
Coach of the Year



*Dr. J. Coiley of the NRM formally unlocks coach 1309 as part of the ceremony celebrating the return on 2 December 1984 to traffic of what has since proved to be the prizewinning coach of the year. In attendance are Trevor Rapley and Graham Ward.
(Mike Esau)*

THE RESCUE OF 1309 — A PERSONAL VIEW

by Trevor Rapley

MY FIRST acquaintance with 1309 was from a window of a Bournemouth — London train as it was slowing for the Woking stop. Indeed, I stared in disbelief at the sight of an externally complete Maunsell coach still in BR Green livery! I hurriedly changed trains at Woking and caught a 'Pompy Stopper' to my home station of Farncombe, I then returned, with haste, to Woking on my brand new Lambretta in order to have a closer inspection of this gem. 1309 or 081642 as it had by now become was berthed in a siding by the substation where the Portsmouth line leaves the South-Western main line. As I approached the coach I could see someone sitting at a desk in what is now the Smoking Saloon. I parked my scooter and knocked on a door marked 'Private'. My request to have a look round was met with a friendly "Yes, come in" from the man at the desk.

My first impression of the interior was not as promising as the view from the train had been for 1309 had clearly been out of passenger use for some years and was now performing as a mobile work study office. Most of the seating was missing but 90% of the panelling in the Saloons was intact. This was a gem!

After my brief visit I made with even more haste to Roger Price's cottage at Binscombe, near Godalming (I had met Roger the previous year when 5768 was at Guildford) as I knew that Roger was involved with railway preservation. I can't

remember any details of our conversation, but as I was not in any position to make a move to preserve 1309, I thought that Roger might have some contacts.

This all happened in the late summer of 1969. Four years later whilst on one of my annual visits to the Bluebell Railway I again stared in disbelief at the same coach I had seen at Woking, now residing in the former cattledock at Horsted Keynes. That was in 1973. I must admit my feelings for the Bluebell were not all that good at the time for many of the coaches on the trains in those days were very shabby. (Does anyone remember 6575 in 1973!). But I felt a warm glow that 1309 had not gone for scrap.

One spring Saturday in 1976 I had to go to Eastbourne for the day to a model 'Swapmeet' where someone informed me that *Blackmore Vale* had been returned to steam that day, so on my way home I made a detour via Horsted Keynes to see this beautiful machine. What a sight to behold, not only a magnificent, restored locomotive but five Bulleid coaches that looked as though they had just been built! I can remember that it was 2515 that caught my eye, mostly because it was incomplete and the quality of the workmanship was there for all to see. Clearly the Bluebell's Carriage and Wagon Department had come a long way in just a couple of years. So much so, that on the way home I vowed that I would join the Society with a view to one day working in the C&W.

Unfortunately it was October 1977 before I turned up for work. But I do remember, on my first day, asking if I could have a closer look at 1309.

I think it was Dick Garbutt who showed me round 1309 (which was serving as the C&W Mess coach at the time). I was astonished to learn that 2515 had apparently been in a worse state than 1309 before rebuilding commenced. Needless to say, I was converted and very pro-Bluebell after my first day.

I always made enquiries as to when 1309 might be next in line for the full treatment, but with one thing then another it would be the Autumn of 1981 (nineteen years after withdrawal) before the long job of the overhaul could commence.

On the evening of Wednesday, 16 September 1981 we moved in — armed with screwdrivers and a numbering set — in order to remove and identify each of the many hundreds of components within the shell of 1309. But this was not to be an ordinary overhaul because many of the seats, fittings, plus some partitions had been stripped out by BR when the 'mobile office' conversion work had been done.

Starting with the North end (the Horsted end), the sliding door allowing access to the Saloons was missing (1). * Facing the Saloon the cranked partition (2) of the North end toilet had been demolished without trace. In the North Saloon all save two corner seats (3) were missing and the mahogany (4) panelling was severely affected by damp and fungi. The centre saloon was gutted apart from the four corner seats. The South Saloon had been the office dormitory as well as later the C&W mess area, this was in better condition but all polished wood surfaces had been painted primrose yellow. Three corner seats remained in this Saloon, but in addition, a domestic type swing door had been placed across the entrance to the middle Saloon. This had entailed the removal of all panelling from the North West side of the South Saloon partitions (5). We now come to the South end vestibule. Here little original material remained. The complete toilet area (6) had been demolished and the luggage rack (7) opposite had been cut down to half height and the slatted shelves redistributed to make a work surface. Where the lavatory compartment had been, there was now a sink unit with cupboards and the floor had been concreted over. All walls had been painted green/white. The above is a brief description of the magnitude of the task facing the restoration gang.

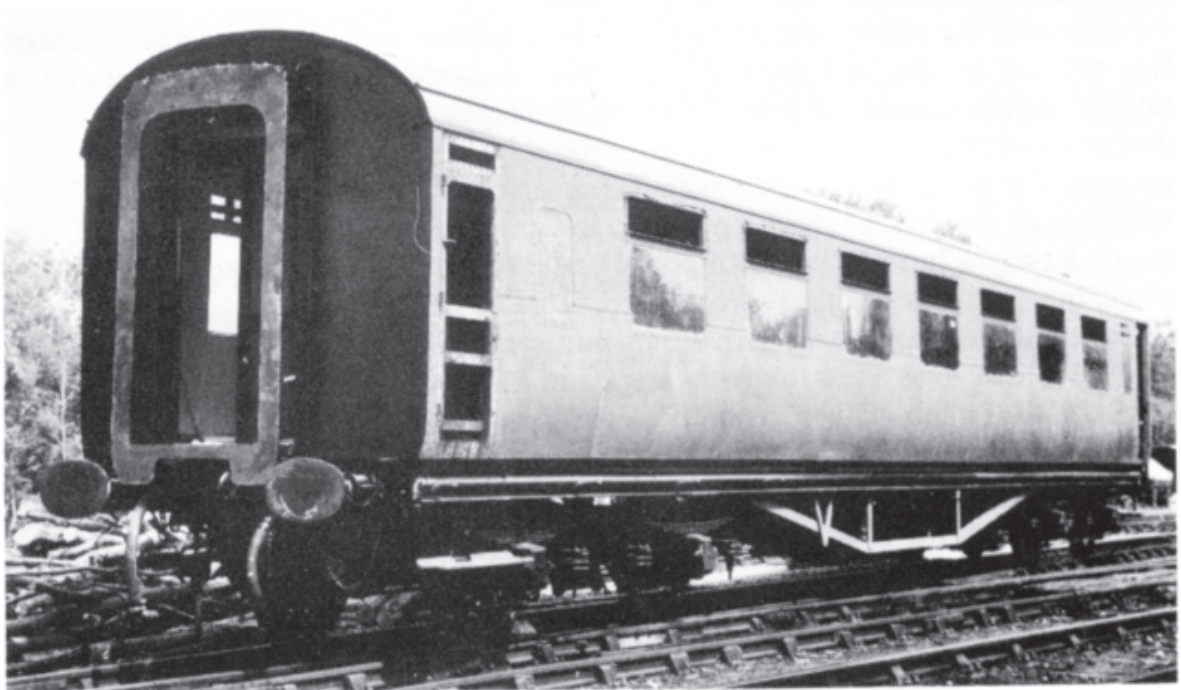
* See drawing on pages 22/23
(Pages 11/12 of present document)

We now go back to the seventies. This is when many spares were obtained with 1309 in mind.

From 1970 to October 1972 the 4 CORs, popularly known as 'Nelson' units, were being despatched to various scrapyards around the country. The motor coaches of these units were a development of the 1935 open third design (of which 1309 is one). But although the interior details were stylistically 'cleaner' than the 1935 coaches (which would render the interior woodwork useless) the seating, luggage racks, ashtrays, coathooks etc., were virtually identical and so, enough of these items were obtained for fitting into 1309, as were some components from a 2 B1L unit (coach No. S12088). However, the missing partitions were peculiar to the 1309 type so it was indeed fortunate that a sister vehicle of 1309 had been retained by B R for departmental use. This coach had been serving as a mess/tool van based at Horsham in connection with the Power Supply Department. It had formerly been No. 1306 but now masqueraded as ADS 70267. 1306 was condemned in 1978 and, after many months and a long wait, a gang of C&W volunteers tracked it down to a scrapyard at Briton Ferry in South Wales, who agreed to sell us the parts we required. A heavily laden van brought back a complete lavatory compartment, four external doors, three internal doors, some seats, some sliding toplights, plus many mahogany mouldings. We now had most of the items required to completely overhaul 1309.

Regular readers of *Bluebell News* should by now be familiar with the well tried procedures the C&W employs during heavy overhauls, thus there is little point in going into details of who did what. But I would like to detail one target we set ourselves. There was to be no compromise on authenticity — only prohibitive expense has dictated compromise. For instance, the toilet walls were originally lined in silver coloured rexine, but this was no longer available so a cream textured rexine was used instead with pleasing effect. The upholstery is where another liberty was taken, also because of prohibitive cost. So 1309 is at present trimmed in red chainlink dating from the 1950's; when this eventually wears out we hope to have the original 'jazz' pattern moquette reproduced.

Maunsell Saloon coach 1309 outside the carriage shed at Horsted Keynes ready for a steam heating test on 3 June 1984.
(Mike Esau)



With the interior bodyside panelling it would have been much quicker and easier to have thrown the original away and started afresh. The figured mahogany veneer panels between the windows had all been attacked by damp and fungi and were delaminating badly. We must say a big thank you to Brian Skene (a non-member) for his painstaking work and meticulous restoration of these panels. The passenger now sees the original veneer but this has been mounted onto new plywood backing. The large tumblehome panels below the windows presented us with entirely new problems. They were manufactured from solid $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick mahogany with a hessian backing. The hessian had rotted and allowed the panels to split. Constant exposure to damp had deformed their natural contour and most of them had assumed some very bizarre shapes. The solution was to make up a former to the shape of the bodyside profile and steam them back to shape then force glue into the splits. Any that were beyond repair were replaced using those taken from 1306.

Six new steam heat radiators also had to be made, using the barrels of three long guards heaters taken from some ex LMS BG's.

It was mentioned earlier that 1309 had lost both toilet partitions and 1306 had yielded only the one. The solution here was to carefully dismantle the one taken from 1306 and manufacture a carbon copy for the second one. The one from 1306 is now in the South end whilst the new one is at the North end. It would take a very keen eye to spot the brand new partition!

Each and every major overhaul seems to present its own new problems. A hallmark of any Maunsell coach interior is the oxidised copper finish of the brass work. Every brass item from the humblest screw to the large items such as luggage racks are treated in this way. 1309's fittings were assembled from a motley collection of spares accumulated over the years from many condemned vehicles, (except the heat controls which were specially cast).

The job of collating a set of everything was no small job, but worse, long term storage and ordinary service wear and tear had damaged the attractive copper finish. Every item has now been meticulously re-finished, with some professional help. The finish is achieved by copper plating the brass, then oxidising the copper plate, polish through the oxidising down to the copper in defined areas, then lacquer over. Thus the polished copper patches on an otherwise blue/black fitting are achieved by design, not as some people have remarked, by wear.

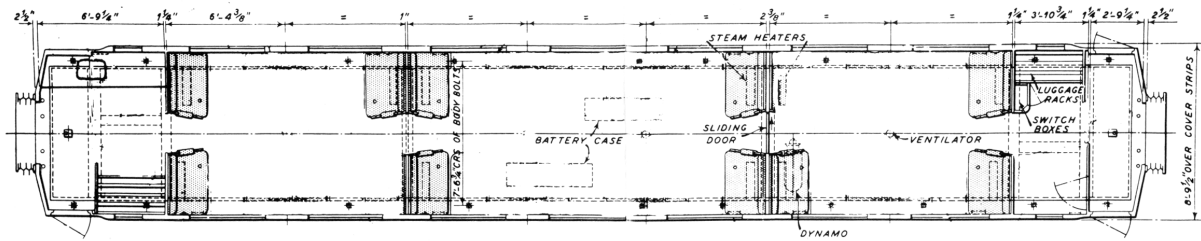
Externally, the whole sides and ends of the coach have received new steel sheeting. This was cut by the 'Alf Brown' gang, who used the old corroded material as a pattern. A new process of primer treatment has been used in the painting process, after professional consultation. We hope the plaguing problem of 'paint won't stick' has gone for good. In all, the coach has received about twelve coats of paint and two coats of varnish. Could it not fail to look magnificent! If 6575 was called "the beauty from the beast" then 1309 could be called 'the Phoenix', risen not from the ashes, but from the ravages of time and neglect.

Exactly three years after the overhaul commenced, on Wednesday 19 September 1984, 1309 was given a test run to the Park and back, together with the newly restored RMB S1818. To those members of the department aboard the experience of travelling in the product of three years of their own labour produced the sort of feeling usually reserved for those few who have conquered Everest. It is not the climbing that produces the satisfaction, but planting that flag on the summit that is the symbol of achievement. With a long coach overhaul the tribulations, long cold winter days, the frustrations that inevitably occur, just pale into insignificance and one's motivation for the next 'big one' is renewed.

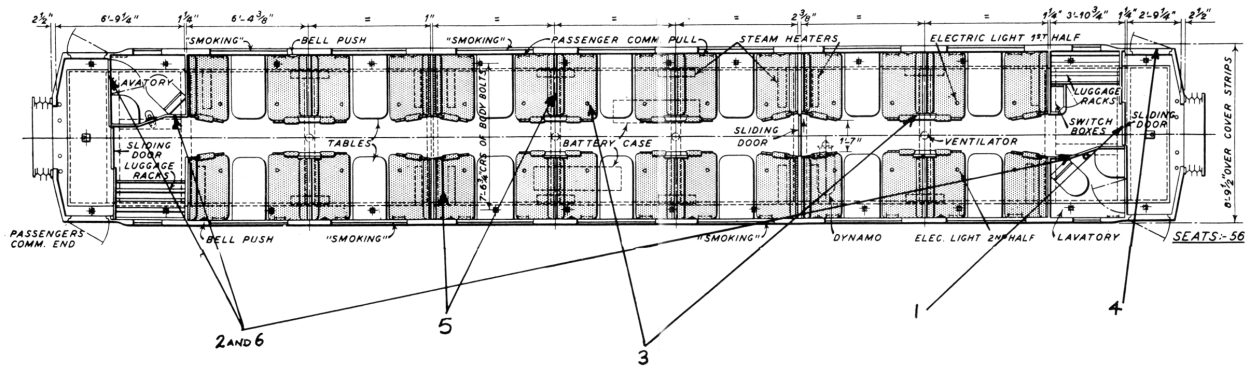
Why don't YOU COME AND GIVE IT A TRY!

THE RESTORATION TEAM

CARPENTRY	
<i>Structural:</i>	G. Burtenshaw, J. Reynard, D. Spicer, assisted by A. Lazell, K. Truss
<i>Internal:</i>	G. Burtenshaw, J. Reynard, D. Wigley, J. Harris, B. Skene
ELECTRICS	
<i>Overhaul</i>	
<i>Rewire</i>	
<i>Renewal:</i>	T. Tester
INTERIOR WOODWORK	
<i>Preparation &</i>	
<i>Revarnish:</i>	T. Rapley, W. Robey.
<i>Inner Roof Paint:</i>	C. Pyle
PLUMBING	A. Silcock
RESHEETING	
<i>Cut by:</i>	'The Alf Brown Gang'. R. Williams, C. Swallow (also floor repairs)
<i>Fitted by:</i>	Team Effort.
INTERIOR BRASSWORK	
<i>Plating:</i>	M. Roe (some by Contractors)
<i>Oxidising</i>	
<i>Polishing</i>	M. Roe, J. Roe, G. Poulson.
<i>Lacquering</i>	
GANGWAY BELLOWS	
<i>Manufactured by:</i>	G. Burtenshaw, W. Jones.
TRIMMING	
<i>Seat Frame Repairs:</i>	J. Reynard, A. Lazell.
<i>Moquette Repair</i>	
<i>Renewal</i>	W. Jones, Jim Harris A. Knight, B. Gray.
STEAM HEAT	
<i>Repairs:</i>	A. Harris, R. Williams.
<i>Remanufacture:</i>	R. Williams.
<i>Refitting:</i>	R. Williams, C. Swallow.
BOGIE OVERHAUL & MECHANICAL	
	A. Pragnell, G. Ward, S. Annis, S. Miles & "The Lads"
ROOF REPAIRS	
<i>Preparation:</i>	C. Pyne, A. Baker, Team Effort.
<i>Recanvass:</i>	
<i>Repaint:</i>	C. Pyne, A. Baker, Robin ...
EXTERNAL REPAINT	A. Elliot, I. Osborne, C. Pyle, K. Short, D. Gilham.
SMALL FITTING REPAINT	A. Elliot, W. Robey, Reg Jebbit.
TOPLIGHT OVERHAUL	M. Roe, D. Spicer.
RESIN & GLASSFIBRE	
<i>Moulding & Fitting:</i>	R. Skene.
DOORLOCKS	
<i>Overhaul/Refinish:</i>	K. Warren, M. Roe.
GENERAL ASSISTANCE	Reg Jebbit, John Williams, Ray, W. Robey, Robin, Richard Salmon, C. Pyne, A. Baker, J. Arkell, G. Jones, N. Houband, R. Hamilton, D. Warner, T. Taylor, M. Sharland.



DRAWING SHOWING 1309 AS ARRIVED (ABOVE) AND AS RESTORED (BELOW)



MAUNSELL OPEN THIRD No 1309

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over eleven years have now elapsed since 1309 arrived on the line in March 1973. This fine testimony to Lancing/Eastleigh craftsmanship was saved from oblivion by a small group of C.W. devotees who are probably unknown to many of our younger members.

Called "The Southern Coaching Stock Group" their fine work not only raised sufficient money to purchase 1309, but also, as already mentioned, they obtained enough spare parts to enable future restoration.

I am sure that the whole railway would like to express deep gratitude to: Mike Sharland, Mike Welch, Bob Bird, Dave Morgan

CONGRATULATIONS ...

to all in the Carriage Workshop for winning the Coach of the Year 1984 competition run by the Association of Railway Preservation Societies. The judges commented 'the paint and varnish finish is to exhibition standard, and, indeed, the standard of workmanship throughout is of the highest order.' Among the runners up was Bluebell's LNWR observation car No. 1503 with 'a quality of restoration almost to the standard of the winner!

The rebuilt 1309 is a composite of parts taken from many vehicles. For the information of readers, details of what part came from where can be obtained by referring to the numbers on the diagram and in the text of the article and matching them to the list below.

1. Ex. 4 Cor DMBS 11109 (Sliding door)
- 2.& 6. One new, one 1306 (Lav partitions)
3. Ex. 4 Cor DMBS 11188: 11232 (Seating)
4. Ex. 1306 (External doors)
5. Ex. 4 Cor DMBS 11188/11232 (Luggage racks)

In Addition:

View Frames Ex. 2BIL DTC 12088

Drop Lights Ex. 3 SUB/1306

Replacement Internal Mouldings Ex. TO's 1306/1319

Steam Heat Rads. Ex. BTK 4035/LMSZ BG