

VV	VV	CCC	TTTTTTT	NN	NN	EEEEEE	WW	WW	SS	S
VV	VV	CC	TTTTTTT	NNN	NN	EE	WW	WW	SS	
VV	VV	CC	TT	NN	NN	EEEE	WW	W	WW	SSS
VVVV		CC	TT	NN	NNN	EE	WWW	WWW		SS
VVV		CCC	TT	NN	NN	EEEEEE	WW	WW	S	SSS

Newsletter of the VINTAGE CARRIAGES TRUST.
 Published by the Trust at Haworth Station, Haworth, Yorkshire.

No. 2. December 1972.

Chairman: R. Higgins.
 Secretary: W. G. S. Henderson.
 Treasurer: G. Massey.
 Membership Secretary: J. Wright.
 Editor: C. G. Smyth.

1972 has been a good year for the VCT. Restoration of coach 1 is nearing completion, the appeal to restore MS&L 176 has been launched, Keighley shop is doing good business, income from exhibitions has been at a high level and the postal sales scheme has been reintroduced. In 1973 we can look forward to the commissioning of the Worth Valley's expanded exhibition shed at Oxenhope and the possible introduction of a special historic rake of coaches. This would allow the occasional use of vehicles which have been rather neglected until now because of the complex shunting operations needed to add them to trains.

It should be a busy and interesting year and we hope we can rely on your continued support. There is plenty of work to be done both on the coaches and at exhibitions and the efforts of our hard core of active members plus the financial support and goodwill of the rest of the membership are still very necessary if this encouraging progress is to be maintained.

1973 Subscriptions

Members are reminded that their 1973 subscriptions become due on January 1st. At only 50p per year the VCT surely represents the best value in the railway preservation movement! Send your subscription to: The Membership Secretary, VCT.

Chatham Report

Before we give an up to date report on the restoration of coach No. 3554 members may like to know something of the origins of this vehicle.

This class of coach, known by railway enthusiasts as "Chatham Matchboards" was designed by Maunsell for the South Eastern and Chatham Railway in 1921. The first batch appeared in 1922 in the standard S.E.C.R. livery of dark brown/maroon. Designed specifically for the boat train services, one was immediately struck by their 'continental' appearance, being larger than the normal carriages then in use on the British railway system. Originally they had entrance doors opening inwards to conform with their continental counterparts and the Pullman cars in service on the boat trains, guards compartments having only the single entrance doors which must have produced many problems for passengers with bulky luggage to say nothing of the inconvenience to guards and porters.

However the interiors were sumptuous being designated first and second class. Travellers from the continent, new to railways in England, must have had a shock to find the second class sporting velvet seat cushions and carpeted floors! All compartments were fitted with portable tables in order that meals could be served direct from the Pullman cars. The Southern Railway perpetuated the design and No. 3554 was built in 1923 at Saltley by the Metropolitan Wagon and Carriage Company. The Southern soon dispensed with the inward opening doors and guards compartments were improved with the addition of double doors. New coaches appeared in the Southern livery of olive green relieved with lining above the matchboarding. The vehicles were always popular with the travelling public and many were drafted to other loco hauled trains apart from the boat services.

The matchboards lasted well into British Railways days and the first withdrawals took place in 1955. No. 3554 received an overhaul in 1961 and was withdrawn later the same year. Acquired for preservation by Mr. R. H. Edwards it was originally intended for the Westerham Railway. On the demise of this scheme a home was urgently required and the coach subsequently arrived at Keighley in February 1965. Later the coach was sold to the Worth Valley Railway and it reentered service in 1968, having the distinction of being in the first train on reopening day.

Since acquisition by the VCT in June of this year progress has been rapid. It was decided by the Committee that the initial works were beyond the physical resources of our members and it was agreed that all restoration on timbers and body paintwork would have to be undertaken professionally. The state of the roof and certain portions of the interior had been causing concern for some time and it was confirmed by a firm of shopfitters from Bradford that a large area was infected with dry rot. Work commenced in August and by the end of the month all rotten timbers had been removed and carefully replaced. All timbers removed were matched up from the originals, a time consuming task.

All remaining brass fittings were removed and taken away for cleaning while member Michael Cope did a sterling job by completely rewiring the vehicle. A not inconsiderable task was the replacement of fittings stolen by metal thieves, including all compartment door fittings and grab handles. Thanks to the withdrawal of 4 COR electric sets by the Southern Region a raid (with BR approval) was organised to Selhurst which produced genuine Southern Railway replacements for most of the missing parts. The roof required expert attention and a representative of Plastic and Resins Ltd (manufacturers of Polaroof) was called in for his advice. The job was undertaken by members under his direction and in all cost us £170 for materials.

By mid September 3554 presented a fairly respectable appearance with the roof finished and the paintwork completed except for top coat and varnish. Running gear is being overhauled by members who are also undertaking the repaint of the underframe. Lining out and lettering will be to early Southern standards and is being done by our member Peter Eastham. The last major woodwork job is the complete refurbishing of the doors which have been removed for this purpose.

The completion of the above tasks will mark the end of the first phase of restoration. The total cost of this phase will be almost exactly £1000 (yes, one thousand pounds) and this, of course, takes no account of the many hours of volunteer labour.

One job left outstanding is the re-moquetting of the seats. This will be a costly affair, around £800, assuming we can obtain the correct moquette. Happily the existing British Railways moquette is in good order and it is proposed to maintain this for the time being. A few of the seat cushions are in need of expert attention which we hope to obtain via contacts on the Bluebell Railway.

1973 should see 3554 available for limited use on the Worth Valley Railway. We believe that it will be a credit to the VCT and the WVR and a lasting memorial to the excellent main line coaches turned out by the Southern Railway and its constituent companies.

W. G. S. H.

S1469

The Bulleid coach No. 5 (formerly British Railways S1469) entered Oxenhope Carriage Repair shops on September 23rd for a general repaint. Whilst inside, the opportunity will be taken to clean up and varnish the interior and replace missing fittings. Repaint will be in malachite green and the coach will sport its old number. Whilst we are pleased to see this fine vehicle in normal traffic, we hope it will be spared the rigours of school party workings.

Wanted

The Sales Dept is most anxious to obtain second-hand items of transport interest. Books, magazines, model railway equipment, dinky toys, lead soldiers etc are all of interest. If you have any of these items for disposal the Secretary will be pleased to hear from you. We shall be happy to collect from your home.

Postal Sales

This very useful side of our fund raising activities has recently been revived by our members living in London. Since the first list was published in July some £150 has been raised. Copies of the current list can be obtained from the Secretary at the above address.

The Secretary would welcome news of any events which may be worth attending in 73.