

Rolling Stock - No.5768

Dave Clarke

2018 has been a very successful year in the restoration of No.5768.

However, it's also seen its frustrations, without which, the coach might have been returned to traffic in time for Christmas. The year began with the third-class half of the coach virtually complete, the first class over 60%, the roof almost ready for topcoat and the sides well into the undercoating phase. It ended with the interior complete, the roof and bodysides painted and the coach in the maintenance road in OP4 so that its underside could be set up.

So what work was carried out on the coach over the past year? In the southern half of No. 5768, the three third class compartments had been completed and it just remained to install the carriage prints, fit the long radiator under the three sidelights in the corridor, and finish the southern vestibule by hanging the southern gangway door and fitting the white painted pelmet to hide its runners.

The lino has been laid in the last of the first-class compartments, corridor and northern vestibule, allowing the second iron radiator to be installed along

the outer side of the corridor before being hidden behind freshly re-chromed steel sheet.

The last four first class seat backs and all 24 seat cushions have been received from the trimmer and installed in compartments A & B, which has allowed the last of the quarter lights to be installed in the corridor partition. New ply panels have been acquired, cut to size, varnished and fitted to the west side of the corridor and the hand or guard rails to be fitted across the side lights. The newly overhauled sliding compartment doors have been hung and the chrome table rack mounted against the lavatory partition at the northern end of the corridor.

The last section of the interior to be completed was the northern vestibule. Two new ceiling panels have been cut, fitted and painted to white gloss. Two 'trumpets' (light fittings), have also been installed. New mahogany mouldings fitted at cant rail level above and either side of the passenger doors. The sliding gangway door was stripped down and overhauled - the mahogany panel on the inner face has been cleaned and re-varnished and the exterior



Resplendent from its time in the paintshop, No.5768 waits in the maintenance road for its new bogies to be overhauled and its underside to be set up. (Dave Clarke)



The partially rebuilt northern bogie awaits the fitted bolts required to attach the hornguides to the red painted sections of the bogies. Their role is to hold the axleboxes in the foreground. (Dave Clarke)

one painted to black gloss. Felt has been applied to the inner face of the closing pillar to protect it and the edge of the door.

The Formica panelling has been reinstalled in the northern lavatory, however, most of the rest of the interior is missing and as a result, it's been converted into a table store and will be used instead of the rack in the corridor.

The interiors of the six passenger doors have been completed - these comprise two varnished ply panels separated by the garnish rail; a large, lower panel covering the recess for the droplight and its 'scissors' mechanism. The upper one surrounds the raised droplight and is punctured at its apex by a small chrome ventilator.

The final coats of grey gloss have been applied to the roof which was the first of the six faces of the box, which is the coach, to be completed. The end steps, grab rails/ filler pipes and RCH jumpers have been fitted to both ends and the final coats of black gloss and varnish applied. The lettering on the tare plates have been picked out with white signwriter's paint.

At the start of the year both sides of the coach where in the early stages of green undercoat and a total of four were applied before Easter. The last one included some top coat to help identify any

imperfections that needed attention and helped to lighten the colour of the paint - the undercoat being a darker shade of green than the Southern Region Green gloss.

No. 5768 entered the paint shop in mid-September where it received its green gloss before the small amount of signwriting was applied and then covered with a couple of coats of varnish to give the finish that extra lustre and to help protect the underlying paint. Up until this point, it had been prepared and painted in the main part of the shed and had spent the last couple of years in the dock, next to the bandsaw. This made fitting out easier, however it did mean that painting was best done late in the day once most of the staff had gone home for the evening!

In November, No. 5768 was moved into the maintenance road for completion of the underside and the setting up of its systems and door locks. This includes connecting up the steam heat and vacuum pipework and the electrical wiring. The last major items to be completed are the bogies. A spare pair was identified early in the restoration for overhaul and swapping under the coach when it came to the setting-up phase prior to release into traffic. They were dismantled several years ago and have finally risen to the head of the queue for rebuilding.

The individual components were assessed and the majority overhauled and painted. Amongst the remainder, the horn guides were condemned and new ones ordered. There are two on each corner of the bogie and are attached to the frames with fitted bolts. Their main purpose is to provide a contact face to hold the axleboxes and allow them to move up and down, against the action of the springs, as the coach travels along the track.

Reassembly of the bogies is in full swing, however the clearances between the axlebox and the horn guide has been found to be a little too tight for comfort and the latter may have to be machined to increase the gap a little. The bearing surfaces of the axles, and axleboxes themselves, have also to be 'blued' in before the bogies can be re-wheeled. They will then be swapped for No. 5768's originals which will in turn be put to one side for overhaul. One of the final jobs will be the installation and setting up of the brake rigging which can only be done once the coach is on its new bogies.

It is hoped that the coach will be available for traffic within the next few months and, all being well, it could be available as early as Branch Line Weekend in mid-March. Once complete, it is hoped that the coach will be run as part of a four-car Bulleid set with semi open brake third No. 2526 and the two open thirds Nos. 1464 and 1482. The latter is part way through its own, intermittent, overhaul at the hands of the team who restored No. 5768. Between spells in traffic No. 1482 has been completely rewired, had half its side lights rebbed, and had mouldings and ply panelling replaced or re-varnished as required in the southern saloon. About a third of the seat bases, backs and quarter panels have been retrimmed with the



**The newly trimmed first class seats and cushions have been installed in compartment C.
(Dave Clarke)**

same third class moquette as that used in No. 5768.

Thank you to the Bulleid Society for allowing the overhaul of No. 5768 and to partially pay for the privilege! It's been a nine-year project, however the coach is now as good as it was in May 1947 when it rolled out of Eastleigh works and first saw the light of day!