



The Railcar Association Bulletin March 2010



Introduction

Firstly, many thanks to those who have supplied material for this issue. Slowly we are building up a list of (hopefully!) regular contributors, and there are some new railways/vehicles mentioned in this issue. I would welcome any more reports, as there are still some large fleets and railways not covered.

The first railcar event of the year has now been and gone, the East Lancs Railway's DMU Day in February, which saw four vehicles in service and a Thumper as well. The next event is later this month at the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway.

W55000 is worthy of special mention as it returned to service recently at the South Devon Railway, following an exterior overhaul involving much backdating to 1958 condition.

I know much restoration work has been delayed by the recent weather, which some say is never ending! Hopefully it will be a little warmer by the time the next bulletin is out...

News

Tanat Valley Railway: This developing line near Oswestry has recently taken delivery of Class 107 Power Twin 51993 & 52012. Previously based at the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway, the set is mid way through restoration which will be continued at its new home. Embsay now no longer have any First Generation DMU's, having once housed a fleet of seven Class 107 vehicles.

Swanage Railway: Class 108 set M51933 & M56504 returned to the mainline on 20th January, albeit in tow as part of a stock movement. West Coast Railways' 37706 was used to haul the set, along with Met-Camm Pullman car 347 from Swanage to Eastleigh (5Z29). Although much of the journey was made in the evening making photography difficult (departure was not until 15:15) Justin Saunders captured the formation passing Holes Bay, and has kindly agreed for the photo to be reproduced here.



Llangollen Railway: For the first time for many years the Llangollen Railway required units to be available throughout January and February so that an experimental Saturday service could be operated. We had originally planned for the winter services to be covered by the blue-liveried class 104 unit, however we also planned to do some jobs on it in between the November Thomas and the start of January and these unfortunately were disrupted by the bad weather. The class 127/105 deputised instead. The job which caught us out on the Birmingham was the planned replacement of one of the exhausts, which had begun to blow beside the corridor connection. The offending pieces were removed prior to the bad weather but were still being worked on when the snow came. Once the weather cleared the repair was completed, though too late for the early January services. We also rebuilt one of the guard's doors, which was removed, made slightly smaller in width and then reskinned so that it fit properly, which it never has done since it arrived at the Railway 16 years ago! Part of the door frame around this same door was also replaced with new wood. Whilst the unit was in the workshop it had a mini-makeover of the guard's van, with a guard's desk installed and a repaint and it also had new exhauster belts fitted to one engine due to it shedding one during the autumn Thomas event. Several seats which had become damaged were also taken away and recovered. Finally an FP exam was carried out before the unit returned to service. The class 108 has received a scheduled B exam, which was on going from December to January and was also interrupted by the bad weather. The toilet in the trailer car, was also rebuilt. The walls and floor were all removed and new panels made and installed within the space of six weeks.

Midland Railway Butterley: The class 141 has remained operational with the only work being carried out being the replacement of a water drain chamber on an air regulator which had become damaged, possibly by the frost. The rolling B1 exam was also completed in time for it to enter service at the end of January.

M56160: Despite a difficult year, work has continued on the DTCL, with the cab buffer beam having been restored- jumper sockets fitted (but not yet wired) new vac bag brackets fabricated & fitted and the beam and both sole bars repainted. The sole bars have also been lettered as per that uncovered during the work. Temporary glazing is almost complete and new wood for the running boards has been ordered.



Ecclesbourne Valley Railway: Derby Lightweight M79900 "Iris" has had an injector on No.2 engine cleaned to enable smoother engine running. Class 101 E51505's new engine has been successfully tested and is running as expected, providing that much needed extra power! M51188 had a small leak on one of the usual roof vents, which has been corrected. Class 108 M56224 was put up for sale in January. Class 119 W51073's restoration work continues apace, and can be followed on the [EVR Website](#).

Garw Valley Railway: Following their eviction by the Vale of Glamorgan Council in 2009, the Vale of Glamorgan Railway Company (trading as the Barry Island Railway) were forced to seek a new home and as a result, the privately owned fleet of DMU's were a victim. The 108 (M51919/M52048) is now based at the "new-generation" Garw Valley Railway, but the 115 and 117 were put up for sale. The 117 has been sold but the 115 still remains at Barry for sale. The Class 108 "power twin" moved to Pontycymer in June 2009 (see image left). The unit is stored at



Pontycymer shed in an operational state and will form the principal traction for the line which is hopefully set to open in some format in 2010. Bogie repairs are currently underway involving the brake rigging bushes and cross rod assembly that have been made up due to wear. A refurbishment of the saloon areas is underway with seating being reupholstered, thanks to a family group at the GVR who refurbish the seat cushions at home. The flooring material is also being replaced as saloon refurbishment progresses. The last DMU to seemingly visit the branch was a charter on 13/09/1986 when set C480 worked the service and a 50 minute round trip was on offer for £2!

Strathspey Railway: Class 117 DMS 51402 was out-shopped from Aviemore shed in December following bodywork and a repaint into BR Green with whiskers. It has also been renumbered from W51402 to SC51402. It is anticipated that DMBS W51367 will receive the same treatment later this year, and if possible for centre car S59511 to also follow. The images show the vehicle after being completed and, a few weeks later, covered in snow at Boat of Garten.



Lavender Line: Class 108 54279, formerly at the Barry Island Railway, is now located on the Lavender Line at Isfield. The DTCL was in coaching stock maroon livery at Barry and was used as a hauled trailer. Now in green, it is believed it will serve a similar purpose at Isfield. This movement follows the arrival of Wickham Railbus 999507 which moved from the Middleton Railway some time ago.



Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway: Since the start of the year our main focus has been on Buffet Car Sc79443. The next phase of the restoration will be to rebuild No. 1 end (compartment end) so we have removed all fixtures and fittings. The gangway rubbing plate, springs, timber, pass-comm equipment, water filler pipes, footsteps and so on. The buffer beam has been stripped of all but the buckeye coupling: jumpers, sockets, steps, buckeye chain, etc. The bodyside doors, one each side, have been taken off and will be refurbished. One has been dismantled, woodwork repaired and dents filled. Some careful sanding has been done on the end to reveal the vehicle's overhaul history and the various lettering applied through the years. We have also started removing the window frames and units on one side, working along

from No. 1 end. A small amount of work has been done on fittings for the cabs of both power cars. As well as this, the Bo'ness Diesel Group have completed the overhaul of our spare engine.

Pioneer Class 122 Returned to Original Condition

W55000 spent part of winter 2009/2010 in the Carriage & Wagon workshops at its base the South Devon Railway. The refurbishment work has included bodywork repairs, a repaint from Regional Railways into original green with speed whiskers, and the reinstatement of the two character route indicator box.



During December 2009 preparation work was completed and the undercoat & green was applied in early January.



Later that month, on January 11th, the unit was completed and out shopped in the snow. The vehicle has become the first Class 122 to be returned to original condition, as all other vehicles have not had the indicator boxes returned. This work follows a long term lease agreement signed 12 months ago between South Devon Diesel Traction and owners South Devon Railway Trust.



The bubble was successfully unveiled to the public on Friday 19th February, as part of the South Devon's "From Autos to Railcars) half term gala. The first run required a suburban coach to be added, such was the passenger demand. The vehicle had undertaken successful test runs earlier the same week.



Dean Forest Railway Class 108's

M51914 ~ 10 Years of DFR Service: Power car M51914 has completed ten years of passenger service on the DFR. This vehicle was originally purchased from Bletchley Depot by Chris Bull and arrived at Norchard in March 1994. Most of our other vehicles have arrived in a reasonably complete condition but M51914 had been used as a source of spares at Bletchley and had many missing parts. Restoration of this vehicle was an ambitious project for our group but over a period of about five years it was thoroughly restored both inside and out. We were proud to return it to passenger service on the DFR Rally day held on 17th October 1999.

M51914 has not been in DFR service for as long as E50619 and M56492 but has provided motive power for many of our services since the railway was extended north of Norchard. It was used for the first of the Tufts shuttles, the first of the Whitcroft shuttles and the first DFR public passenger service to Parkend. Reliability since entering DFR service has been excellent and it has worked on over 450 days. Since 2004 it has been used on most DFR DMU services and during 2005 it worked on all of the 95 running days. The 1999 repaint was to a very high standard and the roof received attention and a repaint in 2002. It has been kept looking smart by a bodywork repaint in 2006 and a roof repaint in 2008. During 2009 the solebars and some of the underframe mounted items have also been painted.



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Centre Car E59387: Our centre trailer car E59387 arrived at Lydney Junction on 11th August 09, and was taken to Norchard by M51914 and M56492. This has increased our fleet of DMU vehicles at Norchard to five, making us owners of one of the largest collections of class 108s. For a while we owned six vehicles, M50933 being on loan to our friends at the Severn Valley Railway DMU group. This has now been purchased by them. Our centre car is a unique vehicle, as it is the only class 108 centre car of its type, the two other 108 centre cars in preservation have a guards compartment. It is a Trailer Second with Lavatory (TSL), a vehicle originally delivered to the North Eastern Region as part of a 3-car set in 1958. The increase in the size of our fleet brings additional work and although the centre trailer has less mechanical equipment than a power car the exterior and interior still needs to be kept in good condition. Fortunately a lot of restoration work was carried out at the Midland Railway Centre but there are still some major jobs to be done such as painting the roof and fitting corridor connections.

M56495 at the Kirklees Light Railway: In 2008 our group sold M56495 for use as a static function room at the Kirklees Light Railway. Some contract work was carried out at the Midland Railway Centre on its way to Yorkshire.

Supplied by Alan Pace - Dean Forest DMU Group

DMU Exhaust Caps

Our DMU fleet currently stands idle and exposed to all weathers for approximately 300 days a year. To protect the exhaust systems and possibly the engines from water ingress, we have traditionally fitted miniature buckets over the exhaust pipes at the end of each running session. This has in the past been a little hazardous as the buckets had to be fitted using a long rod with a hook to reach the tops of the exhausts and sometimes the buckets fell from the hook before being properly in place. Another hazard has been when the buckets were forgotten prior to starting the engines and the exhaust would propel the bucket skywards, possibly injuring a staff member nearby or chipping paintwork etc. With these hazards in mind, it was decided to investigate the possibility of fitting a better, more permanent fixture. It was found that a firm in Devon could supply four inch diameter stainless steel automatic raincaps which would be a perfect fit on our units. Two of the raincaps were ordered for trial fitting and were deemed a success, so four additional caps were ordered to enable the entire fleet to be fitted. Whilst the purists would argue that these fittings are totally non authentic, they do improve safety and also give automatic weather protection as soon as the engines are turned off. The caps have been fitted in a way which gives ¼ to ½ inch gap between the top of the exhaust pipe and the cover to allow the exhaust to "breathe," so helping to prevent condensation in the exhaust system, which is another advantage over the mini buckets in use previously.



Supplied by Jeff Bishop - Dean Forest DMU Group

East Lancashire Railway DMU Day

Many thanks to Derek Gordon & Tommy Mollsmyre for the images covering this event



Strathspey Railway Class 117 During Half Term Week

Three views of recently repainted Class 117 DMS SC51402 in action on the Strathspey Railway over half term week



Derby Lightweight Comparisons

Leigh Gration from Ecclesbourne Valley Railway wished to share two photographs of Derby Lightweights on the Wirksworth branch, which was known as a test route for new railcars from Derby: "The first one shows four spanking brand new Derby Lightweight vehicles with E79508 at the helm, standing at The Hannages just south of Wirksworth Station in 1956. Unfortunately, the original photographer is not fully known but it is an official photograph taken by British Railways. The second shows Derby Lightweight Single Unit M79900 Iris standing the exactly the same spot 52 years later on what is now the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway. (Photograph: Neil Ferguson-Lee)"



Forthcoming Events

Date	Railway
March 20th & 21st	Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
June 26th & 27th	Llangollen Railway
September 11th & 12th	Midland Railway Butterley
October 8th-10th	Severn Valley 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 (such as the Strathspey 117 feature in this issue)
- Restoration articles (such as the South Devon Class 122 article in this issue)
- Reports on special events (such as the ELR DMU Day in this issue)
- Requests for information
- News & images of recent DMU activity (even a sentence will do!)
- Anything that featured in the pre 2004 bulletins
- 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 April 29th for Issue 99 (due out May)