

AUTOCAR

1903 North Eastern Railway Electric Autocar Trust

Newsletter No.30 — Autumn 2016



The North Eastern Railway 1903 Electric Autocar Trust

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- Front Cover:** *A tense moment during craning.* (Alan Chandler)

October 2016

Welcome to the 30th issue of our newsletter. Another milestone passed in July, with the reuniting of the body and the underframe. We're currently working on restoring the parts of the body we couldn't complete beforehand. As always, if you are able to help, whether with hands-on restoration or in any other way, do please get in touch.

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New members

A warm welcome to Mr MA Barker of Hull, Mr PD Waite of Whitby and Mr DWV Branfoot of Hartlepool.

Newsletter Back Issues available:

Numbers 7, 9, 11— £1.50 each

Numbers 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24. — £2.50 each. Postage at cost.

Available from the editor. Embsay station bookshop also has *some* newsletters.

Chairman's notes

Stephen Middleton

Together again.

After considerable preparation, fretting about what may go wrong, worrying about the weather and several sleepless nights we bit the bullet and ordered the crane. The day is described elsewhere in this issue but I wish to report my appreciation to all concerned. The transfer of body to underframe went smoothly, due to the team of Embsay volunteers (driver, guard, and several people who knew what they were doing), our regulars who were familiar with the autocar body and the patient and professional crane operators. Much appreciated, a great step forward and one more 'hazardous task' eliminated.

A couple of days later, safely in the shed, covers removed, I was struck by the work yet to do. However, one task at a time, with sound volunteers we will do it!

A vital element of this project is fund raising. HLF, PRISM and the Ken Hoole Trust have given a huge amount. However, for an organisation with a relatively small membership we have raised a significant and worthwhile sum ourselves. I am incredibly grateful for all such donations and regret that I have not replied with a letter of thanks to you individually.

You deserve recognition and as such I would like to give you credit within the auto coach. There are frames which held scenic prints, photographs or advertising above the seats. Please let me know if we may acknowledge your contribution there, how you want your name or if you wish to dedicate your contribution to someone else. You can e-mail, phone or write to me. You may wish to add your home town too so people can see it is not just a local project, but national, no international, too!

Thanks for your continuing support.

Martin Sunderland videoed the lift and this can be seen at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwkwzuzKEk&feature=youtu.be>



Above: *The first part of the craning. (Alan Chandler)*

Below: *The craning complete, the autocar returns to Embsay. (D Cullingworth)*



Engineering Progress Report

Steve Hoather

After the excitement of finally getting the powered underframe to Embsay in the middle of May, the next step was to arrange lifting of the body from the old, temporary underframe onto the new one. Since the body was in two parts, this required the use of a crane and a locomotive and crew to move the underframes. Hiring a crane costs at least £1000, so any chance of reducing this by exploring the possibilities of a using a crane which might be available more cheaply as a favour were well worth exploring. The original plan was to lift on the main line at Embsay, but after further discussion it was decided to take the vehicles to Prior's Lane offloading point and do the work there.

After various delays hoping for a discounted crane hire, the date for lifting was set for Friday 22 July. Activity actually started the previous day, with various shunt moves which ended with the body on the old underframe being placed outside the restoration shed, ready to be coupled to the new underframe, which remained inside the shed until the following morning.

June and July were certainly not wasted, however, as some preparation work was needed. The cab desk is intended to butt up against the inside of the body end, so to prevent damage Alan and I moved it back by about two feet which sounds simple but actually needed a jack to help lift it over some of the pipe-work – in doing this the two main air pipes had to be disconnected but there was enough slack in the cables to the desk which meant we did not need to disconnect them. We also wrapped the desk in polythene sheet in case it rained on the day, and tied it back to the engine housing so it would be secure if there was a rough shunt.

We also checked the brakes would fully release, which is just as well, as we found there was still air trapped in the system after seven weeks or so. When this was released, the blocks on the trailing bogie still did not fully release, and it appears the linkage was damaged during offloading, which will need to be investigated. Most importantly, rubber blocks were fitted to the centre spine of the underframe, at the location of each body cross member to protect the cables and conduit which are adjacent – blocks are also fitted under the body sides, but these could be located during the lifting operation.



Both: Alan Chandler

Various other bodywork jobs were being done by the Thursday team at the same time, notably cleaning and varnishing inside the roof and its toplights, and removing some sections of flooring to clear the handbrake columns, fuel filler and cables at the trailing end, also fitting some diagonal bracing to the engine part of the body to provide strength whilst lifting.

On the Friday, the two underframes were moved behind an 08 shunter to Priors Lane by about 0830, and the road crane arrived half an hour later. The operation was in charge of Tony Wright, the railway's Motive Power Manager, and the first step was to remove the remaining holding down bolts, and the bolts which join the two parts of the body at cantrail level. The shorter engine end was then lifted on to the new underframe and positioned, followed by the saloon end. Once this had been positioned to give the correct overhang both longitudinally and laterally, the engine end had to be lifted again to enable the bolts which join the two parts to be inserted. Once this was done it was found that, although the two parts were butting up at cantrail level, there was a gap of about 40mm at the bottom, probably due to the old underframe being "hogged" (reverse camber), whereas the new one was flat.

As there was no more that could be done there, the crane was released and the train worked back to Embsay top and tailed by an 08 and 03. The whole operation went very smoothly, and thanks are due to all concerned. Apart from the gap at floor level, we found that the floor bearer under the partition at the engine end of the saloon is broken and will need replacing as it supports the runner for the sliding door, which must be rigid. There is a Youtube clip of the lift at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwkwruZKEk&feature=youtu.be>

The next Thursday, we set about trying to reduce the gap between the two parts of the solebar. Alan came up with the idea of cutting some scaffolding poles into short lengths and fitting them under the engine end body so that it could be pulled inwards, but we first had to slacken all the bolts on the steel roof framing, after which we found that by using ratchet straps at floor level we could pull the engine end inwards to reduce the gap by about half – any more and it would spring back. Since then, the remaining bodyside tongued and grooved boards have been removed to give access to the bodyside bottom rail to fit the bolts which will secure it to the underframe.

Opposite top: *At Priors' Lane (Dave Cullingworth).*

Opposite bottom: *Back at Embsay, the T&G boards removed (Alan Chandler).*



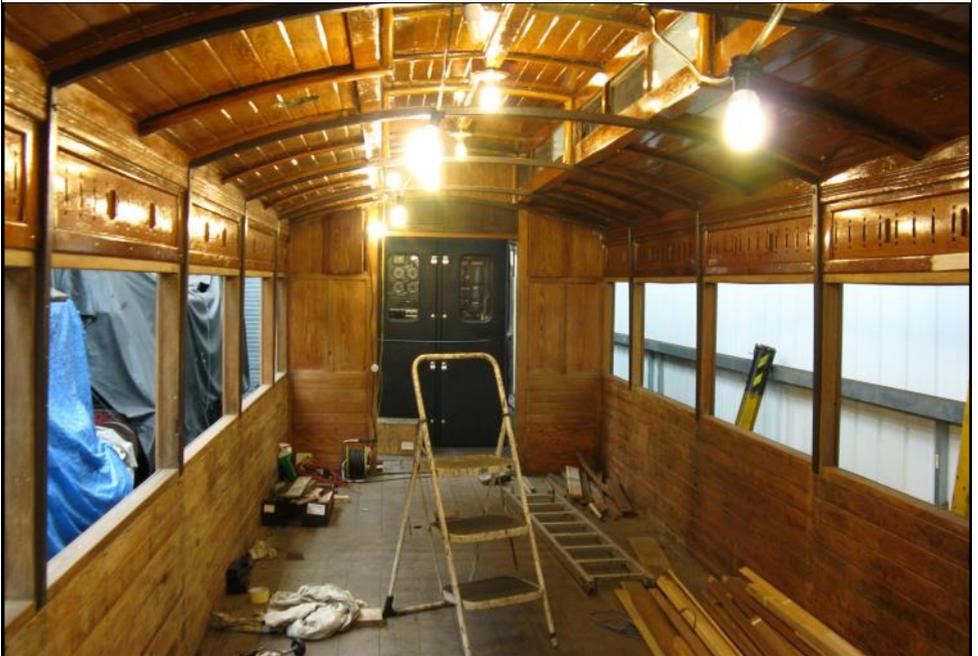
At Embsay





Opposite and above: *Glazing and varnishing.* (Alan Chandler)

Below: *In the shed, the interior, looking towards the powerunit.* (Simon Gott)



Carriage Bodies at Keldholme

Dave Cullingworth

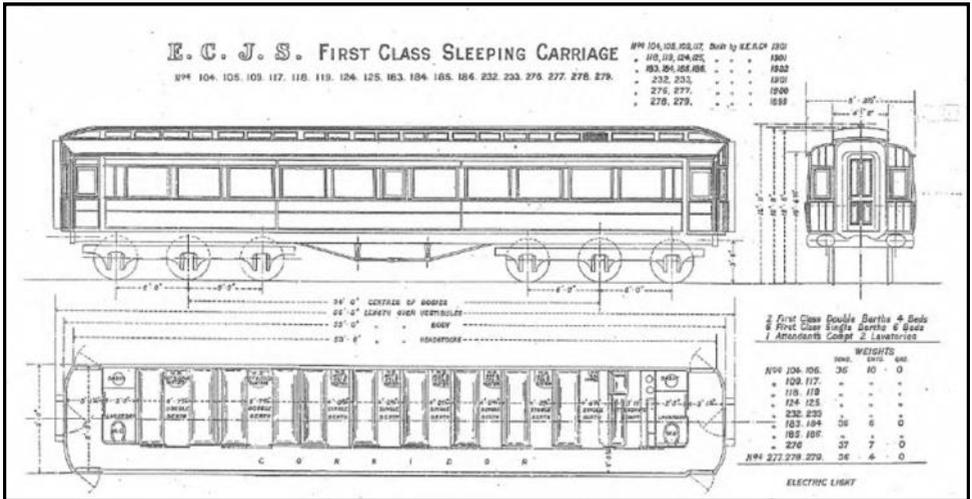
As we know, autocar no. 3170 survived so long because it became a grounded body and was used as living accommodation at Keldholme near Kirkbymoorside. However, it was not the only carriage at that particular site and until 1972 it was accompanied by East Coast Joint Stock 1st class sleeping car no.185.

No. 185 was built by the NER at York in 1902 to diagram 62. This was the most numerous of the ECJS clerestory sleeping carriages, with 19 built to this diagram between 1899 and 1902. These had electric lighting from new and were carried on six wheeled bogies, length 55' 8" over vestibules, weight 36 tons, 6cwt. By the time of construction, glass technology had progressed and these carriages had large windows in the corridor side – earlier ECJS stock tended to have small windows. The original specification was for two double berths, five single berths, a coupe smoking compartment, an attendant's compartment and two toilets. Later, the smoking coupe compartment was converted to a single berth which was a bit wider than the other compartments and this brought the number of beds up to ten. Although lighting was electric the attendant's compartment had some cooking facilities for which gas was provided.

Interestingly, sister vehicle 120 was destroyed in the Grantham accident of 19th September 1906. The Kings Cross to Edinburgh overnight sleeper was scheduled to stop at Grantham at 11:00pm but did not, derailing at speed at a junction north of the station. Some of the carriages collided with bridge abutments and several others ran off down an embankment and were wrecked. Fire spread amongst the wreckage and 13 unfortunate souls lost their lives. A point to note is that electric lighting was rare at that time, the official report of the incident mentions this:

“The whole of the vehicles were lighted by gas with the exception of the eighth and ninth vehicles, namely the sleeping car and composite carriage: these two vehicles were lighted entirely by electricity, but the sleeping car was also provided with a small gas cylinder for cooking purposes”.

Opposite top: *Diagram 62 Sleeper from a NER diagram book. (Courtesy NERA)*



No. 185 had a more uneventful life and was withdrawn in December 1925 by which time East Coast sleeper services were largely made up of much more modern Gresley stock. Withdrawal was a full six years before autocar no. 3170 (4th April 1931) so it seems likely that 185 was already in situ and occupied when no. 3170 was still in service. It's pictured below in 1972 prior to dismantling for spares by the North Eastern Coach Group and the Hull and Barnsley Railway Stock Fund.



P Brumby

Both carriages were delivered to Kirkbymoorside removed from their chassis and cut into two sections to allow transportation for the short journey to a field outside Keldholme village. In their new roles they were well looked after, sat on old carriage headstocks to keep the bottom sides off the ground, regularly painted and at some point given corrugated steel roofs to protect their clerestories. 3170 also received a veranda along one side and both had a shed-like building at one end, which I believe is where the toilet and washroom area was for each 'cottage'.

My father-in-law, David Gamble, who lives a stone's throw from the site remembers both carriage bodies and believes that 3170 had someone living in it possibly up to the 1980s. After that it seems to have had occasional use as a summer house, with the large saloon and windows and veranda making it ideal for that purpose. However, no. 185 seems to have fallen out of use and by 1972 was deemed surplus to requirements. Two rolling stock owning groups on the NYMR were surveying remaining carriage bodies around Yorkshire and were alerted to the fact that this carriage was due for demolition so they offered to dismantle it as it would provide valuable source of teak and interior panelling. In those early preservation days and lack of funding and facilities, it was not something that would have been considered a restoration project.

Discovery of the autocar was a significant event in 1972 for NE railway enthusiasts and Ken Hoole wrote an article in the November Railway Magazine of that year. There are several interesting snippets of information from this article. One concerns the identification of the body as being of no. 3170 rather no. 3171 as there was no number found on the body at the time. (The North Eastern Railway never seem to have marked carriage numbers on inside of doors and ventilators like other companies). Following no. 3170 being fitted with a more powerful engine in 1922 (225HP), it was repainted into LNER brown:

“Now, however, samples of paint from the lower parts of the body show two distinct shades of bright red covered by a coat of dark chocolate brown. It appears, therefore, that the body must be from the car that was rebuilt and repainted in 1923, namely No. 3170, which latterly ran as 3170Y”.

This shows that the body carried three liveries (NER deep crimson red, NER red and cream, then LNER plain brown). We know that no. 3171 retained the Wolseley 85HP engine and red and cream livery until withdrawal and it

appeared to be semi-derelict by 1928. Historically it is good that we have no. 3170 as we know that this autocar was capable of pulling a trailer car. It's also the one that was based at Starbeck shed during 1923 and used on local services to Pannal, Knaresborough, Ripon, and Wetherby and up Nidderdale to Pateley Bridge. It would be nice to think that no. 3170 may well have been in Pateley Bridge at the same time as Stephen Middleton's locomotive 'Illingworth'.

Other interesting notes relate to alteration in the windows in no. 3170 and the panelling over of all but the large window at the trailing end. This appears to follow the practice of some other NER saloons so there are grounds for speculation that no. 3170 had its engine removed and was used as a non-powered engineer's saloon before withdrawal in April 1931.



No. 3170 pictured at Keldholme in 1972 complete with veranda and looking like a cricket pavilion. It was still in use as a house at this point. (P. Brumby)

Rear cover: *The doorway from the passenger saloon, with the powerunit visible. (Simon Gott)*



'Situations Vacant':

Practical, skilled people to work on restoring the autocar at Embsay.

A fundraiser, both to solicit donations and to generate finance through sales.

A researcher, to seek out historical information about the autocars.

If you can help with any of these roles, do please contact us.