



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 61

South of England Group

April 2011

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

2011 AGM REPORT

Our Group AGM and New Year Social, held on Monday 10th January, went ahead as normal – no snow or transport problems this year (unlike last year, and Heathrow two weeks earlier!). Twenty three members and guests were present. Our Chairman, Ian Harrison, reviewed the past year noting our full programme of lectures, summer outing, and the Outreach work. The latter covered 8 exhibitions and 18 rail-tours which were hauled by locomotives of the National Collection. The financial results of all this

work were reported by our Treasurer, Roger Smith, who noted the healthy closing balance. Les Butler described his plans for our 2011 summer outing to York and the Yorkshire Dales Railway. As required by our constitution, three members of committee, Ian Harrison, Alan Gosling and Les Butler, have completed their terms and all were duly re-elected. The audience enjoyed a buffet accompanied by a video presentation of 2010 rail-tours and the Group's summer outing to the Nene Valley Railway.

MEMBERS' EVENING

As you will see from the rear page, we have the next members' evening scheduled for Monday 11th April. You are welcome to bring along items which will be of interest to the rest of the group. You will be aware that we make use of the large screen monitor in the room with our own computers. If your material is in slide or video (e.g. VHS) format I can arrange its transfer to electronic media, providing you get it to me before the

event – Thursday 7th April at the latest. If you wish to show slides, please let me or one of the other committee members, know and we will ensure there is a slide projector available. Of course, the material need not be for projection and printed or other physical material is equally welcome, provide you are willing to talk about it and can get it up the stairs to the meeting room.

Mel Draper

CONTENTS

2011 AGM REPORT.....	1
MEMBERS' EVENING.....	1
CAMDEN'S RAILWAY HERITAGE.....	2
OUTREACH.....	3
THE MUSEUM WHOSE ROOF FELL IN.....	4
EFFORT TO RESTORE LOCOMOTIVE USED IN CHURCHILL FUNERAL	5
LOCOMOTIVE TIMING AND LOAD-BOOK.....	6
FORTHCOMING EVENTS.....	8

CAMDEN'S RAILWAY HERITAGE

Seventeen members and guests were present on 14th February when Peter Darley, Founder of Camden Railway Heritage Trust, spoke about the historical background to Camden's railway heritage and the role of the Trust.

The area of interest is defined by Chalk Farm station, Primrose Hill tunnel and approaches, and Camden Bank, including the Camden Goods yard area. Many of the interesting buildings are now underground, although having originally been built at ground level.

Peter commenced by describing the early railway history, including the winding operations on the bank. This had a very short period of use, locomotives managing all trains from 1844 and the stationery winding engines were auctioned in 1847.

Locomotive stabling was on the north side of the line from its opening. This was convenient for servicing the goods yard, but produced conflicting movements as locos came on and off trains on the main line. A passenger engine house was built on the southern side and a round-house (now the Roundhouse Theatre) on the northern side of the line.

Goods traffic developed and so did the need for interchange between road, rail and canal. A goods interchange warehouse was built by Pickfords in 1843 between the canal and railway. In the basement were stables, while at rail level, the warehouse was close to the Camden ticket-checking platforms. The LNWR built their own interchange facilities in 1848, evidence for the entry to which is still present in the form of an oblique arch by the side of the railway. The area expanded around the goods sheds and included Gilbey's Gin distillery and stores, an ice store and wharf, Collard & Collard piano factory, as well as stables and a Horse Hospital.

Peter then moved on to look at the site today and what remains of the original structures. This includes Regent's Canal and Hampstead Road Lock, Primrose Hill Tunnel East Portal, the stationary Winding Engine Vaults and the Roundhouse, all of which are now listed as Grade 2* structures by English Heritage. One of the ice stores, or wells, still exists but is sealed – not too surprising as it is about 100ft deep. Two of the canal basins, where transshipments took place, still exist although only one is currently still in use as a boat turning area. The locks are still present with the lock-keeper's cottage, as is the “Roving Bridge”, which allowed tow-horses to cross the canal without unhitching. It still shows wear on the stones from the tow ropes. The Trust was established when developers were threatening to demolish the horse tunnel which gives access to the basin here from the stables to the north.

Turning to Primrose Hill, the portal has boundary walls very close to the line because Eton College, owners of the land, wanted to capitalise on the development. By 2005 the portal area was overgrown and graffiti covered. Network Rail have now cleaned up some of this and English Heritage agreed to grade it 2* in recognition of its early status and special architecture.

Underneath much of the goods site are vaults which handled coal traffic and housed the boiler room for the winding engines. Access to the vaults is via a series of tunnels, which connect with the horse tunnels. The winding mechanism operated using a tarred hemp rope over a 20ft driving wheel, passing over three times, onto a tensioning pulley housed in the vaults, with a counter-weight in a 82ft deep well to provide some load balance, to a return wheel then back down the bank to a fixed pulley 250 yards from the

buffers at Euston. The vaults which housed this equipment have to undergo a regular structural check to ensure they are still safe for the trains to run above – the trains to/from Euston still thunder overhead. The check requires pumping out water from the vaults, as it is normally submerged to a depth of some 8ft – well above the level of the canal. The location of all the equipment is still visible in the near-cathedral-scale vaults. Underneath the old goods yard there are three more sets of vaults – one from 1837, now mainly destroyed, the “Camden Catacombs” from 1847 which are partly filled in, and the 1855 vaults built when the goods yard was extended down to the canal. Both the 1847 and 1855 vaults consist of cross passages of high and low (less than 6ft) passageways. The vaults were listed by English Heritage because they are the largest and most complete complex of stables and storage facilities in London.

The Roundhouse dates back to 1847 with the track level 15ft above ground level – this is still evident if you attend a concert and have to climb the stairs! It has been a performing arts centre for some 40 years and had a major restoration in 2006. While this required replacement of some of the structural members at the higher level, much of the original fabric is still present.

The horse hospital dates from 1883/1897

and was possibly designed originally as carriage sheds although there is no evidence that it was ever used as such. It is now “Proud Camden” for youth use, housing a café and bar. The horse “creep”, which allowed horses to be led down to the lower level of the block, is still present. The eastern horse tunnel, of 1856, leads out to the canal but there is no public access because it is in multiple ownership. The western horse tunnel has now been converted into a restaurant. Finally, the hydraulic accumulator house of circa 1860 is still present though out of use; it supplied power for capstans and machine tools in the goods yard.

Peter closed his talk by describing the work of the Camden Railway Heritage Trust. This was set up to promote the preservation and restoration of the railway and associated heritage, encourage public access to the sites and recognition of its history. They work to encourage developers and English Heritage to take action on the remaining historic buildings. They also aimed to get a heritage railway trail established but the local council had difficulty deciding which department should take action! So they published their own trail guide, copies of which were made available to those present at the talk. More information on the Trust and the history of the site is available from the Trust's website at www.crht1837.org

OUTREACH

The stand attended the East Bedfordshire Model Railway Exhibition at Biggleswade on 12th February. We had an unusual position, just inside the doors leading to the refreshment room. Business was steady although attendance at the show was a little down on last year.

On 26th and 27th March we were at the London Festival of Railway Modelling at Alexandra Place where we were surprised

to be given an extra 6 ft of display space. Together with the availability of the NRM-exclusive “00” models, this made for a very successful show for us. Our next event will be the SW Herts model railway exhibition at Bushey on 7th May. Meanwhile, with *Oliver Cromwell* now back on the main-line, we are accompanying it on its rail-tour duties throughout the region.

THE MUSEUM WHOSE ROOF FELL IN



No, not the Great Hall at the NRM. Whilst in the USA last Autumn I visited the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Museum which hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons when a very heavy snowfall during the night of 17th February 2003 caused the roof to partially collapse. Severe damage was caused to some exhibits. A world-wide appeal led to the rapid rebuilding not only of the Museum, but also a purpose-built restoration centre. The new building was opened on 13th November 2004 and the result is stunning! Chatting to the folks there, they said that the collapse was a blessing in disguise in that it exposed weaknesses in the original structure. Had the roof collapsed when the Museum was open it could have been far worse..... Baltimore is the home of US railroads. In

1825 the city of Baltimore was concerned that the newly opened Erie Canal was going to divert trade to New York and so devised a scheme to build a railroad over 300 miles to the Ohio River (ie before the Liverpool and Manchester was built!). It was not achieved for another 27 years, but at least the vision was there! The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was the first long distance railway in the US and had to overcome many difficulties along the way. It later became a key part of the Union Army's struggle in the Civil War. The site at Mount Clare became akin to Swindon or Crewe. Everything for the railway was manufactured there. The current museum structure was built as a passenger car shop in 1869/70. The works continued to grow until the 1930s when diesels started to take over and fewer

shops were needed. Three major fires over the years have also had their effects! The 1950s and 60s saw the site decline; a museum was established but soon closed. The Museum was re-opened in 1964 and has developed steadily since then as it has won the support of the City Council, the Smithsonian Institution and the railroad operators.

It now hosts a remarkable collection of

exhibits from the earliest horse-drawn rail vehicles to enormous steam and diesel locomotives. The museum's website, www.borail.org gives you an idea. Admission charges are \$14 per adult, children \$8. On the day we visited there should have been train rides (extra charge) but there weren't. But there weren't many customers either.



The overall impression is of a museum with a lovely building, and some superb exhibits but more stock than it can accommodate (where have we heard that before?). It is well worth a visit if in the vicinity and the rest of Baltimore is worth a look too.

Ian Harrison

EFFORT TO RESTORE LOCOMOTIVE USED IN CHURCHILL FUNERAL

So ran the headline in the Northern Echo for 31st January. This gave a good description of the fund-raising campaign to restore the locomotive which hauled Winston Churchill's funeral train, in time for the 50th anniversary of his death. As I hope you know, the South of England Group is leading the campaign and our own Ian Harrison was quoted as saying: "We are determined that the work be carried out in good time for the 50th anniversary of Churchill's death and the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, in 2015."

A gala dinner is to be held at the NRM on 9th April and a special guest will be James

Lester, who was the fireman on Churchill's funeral train. He was quoted in the Northern Echo article, saying: "*The steam days were always special to me, and my journey on the funeral train stands out in particular. My memories remain with me today and I am giving the proposed restoration of Winston Churchill to its former glory my full support.*"

Various members of the South of England Group will be at the gala dinner and there will be a report in the next edition of the *Briefing*, along with a progress update on how far we have got on the campaign.

LOCOMOTIVE TIMING AND LOAD-BOOK

It was a full house as Mike Notley joined us to explain some interesting runs he had timed. Mike will be well known to many for his regular column in Steam Railway magazine. He kept the audience fully engaged with his anecdotes without recourse to slides, only referring occasionally to some distributed paper timing sheets.

He started his talk by giving his background. He is a third generation railwayman, his family coming from Derby which is where he followed his father and grandfather into the business. He had, of course, been a spotter in his youth, but on joining the Divisional Control Office at Derby in 1957, in the post of "assistant controller", he found that his knowledge of locomotives didn't count for much. He quickly learned the ropes from the staff there, especially from the inspectors and with the ever-present threat of interrogations by the controller. He recounted several of his early encounters with the inspectors including the loaning by one of his prize chronograph so that Mike could make one of his first timings on a run from Kings Cross. Unfortunately the hand fell off! There were also amusing stories of operations, such as an investigation by one inspector of the unusual number of fatalities amongst consignments of chicks being sent from Derby across London to the southern counties. The inspector travelled all the way with them and found the problem – the cross-London roads were so bouncy that the chicks were thrown all over the truck, with most of the chicks' droppings finishing up on him!

In his 7 years in Divisional Control, Mike got to grips with train logging data which came in frequent staccato telephone reports from around the region, all having to be carefully logged by hand on large

reporting sheets – a good apprenticeship for his on-going hobby.

Mike then turned to a few of his performance logs involving N^o 462229 *Duchess of Hamilton*. He started with a run on Saturday 14th August 1993 on the Cumbrian Mountain Express. This was the day when the loco claimed the "Blue Riband" for the climb from Appleby. The award is for the fastest climb from milestone 275 to 259¾, hauling not less than 12 coaches and using only one fireman on that leg. The calculations show that the *Duchess* produced an average Estimated Draw-Bar Horsepower (EDHP) of 2300 and peaked at 2520 EDHP – similar to a *Deltic* diesel.

Unfortunately, the big steam locos disappeared from the Settle and Carlisle shortly after this event, so there have been no more recent attempts on the Blue Riband. Until then, steam had been restricted to just three routes, the S&C, North Wales coast, and the Welsh Marches. BR then introduced "Open Access" and many more routes were possible. Mike attended meetings with Mel Chamberlain, of Days Out, who was one of those most eager to take advantage of this relaxation. He wanted to organise a trial of engines over the routes from Crewe to Carlisle, out via Shap and return via Settle, with *Duchess of Hamilton*, No 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*, and No 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* taking part. The *Duchess* was at a slight disadvantage since the other two locos were passed for 75 mph running, whereas she could only, officially, go to 60 mph. To create a level playing field, all operators agree to restrict the runs to 60 mph. The winning target was the engine which produced the greatest total power output, through the summing of the average EDHPs on Grayrigg, Shap and Ais Gill.

First on was *Sir Nigel Gresley* on 30th September 1995 which, suffered a stuck whistle on the outbound trip through Preston. This was fixed during a water-stop but bad steaming due to poor coal, meant that power output was well down and the final count was a cumulative total of 4340 EDHP for the three banks. Two days later it was the turn of *Duke of Gloucester* which made a near perfect run on all three banks, actually accelerating up Grayrigg Bank, and maintaining well over 50 mph up Shap. The overall score was 6500, which became the Duchess's target the following day. Unfortunately, she suffered injector problems and the water level in the boiler got so low on the Shap climb that she had to be eased back. This spoilt her run for the rest of the trip and she only managed a score of 5681.

In rounding off this section of his talk, Mike looked forward to the return of A1 *Tornado* to the main line so more performance records can be made of modern steam. In general, he considers that there are good reasons for every main-line steam-hauled train to have detailed performance logs – this will give an archive for future generations, recognition to the crews for their work, and provide evidence if there are compensation claims by Railtrack against the operators for delays. On the latter, he pointed out that it is not just the crew's responsibility to maintain time; stewards, and, indeed, passengers, can cause delays simply be slow boarding.

Mike then turned to the second part of his talk, on the subject of load hauling guidelines for steam haulage. This goes back to BR and before, when trains, both passenger and goods, were made up along the route – vehicles being added as traffic demanded. This meant there was a need for load limits for each engine class so that the operations staff could roster the correct engine to ensure that the train ran

to time. Things are slightly different now. Train loads can be guaranteed before the train leaves, removing one area of uncertainty. But the engine is very much on its own and with no readily available backup. While usually the operators get it right, there are occasional problems, perhaps due to poor coal, greasy rails and signal checks. A “load book”, giving the maximum train loads for particular locomotives could go some way to giving both the engine and crew a fighting chance to overcome these problems.

Rather than use the old BR tables, Mike suggests a new one is produced listing the loads for each of the steam routes and main-line certified locomotives. This will be necessary as modern locomotives range much wider than their old company territories – it is no longer the case that GWR locos work just in the west, or LNER ones in the east. Loads should be set on not what is possible but what is reasonable. This could have a marginal effect on the number of seats available on trains, but by avoiding delays due to stalling or poor running, and the resulting Railtrack compensation payments, it could reduce the commercial risk to the operating companies. Mike gave some suggestions on how such a table could be prepared, using four haulage types over the Settle & Carlisle, North Wales, and Shap. This showed how loads could differ over sections of the route even for the same classification of locomotive. Mike suggests that an ad-hoc committee be established involving the operators and Railtrack, with some performance experts, to establish such a system and then review it regularly. This is not to say that train planners do a bad job – generally they do a good one, but a bit more cooperation and forethought could make the system better and avoid problems.

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>