



December 1995

BOGIEMAN'S GAZETTE

AT WHITEHEAD

GNR 9: Lights have been mended by Gavin Martin and Trevor Wood and will run on batteries for the Santa trains. The wires to the dynamo will be replaced after Christmas. Some new batteries to be replaced.

GS&WR 1142: Primer, undercoat and one coat of gloss have been applied. The numbers have been painted by our numerologist (??) Joanne Maxwell. A second coat of gloss will be applied, volunteers permitting.

GS&WR 1097: A wooden patch has been fitted to the ceiling where a fluorescent lamp was replaced by a more period fitting earlier in the year. A droplight in the lavatory is being re-glazed after being smashed by vandals on the last outing. Disabled toilet partially repainted. New mirrors fitted in both lavatories. Framed photos displayed in corridor - more to follow in various vehicles soon. A new shop has been installed in the half compartment with counter shelves, cupboards, etc. The whole coach has now been completely repainted and numbered by Joanne, Nicola and Sinead. New water tank fillers/grab-rails have been fitted by Joe Maxwell, Thomas Charters, Brian and Gavin.

NCC 68: A second water tank has been fitted in the other lavatory which also received paint, mirror, towel holder, etc. Vent pipe for cistern extended. Underframe repainted externally and all ceilings repainted. Spare roller bearing bogies are being overhauled and will be swapped when ready.

GNR 50: Both vestibules have been sanded and re-varnished in mahogany instead of the previous scumble finish.

NCC 241: Steam heating bag and chain fitted.

NCC 91: Axle pulley realigned and dynamo belt fitted. Plain bearing bogie refitted and wheels machined on lathe. Water tank to be renewed and roof repainted. An exterior repaint is also underway.

It is hoped that all lavatories will be working for the Santa operations. If money is available, we hope to continue with full bogie overhauls over the next year. The RPSI livery currently being applied is unlined crimson lake with black roofs.

After a slight change in plans, the sleeping coach repaint will be attempted after Christmas - NCC 91 having jumped the queue. We really need help to paint these coaches so if you can wield a brush please come to Whitehead. The equipment is all ready and waiting. If you don't like painting, the bogie overhauls require more man (or woman) power. The only new volunteer at Whitehead this autumn was a ghost heard in the carriage shed late one evening. Unfortunately the ghost was more of a moaner than a worker!

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

CIÉ 2421: The final stages of work on this coach have started - finishing off the bar area, some woodwork, train lighting and electrical modifications continuing.

GS&WR 1335: Repainting and carpeting of the final compartments nearing completion.

CIÉ 1383: Electrical modifications continuing.

CIÉ 1416: Electrical modifications continuing.

We have kindly been allowed the use of the John O'Connell road (behind the old military siding) at Heuston. This has made a platform and electricity and water supplies more readily available. A connection system for the latter two is being considered.

State Coach 351 (A short history by Chas Meredith): This historic vehicle was built at Inchicore in 1902 for the state visit of King Edward VII to Ireland in 1903. It is 50ft long, carried on bogies, and is divided into three apartments, referred to as the Reception Saloon, the Smoking Room (presumably for the King's use) and the Queen's Boudoir. The principal entrance to the coach was by a central vestibule situated

between the Smoking Room and the Reception Saloon. Beyond the Smoking Room was a WC and wash basin. Another WC and wash basin were located at the other end of the vehicle, entered from a second vestibule and which was presumably regarded as en-suite with the Queen's Boudoir.

As built, No.351 had a rather low profiled clerestory roof and was unusual in having a gangway connection at one end only - from the vestibule that served the Queen's WC.

The decoration of the coach was carried out by Messrs Sibthorpes of Molesworth Street in Dublin and records indicate that the main Salon was done in the then fashionable Art Nouveau style, with Francis I for the Smoking Room and Louis Quinze for the Queen's Boudoir. The whole was carried out under the direction of Mrs Goulding, wife of Sir William Goulding, the then chairman of the Great Southern & Western Railway Company, and grandmother of the late Sir Basil Goulding.

The coach was used by royalty on several occasions, but after 1921 it is reported to have been laid aside under dust sheets. Fortunately, republican zeal did not result in its immediate scrapping and it remained in store apparently for 40 years until, in 1961, CIÉ decided that it still needed a State Coach.

There is an anomaly in the vehicle's history somewhere within this 40 year period. A general layout drawing of the coach in 1924, when the GS&WR was absorbed into the Great Southern Railways, shows the coach in its original condition, presumably having remained unchanged from 1902 to 1924. A later, undated, drawing shows the general layout of No.351 under the heading of "GSR's Late State Saloon". While the main compartments and the Queen's WC remain unchanged, the King's WC at the other end has become a vestibule and a gangway has been added. The centre entrance and vestibule have been removed and the vestibule space has become a replacement WC, entered from a short side-corridor between the Smoking Room and the main Saloon. The roof has been reconstructed and is shown as having a high elliptical without clerestory. When and why these changes were made and whether the coach was used for other purposes is not at present clear.

Interestingly, the 1924 general layout drawing does not use the word "State" and describes the vehicle simply as "Saloon" and records that it had seating for 18 first class passengers. Was the coach used for a time as a First Class Saloon, for family holidays, as was the custom at that time? It is believed that the State Coach was used by President W.T. Cosgrave when he opened the rebuilt steel viaduct at Mallow on 16th October 1923.

In 1961, No.351 was taken from under its dust sheets, redecorated, fitted with a pair of brand new Commonwealth cast steel bogies and put back into State service. Apart from its redecoration and its new bogies, it was exactly as appears on the GSR drawing. Between its renovation in 1961 and its second withdrawal in the 1970s, when the present Mark II air-conditioned State Coach was fitted out, No.351 was used on many occasions, both by Presidents of Ireland and by visiting dignitaries, including such disparate figures as the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and various Papal Nuncios!

Sadly, from the 1970s, the State Coach languished in the open at Inchicore until, in 1991, at the suggestion of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, the then Managing Director of Irish Rail, Mr David Waters, took the bold decision to put the vehicle under cover, dry it out and see if it could be restored - either as a museum exhibit or, better still, as a working coach for use on special occasions, perhaps in conjunction with the steam specials operated by the RPSI. This decision was nearly No.351's downfall! While in the Carriage Conversion Shop at Inchicore, the entire building was gutted by fire on 14th September 1991. Out of the many vehicles in the building, only No.351 emerged relatively unscathed, having fortunately been given special attention by the fire crews involved.

Externally, the principal damage seems to consist of scorching from the fire, and some old rot from its long period out of doors. All the window glass was shattered in the fire. Internally, the lavish decoration, with its panelled woodwork and coved and embellished ceilings remains almost intact, a tribute to the craftsmanship that went into the vehicle's construction and fitting out.

The State Coach now awaits the restoration as the next stage in its long, important and not uneventful history.