

The Bogieman's Gazette

SPRING 1992

It's a long time since the last Gazette came out, and one of the reasons for the delay was the virtual dead stop to carriage work brought about by the need for economies. Now we're back in business, so here's an update for those of you who might be persuaded to venture to Whitehead or Mullingar and give us a helping hand.

Where's the stock? Well, the Mullingar set is at its home base, while the Whitehead set is in Dublin! It's there because of the work going on at Whitehead, where the carriage sidings have been totally cleared! We haven't seen that in a very long time, but it has allowed our friends in the permanent way business to do some much needed relaying of the sidings.

The Carriage Shed will start construction literally in days from now - already the steelwork is being made up - and it will give us secure storage for 12 coaches. Alas, the cost of covering 18 proved too great but the shed will be built in such a way that additional bays can be added as finance permits. We expect to move in during March, although the services (electricity, water, air) may not be available until later in the year. Nevertheless, we have a lot of work to do to the train before the "Grainne Uaile" railtour starts what promises to be another busy year.

Let's look at the coaches in detail.

91 requires a repaint, at least above the waistline. The toilet needs repaired - the old story of a leaking tank - and we have to do some minor alterations in the van area for our commercial colleagues.

241 is another toilet job - one toilet tank leaks and the other toilet isn't there at all. Deep cleaning is also needed.

9 is lying in Drogheda after a bearing failure on her move to Dublin. She needs the brass re-metalled at the very least, and this will be done to get her home. When she returns to Whitehead she will need a full examination of all her running gear.

88 is due to be fitted with curtains, and when she returns to Whitehead her bar and

kitchen fittings, which were removed for security reasons, will be reinstated. She also needs a roof signboard replaced - the one that says "Restaurant Car" - as one disappeared last year. Enquiries currently centre on some overhanging vegetation near Antrim!

114 needs two axleboxes replaced, her running gear examined and overhauled as necessary, repairs to some (if not all) of her doors, and a real "dunging out"! Well, what do you expect from the crew coach?!

238, 1142 and 1327 all require deep cleaning, and that takes an awful lot of work - no skill, just hard graft! 1327, like 1335, may need some work done to her toilet floors. These were a mosaic finish but are deteriorating and will possibly be replaced with a simple cement skim.

And what about the other vehicles where work is under way, or which are the reserves for the main set? Well, let's go through them the same way, coach by coach.

87 as you know is finishing a major refurbishment. At the moment work is concentrating on the electrics, the gas and water piping, renewal of floor covering and refurbishing her tables and chairs. Lots of work with a paintbrush (for varnishing) and as helpers to the few members who "know about these things" for those of you who would like to be involved. Bass and the ERDF paid for the job, and some of the decorations still to be fitted which Bass have supplied are truly magnificent. We hope that they will use her for a couple of charters of the train during the year, and she should provide our patrons with a standard of service that would make the railway companies green with envy!

1335 was mentioned as needing cleaning and toilet floor repairs. She also needs both gangway tunnels repaired. They have been removed and it only remains for the steel sheeting to be welded around the formers and the units rehung on the coach ends and bolted into position. Nothing to it, if we had a few more hands to help out! She also needs the glass fitted in one window, but

we have had a problem in getting the correct rubber sealing strip. We can't! A way round this will have to be found - no, WILL be found! This coach could then return to traffic, although some internal repainting to "freshen her up" might not go amiss.

1097 is still undergoing a complete rebuild, although work on her came to a virtual standstill when the money was in short supply. We now have some ERDF funding to finish her out, as well as another grant from the BBC Children in Need Appeal for equipment to enable us to carry the handicapped. To this end wheelchair clamps and a wheelchair ramp are on order, and these will be fitted in the saloon area, while the compartments will be finished out in a conventional manner. One of the two toilets will be modified to accept wheelchairs. Our joinery sub-contractor will be turning his attention to this vehicle in the very near future, as the BBC's £1,200 has to be spent within the next couple of months. That's why the wheelchair gear is on order (and it will cost £1,200!). It is however a very worthy project, which we hope can be completed in time for the Portrush Flyer season. Mind you, this will depend on the availability of volunteers! If you are a youth group leader, teacher or someone willing to bring a work party, even for just one Saturday, then this is the coach to work on. Think of the joy on the faces of disabled children - the seaside by RPSI steam. It was done before, but for those in wheelchairs it was virtually impossible and for the helpers it was a nightmare! Let's change that - with your help we could.

68 needs some glazing, a running gear overhaul (not major), and a real good deep clean. If the vandals had left her windows alone she would still be ready for immediate use, but once we get her into the Carriage Shed she'll be ready in no time - with your help.

411 was started some years ago to provide a standby crew vehicle against 114. She has suffered somewhat from the elements, and over the Christmas holidays her roof was re-secured by one member working on his own! There's dedication for you. Her new panelling is all in store and a few days concerted work would finish her and make her properly weatherproof. A repaint would

finish the job externally, and repairs to her floor internally would be all we need to return her to traffic.

227 Remember her, the GNR all first? Well, she's been living in the Whitehead Railway Project Shed, where her rebuild has been progressing, albeit rather slowly. Her roof and external panelling is now all complete, and she is presently being undercoated ready for reglazing and that final external paint job. Internally things are also happening, as her seats have been stripped down ready for re-upholstery to begin. Rewiring, which we do, is under way, and there is every hope that the vehicle will emerge later this year fully restored. We may not, however, get her running gear overhauled as quickly as we would like - it depends on how many members turn up to help - but that will be done as soon as possible to get her back to traffic.

861 is being kept weatherproof, but little else at the moment. She needs her roof finished, and internal refurbishment. We hope that 1993 may see work proceed on her.

And what about the Mullingar set? Well, 1463 is in the shed being totally rebuilt, and it is hoped that she will see traffic later this year. The remainder of the set needs some attention to the running gear, and in a couple of cases it amounts to a fairly extensive overhaul. The Commonwealth bogies are relatively easy to work on, but they are that little bit more complicated and involved than the older varieties, and need to be properly maintained. It is fact that we have to have our coaches to run to earn money to maintain our coaches, or if you didn't follow that, it's just the old riddle - which came first, the chicken or the egg? If we don't have our coaches we are unlikely to run many trains - maybe none - and if we don't run the trains we don't earn the money to pay to maintain our coaches. Anyway, enough high finance - all we need at the moment is manpower (or even womanpower, which is frequently greater!) to get the work done to prepare our set for its summer duties.

To wind it up then, 1992 is going to concentrate on getting our running coaches up to scratch and organising our maintenance procedures properly. We need to build a new Carriage and Wagon team, so get in touch as soon as possible. We face an exciting and exacting future!