



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 71

South of England Group

September 2013

Vice Presidents – Sir William McAlpine Bt., FRSE, FCIT, FRSA; Richard Hardy

LATE SUMMER OUTING

On 21st September, a select group of South of England Friends followed up the talk by Mark Yonge at our February meeting with a trip to Robertsbridge to see the progress which is being made on the Rother Valley Railway. This is the project to connect the Kent and East Sussex Railway from its current terminus at Bodiam to the National Rail station at

Robertsbridge. The visit coincided with the K&ESR's heritage weekend, so there was plenty to see, including a trip on the K&ESR's DEMU to the very end of their line and at, Robertsbridge, a "push-pull" on the new railway in three beautifully restored 4-wheeler coaches with "Terrier" No. 32670 in charge. More in the next issue.

RAILWAYS CHANGE LIVES

The NRM and National Archive recently held two conferences under this title. The first was held at the National Archives at Kew on 7th September and the second at the NRM at York the following Saturday. Both events were well attended, the Kew event attracting some 75 people and around 40 at York. The FNRM had an information stand at both events, the South of England Group providing the one at Kew. This resulted in two new

members joining the Friends. The NRM and National Archive hope that such joint events, targeted at researchers and the serious students of railway history, will become a regular feature. It reflects the fact that they hold a significant proportion of the national records connected with railways, and should help make the existence and use of the records more familiar to potential users.

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A PERSONAL VIEW OF 4472

By Roland Kennington

Unfortunately, our planned speaker for the September meeting, Paul Kirkman, Director of the NRM, was ill and unable to attend. Luckily, Roland Kennington was in the audience and agreed to step into the breach, giving an impromptu, but fascinating, talk of his experiences with No. 4472. He kept the packed audience's attention for over an hour and a half.

Roland began by congratulating the Museum on a fantastic year focussed on the Great Gathering. He paid tribute to the former Director, Steve Davies, for his work in creating the foundations for this. He noted that in his time working for Dr Tony Marchington, there had been abortive attempts to purchase *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and *Dominion of Canada*. Ultimately, Dr Marchington purchased *Bittern* after extensive negotiations with its owner, Geoff Drury, before subsequently selling it, in 1999, to Jeremy Hoskins. Roland was engaged to give advice during its restoration at the Mid-Hants Railway at Ropley.

The main part of the talk concerned *Flying Scotsman*, which has played a big part in Roland's life. He first came across the engine in a professional capacity in late 1985 through an approach from George Hinchcliffe and Bernard Staite asking whether he would be willing to take the job of chief engineer on *Flying Scotsman*. This was around the time he was asked to repair the combination lever following its fracture during a trial run from its then base at Carnforth on 23rd December 1985. *Flying Scotsman* had to haul a 50th Birthday Train out of Marylebone for its then owner, Sir William McAlpine, on 5th January 1986. Bearing in mind the repair was necessary over the Christmas shutdown period, a weld was the only viable option. The engine duly hauled Sir William's train

but, while the welded lever worked, it was clear the engine was not steaming well. By 5th May it was clear the engine was only working on two cylinders. On inspection, he found the left side piston head bent at an angle of 10 degrees, due to a 5/8" bolt being trapped in the cylinder, the piston having worn itself in against the cylinder bore. In addition the centre cylinder was heavily rusted due to a lubrication failure. The left cylinder was re-bored, the centre cylinder cleaned-up and the centre big-end brasses replaced. Within a few weeks it was back in service running regularly on the main line.

By 1993 its main-line ticket had run out and it was in need of a heavy overhaul but the pressure to make it earn its living was still there. It was put into service on the UK preserved lines, but still subject to a punishing work schedule. Finally its boiler failed at the Llangollen Railway. Babcock & Wilcox offered the company's services to repair it and did an excellent job. Roland also persuaded them to have a look at the smokebox, which had never been right, being a replacement gleaned from a BR Standard locomotive. The company offered to make a new one but were looking for something to get some publicity – hence was born the idea of BR green livery with double chimney and smoke deflectors. It then went to the Dart Valley Railway, there still being pressure for it to earn its living, but steam was still coming from the bottom front end.

Following another failure it went back to Southall for repair, but Pete Waterman just wanted to put it on static display at Crewe. Roland stripped the engine down anyway! The time had come to tackle the middle cylinder. When Alan Pegler had bought the locomotive, he also purchased a set of spare cylinders. Unfortunately, the middle cylinder block had been left

outdoors at Carnforth and suffered a lot of corrosion damage. Roland had the facings professionally re-surfaced, which involved the removal of 1mm on one side and 1.5mm on the other. Shims were then laser cut from stainless steel to match each facing, but the frame bolt holes didn't line up with the cylinder, and many holes needed reaming: some holes were nearly half the diameter out. After fitting, there was never a problem with the fit during running.

The then owner, Tony Marchington, pushed hard to get the locomotive out and running, with the result that it went straight into service on steam specials following the rebuild. This was very different from BR procedures at Doncaster, when an engine would be put

on light duties for a while to allow for running in. Between the 1994/5 overhaul and when Roland left the operation in 2004, the engine ran 200,000 miles. Much of this was on VSOE services in the South, a punishing operation involving a lot of rapid acceleration and braking with heavy loads, and 15-16 hours in service.

Roland was not contacted by First Class Partnership, authors of the recent report. While that report calls for high standards for overhauls, Roland argues that is what happened for the last overhaul. He would be quite happy to talk to the NRM and fill in gaps in their knowledge of the engine's recent preservation history. (Your chairman has suggested such a meeting to the NRM Director)

PICTURING AN ICON

THE LATEST ON THE LIMITED-EDITION PRINT

I doubt there are many members of the Friends who are not familiar with the work of Philip D. Hawkins, one of Britain's leading railway artists.

When the South of England Group of the Friends was charged with leading the fund-raising effort for the cosmetic restoration of 34051 *Winston Churchill*, it was clear that we needed to do something special to bring in the money needed. So was born the idea of a painting featuring 34051 plus two other NRM locomotives: 35029 *Ellerman Lines* and 33001 – the ugly duckling Q1 – and the scene would be about a mile from my home, the Battledown flyover near Basingstoke. When I put the idea to Philip he was immediately seized of it. But, he said, Q1s didn't normally work west of Basingstoke, so how about 30777 instead? Done, said I.

Philip has no shortage of commissions so our painting has had to take its place in the queue: but now it's finished and looks stunning. Called *The ACE at Battledown*, it features 34051 hauling the down

summer *Atlantic Coast Express* in 1960 with 35029 on the flyover and 30777 on the down Bournemouth line.

We have 50 Artist's Proofs and a limited edition of 500 numbered prints. Each will be signed by Philip Hawkins; James Lester, the fireman on Sir Winston's funeral train; and Richard Hardy – former Shedmaster at Stewart's Lane.

An order form is enclosed. Friends receive priority in ordering lower numbered prints. This is a very rare opportunity to acquire a superb painting of three NRM locomotives in a genuine and correct context. Purists may say "ah but, the ACE was a Merchant Navy turn!" But on summer Saturdays there was often a relief hauled by anything to hand.

34051 was based at Salisbury for most of its life so the scene is quite plausible.

Interestingly, it could be replicated today with 35028, 34067 and 30777. The only significant changes have been the loss of the telegraph wires and the third rail on the Bournemouth line.

Ian Harrison

PHILIP D HAWKINS AND BATTLEDOWN FLYOVER



The final touches being applied to the painting in the artist's studio
(photo: Ian Harrison)

SUMMER OUTING 2013



Some familiar faces beside 1310 – see report on page 6 *(photo Ian Harrison)*

MALLARD AT GRANTHAM



*Mallard and the LNER Coach Association's Gresley Teak Buffet Car
(photo: Roger Smith)*



The South of England Group's stand at Grantham – before the hordes arrived

THE ELDERLY AND THE OLDEST

On the day after the AGM a party of SoE Group members visited the Middleton Railway in Leeds, the oldest continuously working railway in the world (1758 – present). It is some years since we were last there and we were pleased to see the developments that have occurred, including a smart shop and café facility and the extended shed with “museum” displays.

Built for the haulage of coal from local collieries, the railway has never aspired to big engines and slick trains. It was rescued from oblivion in 1959 by the Leeds University Union Railway Society under the chairmanship of Dr Fred Youell. From very small and inauspicious beginnings the railway has built up a

major collection of industrial steam and diesel locomotives, operating over its 2 mile track length.

For our visit we were hauled by NER Class H 0-4-0 No. 1310, built in 1891 at Gateshead. Re-designated Class Y7 by the LNER, the loco was sold to Pelaw Main collieries in 1931. With the closure of collieries the loco was rescued from the scrapyards in 1964 by the Steam Power Trust for £300! It has an “extended” cab – but still so tiny that the fireman has to use a cut-down shovel.

After restoration between 2009 - October 2011 the loco re-entered service in full NER livery and was a joy to see and hear.

Ian Harrison

SUMMER OUTING 2014

Although 2013 is not out, Les Butler, our Outreach Coordinator, is already turning his attention to next year's outing. He currently proposes a weekend touring the railway sights in the west Gloucestershire area, taking in the Dean Forest Railway, The Flour Mill Locomotive Works, Perrygrove Narrow Gauge Railway, the GWR museum at Coleford, and Tintern Abbey and Station.

To allow Les to develop the plan, including securing hotel accommodation at a reasonable rate, he would welcome expressions of interest from those wishing to take part. No commitment needed at this stage and, since the dates haven't been decided, you can also express your preferences on that score as well.

WINSTON CHURCHILL PROGRESS

The locomotive is at Ropley works on the Mid-Hants Railway. An assessment for asbestos has been completed, and none found, so the cosmetic restoration has commenced. The NRM has let a contract to the MHR to carry out the work at an estimated cost of just over £44k. The missing items of equipment (most of which were “borrowed” to fit on 35029 *Ellerman Lines*) have been identified and the Group is seeking sponsorship for individual items and labour. A sponsorship form is enclosed with this Briefing. The list is also on our South of England website and was featured in

Steam Railway magazine.

The NRM issued a press release on 12th July (on the NRM website) which was picked up by several newspapers and also BBC Radio Solent. Ian Harrison and Jim Lester were interviewed at Ropley alongside and in the cab of 34051 on 5th August and the interview was broadcast on the breakfast show on 6th August.

Attention is now turning to the plans for the celebration events surrounding the 50th anniversary of the funeral train. We obviously look forward to the NRM getting as much publicity as possible as a result of our support for this project.

BMJSB RESTORATION STARTED

As noted in the last Briefing, the restoration of the outer fabric of Borough Market Junction Signal Box is now in hand. The window frames have been removed for repair off-site, and planking is being prepared to replace the rotted outer woodwork.

The dismantling has shown that some of

the window frames date from BR times. The lead weights in these sash windows are functional, if rough, and compare poorly against the well-made originals. Meanwhile investigation of the structural framework, supported by documentary research, indicates that the box dates from 1896 – so well worth conserving.

OUTREACH REPORT

We attended the Northampton Model Railway Exhibition on 20th July. This was the first time it had used this venue and there were a few teething troubles, involving us relocating from a cramped corridor to a more suitable spot. After a rather rushed assembly, we were ready to receive the mayor of Northampton and have a long discussion with him about the Great Gathering (yes, even politicians had heard about it!).

Our main event was the Celebration of Speed at Grantham station on the weekend of 7th and 8th September. Both *Mallard* and the NRM's Deltic *King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry* (KOYLI to his friends) were to attend. As it turned out KOYLI was declared unfit to move the preceding week, so *Mallard* went alone, to be joined at the site by the Deltic Preservation Group's 55019 *Royal Highland Fusilier*, a Class 56, and the LNER Coach Association's Gresley "teak" Buffet Car. Despite the Met Office predicting doom and gloom, the weather turned out fine. There was a slight hiccup when we found the A1 northbound closed north of Stamford resulting in a long diversion via Melton Mowbray. So, again, we were faced with the need to erect the stand quickly, and in a small space (seems to be getting a familiar experience), but managed it in time for the crowds to arrive. And What Crowds! Over the entire weekend, the

headcount exceeded 15,000 – comparable with rates of the Great Gathering.

As the focal point for anything to do with the NRM, our stand was overwhelmed. We fielded all sorts of questions about *Mallard* and the Great Gathering, but the surprising thing was how many questions there were about *Flying Scotsman*. There was a high proportion of families and we ran out of our free handouts on *Rocket* half way through Saturday. A reprint of 300 satisfied Sunday's demand.

Our short stand frontage (8ft compared to our normal 12ft) resulted in many people going away without getting near us. Despite this, by the end of Sunday, we were virtually cleaned out of anything to do with *Mallard* and most of the other items. Many of those we spoke to were planning to attend the Great Gathering II in October – better get ready York!

Our next stand outing will be to the Banbury Model Railway Exhibition on Sunday 29th September, followed by Tring and District Model Railway show on Saturday 12th October and the Peterborough "National Festival of Railway Modelling" on the following weekend, 19th to 20th October. We then finish our autumn session with a visit to the big Warley Model Railway Exhibition at the NEC, Birmingham, on the weekend of 23rd to 24th November. If anyone would like to help man the stand at any of these shows, please contact Mel Draper.

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>