



WHITEHEAD

GNR 9: A window has been cracked by a branch and will have to be replaced before the next Flyer.

GWR 1097: In traffic.

NCC 87: The two water tanks in the diner have been replaced and their insides coated with special hygienic paint. At the same time a pipe was put in through the new tank to provide a chimney flue for the gas powered fridge. Some gas fittings were replaced with more up to date examples by CalorGas. The cooker hood has still to be replaced. One side of the coach has been re-painted in un-lined maroon but a shortage of volunteers means the other side will have to wait. The fresh gloss is quickly scraped by lineside foliage anyway.

Both vacuum cylinders have been overhauled.

It passed its Annual inspection with flying colours recently. NCC 68: In traffic.

NCC 241: Annual insurance inspection due soon.

NCC 238: Some drop lights are being remade and fitted with safety glass.

NCC 91: The new non-slip linoleum fitted to the corridor floor some months ago seems to collect dirt quickly but cleans up easily.

General: All brake shoes on the coaches have been checked for overriding and adjusted accordingly. An intensive programme of bogie overhauls including spring re-tempering is getting underway using contractors. All axles are to be tested ultrasonically within the next 12 months.

HEUSTON

Routine maintenance continues but less work is undertaken during the running season.

TPO 2979: This vehicle has been magnificently restored by Iarnród Éireann with help from An Post and will be cared for by the Society. It ran with a set of Cravens to Thurles on 4th August as part of the ceremonies commemorating the 150th anniversary of the opening of the GS&WR to Thurles.

1463: The laminate coach arrived in Dublin from Mullingar on the barbecue special in June. The main work requiring to be done is the fitting of seats. Originally turned out in green, the coach has been painted in maroon before entering service. With 64 seats and two toilets, this is a useful addition to the set, and will replace Park Royal 1383.

IRISH STATE COACH

This vehicle has moved back to Inchicore works for re-unification with bogies, for fitting out and for painting. The coach should be ready for road trials at the latter end of this year, with final fitting out after that. The continued support of FÁS and Iarnród Éireann in this endeavour is much appreciated, as is the generous support of a number of commercial sponsors.

STEEL CARRIAGES (*The reason we will need more money*)

(Some thoughts from Mark Kennedy)

The debate on wooden bodied carriages has now been running for more than a decade, during which time our route availability has been severely restricted. Like it or not (and I don't) at some point in the future we will have to use steel carriages on at least some of our trains. NIR have indicated that they would like to see us move to steel stock as soon as possible. This is potentially more expensive than any project ever taken on by the Society. However, while it looks as though the future of the Society may be bright, we will be operating in an increasingly difficult environment, with ever more rules and regulations to comply with. In order to satisfy safety requirements and run interesting trips to various destinations at a competitive price, we will have to acquire and run steel-bodied carriages in the foreseeable future.

Once steel stock becomes available we need to consider carriages best suited to our needs and the condition of the vehicles on offer.

There are four possible carriage types:

BR Mark 1 Stock: Last year a number of rakes from Waterman Railways in England came on the market. The RPSI considered these but dismissed them due to their cost of purchase, transportation, re-gauging, their inappropriateness to this part of the world, their pending obsolescence and the fact that the railway companies here were a bit cool on the idea.

NIR 80 Class Intermediate Carriages: These high capacity vehicles would be suitable, but they are unlikely to become available in the foreseeable future.

CIÉ Cravens Carriages: If IÉ were to withdraw them (and there is no indication that they will), the RPSI would be the only people in Ireland running vacuum braked passenger stock on the mainline. This could leave us vulnerable to possible future legislation. Cravens may be very strong and built of steel, but they are not steel-bodied in the modern sense, i.e. a great big steel tube on wheels that conforms to whatever the European standard is.

NIR Mark 2 Carriages: Some of the old Enterprise stock is currently out of use, and just may become surplus to their needs in the foreseeable future. These carriages are as modern as we are ever likely to be offered (and therefore should have a long shelf life with us). They are air-braked (which is good) but our locomotives are not. This could prove to be both complicated and expensive. Mark 2s have electric heating and steam engines do not have generators.

RPSI Ideal Carriage Rake Specification

Plenty of passenger luggage space for two day tour.

Train heating for winter use.

On board public address system and possibly for playing music on teemed trains.

According to 1998 two-day tour survey, people like open coaches. They also like vintage coaches so a reproduction period historic ambience would be an important consideration.

Full width Guards van at each end of the train.

As many seats as possible.

A dining car capable of serving full meals to all passengers.

All seats to have tables large enough to eat your dinner off.

A good big bar.

Space for a band to play.