Great Eastern Railway Tram Carriages

Carriage numbering

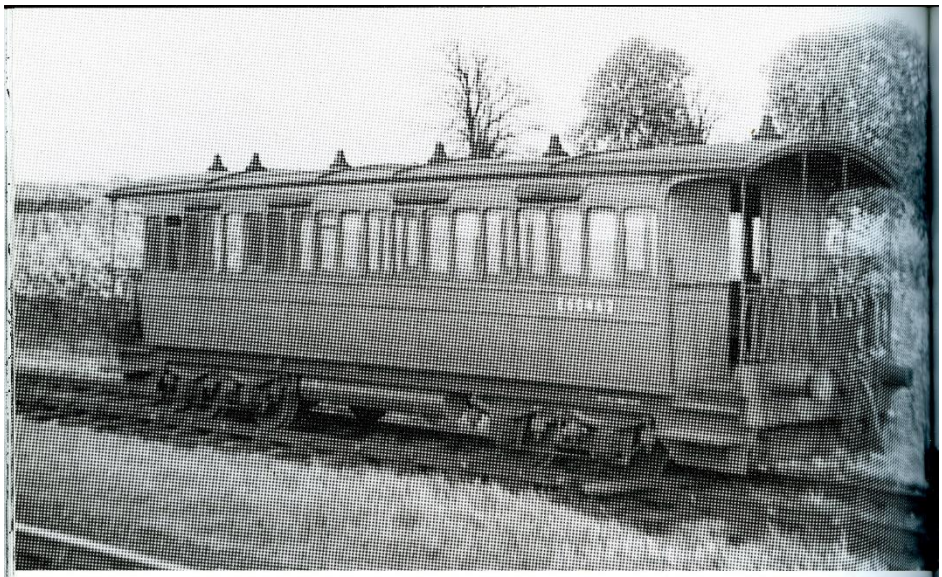
The GER maintained a separate series of running numbers for each class of carriage. As finally determined in the mid 1890's, coaching stock was divided into eight categories, each starting from No 1. They were, in diagram book order, saloon, first, composite, second, third, brakes and brake composites, trams and mail. On the more obscure branches 4-wheel stock sufficed well into the 20th century and a few lines were provided with tramway carriages to reduce operating costs.

Wheel diameter

The 2ft 9ins wheel were used on all the Wisbech tram cars, first introduced in 1884, two of which were also bogie vehicles. For some unknown reason it was found necessary to use a 3ft 0ins diameter wheel on the two 6-wheel Stoke Ferry branch trams in 1896.

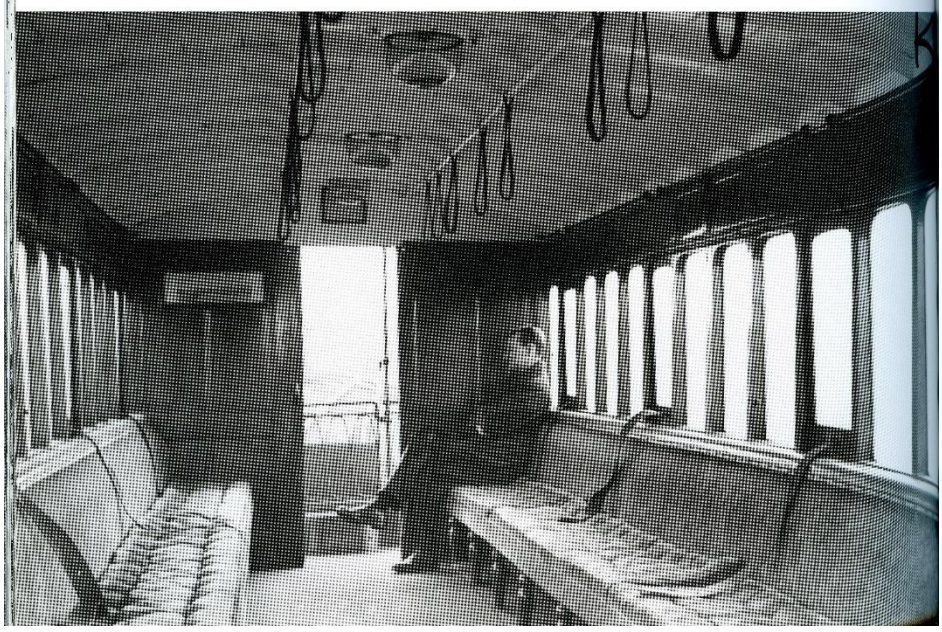
Johnson period 1866-1873

The only non-standard designs to appear during Johnson's term of office resulted from the purchase of four tram cars in 1871/72 for service on the Millwall Extension Railway. These were the traditional tramway carriages of the period, initially horse drawn.



86. The branch had some unusual stock with verandahs. See *Branch Line to Upwell* for earlier views and the film *The Titfield Thunderbolt* for later ones, but all the buffers would be present. The date is 5th May 1951, closure day. (A.J.Pike/F.Hornby coll.)

87. The interior was recorded on the same day, with long leather straps for window adjustment in evidence. The layout facilitated the issue of tickets and the other coaches had end doors, plus drop plates. (J.J.Smith/R.M.Casserley coll.)



Worsdell period 1882-1886

Worsdell was responsible for the Wisbech & Upwell tramcars, comprising 4-wheel 1st/2nd composites (D600) and 3rds (D601) and bogie composites (D602) and 3rds (D603) for passengers and a 12ft luggage van (D604), perhaps laying claim to the shortest standard gauge coaching stock vehicle ever built for a British railway. All ran on 2ft 9ins diameter Mansell wheels, introducing a variation on the standard diameter of 3ft 6½ins. It is also curious to observe that this tramway was the first place where a GER third class passenger could ride in a GER bogie vehicle, no less than 13 years before they appeared on the main line.

Holden period 1886-

In 1889 the last 4-wheel tramcars for the Wisbech & Upwell tramway were completed, hardly at the

Text taken from GER Society website article by John Watling See "*The Tollesbury Branch*" by Peter Paye. "*The Wisbech & Upwell Tramway*" by Chris Hawkins & George Reeve. "*The Stoke Ferry Branch*" by Peter Paye. "*The Kelvedon & Tollesbury Light Railway*" by N.J. Stapleton. "*Branches & Byways East Anglia*" by John Brodribb. Various Middleton Press volumes.

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leading edge of technology but necessary as replacements of the original Millwall Railway tramcars purchased in 1871/2 and latterly used at Wisbech.

In 1896 a pair of 6-wheel tram carriages were built for the Stoke Ferry branch (Nos.10 & 11), and subsequently (1931) sent to Tollesbury branch. For some reason, not so far discovered, these reverted in body style to the Worsdell period, with raised waist beading and the rather inferior internal height of 7ft 0½ins; neither was their 30ft length shared by any other GER vehicle or the use of 3ft diameter Mansell wheels, a size never used on another vehicle. The design remained unique; the carriages were certainly not an adaptation of older vehicles or even the resurrection of an obsolete design.

GER Society Drawings and articles

- LG030 GER 3rd-class tramcar *(drawing)*
- LG031 GER 28 ft. 3rd-class bogie tramcar *(drawing)*
- RG030 The Wisbech and Upwell Tramway *(article which appeared in the Railway Magazine for February 1899)*

Additional Wisbech & Upwell info

There were three 4-wheel composites (Nos.1, 2, 5); three 3rd class 4-wheel composite (Nos.3, 4, 6); composite bogie coach (No.7), 3rd class bogie coach (No.8), 4-wheel guard's van (No.16) and a special luggage van (No.9).

When passenger services ceased on 31st December 1927, Nos. 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 were moved to the Kelvedon & Tollesbury Light Railway (1928). The luggage van No.9 was transferred to Elsenham & Thaxted line. The two bogie coaches 7 & 8 (also 10 & 11) survived into BR ownership on the Kelvedon & Tollesbury, until the line closed in May 1951.

No.7 (E60461) appeared in the 1953 Titfield Thunderbolt film, and subsequently spent many years in a field, being used as an onion store. It has been restored on the North Norfolk Railway in GER livery, but with the addition of the bar in the third-class area, as seen in the film, albeit in the film (*I believe*), the interior was a "set piece", not part of the actual coach!

No.8 (E60462) was restored to GER livery as the photograph below dated February 1957 shows, but subsequently cut up in error.

No8 as restored at Stratford Works (1957), shortly after this date it was cut up for scrap in error, together with the LTSR carriage restored for the Centenary.

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