



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 55

South of England Group

September 2009

Vice Presidents – Alan Pegler OBE, FRSA; Sir William McAlpine Bt., FRSE, FCIT, FRSA

SUMMER OUTING TO EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY

As has become normal practice, every two years the Group organises a weekend summer outing to coincide with the FNRM AGM in York. This year our party travelled to the East Lancashire Railway, by way of an overnight stay in Manchester – coincidentally allowing us to sample the Manchester Metrolink – albeit in abbreviated form due to the city-centre renewals.

Peter Duncan met us at Bury Bolton Road station to give an overview of the preservation company history. He pointed out that BR closed the line in 1980, having diverted freight and passenger workings to Bury. The preservation company opened to Ramsbottom in 1987 and Rawtenstall in 1991. Finding a solution to an original flat crossing on the line to Heywood over the Manchester Metrolink, caused a delay in the West-East link from Bury. The solution, a bridge, was built in 1993. This has exceptionally steep gradients on the two approaches, the one on the west having a very short length of 1:25. Between 1993 and 2003 the line to Heywood was prepared and the increasing bureaucracy tackled – the latter only being overcome 6 weeks prior to the opening in September 2003. The additional line out of Bury, and the possible conflicting routes to Buckley Wells works, required significant resignalling and a major exercise is only just drawing to a close. The south box had its original L&Y frame removed and replaced with a BR 65 lever frame. A major element has been the installation and modification of a signal

gantry recovered from Lostock Junction, where it controlled the lines to Wigan and Preston. An extension has been fitted to the west end to control the loop platform. The station at Bury has also undergone significant transformation, a new up (Manchester direction) platform has been built on the site of the original East Lancashire Railway Offices. Just to the North West of the station, Bury Transport Museum is located in the old covered-goods warehouse, an unusual design of building comprising three roof pitches held up by two parallel rows of cast iron columns. Bury was also surrounded by coal yards, the Holcombe Brook branch came off at Bury and was used by Dick-Kerr & Co. to test out electric haulage in the early part of the 20th century.

John Tait, Hon. Secretary of the Society, and his wife, Susan, then took over for the tour round the site. John described the governance structure, with the ELR Trust at the top, with the trustees, some representing the local councils. Under this is the ELR Company with the ELR Holding Company, the latter a registered charity.

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The Association sits alongside the Holding Company, providing both trustees and Company directors. Their relationship with the local government, including Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive, are good. As an example of the latter, a few weeks ago the GMPTE's Metrolink unveiled a newly liveried tram (N° 1007) decked throughout with advertisements for the ELR. The normal sponsor fee, upwards of £30,000 p.a., was waived completely.

We moved off the platforms. Just to the south of the station, under the road bridge, is a steel-sheeted, grey-painted coach with the words "circus" painted on. This coach started life as a L&Y carriage, then being converted to an ambulance coach for WWI, and used for the same purpose in WWII. After the war it served as a departmental vehicle before ending its days as a store. It then went through various, mainly council, ownerships. The final ownership transfer documents are to be passed to the society in a few weeks time. In anticipation of this, they launched a restoration appeal, which quickly generated £4,000. With this in hand they were given approval to start the clearout of the insides – and were immediately rewarded with a stash of old tin and aluminium cans, the scrap value of which doubled their cash reserve! Behind the steel panels and tin cans, they found that the original L&Y lining was still extant, so they are looking forward to an interesting restoration project.

Moving across the lines, past the signal box and coach shed, we crossed a gated access road, before entering Buckley Wells depot. Here John described the plans for the site. The west side is currently being levelled using demolition debris provided by local contractors. This will ultimately be the location for a new four-road running shed with turntable, and a carriage shed capable of holding all the line's stock.

John then turned to the east of the site, where the original 1846 East Lancashire Railway locomotive works building is still standing,

and told us that the spare ground between it and the access line could become the site of a new outstation for the NRM. Negotiations are proceeding and could result in a new halt being built to allow passenger connection with Bury station. This would also allow the society to make use of the extensive car parking space available at Buckley Wells for general visitors to the railway as well as the NRM outstation. The intention is to have both a display area and new educational complex, connected to the existing building via a new walkway. The local council is, not surprisingly, very enthusiastic.

Turning to the original ELR loco workshop, John described how it was nearly lost to the society. Back in 1993, both Sainsbury and Tesco were vying for the site. With some quick footwork, the society managed to get it listed (grade 1). The local council then gave them a challenge. If they could organise a successful event to attract the public to the area, they could buy the building for £250,000, rather than the £3-4 million being offered by the two supermarkets. So was born the "End of Steam" event. On the second day the council honoured their pledge and handed over the ownership documents. The building has to be financially self-sufficient though, which is why Ian Riley has the lease on part of the building. The arrangement is mutually convenient, the society gets the income and both organisations benefit from the pooling of machinery and equipment. Ironically, this arrangement has turned the clock back 170 years with the building once again housing the construction of steam locomotives.

We toured both parts of the building, in the Ian Riley side seeing some of the contract work, including the repair of *Flying Scotsman's* firebox. This needed substantial rework of past repairs to bring it up to standard. On the Society side, we saw Black 5 N° 45337 and N° 42765 undergoing rebuilds. The latter needs a new tender which has been secured from Cheddleton, and we

saw it in the final stages of preparation. Like many railways, relations with “Thomas” copyright owners are strained, and they no longer run these events. The loco which took this guise, Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0T N° 680 of 1903, is now to be loaned to other railways.

At the rear of the Society's roads was a coach, somewhat incongruously stabled at the end of the row of locomotives. This is an original coach from the 1938 *Coronation* set, a mixed saloon-compartment unit. It is owned by Ian Riley but is being lovingly restored by the society's Keith Battersby who, judging by the quality of the workmanship, is a master carpenter. So far he has spent seven years on the project and expects to spend a further two (but it could be longer!). All the costs are being borne by Ian Riley but the planning and procurement is done by Keith, who has drawn extensively on the NRM's archive of plans and photographs – actually mainly the latter. It should be a superb piece of restoration once complete.

We then moved to the carriage workshop where Hugh Linney took over the description. As is usual for preserved railways, most of the carriages are ex-BR and, as usual, they all suffer the common design faults – rust-worm on the lower plates and end plates. Repair involves substantial amounts of “grind – weld – fill – paint”. They are looking forward to the relocation of the L&Y ambulance coach, see earlier, as a little light relief from the repetition. Hugh explained how the society was lucky to have in its membership, Alan Howlett, an engineer employed by the Chloride Battery Company in Manchester. He was a magician when it came to restoring old carriage batteries, and one coach, N° 4350, which is the oldest on the line, is still running with its original batteries, thanks to Alan. In honour of his work, one coach was repainted and refitted as the “*Howlett Bar*”, although sadly Alan died soon afterwards. We also saw Pete Waterman-owned observation car N°

W15066 stabled in the shed. Then the final surprise – just behind the latter, was Class 33 D6525 - “*Captain Bill Smith RNR*”. This has been transferred north for work. Although the nameplates are on the locomotive, the subsidiary plates have been removed. These plates, which were paid for by the FNRM, explain the significance of the name and Bill's position in the vanguard of direct preservation of main-line locomotives. We were given the contact in the restoration team and hope to arrange for the subsidiary plates to be relocated.

We finished the tour with a visit to Bury South Signalbox, where we saw the extensive changes made to the frame to accommodate the enhanced track layout. The 'box is structurally as operated by the L&Y, indeed it is of a design which pre-dates the L&Y's own boxes, although it has had additional windows positioned at the rear in order to control the lines to Heywood.

We made our way back to the station in time to join the 13.10 departure to Rawtenstall. John and Susan joined us on the trip giving a running commentary of the sights and history of the line. Following a few trips up and down the line, we finally arrived back at Bury in time to catch the Metrolink tram back to Manchester Victoria and a quick sprint up the hill to Piccadilly for our trains south. Metrolink is undergoing substantial rebuilding in the city centre, which means that trams are not running and you either need to catch the bus or use “Shanks' Pony between the termini. Reinstatement of the full service is due sometime around 2012.

Our thanks to John and Susan Tait, and the team at the ELR for making us so welcome. We wish them well in the inevitable expansion of this popular line and, should the plans for the NRM outstation reach fruition, look forward to our return trip in the not-too-distant future. Photographs overleaf were taken with the permission of the East Lancashire Railway.

SUMMER OUTING TO THE EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY



At the entry to Bury Bolton Street station



John Taite provides the pre-briefing



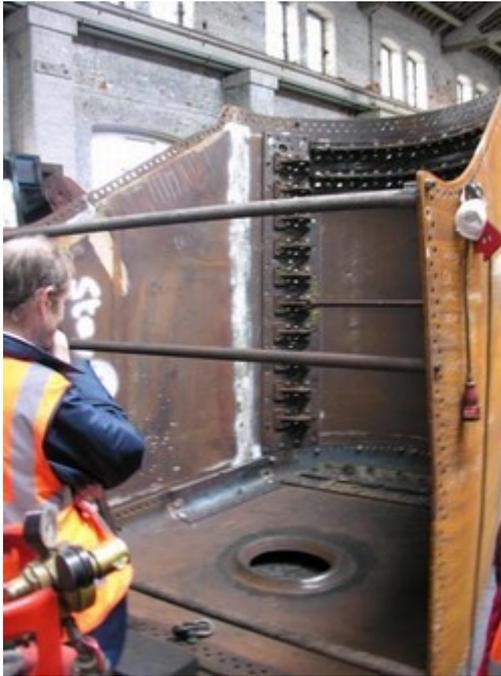
The Group look towards Bury Station and 'box'



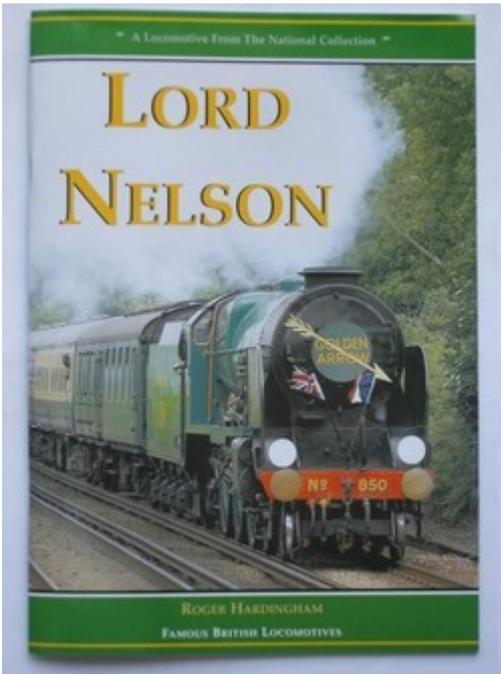
Entering Buckley Wells and the possible location of an NRM outstation?



In the company of *Captain Bill Smith RNR*



Left
Inspecting *Flying Scotman* firebox



Left the new *Lord Nelson* booklet



Below
The stand at Alexandra Palace

Below the invited guests at the unveiling of the streamlined *Duchess of Hamilton*



LORD NELSON AT LAST

We have been eagerly awaiting the book on *Lord Nelson* in the FNRM "Famous British Locomotives" series for quite some time. It has now appeared, and very good it is too! Written by Roger Hardingham (with a little help from his friends) it tells the story of the inception of the LN class and the life of 850 from 1926 to the present day. Roger has

acquired numerous photographs from the early years as well as a good selection of colour photos from her sojourn at Carnforth and then through the rebuild at Eastleigh and her recent mainline running. A very worthy addition to our stocklist and available at £8.00 per copy (£7.00 to Friends).

"DUCHESS" RETURNS TO THE MUSEUM

On the evening of 19th May the newly re-streamlined LMS Pacific No. 6229 *Duchess of Hamilton* was propelled into the Museum watched from the gallery by 229 Club members, other donors and invited guests. All then moved to the floor of the Great Hall to attend the launch of a new exhibition - **Streamlined: Styling An Era** -

The exhibition explores the links between 1930s society, engineering and design using the newly re-streamlined "Duchess" as the

central exhibit.

Returned from Tyseley Locomotive Works after months of work, severely prolonged by delays including difficulties in obtaining the correct gauge of steel for the casing, the lady is stunning in her air-smoothed crimson lake and gold dress. We all now have the opportunity to see a Stanier Pacific in the glorious form it briefly had pre-war.

George Rutter

OUTREACH REPORT

On 28th and 29th March we attended the London Festival of Railway Modelling at Alexandra Palace. We were in our regular spot near the entrance to the second hall, so most visitors needed to pass by us in order to reach the rest of the layouts. The Saturday was very busy with a constant stream of people, not just from London but the whole country and overseas. Sunday was much quieter, possibly because the rain had set in. Over the two days, there were plenty of questions about the Museum and its displays with an increasing amount of interest in the Shildon site. Possibly because of the weather or the economic downturn, our takings were lower but, even so, another successful event. Our next outing was on 9th May when we made our first visit to the south-west Hertfordshire Model Railway Exhibition at Bushey. This was quite a sizeable show, taking up several halls in the town's main school, located conveniently close to the M1 junction. Again there was a steady stream of

visitors throughout the day with plenty of interest in the Museum. One visitor started with some very negative comments on the Museum's policy but following several minutes of dialogue with Phil Brown, was so convinced about the benefits of the Friends' activities that he went away with a substantial pack of goodies. If anything highlights the benefit of the outreach programme, that does.

The "sales on the move", where we accompany NRM locos on steam excursions on the mainline, have also been continuing - see the next item.

We are now looking forward to the Autumn season of exhibitions. We are scheduled to attend the Tring & District, TADrail, exhibition on 10th October, (see enclosed leaflet for details). The main event will be the National Model Railway Exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham on the weekend of 28th & 29th November.

TRAVELS WITH OLLIE

Since September 2008 we have been privileged to be able to operate our sales stand on trains hauled by the NRM's current mainline locomotive 70013 *Oliver Cromwell*.

A glance at the schedules will show that she has been worked incredibly hard, with trips to the furthest points east and west in England and Wales, to the south coast and points north.

She has – in the main – proved extremely reliable, although your scribe turned up with the sales kit on two occasions to find that she had failed at the last minute and been substituted (leaking mudhole door and leaking firebox stays – where have I heard that before?).

Our range of goods for sale on the trains has continued to expand. Simply getting the stuff to the starting point requires some careful thought to avoid stairs on stations and the Underground with a very heavy pull-along case, a rucksack and the collapsible trolley to carry. But the takings make it worthwhile and have amounted to over £11,000 over the year from which we generate a useful surplus which goes to support the Museum in the ways you have read about.

Selling on the trains is a two person job. I have been grateful for help received from various members of the Group plus the Chairman's wife on two occasions (the only

way she could see me on my birthday was a trip to Worcester!). By using a mini-trolley we are able to go through the whole train with our wares and we give the punters a handout with details of our Group as well as the price list.

Notable runs have include the last steam ascent of the Folkestone Harbour branch on 14 March 2009 and the recent trip on the East Suffolk line from Lowestoft to Ipswich (which included some mainline haulage from Norwich to Lowestoft with the loco running in reverse).

We often see the same people on the trains – some indeed go on every train (and not just the coach stewards!). *Ollie* has become a firm favourite for the power and speed she exhibits and the two cylinder bark that can be heard all through the train.

70013 is now set to work in the north for the rest of this year. We know not when she'll be back; but our thanks to the train operators and the 5305 Loco Association support crew for their marvellous work.

As a memento of this era, you might be interested to know that we have commissioned our own DVD of "NRM Steam in the South" featuring 70013, 30777 and 850 on recent trains. It's excellent and is 85 minutes long. Normal retail price is £10.00 but £9.00 to Friends, direct from me.

Ian Harrison

FLYING SCOTSMAN "SOS" APPEAL

In the March Briefing we asked South of England Group members to support the NRM "Steam Our Scotsman" appeal. The idea was that all contributions made by our members would be matched by the same amount from Group funds. The closing date for the offer was 31st August.

Our Group Treasurer, Roger Smith, has now completed his work on the abaccus and can report that members donated a total of

£1,249.72. With the Group's matching funds, this doubles up to make £2,499.44. We've found the odd 56p to make it up to a round £2,500.00 and this sum is on its way north into the main "S.O.S. Appeal Fund".

Many thanks to all who contributed. As those of us on the summer outing noted, there is a lot of work going into its restoration. I'm sure we all look forward to seeing the engine back in steam and on the main line again.

FOR CURRENT LIST OF FORTHCOMING LECTURES

See the Diary section of the web page at:

<http://www.nrmfriends-south.org.uk/Diary.html>

FOR CONTACTS IN FNRM SOUTH OF ENGLAND

GROUP:

See Contacts at main index:

<http://www.nrmfriends-south.org.uk/index.html>