

The Railcar Association News Bulletin



EDITORIAL

Welcome to Issue 126. The annual convention at the Llangollen Railway was a great success for the association with a great turnout of visitors for the event and good numbers at the association meeting, including a few new faces. Whilst this piece is being written on the “warmest Halloween since records began”, I am assured that colder months are on the way, when we retreat indoors and hopefully progress DMU restoration projects! Having said that there is still one DMU event in the calendar, the Mid Norfolk Railway's Multiple Matters gala.

Chris Moxon

19th ANNUAL RAILCAR CONVENTION

This year, the Railcar Association's Nineteenth National DMU convention crossed the border into Wales to the Llangollen Railway, who became the first railway to host the event three times, the previous occasions being in 2005 and 1998. Our thanks go to the large team of the Llangollen Railcar Group who made the event possible as well as all the railway's operating staff.



Four railcar sets were in action with a fifth under restoration and available for inspection.

Thursday

Not forgetting that the planning for the four day convention was being undertaken months in advance, the event itself began on the Thursday with Driver Moxon and Driver Moxon enjoying a round trip on the interesting Class 127/108 hybrid set. This involved the first driver experience run ever to Corwen over the second part of the Llangollen Railway's extension, which had been passed for public use on 14:00 that very same day! An honour indeed.

Friday

The Friday of the event saw much increased activity as delegates descended on the railway for the main day of driver experiences. The sets on offer were the Blue/Grey Class 108 and the unique Wickham Class 109, arguably the biggest attraction for members and even more so given the circumstances of being able to take the controls! These two units operated the full length of the line all day on experiences with the majority of slots booked up.



After the experiences finished the two sets returned to Pentrefelin depot joining the other operational vehicles, the Class 104 and 127/108, on the depot fan for a posed evening photo shoot

using floodlights. This was the first time that this feature had been offered at a TRA event and was successful with approximately 20 people taking the opportunity to get some atmospheric photography in. The overall scene of all four sets was captured first and the rest of the evening was spent concentrating mainly on two pairs of sets from different eras, the green 108 & 109 as well as the blue 104 & 108.

Saturday

As is traditional with the convention, the Saturday was the main day with the most delegates in attendance. During the day from 09:30-17:30 all four operational sets in the Llangollen Railcars fleet ran intensively on the 10 mile line offering a 30 minute service to Corwen. This was very useful for anybody wanting to experience different units with all four having plenty of runs throughout the day. The usual attractions that the Llangollen Railway offers were all present. In addition to this at Llangollen itself was to be found the railcar group's sales stand packed with items of interest. Also on display was a freshly overhauled exhibition coach which contained a display detailing the 60 years that had elapsed

since British Railways first introduced First Generation DMU's as well as the 20 years of Llangollen Railcars. Most amusing were the early 1990's photographs reminding members how they looked before railcar restoration (and two decades) took its toll!



After the first round trip there was an opportunity for a guided tour around the loco shed at Llangollen, also the home of the railway's commercial arm Llangollen Engineering. Such was the demand for this tour that the official guide was overwhelmed by the numbers and delegates had to return to the station to follow slightly later in two further parties with another guide! The tour itself was a fascinating insight into a commercial operation running side by

side with the "home grown" projects keeping steam alive at the railway. Of particular note were the three new build steam locomotives (The LMS Patriot and the GWR Grange & Night Owl), which at the time of the visit were all in residence for inspection. The shed visit was followed by a nosy outside where the resident diesel shunters, operational steam locomotives and various accommodation and stores coaches/wagons were all viewed and photographed with accompanying commentary.



Those who took up the tour had approximately an hour to ride the trains again before it was back to Llangollen for the official meeting and AGM of The Railcar Association. This was held in

the railway's conference room inside the station building on the first floor, handy access being obtained from the station footbridge. The meeting itself was interesting and successful with a mix of speakers covering the running of the association, the history of the railway, railcar group, history of DMU's and technical discussions. Taking approximately two hours, attendance this year was 47.

Another opportunity to explore the railway and travel on the four DMU sets was available after the meeting before the daytime trains stopped running at 18:30. At 19:00 there was the traditional and favoured Fish & Chip special which this year used the Class 104 due to its popularity within the DMU world! The 2-car set was very well patronised and set off in the dark to Corwen where a spirited ascent of Berwyn bank left no delegates disappointed! The special then returned to Glyndyfrdwy station where the station bar was opened and the evening continued with a social for an hour or so where friends and contacts were made and many stories told. The 104 then proceeded back to Llangollen signalling the end of a fantastic day, except for those staying

over in the area who had the opportunity to continue for a further two hours in the public houses of Llangollen!



Sunday

The Sunday was quieter than the Saturday as many delegates had returned home or were travelling back that day. However many features of the Saturday such as the 30 minute intensive service, sales stand and exhibition coach were available for those delegates who made a full weekend of the event. They were rewarded with an opportunity not available on the Saturday, a morning visit around Pentrefelin depot which was the home of Carriage & Wagon and the railcar group. Available for

inspection was the group's fifth DMU set under restoration, Class 104/105 M50447/M56456. The latter had run continuously at the railway with the Class 127 from 1984-2010 whilst the former had yet to run in preservation. Also on view were the workshop facilities and under restoration coaching stock which included some interesting items of stock including Mark 1 suburbans and LNER Thompson carriages. Snatching the prize for the most unusual resident was a narrow gauge Dudley & Stourport tram being restored for the Black Country Museum! Following the tour more DMU running finished off what had been a great weekend, the 19th Railcar Association Convention and also 60 years of First Generation Railcars. As always, the host railway and railcar group deserve the thanks of the association for making delegates so welcome and putting on such an enjoyable event.



20th ANNUAL RAILCAR CONVENTION

The 2015 convention is now confirmed as being at the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway on September 26th & 27th 2015.

NEWS

Dean Forest Railway: Now that the season is over Class 108 50619 has been withdrawn to receive a replacement aluminium cab front as the original steel example was rotten.

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway: The railcar group have launched a [Facebook page](#) for those interested in updates.



North Norfolk Railway: The No2



engine radiator fan drive failure suffered on Class 101 M51192 (reported in *Issue 125*) was interestingly the symptom rather than the cause of the vehicle's failure. On more detailed inspection it became apparent that the drive came apart following extreme vibration caused by the disintegration of the No3 cylinder, which had in turn been caused as a result of over heating due to blocked waterways. The failure



was resolved by "stealing" one of the two rebuilt engines (that were awaiting fitting to E51228) and swapping it for the defective No2 engine. The No1 engine's heads were then removed and the waterways cleared out of this engine to prevent the same fate that befell the No2 engine. With two operating engines once again, M51192 was returned to service. M51192 is now running with its usual partner once again, M56352, after the latter was returned to service having received two replacement buffers.



Meanwhile, E51228's exterior and interior overhaul is now complete, the

vehicle emerging resplendent in BR Green. It has now been stored awaiting parts for its mechanical overhaul.

Strathspey Railway: SC51367/ SC51402 have been turned on the turntable recently.



RESTORATION NEWS

Class 104 56182: Whilst work has yet to start on the vehicle itself, many components removed from the interior have been fully restored off site this summer. A huge number of wooden window surrounds and other saloon beading have all been varnish stripped, repaired where required, deep sanded and painted in four coats of varnish. With these completed, work has now turned to a selection of cab desk controls and components, as well as various fibreglass shrouds and desk panels. More components are due to be delivered soon for resurrection over the winter months.

Class 108 50645: At Ruddington (GCRN) work has started on rebuilding

one of the engines for this vehicle. The heads have been removed and unfortunately water damage has been discovered.



Class 108 51909/56271: At Cranmore progress on improving the condition of this set has progressed at a rapid rate following contract replacement of the corridor end and connection on 51909.

Class 108 51950/52062: The finishing touches have now been applied to the repaint.



Class 111 59575: The restoration of

this vehicle is now completed at the Great Central Railway after the buffet car was passed fit for operation in September. The centre car is now formed in the line's main Class 101 set and operates most weekends as a 3-car formation.



Class 116 51131: During 2013 51131 entered the shed at Shackerstone for major repairs to the cab front and roof dome, this work has been delayed however as the vehicle has had to be moved back outdoors.

Class 116 51138: Much effort at the Great Central Railway (North) has been spent on this vehicle whilst it has been indoors for a bodywork overhaul. A considerable amount of corroded metal

has now been replaced and filler applied and sanded back to a smooth finish.



Class 121 55027: The Ecclesbourne Valley Railway have launched a "Bubble Appeal" aiming to raise funds (through the issue of shares) to restore this vehicle to operational condition for Pway use. More details can be found [here](#).



Class 121 55029: A gearbox change has resulted in the vehicle able to make its first test runs along the line at Rushden. The vehicle's bodywork repairs and repainting also continue, with the inevitable green primer spreading down the vehicle...



MOVEMENTS

Class 108 51942/56270 has relocated to the Mid Norfolk Railway from the Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway. This set has been long stored and has yet to operate in preservation. The MNR intend to tidy up both vehicles and



make them watertight before restoration of 56270 is progressed so that it can operate as an extra vehicle to attach to busy trains.

RAILCAR 60

An amusing alternative account of this year's convention by Alan Pitt:

Happily in our time in the North of Wales there is a Rheilffordd (Railway). It isn't the longest of railways and it isn't the shortest of railways but it is all there is, which is all rather a mouthful so it is called Paradise for short.

Over the weekend of the 4-5th October this year Paradise hosted Railcar 60 where preservationists of these venerable old ladies came to hear how any noises from below stairs were terminal and the unit should be sold to Llangollen Railcar Group for spares !!! But in case we missed our now extinct chargers we could ride on one of theirs in the knowledge bits of ours were probably the reason we were so doing.

Up at cock crow in pouring rain, to head for Llangollen, then we were held up by the national collection of pheasants practicing for the upcoming RSPB four

minute mile, not good when you have a long journey ahead. The four miles were eventually covered. WHAT only four miles I hear you say, well that's a long way to hold your breath driving Dotty down the GCR(N). A good number of strangers boarded the 09:30, a freshly painted 104 to almost Corwen to say they were on the first passenger train to trundle that way for 50 years and to raise the excitement a few notches our hosts delayed departure a little while. The wait was worth it as the Corwen extension is even more of this great line (never know when you might need a friendly favour). It was so good we did it again. Station hopping enabled some iffy video footage to be gathered and sometimes I even remembered to switch on record. I even found a dog like Penny Steam to open the video ! Despatching the good lady to shop and promises to do the washing up for a week the Railcar meeting was a chance to put names to faces and make acquaintances. I found the meeting most informative from historical to modern day subjects even if some of the topics were potentially life threatening DMU wise that is. Then to close the day came the spectacular world record attempt on the number of

portions of fish and chips one small cafe could cook in one sitting. Following this we all piled back on the 104 for a twilight run up the line. OH JOY OF JOYS it took me back nearly 30 years to the 23:00 hrs departure from Grantham to Nottingham, The heaters roaring, windows rattling, lights actually lighting and a rasping roar away and after a short while even a tunnel, didn't quite blast out and along at 70 like the years past still spurred the memories, closing my eyes I was there. The return was interesting as the interior lights were turned off. So Evan could paray to the moon. Turned out John Joyce wasn't sure of the way back and Evan had arranged for a light to be placed on the platform end at Llangollen to guide him in.

Sunday morning a good number of us had a guided tour of Paradise shed where the Llangollen Railcar people call home. A real place of their own, sidings, stores, A SHED to do restoration work in, a place where railcars on the verge of extinction were returning from the grave. Sorry to report this was the straw that broke the camels back. Dazed and confused as to what was reality and what was

wishful thinking I returned to the holiday cottage and decided to take up bird watching and if I did return to Dotty I could do that as we are alongside a country park. AH HA, perhaps the DMS could have those many windows dropped and nest boxes installed.

A Great weekend thankyou Llangollen Railcar group, your hard work was very much appreciated.

IRIS GOES HOME Goes Home *175 Years of Derby's Trains*

Saturday 13th September 2014 went down as a proud day for the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway and it's DMU Group as they saw unique Derby Lightweight single car M79900 'Iris' .



travel back home to Derby as part of a celebratory open day at Etches Park. The event, organised by East Midlands Trains, saw many thousands of people pour into their Derby depot which was open to the public for the first time.

'Iris' was standing just in front of the main shed at Etches Park, stabled next to Peak locomotives D4 and D8 and certainly attracted significant interest from the visiting public. The new two-pack Dark Bronze paintwork was shining in the sunshine and visitors were delighted by being able to climb aboard and sample the driving cab and original-style high back seats. Each hour the engines were ran for around 10 minutes so visitors could hear the lesser-known sound of the AEC 220

engine. There were no barriers between the walkway and the vehicle so visitors were able to enjoy a good look around the engines and the drive train also. Members of the DMU Group were in attendance and spent the day talking to an interested general public, handing out leaflets and answering a seemingly unlimited number of questions. Indeed, she looked quite at home amongst all of the other visiting locomotives as well as the modern fleet of Meridians and Sprinters.

It was quite nostalgic for 'Iris' to be back home within yards of the site of the old workshop where she was built. Derby was shown on the destination blind and, for the first time in a significant number of years, it was actually true. It

seems quite rare for a preserved DMU to visit a major depot open day and it was an honour for East Midlands Trains to request the vehicle to be in attendance. The day was made all the more special by the fact that she had made a homecoming.

TIME TRAVELLER

Green Era

[Class 100 - Brownhills - 2/12/63](#)

[Class 101 - Kirkham - 20/7/63](#)

Blue Era

[Class 101 - Prestonpans - 3/77](#)

[Class 104 - Betws-Y-Coed 26/8/73](#)

[Class 105 - Drifffield - 24/12/81](#)

[Class 107 - Largs - 4/10/78](#)

Blue/Grey & Later

[Class 101 101676 - Hooton - 1/9/93](#)

[Class 110 - Marsden - 7/79](#)

[Class 120 M53659 - Lincoln St Marks](#)

[LEV1 - West Ruislip](#)



CLASS 126 IMAGES

[SC59400 - Ayr - 3/76](#)

[Sc79168 - Glasgow Central - 5/8/77](#)

[Sc50936 - Ayr - 30/8/78](#)

[Sc51042 - Glasgow Central - 1981](#)

[Sc51044 - Ayr - 28/5/81](#)

[Townhill - 5/80](#)

[\(E&G\) March - 29/6/80](#)

[Johnstone - 1980](#)

[Laurencekirk - 1983](#)

[Glasgow Central](#)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- **November 1st-2nd** - Multiple Matters - Mid Norfolk Railway

SUBMISSIONS

Hopefully the contents of this bulletin was both interesting and informative. If you know anyone who could provide similar material found in this issue for future bulletins, please make yourself or

them known to railcar@live.co.uk The following types of submission would be most welcome:

- Photographs of vehicles in service
- Restoration articles
- Reports on special events
- DMU modelling articles
- Articles on DMU history
- Recollections of DMUs on the national network.
- Requests for information
- News & images of recent DMU activity
- Anything that may be of interest to readers

Feel free to send submissions at any time to railcar@live.co.uk but no later than December 30th for Issue 127 (due out January)



GALLERY



50164/50160 at Grosmont MPD, 9/14 (I.Hooper)



E51427/E59575/E50321 on a test run on the GCR, 12/9/14 (B.Pollard)



LEV3 inside the museum at the Downpatrick and County Down Railway, 25/9/14 (H.Allum)



M50933, on approach to Bewdley station, 12/9/14 (B.Pollard)



W55001 stabled in Baron Street yard (ELR) 15/5/14 shortly after completion of interior and exterior re-furb work carried out by the Bury DMU Group, 15/5/14 (A.Morris)