

# *The Railcar Association News Bulletin*



ISSUE 142

July 2017

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to Issue 142. This time last year I was reporting on successful events at the Ecclesbourne Valley and Llangollen Railways, and it seems this year is the same. Although I was unable to attend the EVR's event, visitors were well entertained with the full Ecclesbourne fleet in action supplemented by their first visitor: an East Midlands Trains 153. This made for three single units in service and four on site in total! One of these was old favourite Iris, which is probably now proven to be the most "famous" DMU in preservation times. It is certainly the most travelled, a fact reinforced by the vehicle's holiday a month after the EVR event to Llangollen for their gala. This gala I was able to attend and everybody I came across enjoyed the event. Iris looked particularly good alongside the freshly repainted Wickham set, another preservation gem. We take a break from Railcar events for the next few months but don't forget the November event (3rd-5th) at the East Lancs, more comprehensive details for which we hope to include in the next issue of the bulletin.

*Chris Moxon*

## NEWS

**Bo'ness & Kinneil Rly:** New air tanks for the Class 126 unit have been produced and are now being prepared for fitting at Bo'ness.

**Cambrian Rly:** 51205/56055 were in use the same weekend as the Llangollen Railcar gala nearby offering driver experiences.

**Gloucestershire Warwickshire Rly:** All services are currently being provided by Class 117 3-car set 51360/59510/51405 whilst the overhaul of the Class 122 and the restoration of the Class 107 progresses.

**Great Central Rly:** The usefulness of the Class 101 set should be proved again soon when it forms the first through services on/off their new branch line, the Mountsorrel route.

**Keith & Dufftown Rly:** With the opening of the new shed maintenance on the Class 108's has increased. First in was 50628 for a No1 engine change with a newly rebuilt one. Static testing threw up a few problems with leaking coolant which were fixed, however the engine struggles under load so



unfortunately the vehicle is still out of service pending further investigation. Parts of the air system were also re-piped and various valves cleaned which has helped enormously with what used to be a very weak system. 56224 has also been in for improvements to its air system. 56491 has had repairs to allow it to run in service again, with work has been carried out on the corridor connection and air system. Meanwhile 51568 & 52053 are currently running the main services for the line as 50628 (the only vehicle with a brake van) remains out of action.

**Llangollen Rly:** The fleet was back up to full strength for the Railcar Gala held in June, with the Class 109 set returned to service following an M exam and

repaint. Following the gala, the Class 127/108 hybrid set has been withdrawn for repairs.

**Midland Rly Butterley:** The Class 127 set has been back in action of late and has been running several services. Meanwhile the Class 141 set is being repainted, retaining its latter livery of West Yorkshire Red/Cream.

**Mid Norfolk Rly:** Work has been focussed on Class 101's, both new arrival 56347 and long term overhaul project 51434. On 56347, the headlight has been refitted, batteries topped up and put on charge, electrical systems checked and the controllers cleaned and lubricated. The perspex panel in the internal window aperture behind the second man's seat has been removed and the perspex panel has now gone to the local glassiers to have a piece of

glass made to replace it. 56347 has been coupled up to 51226/51499 to test its vacuum systems, which are working well. Meanwhile on 51434, all the insulation is now complete on the vehicle. The new panels have been fitted to the secondmans side wall in the brake van, meaning beading work and further electrical tasks can be started.

**North Norfolk Rly:** The 6 year struggle to have both Class 101 sets in service together for the first time continues with further setbacks! At the same time as the bogie overhauls for E51228's were completed, (operational) M51192 suffered a major final drive failure caused by a bearing braking up and causing havoc inside the casing. This required E51228 to surrender its bogies which were quickly swapped to get M51192 back into traffic. The bogies from M51192 are now being dismantled themselves for rebuilding. The good news is that DMU services are now being reliably covered by M51192/M56352 once again after only a short break. The bad news is that E51228's reassembly now seems as far away as ever! Its partner E56062 is fully operational and is now acting as a

"spare" trailer, whilst the dead bogies are dealt with.

**Strathspey Railway:** The Class 117 2-car set continues operating all services. SC51402 recently received a replacement secondmans windscreen wiper.



**Weardale Rly:** Class 122 55012 has been repainted this year and is once again operating most of the line's heritage services.

**Yeovil Rly Centre:** Sadly their sole DMU vehicle, Class 117 TCL 59515, was the recent subject of a graffiti attack.



## MAINLINE NEWS

Sadly the curtain fell on the Chiltern Railway Class 121 bubble cars during May. 121020, which had been out of service for some time, surprised observers by joining 121034 in multiple for the last services between Princes Risborough and Aylesbury. The two performed the last regular timetabled service on the mainline to be operated using vacuum brakes, the end of an era for British railway history!

## THE BUBBLE & SQUEEK TRACKER

*Trevor Daw*

The last mainline registered 'Bubble' car 55034 was scheduled to be withdrawn in mid-May when the Chiltern Railways Summer time table commenced. In 2003, CI 121 55020 made a return to the mainline for passenger use on the Aylesbury - Princes Risborough branch line... Later, Arriva Trains Wales overhauled 55032 at Crewe for use on the Cardiff to Cardiff Bay services. Chiltern then purchased 55034 from private ownership in 2010 to share duties with number 55020. For the past two years

these two CI 121's have been the only Bubble cars to remain in daily passenger use. Normally restricted to peak hour's morning and evening they plied their trade along the single track branch restricted to a 45mph line speed.

To mark the withdrawal, the Branch Line Society negotiated with Chiltern Rail to run a tour of Bucks and Oxon. This took place on 9th April on one of the hottest days so far this year. The writer having some inside knowledge of this tour approached the BLS enquiring about a seat. Their reply was no tour had been planned! My interest in the cars has been doing contract work for Chiltern on exhausters and throttle motors. Then one week before the tour, the BLS contacted me to offer the last



seat available. Yes please, of course I would.

The departure from Aylesbury at 09.42 aboard 55034 to Princes Risborough was bathed in warm sunshine giving good views of the Chiltern Hills on the left and Aylesbury Vale on the right. After negotiating the sharp left hand curve into Princes Risborough, we joined the main line heading to High Wycombe. Our driver Peter Barford accelerated up the steady climb of 1 in 167 to Saunderton Station at around 68 mph, then down the 1 in 164 at 70mph to pass through High Wycombe at 10.06. Continuing at speed we were booked to stop at West Ruislip for ten minutes to allow faster trains to overtake. Departing at 10.33 it was high speed running into Marylebone. A half-hour break and a rush for food and tea. Leaving at 11.26 we ran at 70mph to Bicester, then down the new chord line to join the old Bletchley-Oxford line to Oxford. This has recently been rebuilt; and opened fully in December 2016. This new route provides a second route to London from Oxford, the first new route for a century.

On reaching Bicester South Junc. we diverged onto the double track, fully

bi-directional chord to Gavray Junction. Opened to passengers on 25/10/2015, where we converged with the L&NWR line from Cambridge to Oxford passing through the new Bicester Village station at 13.18. After a short visit to Bicester Depot we departed via Bicester West Junc. for a high speed run to Oxford Parkway. Here a seven minute stop for passengers to have a quick look around the new station, opened to passengers 25/10/2015. The train arrived in platform one at Oxford at 13.52. Something your writer has not done by rail since September 1959, when he travelled direct from Bedford to Oxford behind a CI.4 tank and four BR Mk.1's. Here a change of drivers from Peter Barford to Mark Lunt for the journey to Quainton Road and Aylesbury. Departing Oxford at 14.22 we returned to Bicester Gavray Junc. at 15.06 to continue at the lower



level to Claydon L.N.E. Junc. This line has no booked traffic and has lain derelict since 1993. Very soon we reach the Bicester Eastern Perimeter Road level crossing, which is trainman operated. Speed is no more than 25mph as we travel along and overgrown stretch of straight track to reach Claydon LNE. At this point we travel along the RR loop to the extremity of the line, almost touching the gates. Beyond is the route onto Bletchley eleven miles East which is being rebuilt for the projected East West mainlines to Cambridge. Running back along the so called mainline, we diverge left to run down the spur to Calvert Junc. opened in 1940 as a wartime measure for through traffic on the Great Central Mainline. Departing Calvert at 15.49 we arrived at Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at 16.00. One hour was allowed for a short visit departing for Aylesbury at 17.00. After a run along various Depot sidings we alighted at 18.00.

The whole day had been a wonderful demonstration of a heritage DMU going about its work without any mechanical issues. The helpful Chiltern crew of two drivers, one Guard and two travelling fitters (All DMU enthusiasts). Made our



tour something that many will remember for a long time. The journey raised over £5,500 that will be donated to the Bowel Cancer and The Railway Children's Charity.

55034 was driven onto Aylesbury Depot and stabled in front of 55020, ready for the following morning's peak hour diagrams.

During March this year 55020 suffered a serious mishap in traffic running along the branch to Risborough. The incident damaged a cardan shaft to final drive universal joint putting the car out of action, never to run in mainline service again (Or so we thought, until 55020 was used on the last day – presumably with the affected power train isolated - Ed)

Lastly, my grateful thanks go to the BLS who organised a superb day out with good stewarding. Owing to the hot weather they kept us supplied with orange squash and bottles of water.

## RESTORATION NEWS

**Derby Lightweight 79018 (Ecclesbourne Valley):** 79018 sneaked into the recently extended shed for a time where its long term restoration progresses steadily.



**Class 100 5118 (Midland Rly):** Refurbished marker lights have been refitted to the vehicle's front end, and the 2-character route indicator blinds also fitted. False rivets have been added to the roof, of which there are many in order to replicate its original appearance. The bodysides have seen the windows fully sealed and stray adhesive tidied up. On the rear, the corridor connection has been temporarily refitted so that its bits do not get lost.

**Class 103 56160 (Denbigh):** The buffer beams and sole bars have been cleaned and painted and jumpers added to the driving end. Dummy sockets and an air pipe have been recovered from 50211 and are being



cleaned up to replace the missing items on the other end. I've finally found a source of dummy air pipe couplings and chains - MoD surplus stock, pressed, not cast, but they do the job! The ex 101 vacuum reservoirs recovered from Immingham have also been cleaned and painted and are ready to go back on. A pattern has been made for the missing horn bracket and this is being fabricated.

**Class 104 50455 (East Lancs):** Continued progress is being made on refitting the door jambs and completing the door edge corrosion repairs.



**Class 104 56182 (North Norfolk):** All the major repair work has now been completed on the fibreglass cab roof dome which now awaits refitting. Seat repairs and re-upholstery also continues, with the middle saloon now almost completed and the rear saloon seats being dismantled for repairs and eventual recovering.



**Class 105 51485/56121 (East Lancs):** The vehicles have been rubbed down and varnished for the final time. The power car has also moved under its own power on test runs for the first time in many years. The two saloon heaters have been refitted. On the interior, a great deal of finishing and painting work has been undertaken in the guard's van area, which is being returned as close to original condition as possible.

**Class 105 56456 (Llangollen):** Various restoration tasks have been completed steadily. The new ceiling joists have been painted, and various items of supporting (hidden) woodwork fitted to the interior.

**Class 107 52029 (Gloucestershire Warwickshire):** The cab brake valve was stripped down, cleaned, inspected and rebuilt. It now moves sweetly. The gear selector and throttle controller have always been "notchy". On strip down today, a lot of glass was seen in the top of both controllers tops and in the gearing underneath. this was cleaned out and lubricated. both gear selector and throttle controller now move far smoother than before. The air horn selector valve had been "robbed" to keep the 117 set going, the old selector valve was left on the floor. the

selector valve was found to operate one tone only. the valve was stripped down and a new operating mechanism was manufactured and fitted. The selector valve will be fitted at a later date. The engines were due to be started up for the first time in about 18 months but a cabling fault prevented this from happening. The new battery box has been fitted and it is hoped the new batteries and battery cabling can be fitted soon.

**Class 110 51813 (East Lancs):** Work on the final vehicle of the Class 110 3-car set has now been started in earnest. The rotten cab front end has been tackled first and a great deal of stripping out has been done. Windows, roof dome, cab desk etc have all been removed for restoration.



**Class 116 51138 (Great Central North):** Guards van restoration continues on 51138. The latest areas to be attended to are the ambulance emergency cupboard and the train lighting controls. Both are being restored to a high standard.

**Class 110 51842 (East Lancs):** The work to overhaul 51842 has now been substantially completed. The exterior has been made fully watertight now and repainting into Green to match the previously overhauled centre car has been completed.



**Class 122 55003 (Gloucestershire Warwickshire):** The windscreen wiper motor has been piped up, both cab ends have been etch primed and more primer has been rubbed down. The exhaust pipes have been refitted. The exterior overhaul of the vehicle is now at an advanced stage.



## MOVEMENTS

**Class 101 DTSL 56347** has been sold and has moved from the **Foxfield Railway** to its new home the **Mid Norfolk Railway**. The plan is to reinstate it as a spare vehicle to make any two car into a three car, with the added bonus that the vehicle could be used to replace any DMC if the MNR need to do any overhaul work on them. The vehicle has been affectionately nicknamed "Dorris"!



**Class 117 TCL 59506** has moved from **Long Marston** to **Peak Rail** where it is being repainted back into BR Green after spending a time in a non standard yellow livery, reportedly for testing purposes.

## FOR SALE

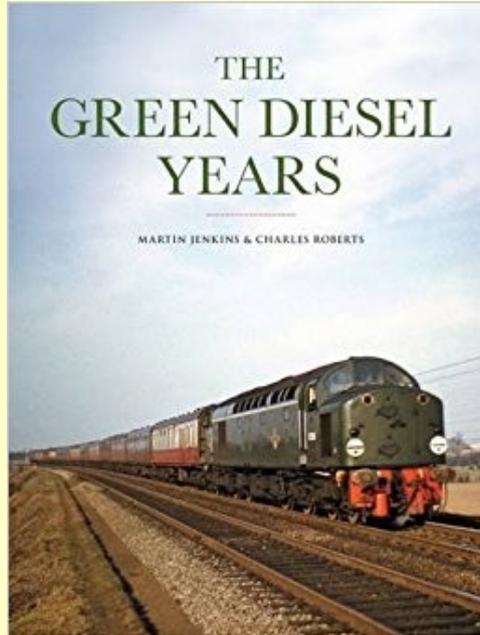
Tim Stubbs still has a few Leyland 680 Fluid Flywheel glands for sale and can deliver to the Railcar Convention at the East Lancs in November if required. Still £30 each, while stocks last. Contact this newsletter if interested.

## THE GREEN DIESEL YEARS

### *Review*

Not immediately obvious to the railcar enthusiast is "The Green Diesel Years" by Martin Jenkins & Charles Roberts, published recently by Ian Allan. The imposing image on the front cover depicting a Class 40 is an effective disguise for a book that actually includes over 60 images of railcars. Given the widespread introduction and importance of DMU vehicles at the same time as the birth of the BR mainline diesel fleet, many similar books pre-dating this one are guilty of almost exclusively featuring these locos, with the railcar given a token image or two towards the back. Not so here, with a very wide selection featured. Indeed, there are few classes that do not have a picture within its 96 pages. The BR railbuses are also

represented, with at least one image of all of the five types. Particularly popular subjects include the pioneering Derby Lightweights and Classes 101, 105, 108 and 120. As the title suggests, all of the railcars with a few exceptions (namely the GWR railcars), are shown in green livery, with all the front end variations such as speed whiskers and yellow panels represented.



In terms of the quality of the book, this can be said to be very good. It is basically a collection of images, the printed quality of which are excellent. The photographic quality of the images selected is excellent, with poorly exposed subjects noticeable only by the absence. Even the more challenging environments such as the interiors of sheds are covered well. If a fault has to be found, perhaps the image selected for the front cover could be sharper. However given the limitations of colour film during the period of green diesels, this is certainly excusable. The scenes featuring railcars are varied and pleasing, with some particularly nice scenes showing the units alongside steam traction. The full range of railcar haunts are shown ranging from country branch lines to the busiest of main lines and London termini. There is an image of a Blue Pullman unit towards the end of the book that has to be singled out as being particularly gorgeous! Oozing with period atmosphere, it will be some time before a reader's gaze moves onto the next page.

As is customary for these titles, each image has a long caption detailing the scene, the traction, the history etc of

what is depicted. The attention to detail of these captions is high, indeed one example even talks of how a branch line's 40 bridges added to its running costs, suggesting that the accompanying research of the authors has been anything but lazy. There are some nice links between then and now within the captions, and they certainly don't fall into the trap of relentlessly listing the withdrawal dates of the loco/unit featured: a habit which can make other books repetitive to read for more than a few minutes.

In conclusion, the book is not solely focused on railcars so is not a definitive work in that respect, nor does it claim to be. However it is highly recommended for anyone with an interest in the early years of diesel traction offering a very pleasing collection of high quality images indeed. A nice addition to any railway bookshelf, the title refreshingly gives railcars proportional representation against the larger locomotives in its coverage of the Green Diesel Years.

### **Amendments & Additions**

As is traditional within the railcar association's reviews, a list of

amendments/additions is included. For a title with so many railcar images, it contains a very low number of errors which is testament to the authors' research skills. Noted amendments/additions are as follows:

- Pg10 – Addition – Although technically a “Power/trailer set”, it is worth noting that the BEMU's battery cells were spread over both cars.
- Pg18 – Amendment – The second vehicle is not DMCL E50268, it is a DMBS vehicle.
- Pg43 – Amendment – Pictured is a 2-car Class 114, not a 3-car.
- Pg54 – Amendment – BRCW built 302 Class 104 vehicles.
- Pg90 – Addition – The DMU appears to be hauling two vans.

### **TIME TRAVELLER**

#### **Green Era**

[Class 105 – Drummuir](#)

[Class 113 – Ashton – 20/6/61](#)

[Class 117 W51404 – Reading West – 3/9/66](#)

[Class 120 – Newport – 5/63](#)

#### **Blue Era**

[Class 101 – Cullercoats – 25/8/76](#)

[Class 105 – Norwich – 26/8/81](#)

#### **Blue/Grey & Later**

[Class 101 53268 – Crossmyloof – 9/7/99](#)

[Class 108 54250 – Kirkham – 5/5/84](#)

[Class 110 51814 – 28/8/82](#)

[Class 115 – Cadishead – 25/1/86](#)

### **PHOTO CHARTER**

DMU Group West Midlands/30742 Charters are pleased to announce a second night photography shoot at Arley Station on the Severn Valley Railway on Friday 29th September 2017. This will use the three Car Class 108 unit (52064/59250/51941) owned by the DMU Group and based at Bewdley on the SVR.

Participants will join the unit at Bewdley where ample car parking is available and run down to Arley station and back after the photoshoot and for those who would like Fish and Chips on the way up there should hopefully be a run down into Bewdley before we depart.

Floodlights will be set up for the evenings shoot on arrival at Arley and there may be the opportunity to purchase tea, coffee and soft drinks from our on board buffet counter in centre car 59250 during the evening (subject to having available staff to man the counter).

Full details are still being finalised but we expect the shoot to commence after the days SVR services at a departure time of around 18:30hrs with the return arriving back at Bewdley no later than 22:30.

Proceeds gained from the shoot will be donated to the DMU Group WM for the upkeep of our Class 108 Vehicles, There will be 30 spaces available at £45 per photographer and booking details can be found [here](#)

## **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](mailto: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](mailto:railcar@live.co.uk) but no later than August 29th for Issue 143 (due out September).

## GALLERY



Two views of 51360 on the GWSR, 10/5/17 (*P.Weston*)



M55005 calls at Shackerstone, 21/6/17 (*W.Pilkington*)



Unique Class 140 interior, 24/6/17 (*M.Hughes*)