

# GCR ROLLING STOCK TRUST

## PRESS INFORMATION FROM GRC ROLLING STOCK TRUST

**Date: 07 November 2017**

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### **Emotional move for restored Victorian gem**

Three consecutive days in September (16/17/18) provided the 1888-built MS&L carriage no.946, with a watershed moment – very fortunately without one drop of rain. Well actually a little over Sunday night after the show which proved the carriage water tight, reports Executive Trustee, Roger Penson.

**Day one** saw a major shunting exercise extract the 129-year old newly restored 6-wheeler from Building no.1 and place it on the car park at the Heritage Centre, Ruddington. The very next **Day two**, the carriage was re-dedicated to the fallen of the former Great Central Railway in the Great War of 1914-1918 in due solemn ceremony. On **Day three** specialist Duncan Milner Haulage winched the vehicle on to a low loader which then landed no.946 at Nunckley Hill for a display season in the Quarry Museum there.

#### **Lest we forget....**

Some 17 years restoration of this carriage is a massive tribute to the team that has undertaken the skilled work, but not only reminds of the transition in carriage design to the longer bogied types but also to the very significant past associations with railway companies now long gone, the Great Central Railway in particular. On Armistice Day 2015 this vehicle, identical (being of the same build and class) to the trooping trains of the First War, was dedicated to those 435 troops of The Royal Scots Regiment bound for Gallipoli who were killed or maimed by the horrific crash and fireball at Quintinshill in May 1915. We were honoured then by the presence of Lt Col Brian Le Haye OBE and Colour Sergeant Matthew Learmouth, attending Deputy Lord Lieutenant Michael Rowen.

In collaboration with the Great Central Railway Society, the Trust decided that upon completion of the carriage it should extend the dedicated to the memory of the 3470 members from every part of the former GCR system who fell or were grievously wounded in the First World War.

As Chairman GCR Rolling Stock Trust, Richard Tilden Smith, explains:

**“It was a particularly poignant ceremony led by RST Trustee Roger Penson who introduced our celebrant, Revd. Andrew Buchanan, Vicar of St Peter's, Ruddington.**

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**To unveil the specially-commissioned GCR memorial plaque attached to the two sole bars, we were honoured by HM representative Deputy Lord Lieutenant Col Roger Merryweather, assisted by Lt Col Darren Woods RE OC OTU, and Vice President Ken Grainger of the Great Central Railway Society who delivered a moving and touching eulogy, derived from his in-depth research.”**

These three days marked the end of a 17-year dedication to the saving and restoring of this original Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway 50-seat carriage. Tony Keeble and former BR C&W engineer Pat Sumner led the team – Clyde Pennington. Andrew David, Peter Wilson, Melvyn Rowthorne, Wilf Ankers, Jeff Cox and a host of supporters - that transformed the wreck into a pristine example of the restorer's skills, reinforced by the final furnishing abilities of Trustees Roger Penson and Francis Bailey.

### **Little known earliest history**

While such a humble Manchester-built carriage has little known early service history, for instance it may have run the suburban services between the northern cities until the GCR's London Extension was opened in 1899, but was a Camping Carriage with L&NER, it concluded its BR life at Stratford locomotive works when used as a store for boiler tubes. It languished in Manningtree sidings until Tony Keeble and friends bought the carriage for £50, transported it to Bob Drage's farm in Cambridgeshire and there it sat for 20 years as a hunter's lodge, until it came to Ruddington and into the custodianship of the Rolling Stock Trust. Then the painstaking work began....

### **Our honoured guests**

Accompanied by the sparkling Robin Hood Regiment Cadet Corps of Drums and Bugles, the honour party, headed by Colonel Merryweather, with His Worship the Mayor of Rushcliffe Cllr Barrie Cooper, Chairman Nottinghamshire Council Cllr John Bradley, and their wives, together with Nicky Morgan MP (Chair of the All Party Heritage Rail Committee) and a select supporting group including our friends in The Great Central Railway Society with Chairman David Grainger in attendance and members of the Ruddington branch of the Royal British Legion. Staff Sergeant Nathan Buckley represented the Royal Logistics Corps.

We were delighted that *BBC TV* decided to cover the event, as too the *Nottingham Post*, and to have three aces on photography cover – Phil Sharpe and Andrew Coalwood on stills – and a highly talented former BBC producer and cameraman Bob Rowe who produced a stunning video record of the event. This will be available on wider circulation shortly..... We were also very pleased to have displays by Roger Shelley on the latest news of the GCR Museum, the remarkable tribute by Ken Grainger who chairs the GCRS Memorial Committee, The Great Central Railway Society and indeed the RST display.

### **New venues**

Some very unusual modern day pairings of the 1888-vehicle on first appearance on the GCRN tracks were with Steve Turner's Class 47 diesel no.47492, and indeed former NCB colliery 0-6-0ST Hunslet (built in 1950) no.3694 “Whiston”, operating at Ruddington, prior to its departure for exhibiting at Nunckley Hill. While it is there to support the GCR heritage for the massive Museum Project by being one of the oldest of the former GCR's stock still extant in immaculate condition, it also relieves Ruddington where workshop track space is at a premium. That is where the Trust's next project, a king-sized Barnum is being undertaken – and it needs space, more elbow room for the bigger work.....

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As Trustee Roger Penson concludes:

**“While we were sorry to see our pride leave Ruddington, and we will be back again to our home on GCRN, we are so pleased to have such an arrangement agreed with Steve Cramp and the MARCH project. It is quite a relief at last to have the carriage where it can be seen, admired and maintained in museum condition. Not only we but many admirers consider no.946 a very crucial first large exhibit at the projected GCR Railway Museum at Leicester. We intend to be the first in that queue.”**

**ENDS**

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