

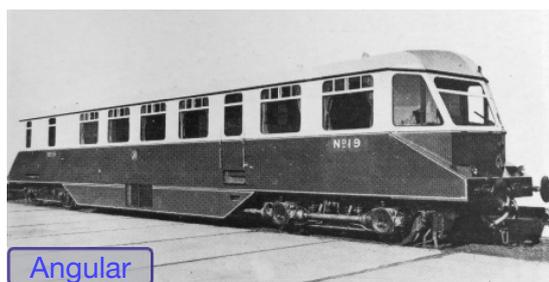
STOURBRIDGE SHED'S BANANAS by Roger Davis

In issue 5 of Platform 2 in his article “*Bubbles and Bananas*”, Rob Hebron looked at the use of railcars on the Stourbridge Town branch and detailed the introduction of the GWR AEC railcars into service. Without revisiting too much of Rob’s article, 38 railcars were built, numbered 1 to 38. They can be summarised as follows :-

Nos.	Bodywork	Type	Body Shape
1 to 4	Park Royal	Passenger	Streamlined
5 to 16	Gloucester RCW	Passenger	Streamlined
17	Gloucester RCW	Parcels	Streamlined
18	Gloucester RCW	Passenger	Experimental
19 to 33	GWR Swindon	Passenger	Angular
34	GWR Swindon	Parcels	Angular
35 to 36	GWR Swindon	Passenger	Angular 2-car unit
37 to 38	GWR Swindon	Passenger	Angular 2-car unit



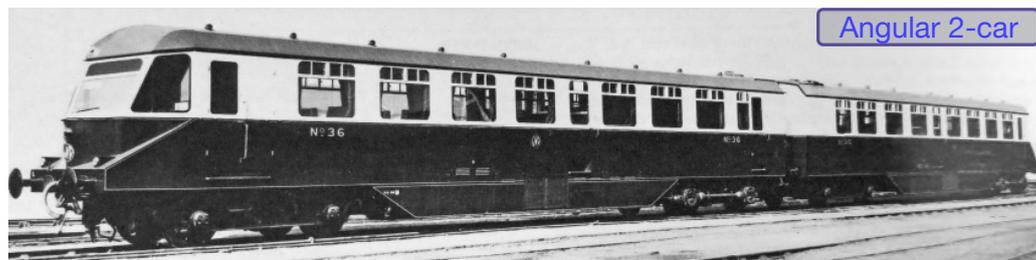
Streamlined



Angular



Experimental



Angular 2-car

The story as far as Stourbridge shed was concerned started in March 1936 when number 8 was delivered new. However, it did not last long before heading to Bristol (St Philip’s Marsh) two months later. Whether it was actually used in service is undocumented. The same could be said of the 2-car units. 35/36 arrived new at Stourbridge in November 1941 followed by 37/38 in February 1942. Again, they soon moved away with 35/36 heading to Reading and 37/38 to Bristol (St Philip’s Marsh).

After the war, Stourbridge received three railcars with 33 arriving in 1945 and 8 and 14 in 1946. 33 transferred away in 1953 when it was converted to become one half of a 2-car unit, replacing 37 which had been damaged by fire and scrapped. However 8 and 14 were to remain at Stourbridge throughout the majority of the 1950s, being renumbered W8W and W14W after nationalisation.

In 1950, the Stourbridge railcars operated two diagrams on Mondays to Saturdays and one on Sundays. These diagrams concentrated on two routes - Dudley to Old Hill and Dudley to Birmingham Snow Hill via Great Bridge South.

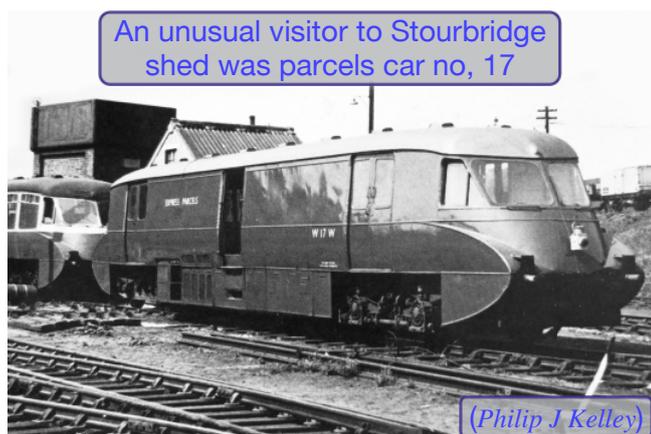


Duty A saw the railcar run empty from Stourbridge to Dudley on weekdays to enter service. It then did 3 round trips to Old Hill, 1 round trip to Snow Hill, 6 round trips to Old Hill, 1 round trip to Snow Hill, and 3 round trips to Old Hill, before returning empty from Dudley to Stourbridge. On Saturdays it ran empty to Old Hill then in service to Dudley. It then followed the same pattern as weekdays except that it ran 7 round trips to Old Hill between its 2 round trips to Snow Hill.

Duty B saw the railcar run empty from Stourbridge to Dudley on weekdays to enter service. It then did 3 round trips to Old Hill, 4 round trips to Snow Hill, 2 round trips to Old Hill and 2 round trips to Snow Hill. It then returned to Stourbridge Junction in service. The Saturday service was the same as on weekdays, except that it only did 1 round trip to Old Hill between its two stints on the Snow Hill service.



On Sundays, the railcar ran in service from Stourbridge Junction to Dudley, followed by 2 round trips in service to Snow Hill. It then did a round trip to Stourbridge, running empty in both directions. The afternoon and evening saw 4 round trips to Snow Hill before it returned empty to Stourbridge.



1957 saw numbers 7 and 15 move to Stourbridge and this enabled the Stourbridge Town branch to be converted to railcar operation. Number 13 joined them in January 1958. However, railcar operation in the Stourbridge area was now short lived. 1958 saw the introduction of the Class 122 first generation bubble cars and some of these were allocated to Tyseley diesel depot. Railcars 7, 8 and 15 were withdrawn from

Stourbridge shed in January 1959. The two remaining Stourbridge based railcars, 13 and 14, continued in service until 16 May 1959 when they were transferred to Leamington Spa, where they remained until withdrawn in August 1960. As Rob wrote in his article, the Class 122 bubble cars took over, not only on the Stourbridge Town branch but also on the Dudley to Old Hill and Dudley to Snow Hill routes until these succumbed to the Beeching Axe.