impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was not previously foreseen and risks had been linked to individual events or activities. The reserves policy and Trustee actions, together, had been sufficiently prudent to protect the Trust against these perceived risks. The consideration of risks has therefore been expanded beyond the 2019-20 year end to address more fundamental risks to the style of Trust activity, sources of heritage funding and the availability of volunteers.

### **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: running a charity (PB2)'. Emphasis has been placed on access and affordability as demonstrated in this report. We have sought wide involvement from all within the community and have used local publicity and social media with considerable success.

The Trustees have reviewed the objects, goals, services and objectives of the Trust in this light and can confirm that The Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust serves the public benefit. Details of the Trust's charitable activities are provided in the Review of the Year above. The approach beyond the year end (February 2020) has had to be modified in light of the Covid-19 pandemic but the Trustees remain confident that the novel and alternative approaches have delivered significant public benefit to the extent that is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances and can confirm this remains the Trust's priority.

### **Trustees & Directors**

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

Dr C J Billington

Dr H M Bolt

G G Green (from 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020)

R D Rampton (position vacated subsequent to the year end, with effect from 27 June 2020)

D T Sheppard

### **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. Details of Directors' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in Notes 9 and 10 to the accounts.

The Trust has no employees. All work is carried out by volunteers and Supporters who also give their time without charge.

### **Investment policy**

The Trustees have adopted a cautious policy on investment and available funds (restricted and unrestricted) have been held in an interest bearing account with our bank. In order to maximise the return whilst maintaining free cash liquidity, a sweep operates on a daily basis between the current and deposit accounts leaving a current account balance of £6,000 at the end of each day. Due to wider economic circumstances deposit rates have been depressed but that same

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uncertainty undermines confidence in other financial instruments so other alternatives had not been pursued. The investment policy and security of reserves remains under review and a proportion of the reserves were placed on money markets via Lloyds Bank to secure a better rate of interest in May 2018 securing an improved level of interest. The action was accompanied by renewed assurance on the security of the capital sums.

### **Reserves policy and going concern**

The cumulative current reserve funds at the end of the period are £176352 (2019: £170102) in the Restricted Funds and £71101 (2019: £55407) 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; and (c) to build up reserves to provide match funding as required by grant making bodies for future projects. 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 have therefore considered that the ideal level of reserves should be at least £40000 when major projects are in the offing. The prudence of this policy has been confirmed with the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on activity from March 2020 meaning 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 have had to be cancelled. 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-19 and the potential for its resurgence and/or the 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, the Trustees now consider reserves of at least £55000 should be maintained and built on where possible for the foreseeable future. The policy will continue to be reviewed annually with a view to reducing the reserve level once the picture is more certain.

Five of the seven restricted funds have positive balances at the year end with formal commitments from benefactors to provide financial support sufficient to cover all outgoings on restoration projects and associated educational/event activity. RF4 which provides funding for the donated Reading VR No. 38 shows a negative balance but, with over 70% of the base annual costs being covered by regular donations, the Trustees have agreed that the remaining costs be covered by General Funds. RF6 provides for funding and expenditure on Southern National Bristol KSW6B No. 1852. The negative balance reflects the initial recovery costs and the annual shortfall covered by General Funds is just £55 so wholly justifiable for this important vehicle destined for a major restoration project in due course. 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 view that the Trust is a going concern.

This report was approved by the board on 31 October 2020 and signed on its behalf.

**Dr C J Billington**

Director