

The Railcar Association News Bulletin



EDITORIAL — Chris Walker

As 2020 comes to a close, I never cease to be amazed at the high standards and dedication of the people who restore, maintain and operate these 60 ish year old vehicles. The pictures that have been bandied around on email or social media show the work that has gone and continues to go on. I wonder how many of us have better survived the lock downs because of the distractions of for example lying on the ballast under a power car trying to remove an exhaust?

As the number of second generation units in preservation grows I wonder how different it will be compared to the way the pioneers in the 1st Generation world did it? It works because people are prepared to share information and advice. People donate time and money, no doubt for a multitude of reasons why — for me it started on a fateful day when I was admiring a pair of 108's and a voice said "I'll give you a paintbrush if you like"

UPDATE 2nd GEN

TRA Scheme to assist owners of 'Pacer' vehicles:

A TRA initiative, designed to assist the introduction of 'Pacer' trains to UK heritage railways is making good progress.

Representatives of all the railways and groups which have 'Pacers' have been contacted and all have joined the initiative, and the io group that has been formed to support it. Driver's and Conductor's model training manuals have already been written and made available, along with some technical information, such as wiring diagrams.

A 'Model' Vehicle Maintenance Scheme is being produced, which is specially tailored to the requirements of heritage railways, and takes account of non-mainline circumstances such as vehicles which have long periods out of use, and the lower mileages covered by preserved units. This is currently out to consultation with several of the more experienced, or qualified, members of the scheme.

The scheme, which is called '2nd'Gen, follows the TRA's established '1st-Gen' Model Maintenance Scheme for older-style DMUs and which has been successfully used by heritage railways for almost 20 years and which sets out to establish best practice amongst owning groups.

To participate in the scheme join the group 2nd-gen@groups.io .

144003 at Ruddington
Fields on the GCRN on
3/10/20 *Phil Stanway*



NEWS

Colne Valley Railway:

In early November Pressed Steel Heritage based at the Colne Valley Railway purchased class 117 vehicles 51382 and 51339 that had been based at the East Lancs Railway.

The vehicles were purchased to support social distancing of train services on the Colne Valley and also to allow work to be carried out on the bubble car 55033 over the coming year. The vehicles had a wash and a brush up and were put into service on Santa trains on the weekend of the 12th and 13th of December. We were lucky enough to run the two car and bubble car on the Sunday with the railway running a two train DMU service that it has not seen for many years. Unfortunately the area was placed into Tier 4 restrictions and the railway had to cancel further Santa train services on advice from the local authority. Whilst it is not planned to do any significant work to the 117's over the coming year we will look to ensure that all roof leaks are attended to and will reinstate the 4 character headcode boxes to at least one of the vehicles. Work will hopefully then turn to a re-paint of the bubble car from the spring of 2021.



51382/55033 above,
55033/51339 below. *Martin Smith*



Llangollen Railway:

Since our last update, all remaining diagrams for 2020 were cancelled, with the Welsh firebreak and then the English lockdown.

2021's running has now been pushed back to Easter (so far); the current plan for the 2021 timetable still has a decent amount of railcar work, though what will actually turn out remains to be seen. Only 46 unit turns were covered, mainly by the 104 and Wickham, compared with 150 the year before. (counting a 6-car formation as 3 'unit turns')

North Norfolk Railway News:

The railway made limited use of its Class 101 set for the February and October half term weeks but compared with 2019 levels the pandemic has decimated diesel running on the railway in general. It has been clear that pre-booked steam-hauled compartments have been what is needed for the railway to survive. With a mainly all-steam timetable and many staff also on furlough there has been little maintenance or improvements made on the Class 101 vehicles. For 2021, nobody has a crystal ball, but likely similar to 2020

Dean Forest Railway:

2-car set M51914 and M56492 operated the last services of the delayed main season, on Wednesday 4th November. In addition, this unit worked the first ever DMU 'Santa Special' service at the DFR on Wednesday 9th December.

The group continued to be busy maintaining our vehicles in addition to preparing a replacement engine and final drive for fitting on M51566. Unfortunately, some of our spare drives have been found to be in a poor condition, but one was eventually identified and inspected

With spares availability important to keep our 60-year-old DMU vehicles running, we purchased Class 108 DMCL vehicles W50632 and W52044 from the Gwent DMU Group.

The vehicles were located at Furnace Sidings at Blaenavon and as part of the transport move both vehicles went via the Wheel Lathe at Great Western Trains depot in St Philips, Bristol for tyre turning. On 23 December both vehicles were tripped from DFR Lydney Junction to Norchard using 08769. It is planned that 52044 will be stripped for component recovery and then scrapped. 50632 will initially be used for storage whilst its' future is decided.

9/12/20 sees 51914 and 56492 approaching Norchard
Chris Walker



56492 at Norchard on 9/12/20
Chris Walker

DMU Group West Midlands:

A two-car power twinset; 52064/50933 has been used on staff train services for the days in December 2020. When Santa steam hauled trains have run to Arley via Bewdley and back to Kidderminster. Then the twinset stabled at Kidderminster carriage sidings until required for collecting staff from Arley and Bewdley and return to Kidderminster later in the day.



52064 at Bewdley on 12/12/20
Mark Miller

Keith and Dufftown Railway:

144022 new to Neville Hill Leeds in 1987. WYPTE owned and sold to Porterbrook Leasing in the privatisation era.

In June 2019 a request was made to Porterbrook Leasing regarding acquiring 144022 for preservation upon release from mainline use. With Covid 19 taking affect and Northern having no further use it was stored at the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway until September 2020 when it was moved under its own power to Worksop for onward transport to Dufftown.

Many other groups announced their acquisitions this year and had some delivered before 144022, but technically this unit was the first to be secured but not delivered first. Congratulations to all the new owners. Overall 144022 was in excellent condition apart from needing a good scrub and sterilisation by the Keith and Dufftown Railway staff after they had a test run over the full line. Everyone behind the Dufftown line was very impressed and happy on how smooth the ride was for them and grateful for something that is a valuable asset as a railway but, the same as many railways, have not been able to greet their visitors due to the pandemic.



144022 Stephen Batty

It will be a day that after such a long wait for it to finally take place will benefit in the long term.

As 2020 is now coming to the end of an awful year, all we can do is hope 2021 will be a much better one for those who keep these railways running, will be vandal free and be an experience for us the public to enjoy and for the next generation to eventually maintain and look after.

W55003, W51339 and W51382 during a “pressed steel” shunt at the Colne Valley Railway on 21/11/20 *Neil Bunt*



RESTORATION NEWS

DMU Group West Midlands:

Maintenance work planned for early 2021 will be tracking down why an engine on 50933 will not stop, when the stop button is pressed from the cab panel. It stops immediately from the local stop. Group member Pete Finch has repaired an air dirt trap that was leaking at the lid. He obtained a new Helicoil set before Christmas, and successfully repaired the item and fitted it to 51941. The group has obtained another similar trap from our friends at the Dean Forest DMU Group. This came from salvaged parts when the DFR scrapped a class 115 many years ago.

North Norfolk Railway

The restoration of Class 104 56182 at the North Norfolk Railway has been a refreshing antidote to the story of the operational Class 101's lying out of use for the summer. The continued spare capacity in the works, created by the furloughed restoration teams, has been gainfully employed with 56182 remaining in the shed for an additional two months since the last update. In this time the cab has been reassembled

and is now 95% complete with the desk populated with the controls and instruments. Elsewhere on the interior the middle saloon floor was found to be rotten so has been removed and fully replaced. Underneath the vehicle, the original plan to re-wire the vehicle in stages starting with the cab was discarded, the unexpected shed space being used instead to tackle the rewire in one go. It is now completed which represents a massive milestone for the vehicle. As if this wasn't enough, in between lockdowns some useful socially distanced volunteer help enabled the underside of the floor and main under-frame sections to be needle gunned, inspected and fully repainted. This process was completed in between the bogies in 2018 but the presence of the latter prevented the rest of the vehicle being treated. With the bogies removed completion of this, also very large, task has been achieved.

56182 floor (right) *Chris Moxon*

Weardale Railway

The line's Class 108 set is currently in the Wolsingham workshops. DMBS 50980 has had one of its gearboxes reconditioned and has had repairs to one final drive where the piston sleeve had split. A new one has been machined and fitted. Both this car and DMCL 52054 have had updated air/axle panels fitted and both have had their roofs sanded down to bare metal, with rivets replaced prior to repainting. Inside all the seats are being removed and repainted and new floor covering fitted.

Class 122 55012 is due in the workshop after Christmas for engine and guard's van floor repairs.



Strathspey Railway, Blue Square Group:

With the easing of Covid restrictions a small bit of work has finally taken place on the unit. She has not run passenger service since the Strathspey Railway's February DMU services! Firstly, we were grateful to the railway's C&W Department which offered to plug a charger into the power cars in the spring. We have new batteries in both cars so neither took much charge. As per the November bulletin, one of our volunteers also paid a visit in September to give her a quick look over and fire her up, again thanks go to the Strathspey Railway who let one of their DMU passed drivers (who lives locally) take her on a very slow trundle around the yard. At last, on the weekend of 16th - 18th October we were able to assemble a small team of three to undertake a full A-Exam. This was our much-delayed ORR post-lockdown maintenance check. All 4 gearboxes took a bit of oil as well but the engines were fine as they were topped up in September and the right-angle drives were all fine.

We also took the opportunity to put anti-freeze into the radiators. I took her for a trundle about the yard a couple of times to work the coolant through and she fired up first time. Fire detection was fine and she held good air and vacuum, she drove remarkably well I must admit. We have a video of her in the yard on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/BlueSquareHeritage/ not a "full" run but a bit of footage of a DMU on the move in 2020 nonetheless!

Work has also progressed on staining the new interior of Sc59511 (see photo). One of our team has been turning up himself to work away at this. We would have liked to have the centre car ready for 2021 but this is now looking unlikely. We've also been told that the railway's Board has decided not to run any February DMU services in 2021, which is disappointing but not unexpected but we hope to get a small team over do work on the (it seems never decreasing) "jobs to do" list, once we're allowed to reconvene again.

Sc59511 staining (right) *Iain Robertson*

Midland Railway

Work has started to exchange parts between recently-arrived 142013 and parts donor 142011, with many components from the interiors swapped between the two sets.

141113 has had new wooden step extensions fitted all round, which have had to be specially machined. Class 108 DMBS 51907 has had a replacement air/axle panel following the failure of some LEDs.



Dean Forest Railway:

Work has continued on preparing a replacement Final Drive wheelset and No 1 engine for 51566, now on Jacks.

Examination of a long stored bogie uncovered a wheelset with what must have been a noisy failure with the end nut over the axle bearing unscrewing and wearing the cover plate away.



How it should have looked *Chris W*



50632 at Norchard on 26/12/20
Nigel Benning



52044 at Lydney Junction on
23/12/20 *Nigel Benning*

M51560 Denbigh:

A two character headcode mechanism has been adapted from an ex class 304 four character box, and a new door fabricated for the destination blind box.



Both pictures above
Richard Thornton



Refurbished cab of 56182 at the North Norfolk Railway *Chris Moxon*

Mendip T&RS Group, Cranmore.

L231—work continues on refurbishing 51909s cab interior after its structural repairs, wiring modifications and upgrades have been carried out on both vehicles with redundant cables largely removed and new, simplified ones added – 51909 is now fully functional again with the desk having had a new laminate top and new Traffolyte panels fitted, all controls have been wired back in and tested successfully.

The two cars were coupled cab to cab for the first time in at least 10 years to test the multi working before being reformed the right way round and tested again – all performed as intended which was a relief considering how invasive the rebuild work has been.

New panelling has been cut and fitted along with a new back panel mount for the air / axle panel, demister ducting has been renewed where the old hoses had rotten.

The internal roof dome was stripped to bare fibreglass before being refitted then primed and glossed, fitment of trims and varnishing / painting continues as time and weather allow. Controls and instruments have all had a coat of paint.

51909s defective Smiths heater was found to have lost its Overheat stat, a replacement has been fitted and it now works perfectly. While the heater was off we took the opportunity to rebuild the underframe ducting which had been 'temporarily' held together for years – the sections were cleaned and straightened with old rivets drilled out and new ones fitted – needless to say the large rigid section was much harder to refit than the rather flexible parts we removed!

A minor earth fault on 51909 was finally traced to a non insulated crimp on the No.2 engine stop solenoid which appeared to be tracking – this has now been replaced with a nice insulated one curing what was presumably a BR bodge many years ago...

Thanks to the collective order for brake blocks we now have a set to install once our attention turns to underframe work before we (hopefully!) start running at Easter...

Renaissance Railcars, Loughborough:

DTCL 56342 in Rothley shed for a short Christmas holiday stay to enable steel-work repairs to the gangway area.



Recently arrived 55009 now with #2 engine exhaust fitted. Mechanical and electrical systems have been progressively bought back to life.



RAILCAR OF THE YEAR 2020

This time congratulations are due to the Mendip Traction and Rolling Stock Group at the East Somerset Railway who have won the award for their two car L231 set of DMBS M51909 and DTCL M56271

Full details will appear in due course on the Railcar website at:
<http://preserved.railcar.co.uk/RailcarAward2020.html>

Photo courtesy of Mendip Traction and Rolling Stock



MOVEMENTS

Class 117 51352/51376 moved Long Marston to South Devon in November

Class 117 51339/51382 moved to Colne Valley in November

Class 117 51370/51412 moved from Whitwell & Reepham to Mid Norfolk in November

Class 108 52044/50632 from Pontypool & Blaenavon to Dean Forest in December—does this mean that the Dean Forest Railway now has the largest number of 108's on one railway?

NEW VEHICLES INTO PRESERVATION

144004 to Aln Valley in December
144016 to Aln Valley in December
144018 to Mid Norfolk in December
3-car sets 144014, 019 & 023 were transferred to Vintage Trains at Tyseley in December, but we do not recognise these as being preserved despite Vintage Trains' obvious strong association with heritage. This is because the 144's are owned by a Train Operating Company with a declared intention for their mainline careers to be extended. Nevertheless they have been "saved from the scrapman" and remain extant.

VEHICLES SCRAPPED

Class 104 50556 was scrapped at the East Lancashire Railway in December. The stripping had been ongoing for six months but just before Christmas the final sections of frames were cut through and disposed of, marking 50556's official ceasing to be! It is the first Class 104 to be scrapped since the last mainline examples were cut in December 1995 - exactly a quarter of a century ago.

FOR SALE/WANTED

Wanted: BR Plastic roof ventilator grills as fitted to the ceilings of some classes of DMU/EMU & loco hauled coaching stock - 10 required.

Please note there are two sizes: small and large. The small type are approx. 6" diameter, more common and typically found in compartments and guards vans. The larger versions are from passenger saloons and are approx. 12" diameter. It is the LARGE versions that are required.



Willing to pay £10-£20 each as, whilst made of plastic and of no value outside of preservation, they appear to be quite rare now!

Contact Chris Moxon at christopher-moxon8@hotmail.com

TIME TRAVELLER



101685 at Betws Y Coed in
1999 *Chris Bull*



101677 and one other at Llandudno
Junction in 1999 *Chris Bull*



101680 at Blaenau Ffestiniog
in 1999 *Chris Bull*



101685 at Llandudno Junction
in 1999 *Chris Bull*

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 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 February 28th for Issue 164 (due out in March).

GALLERY



51213 at Chappel 12/12/20 (Chris Moxon)



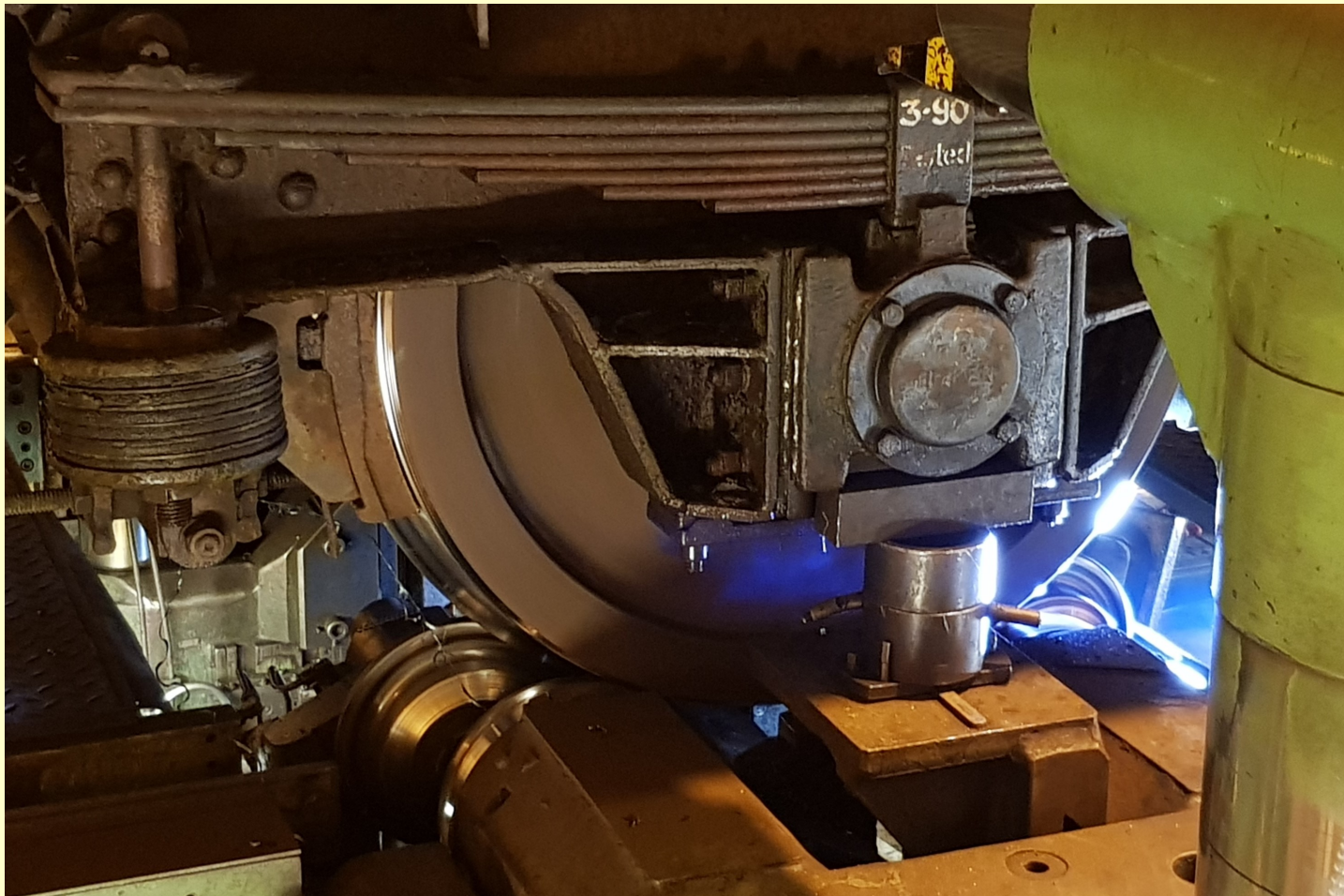
51950 and 144013 at Telford 11/12/20 (Ben Hopkinson)



144003 at Ruddington on the GCRN, 3/10/20 (Phil Stanway)



51914/56492 meets new at Parkend, 9/12/20 (Alan Pace)



50632 on the wheel lathe at St Philips Marsh, Bristol *Chris Walker*