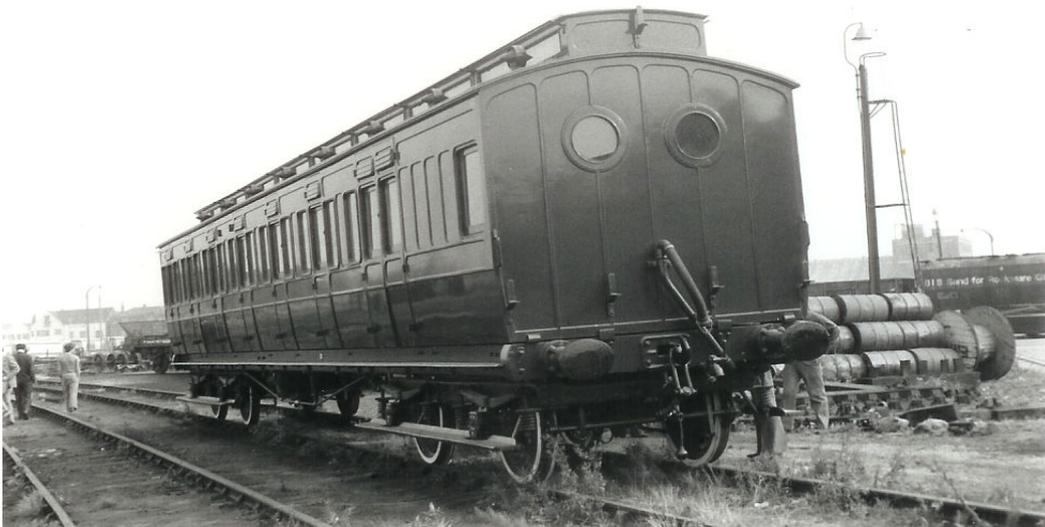


AUTOCAR

No. 6

Winter 2009/10



The Newsletter of the
1903 North Eastern Railway
Electric Autocar Trust

The North Eastern Railway 1903 Electric Autocar Trust

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Please send all correspondence to the secretary, address as above.
- Front Cover: NER 3453 at Hull in the 1970's
Photo: *Stephen Middleton*

Education is the key.

Stephen Middleton

In September I submitted our 'mid-term progress report' to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is to let the HLF know how we are progressing toward the second round and the resulting decision on the grant. To me the report was like the curate's egg, good in parts. We had a rough idea of price but no contractors short listed yet. We needed a member to act as project manager, a challenging role that demands experience in the industry, a good knowledge of diesel electric railway propulsion and a railway enthusiast to boot. We had a letter confirming one 'balance funding' grant but we had not been successful in applications for others. Education wise we have Beamish's materials as a template but done little to progress that.

That report was a wake up call and coupled with some extraordinary luck we are now set on the right track. Marcus Woodcock's friend Steve Hoather agreed to manage the technical side of this project and an account of his impressive background is noted elsewhere in this issue. Brush Traction of Loughborough has proved that the project is possible within budget with a sound outline plan that we hope will be worked in to a quotation. We are applying for a significant grant and have a good chance of success which will complete the balance funding apart from what we hope to come in in terms of memberships, donations and volunteer time.

As luck would have it I met our HLF contact at the National Railway Museum industry dinner and he corrected several misconceptions I had and suggested a meeting late November. There he emphasised that the funding is primarily dependent on a good inclusive education plan. To this end Bob Gwynne of the NRM, Paul Jarman of Beamish and I are working on different threads to come up with a diverse interpretation package. I have met the head of engineering at Skipton Girls High School (an engineering specialist school) to see how they can be involved as it is local to the restoration base. (This school was featured on one of James May's documentaries.) I am to do a further presentation in January and our project may be included in several subjects.

Once we have education in place, the balance funding confirmed and an engineering contractor on board we can make our second round HLF submission. Thank you all for your support.

Progress Report

Sunday the 18th of October turned out to be a productive day for the trust, Stephen Middleton and I met our new project manager Steve Hoather at Bolton Abbey and introduced him to his new “baby” the Autocar. Steve is a chartered engineer who served his apprenticeship at Doncaster works and worked on Eastern, Scottish and Southern regions of BR. He has had considerable experience of electric traction throughout his career and retired ten years ago, a lifelong model railway enthusiast any members of the Gauge O Guild will know Steve as the Guilds technical advisor on DCC Control. Not one to hang about Steve provided the trustees with his first outline specification of the project for the AGM the following Saturday!

With Steve as technical advisor progress has speeded up, having assessed our proposals so far as broadly correct he has highlighted our problem areas and is addressing these. A major problem is the motor bogie which Steve believes to be the key to our success or failure. We have been offered a Fox heavy duty bogie which is the correct pattern for the autocar, however it is a trailer bogie and will require modification to be a power bogie, this is an expensive process and may take us over our proposed budget. The key to keeping the cost manageable would be to use an existing motor/axle/wheel assembly which could be modified to fit the existing axleboxes on the bogie. A cheaper option would be to use a second-hand motor bogie from a withdrawn EMU but this would be a considerable compromise as they have a longer wheelbase and deeper sideframes, costings are being drawn up for both options before any decision can be made.

November saw a meeting at York between the two Steve's and Dave Moore of Brush Traction who are prospective contractors for the electrical and mechanical work.

Dave seemed confident that the job was quite straightforward for Brush and achievable within budget. It is hoped Brush will be able to provide a quote for the work to be undertaken.

Our next task will be to survey the underframe and bogies we have been offered so costings can be made for the overhaul and modifications required, it is hoped to do these in January.

Archive Material

Marcus Woodcock

Since formation the trust has gathered drawings and photographs relevant to our project. As we enter the design and rebuild stages it is becoming important that we find drawings of the autocar and in particular the motor bogie as this may if required allow us to claim “Grandfather rights” on areas of the design work. The obvious place to start looking is the NRM Archive, however due to the development of the “Search Engine” this was closed to the public for several years. Now open Steve Hoather and myself paid a visit before Christmas to see what information we could find on the Autocar. The drawings are catalogued on computer file which allow you to search for individual drawings and then request to view them.

Scrolling through the Darlington drawings section found quite a collection of likely looking suspects marked “Autocar” which we duly requested to view, our hopes were dashed however on viewing as we discovered they related to a rather strange petrol railcar supported on one driven axle and a 6’ wheelbase trailer bogie (see page 74 of RCTS Loco’s of the LNER part 10B). Definitely not what we were looking for! A little more luck was forthcoming in the photo archive, two photo’s marked dia 176 produced images of our type autocar fitted with an engine so far unseen by the trustees. Unfortunately the original photo’s are badly distorted and when scanned or photographed produce a lot of glare in the image.

The photos reproduced overleaf are marked Dia 176, when built the autocars were given NER diagram No 102, in 1909 they were rebuilt with a luggage compartment and became dia 176. So theoretically the photos should show either the Wolsey 4cyl horizontal (2nd) engine or the ex MOD 6cyl 225 HP (3rd) engine, but as can be seen the images are of a 4cyl vertical engine which must mean they show the first unsuccessful Napier engine fitted to the autocars when new and quickly replaced.

Evidence to support this is the relatively small size of the engine compared with the Wolsey engine (for photo see page 7 of Autocar issue 2), note also that the exciter dynamo and supporting platform are reversed to that shown on the Wolsey photo. Can any reader confirm whether this is a Napier engine?



Photo: courtesy of the NRM



Photo: *courtesy of the NRM*

Thank you Len!

New member and renowned carriage/locomotive painter Len Clarke kindly made and lettered shop signs. Our shop suffers from being set back in Bolton Abbey station car park so unless it is busy we have no passing trade – indeed no visitors at all! Len's sign's placed in the station will encourage visitors and increase sales.



...and thank you Marcus!

Our secretary Marcus Woodcock donated a set of high quality covers for the autocar to keep the wind and rain out until we are able to work on it. Marcus explained 'while the frame is made of teak and will not come to much harm, I was concerned by corrosion on the metal and in particular, screws. They were in reasonable condition but steel screws, once wet, will rust and split what was good wood. They are also harder to remove. A little investment now will pay dividends once we restore the body.'

Marcus, Stephen Middleton and Roy Lingham fitted the covers just before heavy rain on November 6th. That will ensure that it is snug and dry over winter. Both autocoach and autocar are sheeted over. They have been shunted together, the first time such a combination has been seen for 80 years. Although covered, it is pleasing to see length, height and roof profile match.

Annual General Meeting Report

The Fifth Annual General Meeting of the NER 1903 Electric Autocar Trust was held at 1pm in the LNWR directors saloon at Emsay station on Saturday the 24th October 2009.

Eight trustees and committee members and four ordinary members gathered in the luxurious surroundings of the LNWR twelve wheel directors saloon for our fifth AGM.

Our chairman Stephen Middleton welcomed those present and gave an account of 2009's activities, this was followed by the Treasurer's and then Membership Secretary's report.

The election of trustee's followed, Ian Douglas retired as treasurer and was re-elected as a trustee only. The secretary thanked Ian on behalf of the trust for all his work as our first treasurer.

Quiying Middleton retired by rotation and was re-elected un-opposed and Ben Duncan was elected as our new Treasurer.

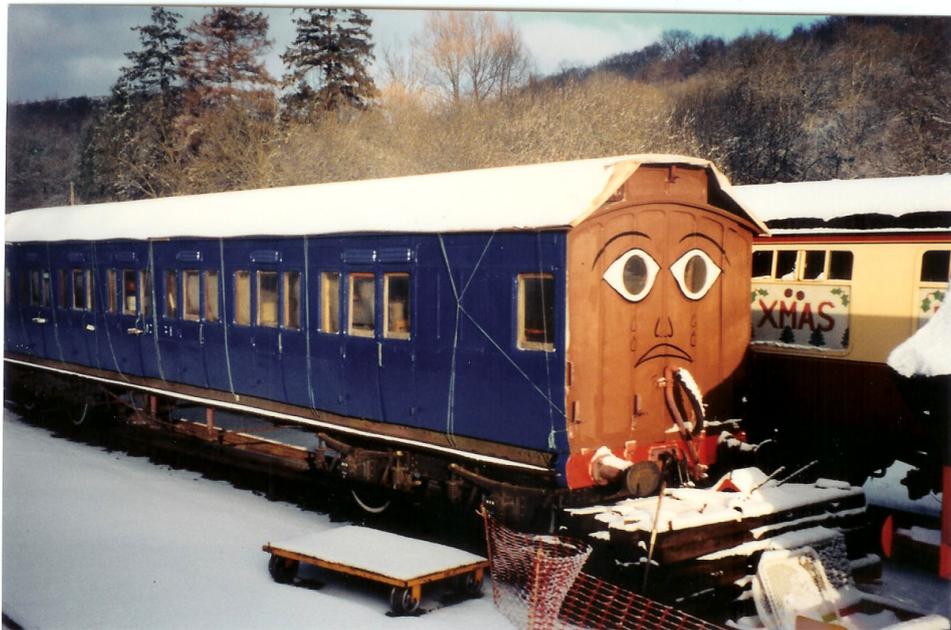
A copy of the minutes of the meeting and reports are available to members from the secretary.

A warm welcome to the following new members;

Dr F W Hampson of Newcastle upon Tyne,
Mr D N Carr of Pocklington,
Mr N J Bailey of Winchcombe,
Mr R H Gibbon of York,
Mr R P Gwynne of York,
Mr P T O'Connor of Portsmouth Arms,
Mr D E Yates of Doncaster,
Mr S J Hoather of Nether Poppleton,
Mr R M Marsden of Irving,
Mr G F Skelton of Tadcaster,
Mr D A Castle of Swanage.
Membership now stands at 61.

3453 Arrives

As mentioned in the last issue NER autococh No3453 arrived at Bolton Abbey in October from the NYMR, donated to our cause by the NER coach group. Based at Levisham the NERCG are concentrating their resources on 945 an open third built by the LNER in 1924 to NER diagram 155 which is now well on it's way to completion, but this has been done at the expense of 3453 which has been sheeted over untouched for several years now. The NERCG decided that 3453's best chance of restoration was to donate her to the autocar trust, let's hope we don't disappoint them! An article on 3453 will appear in the next issue. As can be seen in the photo on the back cover 3453 arrived well sheeted over and will be left covered until better weather in spring when we hope to do a thorough survey of the restoration work required and costs involved.



3453 at Levisham on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, in unusual guise looking very glum we may have saved her from a fate worse than Thomas!

Photo: *Stephen Middleton*

News

Member Dave Cullingworth has located a coach body in North Yorkshire which has a NER luggage door locking bar and handle assembly which we require for the double vestibule doors on the autocar. The farmer who owns the body has agreed we can have them when required.

Secretary Marcus Woodcock is on the hunt for drawings of the autocar motor bogie. Following a lead supplied by member Colin Foster that the Leeds Forge (the company who built Fox pattern bogies) drawings were contained within the Metro-Camm drawing archive in the HMRS study centre at Butterley, Marcus spent a day searching the archive, of which only about ten percent of the content is catalogued, and found a drawing titled "Motor bogie for carriages" dated 10/7/1903 this is of a 7' wheel-base bogie for the 1st generation Tyneside electric stock, otherwise very similar to the autocar bogie. It is hoped that a further visit may locate the earlier correct specimen. Thanks also to Mike Grocock for sending an article from the Locomotive magazine of June 20 1903 on Fox pattern bogies supplied to the NER.

Stephen Middleton received a copy of the American National Rail Historical Society bulletin for summer 2009 which contained an article titled "Fencepost Ugly" (The transitional era of the gas electric car) by Stan Rhine. He claims that "the combination that eventually prevailed was one invented by General Electric in 1904; an internal combustion engine driving a generator to produce electricity that was fed to truck mounted traction motors." Needless to say Stephen contacted the NHRS and pointed out that this was in fact a British invention made at York in May 1903. He also stated "I fancy that it is not only older but better looking than the examples you feature!"

Back Cover:

NER autocar 3453 (left) and Autocar 3170 are shunted together for the first time at Bolton Abbey in November. The autocar sports a set of new cover sheets, 3453 although watertight really needs new sheets as its current set have become brittle with age and will eventually develop cracks.

Photo: *Stephen Middleton*

