

The Bogie-man's Gazette

AUGUST 1989

HI THERE!!

It's been a long time since Carriage & Wagon Department produced a Gazette, but that doesn't mean that nothing has been going on. Quite the contrary! Indeed the amount of work needing to be done has taken up all the available man-hours, and we just haven't had the time to sharpen our pencils. It's probably easiest to bring you up to date by reviewing the department coach by coach.

IN TRAFFIC

This year the Whitehead Set was not all ready for certification before the Two day Tour, and the last three coaches were only passed at the beginning of July. In total 11 vehicles have been passed for main line running, including the Film Train! Brake overhauls and gangway renewals take a lot of time and effort, and we're now having to check out wheel wear and bearing conditions on a more frequent and thorough basis. Just a thought here ... some of our coaches have been in Society service for about 15 to 17 years, and they're only 50 to 60 years old! This means over 25% of their working lives has been with the RPSI! No wonder we're coming round to second overhauls.

Coaches which are in need of only minor attention are 9, 238, 1142 and 1335, which is having its reading lamps fitted at last. By the time you read this the job should be done, but all our coaches require some work on the electrical gear, and several new sets of batteries will need to be purchased. This will be quite a major outlay over the next few years. More work is needed on 91 and 241 (reinstatement of a toilet in each) while 1327 and 87 both require repairs to the floor. We are seeking some sponsorship (from Bass) towards the refurbishing of 87, and hopefully over the coming winter the last of the (dreadful) formica will disappear and the coach WILL re-emerge next spring with varnished wood, mouldings and more attractive fixtures and fittings. Finally 114, the service coach, will require some attention to her doors and other work to complete her refurbishment.

IN THE SHOPS

Needless to relate, there are several other coaches in the wings waiting to come on to the centre of the stage when their overhauls are complete. 88 has been unavoidably delayed

by several problems over the last few months. When we went to re-hang the Belfast end gangway we found that an upright had not been replaced, and that it was vital to renew it to provide a safe support for the gangway connection. This work is proceeding in Shed Road 5, and should be completed in the near future. But as well as the bodywork some repairs were necessary to the running gear and this work has also been undertaken over the last few months. 88 had been modified to run in railcar sets, and as a result carried underneath her a lot of pipework and electrical cabling which was now just dead weight. This has all been removed and the emergency brake valves reconverted to normal coaching stock pattern. A complete new set of brake blocks was also needed, and these have now been cast and, more importantly, drilled and finished ready for fitting. A complete new set of bearings is required and this involves the re-metalling of 9 brasses. The chill (a former) has now been cast, and over the next few weeks it is hoped to complete this job. Although the season will be almost over, at least the "new diner" will be ready for traffic for the 1990 season.

The midweek squad have been working solidly for some months at 1097, the GS&WR half saloon coach. Gradually the compartments are taking shape again, but there is still a lot of work to be done, and when the woodwork is completed there is still the re-upholstery of all the seats to be carried out. This coach will cost a fair amount to restore and will probably not be available until mid-1990 at the earliest.

861 received a full external repaint and some bodywork repairs for recent film contracts, but there is a great deal of work still required on this vehicle. It must be re-roofed, as the present roof covering is life-expired and leaking, and if it is possible the clerestory lights will be reinstated at the same time. The gas lighting needs to be completely overhauled and the light fittings need attention. The interior panelling needs considerable work to renew where necessary and refurbish the matchboarding, and reupholstering is required, at the very least in first class compartments.

Work on this coach has been suspended at this time due to shortage of manpower and the

number of other jobs on hand. We would love to see a group of members take this on as a project, or sufficient extra workers so that it could be accelerated in the overall programme of work.

Work is also progressing on an ad hoc basis on the six wheel coach 62M. It is hoped to have this vehicle available for train ride duty in the future, but at minimal expenditure. At present the work takes the form of a concentrated "work-in" day (usually followed by a barbecue) when everyone tackles a job on the vehicle. It's a nice change and gives the regular squad a little break from the other vehicles!

411, the NCC full brake, will also be finished externally (and hopefully internally) over the rest of the year. Our standby service vehicle, she requires completion of the external repanelling, some floor repairs and a repaint.

THE LONG(ER) FINGER

Well, 227 should finish her sojourn in Whitehead Railway Project later this year. We hope by then the GN all first will be externally complete, although internal works like upholstery and "fitting out" will it take longer.

If all goes according to plan, she will be ready for traffic during 1990. No decision has yet been agreed with the Operations Committee or the Council about the next vehicle to be rebuilt, but there are a number of strong contenders.

As a move for the future we have purchased NIR's stock of spare LMS pattern wheels, all 39 (!?) of them. Hopefully this will enable us to keep all our vehicles running for quite a while, since we have had the wheel press for fitting them to the axles for some time. However, it is a kit of parts at the moment, and will have to be reassembled. We also hope to see work start later this year on the erection of the shear-legs and the construction of the "heavy lift" area.

ON THE SOUTHERN FRONT

The Mullingar Set has fortunately required little major work to get it ready for this season, although a couple of bogie changes are planned so that worn wheels can be replaced. Alterations and improvements have been carried out to the train plumbing, and this has helped to reduce water consumption and ease servicing.

Over next winter some further mechanical work is being considered-1 and some internal refurbishment will be necessary on several

coaches. We'll try to concentrate on this programme in our next Gazette.

A major factor in our planning is the proposed purchase from Irish Rail of several vehicles. This has been a long-running negotiation and it would appear to be coming to an end. Among the vehicles sought are a couple of generator vans, the last of the mini-buffet coaches (similar to 2422) and a couple of standard laminates, including a brake. A couple of full vans are also being sought, but they are to provide storage at Mullingar (at least until such time as the finalising of a lease will allow the rebuilding of the original workshops and stores), and spare running gear parts. The generator vans would solve some of the present problems with train lighting batteries, not to mention providing mains voltage electricity which could power beer coolers, microwave ovens and tools for the workshop. We are awaiting a decision from Irish rail at the moment, but it seems likely that our bid may be successful and so the coaching stock could see some significant developments over the next winter maintenance season.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

When you read this portion - stand in front of a mirror. When you took in the mirror, the person you see holding this Gazette is wanted!

And yes, you've guessed it - to help at Whitehead or Mullingar. We repeat, you don't need to be an engineer or joiner - everyone can paint, clean and be a gofer (this last job is vital to the fellows who understand the technical end; you can gofer a spanner, or a box of screws, and even that helps!). And of course, we'll teach you how to do the more complicated jobs as well. Under supervision, anyone can do it! (Bear in mind that a year ago 1327 had her internal panelling renewed - by a female working on her own with no previous experience!!) So there's the challenge. Alan Edgar at Whitehead and Mark Hodge at Mullingar need help, and you are the one who can do it! Help us live up to our Silver Jubilee motto: **Steaming Past ... Into the Future!**

Donations to the Carriage Shed Appeal fund should be sent to:

Whitehead Railway Project at Castleview Road,
Whitehead.