

PINES EXPRESS

The Bulletin of the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust

No. 184 September - October 1994

In this issue:

Competition time

Your chance to win a video!

Genuine S&DJR coaches

Treasures for the Trust

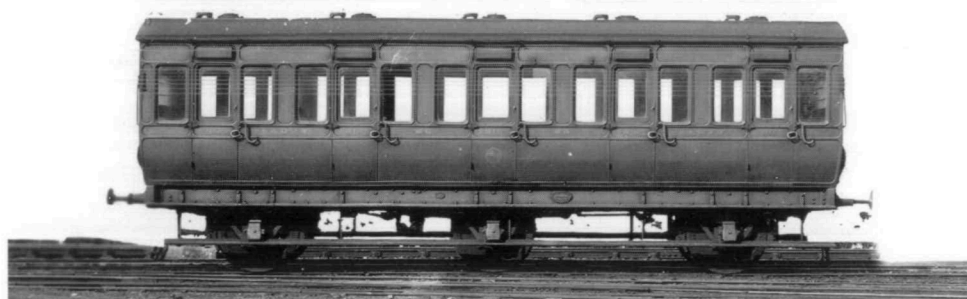


£1.50

A rather extraordinary train!

Swift action saves genuine S&DJR coaches

Jonathan Edwards reports



S&DJR 5 compartment Third No. 66. This coach, like No. 98, was built by Cravens, but unlike No. 98 has flat metal ventilators over the doors. The Cravens coach (No. 98) we are hoping to rescue has 4-louved wooden ventilators. (Photo: National Railway Museum).

Encouraging response

The initial response to the appeal for donations towards recovering the two S&DJR Third Class 6-wheel coach bodies from Sussex has been extremely encouraging. About one-third of the estimated cost of the operation has been raised following the letter that was sent out with 'Pines Express' issue 183. It is clear from comments received with the donations that the project has aroused a lot of interest and support.

I am very grateful indeed to those of you who have contributed towards the appeal. The Committee

was faced with little time in which to decide whether to go or not to go ahead with the rescue attempt, and your response and enthusiasm so far has vindicated the decision to 'go for it'.

It is - of course - by no means too late to make a donation to the project! Whatever you can afford, please send me a cheque payable to 'Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust', indicating clearly 'Sussex Coach Bodies' on the reverse side, to Jonathan Edwards, 40 Ringwood Road, London E17 8PP.

Steve Ehrlicher adds:

We now have more information about the coaches themselves. One has already given 38 years of service and the other no less than 42, before their retirement to the seaside in 1932. They have been well cared for in their retirement, with a protective roof and verandas, but now their owners are giving them up in favour of little more luxurious lifestyle - luckily for us!

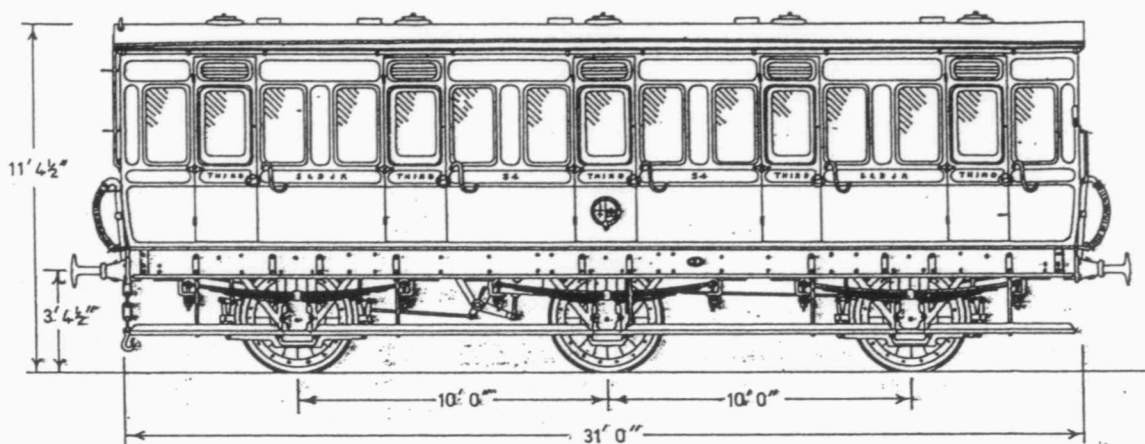
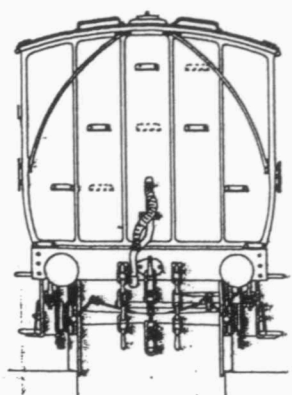
Two Thirds

The coaches are both 31' long six-wheel, five compartment, Third Class coach bodies built for the SDJR. The older one was built in 1890 at Highbridge, and carried the number 114. The younger one was built in 1894 by Cravens, and carried the number 98. They were both taken over by the Southern in 1930 as part of the overall shareout of stock between the SR and the LMS. No. 114 became SR No. 1423, and No. 98 became SR No. 1419.

The discovery of these bodies has been of enormous interest and excitement. As the cladding was removed, there before our eyes (Steve Ehrlicher, Neil Pankhurst, Alan Bridger, and on another occasion, Peter Cattermole) was the now familiar Prussian Blue livery, with faded S&DJR letters in the waist panels, bright THIRD lettering on the doors, mounted on brown panel colour (undoubtedly spruced up by the Southern) and the SR number in each case. So the Southern did the minimum amount of repainting to take them into its ownership, and they must have run in Prussian Blue with SR insignia from 1930 to August 1932 (modellers please note). Many original fittings are still in place, including all five lamp fittings in one coach.

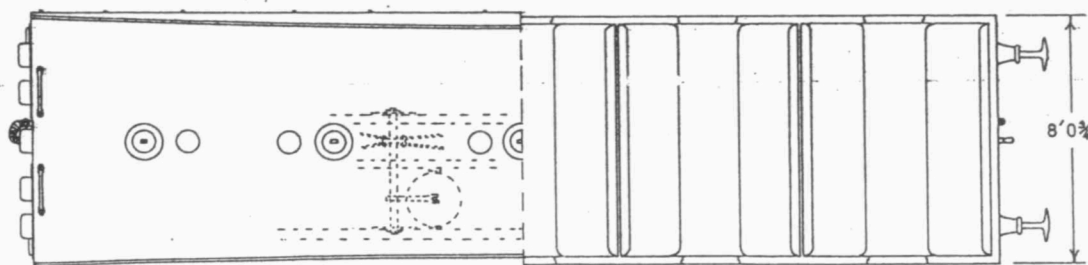


Who would have thought this house contained two antique railway coaches in original condition? The retirement home for the S&D coaches, now being demolished and yielding up its treasures. (Photo: S. Ehrlicher).



Notes:-

Some vehicles appear to have had a higher arc roof, 11' 6" total. End steps as drawn fitted one end only. Some vehicles had left grab rail only, upper end on centre line, small grab handle at right side, roof handle on right only, left steps only as shown dotted, e.g. no.125. These carriages probably had steps at both ends.



Alternative door handle fitted to some vehicles, e.g. no.125. Horizontal when locked.

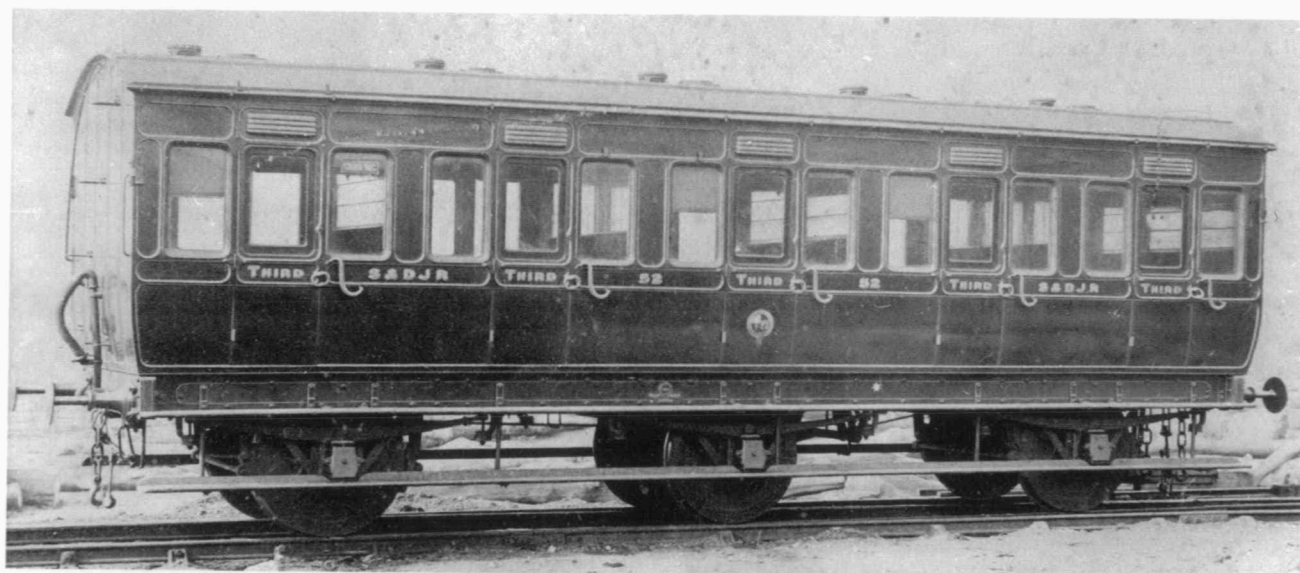
0 5 10 15 feet

S & DJR 31 FT. THIRD C.1890.

G.R.Weddell

Drg. 2.1

Nov.197



Urgent action

The Committee are working hard to secure these bodies, not only in terms of moving them to Washford, but also ensuring that they will not be allowed to deteriorate once they come out of their protective cocoon. Your continued support is very welcome and necessary, as a great deal of

work needs to be done in a very short space of time.

However, with three S&DJR coaches in our collection, the Trust may yet be able to run a vintage S&D rake - 90 years on from the one on page 3 - **surely a rather extraordinary train!**

Above: S&DJR 5 compartment Third No. 52, built by Oldbury C&W Co. The coaches from Sussex are very similar to this vehicle. (C. Maggs Collection).

We are very grateful to Gordon Weddell for making available his superb drawings reproduced above, and to Colin Maggs for permission to use his photograph.

Neil Pankhurst writes:

On Saturday 13th August, Mr. and Mrs. Orsell of Westergate could look out of their front windows and see a bungalow in their front garden. By Sunday night, they could see SDJR coach bodies Nos. 98 (1894 Cravens-built) and 114 (1890 Highbridge-built). By Friday 11 a.m. they could see nothing - the SDRT coach gang had struck again!

The stalwarts of the coach gang had dismantled the bungalow, with the help of the Orsell family, during the week of 13th - 18th August. On the 19th, the bodies were craned on to lorries and despatched to Washford. All went smoothly, although it was only just before the lift that the final preparations were completed.

The most interesting discoveries were that the hall floor of the bungalow was supported by two complete sets of steam heating radiators, lettered 'SDJR', and that the hall ceiling was not sufficient to bear the weight of the coach project leader!

So what do we have for our efforts? Two well-preserved coach bodies, with SDJR and SR lettering, minimal rot and damage, with sufficient components to recreate a complete set of gas lights as well as the radiators. The other side of the coin is that now we have to decide on the preservation and restoration of these bodies, with all the work and expense that is involved in that. The coaches have no hinges, door handles or bolelection mouldings, and we must find two six-wheel chassis to carry them. However, a significant bit of the SDJR has been found and secured by the Trust.

My thanks to everybody concerned with obtaining the coaches and financing the project, and to the Orsell family for their generosity and co-operation.



Going, going, gone - the Trust's trusty stalwarts complete a clean surgical operation. (Photo: N. Pankhurst).