

Highlights of 2019 in the Carriage & Wagon Department

By Richard Salmon



The big relaunch was that of the **Bulleid Society's composite No. 5768**, which re-emerged from its comprehensive bottom-up overhaul for the Branch Line weekend in March, when it operated as part of a four-coach set of Bulleid coaches.



Also back in service was **Bulleid Open Third No.1482**, which is now three-quarters of the way through a project that has seen it re-wired, asbestos removed, most of the seats re-trimmed, sidelights (windows) removed, steelwork repaired and re-bedded. Chloe, the C&W cat, always finds the most recently trimmed cushion on which to sit—in this case, a retrimmed seat using SR Bulleid-period moquette in No.1482. This work has been

done in stages such that the carriage returned for service as required for peak traffic requirements.



It was also good to see our **four Metropolitan Railway carriages** running as a complete set again at the Branch Line event, following major work on the door locks and brake gear. The set made what will probably be their final visit to London (by rail) to run on the Underground for the 150th anniversary celebrations of the District Line (originally the Metropolitan District Railway).

The photo by Steve Lee, taken on 13 April, shows the Met carriages as part of an all-teak 6-coach set.

The first heavy general overhaul of a Mk.1 carriage on the Railway was of **Corridor Composite No.16210**, completed in 1991, and this coach was due for intermediate bodywork attention during the year, with loose rivets and corrosion on the exterior attended to and a full repaint undertaken. Sadly, the scheduled work was interrupted by

operational requirements, and the numbering, cream stripe, and final varnishing has not been achieved yet. **Brake composite No.21246**, which entered traffic after overhaul in time for the Santa Special trains a year ago, was also back in the paint shop early this year for remedial work.

Mk.1 SK No.25728 returned to service thanks to a bogie swap with **No. 25769**, on which work has started stripping asbestos (an expensive business undertaken by specialist contractors) and on which a general overhaul of the interior has started, although structural repairs will be required before the carriage returns to service. Structural repairs to the end-pillars on wheelchair-accessible saloon **No. 5034** and buffet car **No. 1838** have been contracted out to Cranmore Train Services, and the former has now returned, awaiting further attention in our workshops. The rewiring and comprehensive overhaul of the **ex-Bicester open third No. 4754** continues to make progress at the hands of our staff and mid-week volunteers, with the seating being re-trimmed in early BR-era "boomerang" moquette.



Entering service in December, **Mk.1 Open First No. 3069** has had an illustrious past. After its BR career on the "Ocean Liner Express," it was overhauled for use as a standby spare for the VSOE's Pullman train. Subsequently, it was used on the reincarnated Ocean Liner Express run by VSOE for Cunard in the 1990s and then on the "Regency Rail"

excursion train (the predecessor of the "Northern Belle") and Riviera Train's "Royal Scot" service. It arrived on the Bluebell Railway in March 2019, on loan from its private owner, following refurbishment and repainting into Western Region style to match the Pullmans with which it now runs. Since arrival, it has received work to set up the doors and renewal of the main steam heat pipe. The photo by Martin Lawrence shows the carriage attached to the Golden Arrow set.

No. 3069's presence on the Railway enables us to save the huge amount of shunting which has hitherto been required when No. 3064 "Ashdown" was shunted between our Golden Arrow and Wealden Rambler sets. The seating capacity it provides on the Golden Arrow is required until such time as we can increase the Golden Arrow to four Pullmans, which is in progress, with **Car No. 54** (which will have a brake van and wheelchair access) currently being overhauled at Horsted Keynes. The LMS six-wheeled brake will continue in the train (for which it provides additional catering facilities) until such time as we have a second operational Pullman kitchen car. No. 3069 is marketed as "Sapphire" on our Railway.



The huge quantity of work undertaken on Car 54 is far beyond the scope of this article, but suffice to say that the structural element of the rebuild is essentially now complete, the (new) gangways and (replacement) buffers coming together, the wiring well-advanced, the overhaul of the marquetry and manufacture and trimming of the new seats well in hand, and the internal ceilings going up. The photos, taken on 14 Dec., 2019, show

the exterior of the southern saloon and brake van end of Car 54, and the inner ceiling of the northern saloon, which is formed of flexible ply on a timber sub-structure.



Maunsell Brake Composite No.6686 is currently having its first-class seating re-trimmed in SR-pattern "Bird of Paradise", whilst remaining available for service. The existing seat structures are in poor condition, and one completely new unit has therefore been made. The others will have substantial parts of their structural timbers replaced, particularly around the arm-rests. Four spare SR armrest mechanisms were recovered from a pair of ex-emu (6-PAN) first-class seats in poor condition, courtesy of the Bulleid 4DD Group at Sellindge.



The two LB&SCR Stroudley carriages in the works continue to make progress. **Brake Third No.949** now has all its glazing in the passenger area, all but one of its doors overhauled and hung, and a start made on panelling these. Excepting internal quarterlight (window) frames and the unique Stroudley patent communication system, the interior is essentially complete.



Stroudley Full Third No.328 has had its external panelling fitted, and the decoration of the partitions completed prior to fitting the roof, the timbers for which are in an advanced stage of preparation. Work has re-started on the doors.

The Alf Brown Group's **SECR Passenger Luggage Van (PLV) No.153** represents the first version of what became the standard SR pattern of passenger-rated van, and this van has recently entered the carriage works for some TLC, the replacement of several of its doors with newly made ones prepared in advance, plus a new roof covering.



In comparison, **No. 2531**, the Camelot Locomotive Society's Lancing-built Covered Carriage Truck (CCT) of 1955, represents the final design of that SR van family. After completion of the major body overhaul earlier in the year, in October it was able to go on the lifting jacks and receive its mechanical overhaul. At the same time, the remaining steelwork on the underside of the van was cleaned up and repainted. It is now all but

ready for use on demonstration trains, a perfect match for "Camelot," which was built the same year.



The CCT team has joined others to work on **Maunsell Hastings line (Restriction 0) Brake Third No .3687** (photo by Alex Morley), which was finally able to enter the works in the space vacated by the Bulleid carriage projects described earlier. With most of the work completed over a long time-frame by a very small team, led by David Wigley, it now becomes our main volunteer project, being worked on three days a week. In the past few

months the exterior sides have been stripped back to bare metal, and three-quarters of the coach now has all the screws re-bedded, the lower panels removed and refitted (to ensure the underlying structure remains sound following repairs some years ago), and the panelling treated and primed. The teak exterior window mouldings made some years ago are now being cut to size, drilled, and varnished. On the interior much work has focused on the toilet compartment which is being fitted out, and work has started on the roof, which needs new stainless steel screws to replace the corroded originals. Excepting the narrow edge roof timbers, which are being replaced, the remainder appear in good condition.

Southern Railway **Gangwayed Bogie Luggage Van (GBL) No. 2462**, which hosts the Rail Artists South-East Exhibition, spent last Christmas in the paint shop, and it had some planking repairs on the West side. When back in use in the dock at Horsted Keynes the accessible east side also received attention, and a new door has been fitted.



The Wagon Gang has slowly been rekindled over the past year, and it is looking for new volunteers to help look after the wagon fleet. The gang hopes to bring back Goods Trains in 2020 and hopefully SR **Bulleid 5-plank Open Wagon No. 12058** will be joining the set. Laurie Anderson's photos illustrate progress over the year on the underframe of the wagon. It has changed colour many times this year, but it is now a lot better looking than it was at the beginning of the year! It is currently waiting to be lifted back onto its wheelsets so further

work can be carried out. The first photo shows the wagon at the start of this year, and the second was taken in November.



Finally, there was some progress during the year on preparations for the overhaul of **Maunsell Restaurant Car No. 7864**, which will follow on once No. 3687 is completed. Earlier this year, thanks to a tip-off from a friend elsewhere in the carriage preservation scene, we were able to acquire several tons of second-hand teak, part of the timber which was surplus from the recent rebuilding of the “Cutty Sark”. The 36 planks of teak give the project a huge head-start. Even the smallest planks in the photo are big enough to get a body pillar out of, and the largest are far longer than normally available these days. It should be just about enough for the major repairs required to the timber-framed body. The fundraising for the project has now reached 80% of the £100,000 set as a target to be able to start the project.

