

The Bogieman's Gazette

AUTUMN 1992

It's some time ago since I dipped my quill in the inkwell and a review of our coaching stock is due again. We have had the benefit of some grant aid from the European Regional Development Fund, Bass Ireland and the BBC's 'Children In Need' appeal; more on the financial front later.

No.9 (GNRI Open Third)

An overheating axlebox (yes, coaches have mechanical parts too!) has given trouble. The wheelset was removed after the coach had been lifted from the bogie. A total of four white metal bearings plus one journal needed attention and thanks to the timely assistance from the Locomotive Department all is now ready for reassembly.

A cracked bolster soleplate has also been replaced with a new casting.

The NCC coaches are nearly a full train on their own these days, the sad fact being that GNR vehicles have suffered much more from the effects of Anno Domini. The 1st/3rd corridor composite No.68 has made a welcome return to traffic after two years on the sidelines, and looking very smart after repaint.

Nos. 238 and 241 the 'twin' corridor thirds will be next to receive a smartening-up whilst brake third No.91 (the 'North Atlantic' brake) will be attended to after some essential repairs to window frame mouldings and doors. The winter should also see the total number of working lavatories on the train rise to 100%.

Anyone travelling on the train this year will have noticed a significant improvement in the lighting, in that almost all of it works, and works well. The exception being the Dining Car (No.87) which has been suffering from gremlins in the charging regulator, but should now be cured. A glance at the end of the train next season will also reveal jumper sockets so that in an emergency a

coach may be lit from its neighbour or a 240v AC supply. For the record our train lighting batteries have been as the original lead acid or alkaline (NiFe) cells were up to forty(!) years old. We now have a standby lighting reserve of four hours.

Lord Gnome has informed the Bogieman that a bewhiskered gentleman with a red suit and jolly disposition intends travelling on the train again this winter. When he does so he may be assured that the carriage heating on the Whitehead based set will have been overhauled in order to provide the same facilities as he has previously enjoyed at Mullingar.

Water, water everywhere - BUT NOT A DROP FOR COACHES!

Due to ongoing work on the Carriage Shed and Loco Workshop projects at Whitehead this summer the water supply for filling the carriage tanks has been severed causing all kinds of fun, games and uttering of industrial terms before 'Flyers'. Fortunately our Chairman was overheard to remark that it was an easy task to make an adaptor for a standard fire hydrant fitting. His bluff called, the fitting was duly produced and means that in future emergencies we will have much better options for getting this essential task done at all.

No.1097 (GS&WR Half Saloon)

This beautiful and unusual vehicle is nearing completion and will be in traffic in late 1992 or early 1993. Finishing out includes the upholstery, plumbing and installation of accommodation and toilet facilities for wheelchair users, the cost of which has been assisted by the BBC 'Children In Need' fund.

No.50 (GNR(I) Saloon)

Whilst stored in the open awaiting the carriage shed facility at Whitehead some weather damage has been caused, mainly to exterior panelling. This has been

stripped to assess the work required to return the 'Director's Saloon' to operational condition.

No.227 (GNR(I) First)

Unfortunately the NIACRO Youth Training Scheme which has been assisting with the restoration is drawing to the end of its life at Whitehead. Still to be completed are the external painting, lettering and glazing, internal finishing, flooring, plumbing and upholstery. The RPSI's contribution to employment training will not end, however, as several possibilities for continuing the scheme are being explored.

Coaches Earning Their Keep

Members should be aware that we receive a constant stream of enquiries concerning our vintage coaches for films, functions, excursions and other events. Sadly not all of these go ahead for a variety of reasons but when they do it is essential that we, just like the railway companies before us, are able to call on a pool of vehicles, each one designed with a specific purpose; at its simplest witness the dining cars. No.87 has the large bar and snack layout for one-day excursions as opposed to No.88 which is geared to providing a full meals service. Other priorities for restoration and overhaul will be GS&WR clerestory brake No.861. Where else will you find a 1900s vintage, gas-lit twelve-wheeled coach in regular mainline traffic? Please read the 255/1328 appeal as well. Even better, read it and send a fiver. It can't be over-emphasised that despite grant assistance we still need the support of our members, working and non-working, to carry it off. Every single member contributes in some way to the success of the RPSI as a whole.

No.1335 (GS&WR)

This Bredin-designed side corridor third is about to re-enter traffic having received new gangways, a door post and a vacuum gear overhaul.

No.1327 (GS&WR)

Sister to No.1335 and at the time of writing sitting at Mullingar awaiting

mechanical attention as well as some structural repairs before joining the Mullingar based train next summer.

Still at Mullingar, No.1463 is almost complete after major restoration work and should be in traffic next season. The Mullingar team are also planning a major series of bogie overhauls, and to assist in this it is planned to buy spare bogies from Irish Rail. An overhaul programme will begin once a pool of spare bogies enables us to rotate between coaches as the various tasks required are carried out.

The jumper system for lighting vehicles from an external power source if required was tested on the Mullingar coaches this summer and proved so successful that it has been adopted for the whole fleet.

Safety First

As you were probably aware there was a major controversy earlier this year concerning slam locks on British Rail and a spate of accidents. All locks on RPSI sets are checked once a year by our insurers and Irish Rail, and before every trip by the RPSI Guard. Our safety record is one to be proud of, but will not be maintained by complacency.

The interim report by the health and Safety Executive has been obtained, as will the full report in due course, as well as other relevant documentation from HSE, the British Standards Institute, NIR, Irish Rail and other sources. Our vehicle maintenance is carried out in accordance with recognised standards, or where none exist to a specification agreed with the relevant authority.

This may seem to be labouring the point but if we are to continue to be respected as fellow professionals by railwaymen then we must ensure that all our trains are above all safe to operate.

A programme of lifting coaches from bogies for mechanical inspection has begun, as coach mileages are clocking up to major mechanical overhauls.

Thank you again for your help in whatever form, and an open invitation to join the C&W Team at Whitehead or Mullingar.