

District Railway steam stock

by E. Shaw

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Locomotives:

The initial locomotives of the Metropolitan District Railway were similar to the 4-4-0 tank engines employed by the Metropolitan Railway, but with minor modifications. The order was for 24 engines, and the successful tender was from Beyer Peacock at £2,280 each, which company built all the steam passenger locos of the MDR.

The second batch of 6, similar to the first 24 but with minor modifications, cost £2,625 in 1875. Six more were ordered in 1880, followed by six in 1883 at £2,286 each; six in 1884; and the final six in 1886.

Tenders for 7 tank engines were invited in 1900, and a year later the contract, which had been placed with Dubs & Co., was cancelled. As a result Dubs received £1,000 and the materials were handed over to the District.

	<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Works Nos.</u>
*	1 - 24	1871	1063 - 1086
	25 - 30	1876	1612 - 1617
	31 - 36	1880	2053 - 2058
	37 - 42	1883	2298 - 2303
	43 - 48	1884	2584 - 2589
	49 - 54	1886	2776 - 2781

\* Originally carried letters instead of numbers.

In 1906, ten steam locomotives were sold to Samuel Isaacs for £310 each; 33 went to Robert Frazer at £316 each, which figure was the actual value of the scrap obtained from one locomotive broken up by the MDR; 4 locos to George Cohen for £410 each.

In 1909, 4 scrap locos went to J. Livingston for £240 each. The other two, nos. 33 & 34 were scrapped in 1925 and 1932 respectively.

## Carriages:

The original carriages were based upon the type working on the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, with certain modifications - no arms and one division. These were bought in 1871 via the Railway Rolling Stock Co., a finance company with whom repayments were arranged over seven years, from the Oldbury Carriage & Wagon Co., who built 38 first-class and 38 third-class carriages, and the Gloucester Carriage & Wagon Co., who built 38 second-class and 38 third-class carriages.

These carriages made 19 eight-coach trains consisting of 2 first, 2 second, and 4 third-class carriages. The contract prices were £455 for a first-class, £373 second, and £332 third. Subsequent orders were for block trains of 9 coaches each, the extra carriage being a second-class.

The MDR required 4 block trains in 1879, and orders were placed for 2 trains each from the Ashbury Carriage & Wagon Co. at £3,355 and the Metropolitan Carriage & Wagon Co., at £3,515.

In 1880, 6 trains costing £21,726 were ordered from the Oldbury C & W. Co.

Late in 1880 an agreement was made between the MDR and Pintsch's Patent Lighting Co. Ltd., for the compressed oil gas lighting of carriages which initially cost £432.5.0 per eight coach train.

Another 6 trains costing £18,500 were ordered in 1882 from Ashbury, and in 1884 Ashbury were awarded a further contract for 6 trains at a cost of £19,330.

In 1890 an agreement was made between the MDR and the Railway Automatic Electric Syndicate Ltd., as to the use of automatic lamps in carriages. A further agreement in 1892 was for reading lamps, with renewal of the automatic lamps agreement.

Two trains costing £6,510 were ordered in 1891 from the Metropolitan C & W. inclusive of lamps and gas fittings.

The use of station indicators in coaches was agreed in 1894 between the MDR and The Indicator Co.

Improvements to carriages authorised in 1896 called for improved lighting in second and third class coaches, the warming of carriages, and the enlargement of guards brake vans.

In 1898 agreement was reached as to the working of the Whitechapel & Bow Railway between that company, the MDR, and the London Tilbury and Southend Railway.

A contract for 6 trains was awarded to Ashbury in 1900 at a cost of £36,000, these trains being known as the District and LT&S Joint Stock trains, 3 belonging to each company, and details of which follow:-

These carriages were 4-wheeled compartment with steel underframes, body framing and panelling of teak mounted upon laminated side bearing springs and with continuous drawbars.

The length over body was  $26'4\frac{3}{4}"$ ; length over buffers (intermediate 3rds)  $27'3"$ ; width over body  $8'6"$ ; height from rail over lamp tops  $11'8"$ ; wheelbase  $14'0"$ ; and wheel diameter  $3'7\frac{1}{4}"$ .

The composition of these joint trains was 2 first, 2 second, 1 second with guard and luggage compartment, 3 third, and 1 third with guard and luggage compartment.

Interior of first-class were upholstered in blue cloth with spring seats and backs, mirrors and photograph frames above seats with mirrors above side lights. Finish of polished teak and floors covered with oilcloth. Divided into four compartments seating 40 passengers.

Second-class upholstered in figured velvet with spring seats and backs. Divided into five compartments seating 50, luggage compartment carriages seating 40.

Third-class fitted with cushioned seats and backs in rep. Divided into 5 compartments for 50, luggage compartment coaches seating 30.

All carriages were fitted with the Westinghouse automatic brake and lit by Pintsch's compressed oil gas, the outside of the bodies being varnished showing the natural grain of the wood.

Roofs of all carriages lined with papier-mache painted white. Guards compartments have double doors, fitted with handbrake, flap table and seat, letter rack, destination board cases etc., All compartments fitted with spring roller blinds and parcels racks.

<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Year.</u>	<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Year</u>
<u>1st Class:</u>			<u>2nd Class:</u>		
1- 38	A	1871	1- 38	A	1871
39- 46	B	1879	39- 40	-	1877/8 ex-3rd.
47- 58	C	1881	41- 52	B	1879
59- 70	D	1883	53	-	1880 ex-3rd.
71- 82	E	1884	54- 71	C	1881
83- 86	F	1891	72- 89	D	1883
87- 98	G	1901	90- 91	-	1884 ex-1st.
			92-109	E	1884
<u>3rd Class:</u>			110-114	-	1886/8 ex-3rd.
1- 76	A	1871	115-118	-	1888 ex-1st/3rd.
77-92	B	1879	119-124	F	1891
93-116	C	1881	125-142	G	1901
117-140	D	1883			
141-164	E	1884	<u>Composite:</u>		
165-172	F	1891	1	-	1903 ex-2nd.
173-196	G	1901			
197-236	-	1903/4 ex-2nd.			

Note: All numbers and class letters have been assumed by the author who has no proof of same.

In 1905, the War Office purchased 2 third-class coaches for £50 each.

In 1906, 40 carriages sold to Taff Vale Railway for £30 each; 200 gas recipients from old coaches sold for 6/- each to John Douglas; 2 carriages to Frazer at £20 each; 3 to Isaacs for £53 lot; and 286 to Frazer at £21.15.0 each.

In 1907, the 27 Joint Stock carriages of the MDR were sold to Taff Vale Railway for £80 each, together with surplus steam stock spare parts worth £23.

References: BTHR - MDR. 1/1-14 & 18-22  
TV. 5/2.

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