

History of GCR Suburban No.799, eight-compartment, 3rd class. (Rev8 Apr 2020)

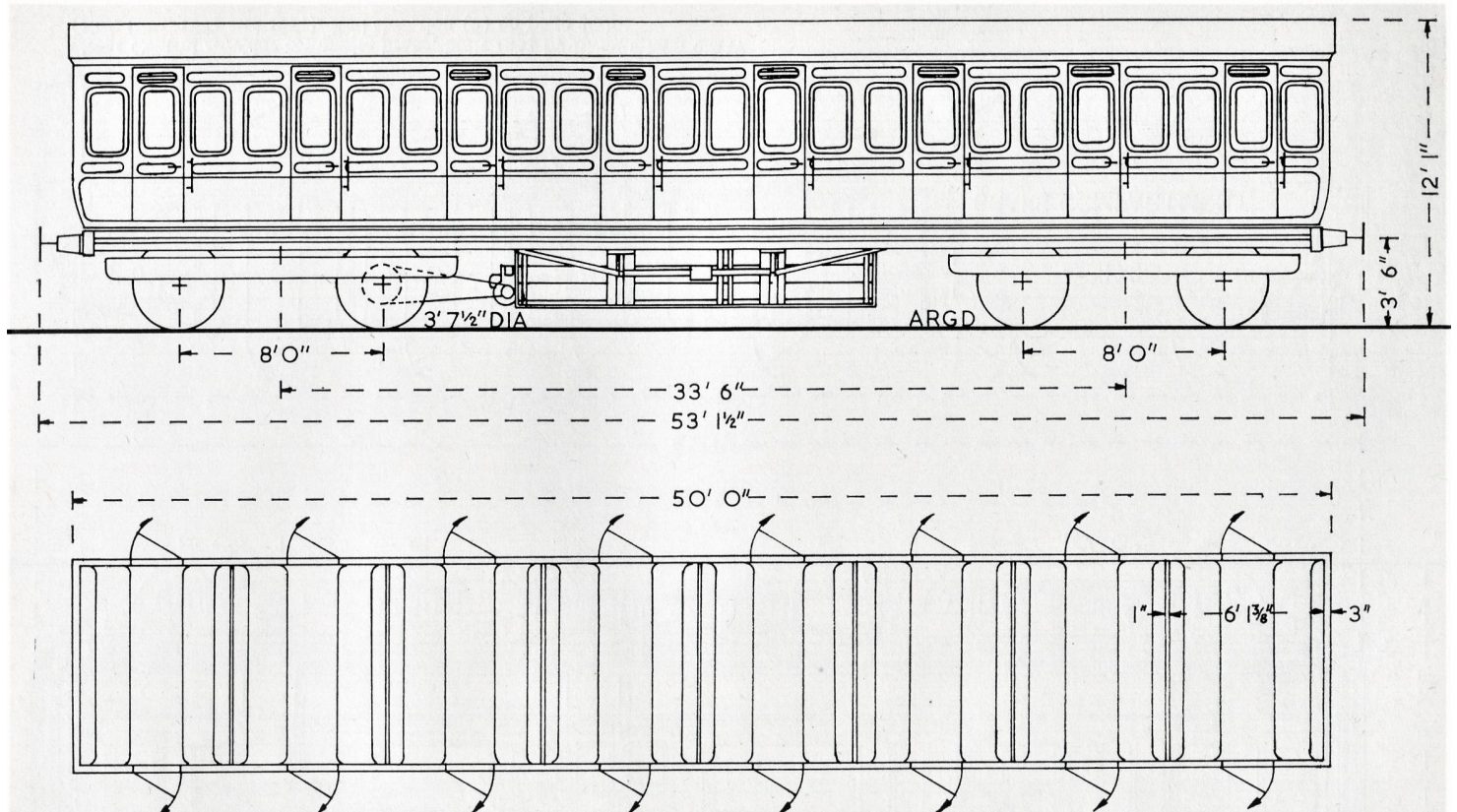
Acknowledgements: Author, Clyde E. Pennington, Verifier and contributors: John Quick and Roger Penson.

This eight-compartment 3rd class 'Suburban Carriage' was built in 1905 at GCR's Gorton Works, Manchester, to the design of John G. Robinson, Chief Mechanical Engineer (CME) and allocated the No.799.

Also known as L.N.E.R. No.5799 and under British Rail - E5799 or E5799E and later No.040452

Note: This Carriage is basically identical to No.793, built by the Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Company (BRC&W), currently in Swithland Sidings on the southern GC section.

Max Height	12' - 5¼"
Width over body	8' - 4"
Length over body	50' - 0"
“ over buffers	53' - 1½"
Bogie centers	33' - 6"
Bogie wheelbase	8' - 0"
Tare weight	26ton 19cwt 0q
Seating capacity	80



GCR Suburban eight-compartment, 3rd class built at Gorton Works in 1905 (Drawing published: Great Central Volume 3 by G. Dow).

The mainline pre-grouping companies mainly favoured the vacuum brake system, but some, the N.E.R. and G.E.R. for example, used the Westinghouse air brake.

Most of the 'London Suburban' carriages were vacuum braked only, but some composites had dual brakes, so that other companies' passenger engines could take over a train from a G.C.R. locomotive and work the train over their lines.

Note also that its width of 8'- 4" allowed it to run over certain other lines, e.g. the SECR, others of this type were slightly wider.

Some of the 'Suburbans' received plain red livery under British Rail (BR). No.799 may have been included but this cannot be confirmed.

Note: GCR-RST will use the GCR number 799 and a build date of 1905 so that we, RST, our members and all other readers, have no confusion.

History under GCR, LNER and lastly BR.

Built 1905 at Gorton Works for use in 'London Suburban' trains.

Details of its early working life under the above are currently unknown.

Although we believe it ran on 8'- 0" bogies when new, by grouping it had 10'- 0" bogies at 31' - 6" centres and was represented by GCR diagram 3B3, LNER code 5036 - reason unknown.

Bogies were exchanged for a variety of reasons and we know that this carriage was running on 8' - 0" bogies (GCR Diagram 3B4, LNER code 5037) on entering service with the Hull Docks Board, so they must have been changed.

16th July 1955 - Withdrawn from BR service.

Sold (presumably) shortly after to the Hull Docks Board.

Under Hull Docks Board.

Painted in their blue livery.

In use as an Engineer's support vehicle, latterly as a paint store.



1979c - GCR 799 at Hull Docks, exact location unknown.

Kim Booker & The GC Coach Group.

When redundant in 1979, Suburban No.799 was bought at auction by The GC Coach Group and stored, along with other G.C.R. stock, on Chipping Camden airfield near Banbury.

1982 - *Extract from Quainton Road News No.46 explains:*

The GC Coach Group has unearthed two vehicles, both of course, of G.C.R. origin.

The first is an open saloon of the type nicknamed "Barnums", which they found at Hull's Alexandra Dock, in use as a greenhouse. It is complete, but the interior has been stripped out and the rotten wood flooring testifies to the effect on wood of some of the well-known brands of fertilizer! Much of the original panelling is intact and, fortunately, the roof is sound inside.

They have not yet established the number of the vehicle. (*Note: Later identified as No.228 which also now forms part of GCR-RST's stock portfolio.*)

A second G.C.R. carriage, an eight-compartment suburban coach (*Note: This is believed to be No.799 Suburban Third, built 1905 and pictured above*), has also been located at the same docks, in use, latterly, as a paint store and, like the Barnum, has been at Hull since the 1950s. It was built in the early 1900s and is similar to No.957 at Quainton.

Kim Brooker has been given the all-clear to bring these coaches to the site. He already has another G.C.R. coach, No.652, which he is working on at Banbury, pending moving it to Quainton. This is a ten-compartment vehicle of the 1913/15 period.

22nd July 1997 - Kim Booker's - Sale of stock auction.

No.799 sold by Heathcote Ball & Co at Banbury auctions - Lot 346, still in blue Hull Dock Board livery. Bought by Stuart Copson, former Director of GCR(N) for £400.

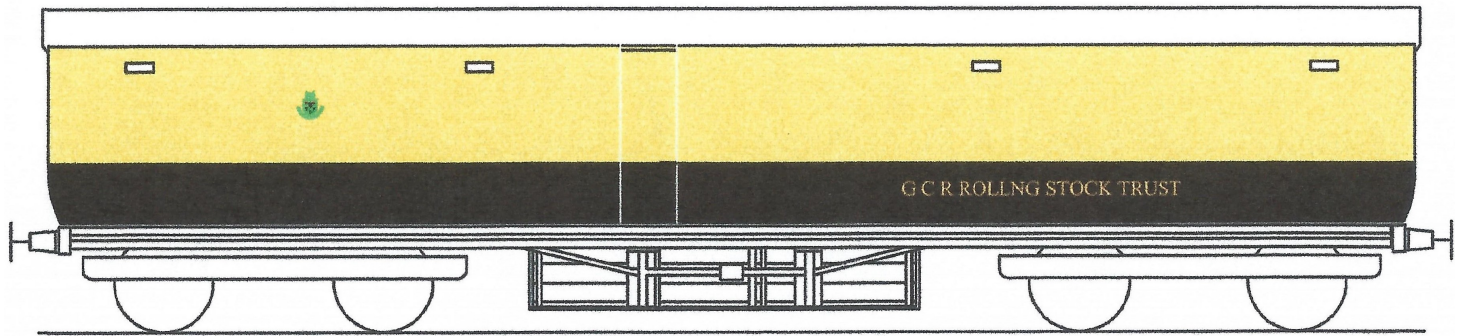
At the Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre, Ruddington. Nottinghamshire.

1997/8 - Delivered to the Centre.

1st September 1999 - Donated by Stuart Copson to the newly formed GCR Rolling Stock Trust, by Deed.

The original purchasers, GC Coaching Group, and latterly GCR-RST both originally proposed to separate the body for alternative usage or scrapping, as this was not unique, and re-use the underframe for the unique GCR Clerestory body No.1663, also now based at Ruddington and owned by the Trust.

However, on close inspection the body was found to be in very good condition for its age and, as the RST did not have a dedicated storage facility on site, the carriage was in 2017 re-envisioned to be steel plated externally and converted for use as their ‘GCR-RST Site Storage Facility’.



2017 CAD side elevation view of No.799 as GCR-RST Storage Vehicle. (K. Stimpson)

2016 - The pictures on this page give some idea of the changes made since the initial cleansing of the interior. What they do not show is the wealth of historical detail preserved within the intact end compartment believed latterly used by the Dock Board's ‘Supervisor’.



GCR Suburban No.799 at Ruddington with external lower panelling removed ready for its steel plating (Photo GCR-RST Archives)



2016 No.799 before conversion to stores. (Photo: C Pennington)



2018 No.799 in use as GCR-RST Storage van (Photo: A Coalwood)

2020 - The investigation work, the centralization and photographing/cataloging of the hundreds of retrieved parts and spares etc. is ongoing. The internal alterations are complete but the exterior needs scaffolding out to facilitate the agreed cladding and finish painting. This cannot be achieved in the immediate future with the carriage in its current location and with the limited RST resources now available.

Trustee Roger Penson tells about the historical evidence discovered in the end compartment - believed to have been formally used by the Hull Docks supervisor, when the carriage was used as a staff restroom, and his subsequently research work:

“The partition wall was intact, so this section could only be accessed via the compartment door.

There was a ‘sliding’ window cut in the compartment wall – no doubt to harangue the sluggards!



(A) Red & Black small patterned fabric, probably the 1905 original.



(B) Art-Deco style (LNER late 1920's through to the late 30's)

On gaining access, we discovered some red and black small patterned fabric, probably the 1905 original, and on top of this an ‘Art-Deco’ style fabric and therefore probably from when the carriage was re-upholstered in LNER hands. The colours were very filthy, giving the impression of a green/khaki cast, but, after a gentle wash/dry a geometric pattern utilising pale orange, light ‘French navy’ and a warm beige emerged – probably of cut wool pile.

The backing fabric – probably either rayon or cotton, consisted of a pale sugar pink and a grey/violet matrix. This will have affected the surface colour, but only slightly – giving it a ‘comfortable’ appearance.

These colours will be from the ‘Aniline’ (Coal, now oil-based) source and thus will have faded only a little, having been protected from light by the hard-board applied when converted for restroom use.

A length of 1920/30's braid was retrieved, again washed & dried. This echoes the LNER fabric colours and style above, as follows:

Elegant, geometric pattern, using light blue, pale orange, with what looks like a ‘Mercerised’ beige thread. (Mercerised threads are shiny, like silk and are usually either Cotton treated with mercury!) or, are one of the ‘Rayon’ family – a replacement for Silk.

Wall paddings – On removing some damaged hard-board from the same compartment, evidence of padding was found, as follows:

Under the window (between it and the seating) there was a disintegrated pile of ‘horsehair’. On inspecting the wooden panel from which it had fallen, there is rust mark evidence of tacks that would have held a twine, in a diamond shape, which would have held the horsehair in place.

There is no evidence of buttoning, as we found in the 1905 Clerestory (No.1663) carriage body, so I must assume that this was also absent in the original design.

Looking at how the braid was applied (i.e. from the compartment wall at head height, down and around the window and on down to just below the seating pad), I am assuming that the same LNER fabric was used on the walls and possibly doors. However, since the doors would get exposed to weather, I rather think they would have used (in the original) a material called ‘American Oil Cloth’ ~ an early version of vinyl, showing a ‘leather-like’ grain. I can find no evidence on the doors, but it certainly was fabric on the interiors.

Photographs were taken of the fabrics in situ, unwashed and post wash as well as the braid, and matched with colour swatches that we feel relate closely with to the fabric/braid colours mentioned above.

A length of ‘Leather’ used as a draught-proof strip was also retrieved from down the hinge-side of the doors, photographed and the evidence archived.”