



Sources of Drawings for LNER Carriages

The following sources for drawings of LNER carriages are suggested.

1. The LNER Originals

There is an archive of LNER and constituent Carriage and Wagon original drawings from roughly 1860 to 1960 in the National Railway Museum. These are mostly in ink on linen but some are just pencil on frail tracing paper and some older ones 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 provide access to a high proportion of the drawings of all types which amount to over a million. Two LNERCA members spent six years cataloguing the 16,000 LNER so-called "Doncaster" C&W drawings. The catalogue has sections relating to drawings originating in Doncaster, Darlington (including Shildon, York and Gateshead), Gorton (including Dukinfield) and Hull (together with some from contractors such as Metropolitan Cammell which may have been given LNER numbers). It had 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 Stratford drawings have been separately catalogued. There are virtually no drawings from Cowlairs.

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 felt to be at risk or issued for some purpose and never returned. Moreover, as there are some BR drawings in the archive which one might have expected to have remained with those 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 15046.D, the LNER general arrangement drawing of the Tourist Open Third will serve as an example. Sight of the GA reveals several other drawing numbers for items such as bogies and section of toilets, which can in turn be referenced and in most cases will refer to further drawings. The catalogue does have a column which attempts to indicate which assembly drawing a 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 having been 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 walk in, consult the catalogue, view a particular drawing and order a print (except in the case of drawings deemed too fragile).

There is also an archive of aperture cards of 35mm slides of a completely different extract from the originals but there are apparently no immediate plans to catalogue these.

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 (www.nas.gov.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 drawings are prefixed RHP. There are further drawings to be added to the catalogue.

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 of blue A4 binders, one of which refers to the LNER orders.

The HO (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 Tyneside Electrics) drawings were prepared by tracing from LNER originals and LNER Drg No references frequently appear. One Met Camm sheet often contains items traced from several LNER drawings, usually grouped according to the manufacturing shop which would make them (ie a sheet might consist entirely of castings from various LNER source drawings).

To take the same example as above, the Met Camm GA drawing of the Tourist Open Thirds built at Saltley is Met Camm Drg No 71587. This is held in Bundle 146 using two cards, 11 and 12, to show the full width of the drawing. The first Order Number is 5431 and this is stencilled to the left of the legend box in the bottom right hand corner. Order Numbers of subsequent orders from the same drawing were added to the left of the first (ie they read from right to left chronologically). The number stencilled on the right hand side above the legend box is a page number within a particular order. Actually Roll (bundle) 146 is unusual in that it contains GAs extracted from their parent Rolls.

This archive holds one distinct advantage over that at the NRM in that all the drawings necessary for the completion of a particular carriage are there; they have never been purged in any way. The quality of prints available for 35mm aperture cards is not, however very good, although one can request enlargements of chosen areas of a drawing.

A severe complication arises from the fact that when Met Camm received an order from the LNER, they re-used drawings prepared for previous orders if they contained common parts. This meant that a drawing was extracted from its original Roll and added to the new Roll and given a new Page Number within the sequence for the new Roll (stencilled above the previous one on the linen). Some drawings evidently migrated several times like this. Consequently, although a particular Roll once contained all the drawings for a particular Order, they became somewhat dispersed; hence the importance of identifying the relevant Order Number.

A list of the Met Camm Order Numbers relating to each of the orders shown on Michael Harris's lists can be purchased from LNERCA.

Contact: Birmingham City Archives, Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ 0121 303 4217
archives@birmingham.gov.uk

(Closed Wed [NB] and Sat).

4. Historic Model Railway Society

The Historic Model Railway Society at Butterley holds the original Met-Camm drawing linens 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 those originals and much better prints should be achievable.

5. David Jenkinson and Nick Campling

Back in the 1960s, when drawing resources were minimal, Ian Allan commissioned David Jenkinson and Nick Campling to prepare a selection of LNER carriage drawings. These were published as Historic Carriage Drawings in 4mm Scale Vol 1 LMS and LNER in 1969 (SBN 7110 0053 0) which can still sometimes be obtained secondhand. After being out of print for many years, a new edition was produced; Nick Campling, Historic Carriage Drawings Volume One LNER and Constituents Pendragon 1997 (ISBN 1 899816 04 6) which adds photographs. The drawings are 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 subject (there 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, NER, ECJS and GN&NEJS carriages. A catalogue can be found at <http://www.edgson.net/isinglass/carriages.html>

7. Skinley Blueprints

Modellers once referred in awe to the 7mm scale blueprints prepared in the 1930s by John E Skinley 51 High Street Southend on Sea. They covered a wide range of railway material and included a good selection of outline drawings of LNER carriages. They were however not dimensioned and are now only really of historical interest.