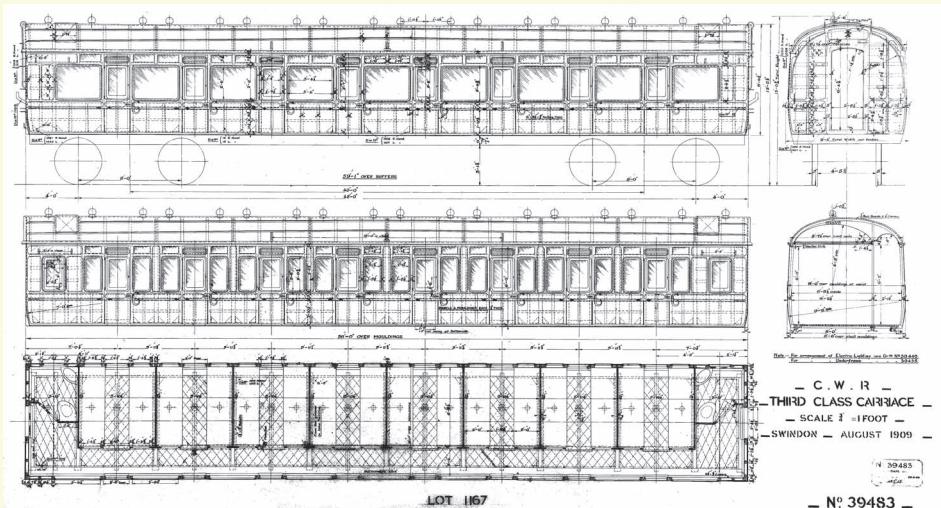


2426 at Bridgnorth in August 1983.



© Paul Bartlett

Up train of Toplights at Twyford box circa 1914



A Churchward 'Bars 1' Toplight to complete the set

2426 at Bewdley in April 2017



© Steve West

Help restore the Association's oldest carriage to join Toplights 'Bars 2' 9055 and 'Multibars' 3930 and 9369



Registered Charity No 1078718

Churchward 'Toplight' Full Third 2426

The Severn Valley Railway is well known for its variety of heritage rolling stock and the short Great Western Railway 'Toplight' set is popular for hire and at galas. The Association is proud of the quality of its restored vehicles which are authentically appropriate to a country branch line. The Association and its members own 'Toplights' of all three designations having restored multibars 3930 (full third of 1915), 9369 (saloon of 1923) and Bars 2 9055 (saloon of 1912) – we wish to restore the line's oldest vehicle – Bars 1 2426 (full third of 1910) which is our biggest challenge yet.

2426 was designed under Churchward's direction in 1909 and completed at Swindon Works in January 1910 to Diagram C30, Lot 1167 (one of 14 built). It has a 56ft by 9ft body on 8ft American bogies with an underframe braced with flat-iron trusses. It weighed 27 tons Scwt with accommodation for 64 passengers in eight compartments and two toilets at the ends. It was fitted with scissors corridor connections and doors to each compartment. It lasted in ordinary service until withdrawal in May 1952 when it was converted at Swindon for use as a 'camp coach'. Compartments were removed to allow for the installation of a kitchen area, sleeping and living accommodation. It was re-numbered W9918W. In 1967 it was used as a departmental S&T vehicle before withdrawal at Swindon in 1972.

It was purchased by the Severn Valley Railway Holdings Company in 1972 for use as volunteer sleeping accommodation, firstly at Bridgnorth until 1988 and then Hampton Loade until 2016. The Association acquired the vehicle in 2002 and moved the carriage to Kidderminster Carriage Shed to dry out before transferring to our restoration base at Bewdley in 2017, initially used as a workshop. The overhaul commenced in 2022 with framework repairs and underframe painting. Fund raising can now commence as Collett bow-ended third 4786 nears completion. Money is needed for the heavy framework repairs (£50k), manufacturing the many missing fittings (upholstery £20k, others £25k), roof repairs (£20k), overhaul of the bogies (£20k) and making the many intricate moldings that make it such an attractive carriage. On completion, it will take its place in the GWR 'Toplight' set to complement the other vehicles and exhibit the three types of construction.

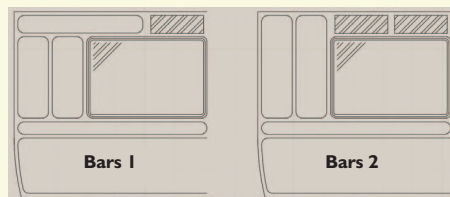
Background to the 'Toplights'

George Jackson Churchward is best known for his revolutionary locomotive designs but he served as the GWR's Swindon Carriage Works Manager between 1885 and 1895, introducing many innovations including Britain's first corridor train in 1890/91. He then became William Dean's assistant before succeeding him as Locomotive and Carriage Works Superintendent in May 1902. Initially, he concentrated on modernising the Works itself and introducing the first standard locomotive designs before turning to the carriage stock. He oversaw the design and construction of a fleet of carriages to replace the clerestory stock of the Dean era. It began in 1905 with the 'Dreadnoughts', 70 ft long by 9ft 6in wide corridor trains for main line long distance services out of Paddington, taking advantage of the generous GWR

loading gauge, a legacy of the broad gauge. However, these were unsuitable for many cross country and regional services which travelled over other Companies' lines.

Hence the 56ft or 57ft 'Toplight' corridor stock constructed between 1907 and 1922 which became the GWR Edwardian carriage type, distinguishable by their oblong hammered glass top lights above the quarter and full-size windows with full panelling above the waist and elliptical roofs. There were three basic types:

'Bars 1' of 56ft and 57ft body length and 9ft width on 'American type' 8ft or Churchward light-type 9ft bogies built 1907 to 1911. Initially gas lit but with electric lighting from 1911. 231 gangwayed stock were constructed evenly split between full thirds, brake thirds and composite vehicles.



'Bars 2' of 57ft body length and 9ft width on Churchward heavy or light type 9ft bogies built in 1912 and 1913. 142 gangwayed stock were constructed at Swindon including 56 thirds, 35 brakes and 47 composite vehicles.

'Multibars' of 56ft 1 1/4in length and 8ft 1 1/4in width on Churchward 9ft heavy and light type bogies built 1914/15 and 1919 to 1922/23 (Great War delayed construction). 189 gangwayed stock were built including 102 thirds, 30 brakes, 12 composites and no less than 42 full brakes (including our 1145).

The designations refer to differences in underframe bracing and variations to moldings above the waist (see diagram). Multibars had no moldings above the waist.

The vehicles were used throughout the system until being condemned in the 1950s with around 30 thirds being converted into camping coaches and others such as the saloons for departmental use. They were therefore familiar in not only the Edwardian era but also during Queen Elizabeth's reign.

Your help is needed as the cost could exceed £200,000 - our biggest challenge yet!



A 'Bars 1' coach – possibly 2459 which was in service until 1952 – in use as a camping coach. Photo: R Spratt Collection

Churchward 'Toplight' Full Third 2426

Please complete and return to:

Rob Massey – Secretary, 9 Shandon Close, Harborne, Birmingham B32 3XB

Donations

I would like to make a donation of £ towards the restoration of 2426.

Please make cheques payable to 'Great Western (SVR) Association'.

Name:

Address:

..... PostCode:

Email address:

Donations can also be made online via the Charity Aid Foundation website – please see: www.gw-svr-a.org.uk/how_to_help.html

Standing Order

Please pay from date until further notice £ per month in favour of the Great Western (SVR) Association.

The HSBC Bank, 31 Church Street, KIDDERMINSTER, Worcs, DY10 2AY

Account Number: 61000217 Sort Code: 40-10-13

Bank: Bank PLC

Address:

..... Post Code:

My Account Number: Sort Code:

Signed: Date:

Gift Aid Declaration

Please treat all donations and subscriptions that I make today and in the future as Gift Aid donations.

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You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax in each tax year at least equal to the tax that the GW(SVR)A will claim from HM Revenue & Customs on your Gift Aid donation(s).

Signed: Date:

Please notify the GW(SVR)A if you:

1. Want to cancel this declaration.
2. Change your name or home address.
3. No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.



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