

The Railcar Association News Bulletin



EDITORIAL

This issue is the first to be produced with the reporting period being entirely contained within the “lockdown conditions”, so news and restoration reports are consequently sparse. However we're relived to be able to report the green shoots of recovery with a few railways tentatively getting their units back out on works trains and crew training duties. These roles have been particularly suited to the vehicles for reasons including: their cheapness to operate, almost “go anywhere” route availability, ability to reverse direction anywhere, motive power and significant seating self contained, and the good view from the front. Once again this proves the value of our railcars to the host railways, which is a great thing for many of us who “shelter” on railways that remain extremely steam locomotive dominated at board level. You can never beat these individuals enough over the head with reasons to appreciate having diesel railcars in your motive power collection!

I dare say that the increasing number of Class 142's and 144's that are entering preservation will, if maintained and marketed correctly, provide their

railways with similar benefits, with the total number of Pacers now delivered to heritage sites now totalling 20. Sadly over the last two months I have observed further “hate speech” towards these sets in a mirroring of the comments that were directed towards our cherished first generation fleets in the 1980's & 1990's. History will continue to repeat itself I am sure and we will see some of these vehicles wall by the wayside and be scrapped, just as we have seen with conventional sets, with the final numbers eventually settling down to a more sustainable equilibrium. As an example, of the original four Class 141 sets preserved, half have been scrapped and only a single example appears to have a future operating services. It will be interesting to see how many Class 142's are overhauled, looked after and maintained (as 141113 has at the Midland Railway Butterley) versus how many are run until they break and/or become corroded and mouldy when they are parked in sidings and later scrapped, as we have seen on many occasions before with both first and second generation.

In the meantime, the majority of us plug

on with our (mainly first generation) projects. Returning to the idea above of fleets reaching “equilibrium size”, I notice another long term stored set, the Pontypool & Blaenavon's Class 108 twin set, has been put up for sale with the railway concentrating on their Class 117 set instead. This 108 set, although out of use, was never on our list of “wrecks”, so hopefully someone somewhere will take this one on. Perhaps the lockdown has caused you to reassess your life aims, and you have woken up and realised that your ambition is to restore a Class 108 set!!

2020 CONVENTION

It is now looking unlikely that the 2020 convention will be able to go ahead, however official cancellation has not yet been received from the hosts, so we continue to await news.

NEWS

Dean Forest Railway: The beginning of March saw the DFR DMU Group busy preparing the 2-car set (DMBS 51914 + DTCL 56492) for service, but then came lockdown and the closure of the railway to volunteers. However, by the end of May, following the writing of updated procedures and risk

assessments, work was able to resume. Gradually, outstanding jobs were ticked off the list and a milestone was reached on June 10th when 51914 was started and the set made a test run of about 200ft. Although short, this was the first time 51914 had moved under its own power for almost 4 years. A planned running day in July to celebrate the 60th birthday of these vehicles has had to be cancelled, but it is hoped the set will re-enter service in August.

Once the 2-car set is in service, attention will turn to the 3-car set (DMBS 50619 + TSL 59387 + DMCL 51566) which has performed all DMU duties at the DFR over the past few years. 51566 requires a bogie change due to a faulty final drive and a spare bogie has been extracted from storage for overhaul to facilitate this. This vehicle also requires an engine to be repaired (or replaced) plus a radiator change, so the group

has plenty of work to keep them busy for a while. If anyone would like to join us, check out the Volunteering section on our new webpage for details:
deanforestrailway.co.uk/dmugroup/

Llangollen Railway: Llangollen are reopening to volunteers on 6th July, and hope to operate some refresher / training runs a few weeks later, followed by public operation. It is very likely to include a significant amount of railcar operation, once necessary checks and preparations are completed, due to the fairly straightforward nature of getting our part of the operation running again. With capacity likely to be severely limited due to 'social distancing', and the unknown of how many people will actually want to ride, obviously a railcar's economics are rather easier than a steam-hauled operation. Diesel loco haulage of compartment stock is also under consideration, but this depends on crew and loco availability. Working parties are planned to give everything an 'A' exam ready for whenever the call comes. It is currently planned that the Wickham, 108 and 104 will share whatever turns we operate - singly at first, perhaps as longer

formations if passenger numbers demand it. More details will appear when available.



Restoration works will also recommence once we have enough manpower available, though priorities may have to change to suit the jobs which can be tackled within current guidelines. Work carries on with components off site, mainly for Cravens trailer 56456 and Gloucester trailer 56097. One might have hoped that 12 weeks off site would be enough to completely clear the shed of 'pending' jobs, but sadly not!

Severn Valley Railway: The DMU Group (WM) have been very quiet in recent times. This is because we are waiting for the SVR to complete the



repairs to bogies under 59250 and 51941. We have not run any service trains for two years. Sadly our bread and butter turns on Saturday evenings have been run using Mk 1 stock with a steam or diesel loco as available. Members have not been idle during the down time. We had already started the rebuild of two Leyland 1595's /0 and /1. These are progressing toward the time when we can book time in the Kidderminster TMD to exchange engines. We have replaced two alternators with a pair that have had new bearings and new regulators. Next job will be to test them and check the output voltage. Various members have been helping Pete Finch to replace the clunky old cooling fans; with electric fans that are controlled with temperature senders in each set of pipework. All wiring has been completed and terminated in the control boxes fitted to each power car. We have been having problems with the handbrake detection switch on 52064 which was found to be worn out. Much help has come from Steve Beck and John Joyce via 1-st gen pointing us in the right direction to a supplier who has sent us two switches so we have one spare to replace the next failure. All oils

and lubricants have been drained and refilled with new filters from our supplier in Coventry. A problem showed up when we could not get the f/drive isolating pin to drop into its notch. The notch plate has been exchanged for a good one, and the old one cleaned up a re-profiled for spare stock.

Strathspey Railway: Not much has happened up at Boat of Garten since Class 117 SC51367/SC51402 were shut down after February's running. The set has been bearthed in the shed for the duration. Hopefully, subject to volunteers being able to get up there



and find somewhere to stay, then full maintenance checks will start in August.

RESTORATION NEWS

Derby Lightweight 79612 (Ecclesbourne): After delays caused by the dreaded world events, the interior reconstruction has progressed with the middle saloon (which had been behind) catching up with the front and rear saloons in terms of the completion of wall panelling fitting. This in turn has allowed lino to be fitted throughout the coach which has rather transformed the appearance of the vehicle.



Class 104 56182 (North Norfolk): With the railway opening its doors again in July, limited working on site again is

authorised, so the restoration can continue once again. During lockdown conditions, some limited work at home has been able to progress including the dismantling and cleaning of the sliding lights from the bodyside windows in the mid saloon, and the wooden securing bars that hold the glass in place in the same saloon.

Edinburgh Glasgow 79443 (Bo'ness):

Before the nation went into shut down the DMU group at Bo'ness managed to fit in their regular winter work week in late February. Work concentrated on interior work to the compartment end of buffet car Sc79443.

All four of the surviving Inter-City vehicles have 'long' toilets, common in size and layout to Mark 1 compartment coaches. When the Ayrshire three-car set was being restored many extra parts were manufactured at the same time in preparation for the buffet restoration, which was completely stripped of its interior when acquired. This included the framework for the toilet compartment, but in the end we did not need this.

The 79xxx series vehicles differed in

the covering of the bodyside and toilet walls, the Ayrshire centre cars used formica and angled corners to the toilet, the earlier vehicles used veneer with rounded corners. The SRPS had recently scrapped a Mark One FK, and we were able to carefully dismantle the toilet walls for re-use and not have to build those veneered sections from scratch.

The main biggest challenge in fitting this into 79443 was establishing "datum" points from which other measurements could be referenced, ensuring that the walls were fitted into the correct place in relation to the already constructed bulkhead between the toilet and the first compartment. Below ceiling level no changes were required but above there are differences between the steel framework construction of the DMU and 'standard' coaches which required some modifications to make it fit.

A start was made in fitting the wooden floor to the same end of the vehicle. Strips of glass fibre insulation were cut to fit in the "valleys" of the "key sheeting" - the corrugated steel floor. The underside of the plywood floor

panels were treated with fire retardant before being drilled for hundreds of self-tapping screws and screwed tight.

Once the floor is complete it will allow the compartment sides to be fitted and work on fitting out the compartments can commence. Some progress has been made in sanding and varnishing the veneer panels that fit on either side of the compartments above the seats, ready for when this can start. These were recovered from the 59098 and 59099, also one time residents of Goathland station.

FOR SALE

Class 108 power twin set 52044/53632 at Blaenavon in South Wales. It is not in running condition at present and needs



quite a bit of work. For further details please email [Peter Drummond](mailto:Peter.Drummond@live.co.uk).

Class 121/122 Duplex Vacuum gauges for sale. New old stock with original certificate of conformity. Three available. Contact Dave Cunningham on 07834949845.

NEW VEHICLES

Since the last bulletin, a further four Class 142 sets and three Class 144 sets have joined the ranks of preservation. In numerical order they are 142011 & 142013 to the Midland Railway Butterley, 142035 & 142041 to the Wensleydale Railway, 144006 & 144007 to the Cambrian Railway and finally 144011 to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway.

TIME TRAVELLER

Green Era

[Class 128 – Southall – 23/11/63](#)

Blue Era

[Class 100 DB975349 – Doncaster – 19/5/90](#)

[Class 116 – Southall – 6/72](#)

[Class 121 – Claverton Weir – 13/4/88](#)

Blue/Grey Era

[Class 101 W51450 – Keyham – 6/9/74](#)

[Class 118 W51313 – Par – 10/7/84](#)

[Class 124 – Hessle – 10/10/77](#)

“Modern”

[101692 – Manchester Piccadilly](#)

[143014 – Stockton – 22/2/89](#)

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
- Articles on DMU history
- Recollections of DMUs on the national network.

Feel free to send submissions at any time to railcar@live.co.uk but no later

than August 28th for Issue 161 (due out September).

GALLERY



51370 under restoration at Whitwell, 20/6/20 (R.Vardy)



51131 back in February at the Battlefield, 1/20 (D.Bickley)



M50203 on crew training at Leicester, 28/6/20 (J.Steel)

