Sources of Drawings for LNER Carriages

1. The LNER Originals

There is an archive of LNER and constituent Carriage and Wagon original drawings from roughly 1860 to 1960 on the National Railway Museum. These are mostly in the HO scale, some in just one or two formats. Some are tinted masterpieces on linen-backed cartridge paper. For many years these were all part of the NRM's notorious inaccessible "black hole". A huge amount of work has been done in recent years to create a high proportion of the drawing from which amounts to over a million. Two LNER members spent over ten years cataloguing the 15,000 LNER so-called "Doncaster" C&W drawings. The catalogue has sections relating to drawings originating in Doncaster, Darlington (including Shildon, York and Gateshead), Gorton (together with some from contractors such as Bath and Hunslet) which may have been given LNER numbers. It has just become available to the public when the Reading Room and associated resources were closed for the work relating to the Search Engine construction. It should become available again by 2008. The LNER drawings have been separately catalogued. There are virtually no drawings from Crewe. Over the years the original stock of drawings has clearly been purged more than once so that the archive only contains a selection, many detail drawings no longer being available. In addition, certain drawings are unexpectedly missing. These may have been extracted at a time when they were required for a particular purpose and not returned. Moreover, as there were no BL drawings in the archive which one might have expected to have remained with these at Derby at the time the archive was passed to the NRM, it is probable that some LNER drawings still remain with British Railways' many successors. Missing drawings can sometimes be identified by reference to the Drawing Registers which list the title of each drawing at the time its number was issued.

The drawings are catalogued by Drawing Number. Drg No 1504,6.1. LNER general arrangement drawings of the Tourist Open Third will serve as an example. Sight of the GA reveals several other drawing numbers for items such as means of entry and seats, which can in turn be referenced and in most cases refer to further drawings. The catalogue does have a column which attempts to indicate which assembly drawing a particular part drawing is used on. Here is a partial cross-reference between Carriage Diagram Numbers (used by the Operating Department) and GA Drawing Numbers (used by the Drawing Office). Moreover, most diagrams will represent several different GAs, these being re-drawn to show such developments as changes in internal finish or bogie or underframe design. When the Search Engine is complete, it should be possible to work in, consult the catalogue, view a particular drawing and order a print (except in the case of drawings deemed too fragile)

2. Scotland

Such drawings as would have been passed on to the National Railway Museum in England found their home in Scotland with the National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh (geo.uk). There is an on line catalogue. For instance, a search for first "North British Railway" and then for "carriage" has yielded over 2,000 results. All the proofs are filed in HO. There are further drawings to be added to the catalogue in Edinburgh. In addition, the Great North of Scotland Railway Association holds a number of other drawings which have been deposited with the Grampian Transport Museum. They are currently being catalogued and copied, so they are not available at the present time.

3. The Birmingham Public Library Metro-Cammell Archive

The archive department of Birmingham Public Library holds an archive of perhaps 20,000 35mm film aperture cards of the carriage and wagon drawings from the Metropolitan-Cammell Carriage, Wagon & Finance Co Ltd of Saltley, Birmingham. They are available for viewing without charge and A4 or A3 prints can be purchased. The catalogue is held in several feet of shelf space in blue A4 binders, one of which refers to the LNER orders.

The (Head Office) or Order Number is the key to searching this archive. However there were several sequences, so an individual number can be repeated (not known to have happened within the five percent of the total referring to the LNER). The drawings for an order were stored in a roll. Each drawing was filmed on one, two or even four cards. The cards for each Roll are held together by the Library and have come to be referred to as Bundles. So to the Library, Met Camm Drg No 56789 will be known by its local reference as Bundle 123 Card 45. Except in those cases where Met Camm were contractors for design as well as manufacture (eg Tyne Electrics) drawings were prepared by traction engineers and the LNER is not well served with No references. The catalogue does have a column which attempts to indicate which assembly drawing a particular part drawing is used on. There is at present no cross-reference between Carriage Diagram Numbers (used by the Operating Department) and GA Drawing Numbers (used by the Drawing Office). Moreover, most diagrams will represent several different GAs, these being re-drawn to show such developments as changes in internal finish or bogie or underframe design. When the Search Engine is complete, it should be possible to work in, consult the catalogue, view a particular drawing and order a print (except in the case of drawings deemed too fragile)

4. Historic Model Railway Society

The Historic Model Railway Society at Butley Heath holds the original Met Camm drawing lines from which the Birmingham Library aperture cards were prepared. When these are made available for study, all the cataloguing work carried out on the Birmingham archive will be capable of application to these originals and much better prints should be achievable.

5. David Jenkinson and Nick Camping

Back in the 1960s, when drawing resources were minimal, Ian Allan commissioned David Jenkinson and Nick Camping to prepare a selection of LNER carriage drawings. These were published as Historic Carriage Drawings in 4mm Scale Vol 1 L&SS and LNER in 1969 (BN 710 0053 which can still sometimes be obtained secondhand. After being out of print for many years, a new edition was produced, Nick Camping, Historic Carriage Drawings, 4mm Scale, Ian Allan Ltd, circa 1990 (ISBN 1851240147) in which some additional drawings have been added. The drawings were something of a cross between diagram drawings and general arrangements so are by no means fully dimensioned. Nevertheless they contain a wealth of useful data indicating an extensive understanding of the carriage which even today are inevitably some minor errors, but then carriages were not always built exactly to the original drawings). They will prove adequate for many modelling purposes.

6. Isinglass Models

More recently Isinglass Models have produced a series of modelling drawings which include LNER, GNR, RER, NE and GN&NEJS carriages. A catalogue can be found at http://www.edgson.net/isinglass/carriages.html

7. Skinkley Blueprints

Models once referred to in awe to the 7mm scale blueprints prepared in the 1930s by John E Skinley 51 High Street Southend on Sea. The blueprints have been separately catalogued. There are virtually no drawings from Crewe.