



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 73

South of England Group

March 2014

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

AGM REPORT

The Group's AGM was held on 13th January, with 18 members present and 2 guests. The report on the activities of the Group was given by our Chairman, Ian Harrison, who emphasised our strong lecture and visits programme, and the outreach work. He noted that the number of steam train excursions have been lower than previous years and, unfortunately, the coming year will be similarly sparse. However, the limited edition prints by Philip D Hawkins of the ACE at Battledown have been selling well. As a result, there has already been a substantial contribution to the *Winston Churchill* appeal fund, which now stands in excess of £30,000 - well on its way to the target of £44,000. Looking to the future, the main FNRM AGM at York is on 7th June, and our own summer outing to the Dean Forest is from 19th – 21st September.

Roger Smith gave the Treasurer's report, noting that the Group has significant funds in its reserves. Donations have already been made towards the restoration of Borough Market Junction Signal Box (£2345.77). While income from the steam trains has been lower than

last year, this has been balanced by an increase in the income from the outreach stand, due to the galas at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Fawley Hill, and Grantham. However, the wider successes of the Friends have brought their own challenges. Mainly because of the sales connected with the Great Gathering, the sales income, as a proportion of the FNRM's total income, has exceeded the limits set by the Charity Commission. This has meant that FNRM Enterprises, the associated trading arm of the FNRM, has had to be restarted. In addition, the trading turnover has meant that Enterprises has had to register for VAT. Both of these steps, especially the latter, mean that the accounting has become more complex, particularly in accounting for sales which are a mixture of items subject to standard VAT, zero-rated, or exempt. An accounting system has been established but it is possible, with the end of the Great Gathering, that sales in 2014 will fall back below the VAT threshold again. After the formal business, we all enjoyed the festive refreshments.

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BUILDING MY OWN RAILWAY

John Jolly, Mangapps Railway

John gave his talk without notes or accompanying slides, keeping the audience fully engaged with his anecdotes. His interest in railways was stimulated by his mother's mementos of the 1925 celebrations. At school he was useless at maths, but he and the maths teacher had one thing in common, they were both keen on railways. As a result, there was a school trip to Stratford depot. After school, John went to help run his father's farm, until he married June in 1970 and moved with her to his own farm in Suffolk which, just by chance, was next to the East Suffolk line. The signalling on the line was to be modernised with the loss of all the local boxes, so John and the local signalman got together to try to save the 'box. By this time John was already assembling a collection of railwayana. His first item was a gauge glass retrieved from 65503 on the scrap line at Southend. He also acquired several Beccles station totems and a Southwold Railway station hand bell via a local antiques salesman. This got him hooked on collecting signalling equipment starting with an ex-LMS pegging instrument. Within a few years one room of his farm house was full of railwayana but a move to Mangapps Farm provided more space. The next big step was made by June who saw a waiting room building at Brampton station and said that would make a wonderful summer house. Although he missed out on the initial sale to a neighbour, Jim Prior, then Northern Ireland Secretary, he managed to buy it from him.

Meanwhile, John acquired a 0-6-0 DM shunter D2325 from an old railway yard near the site of Norwich Victoria Station. John knew a local business man who was just starting out in heavy-haulage, and got

him to try his hand at moving the shunter. Moving it down from Norwich went smoothly, but then came to question of where to put it at Mangapps. The temporary solution was to locate it in the farm workshop, using some temporary rails across the yard and a sharp incline into the building. Following advice to "give it a bit of welly", he shot up the incline and just managed to stop a couple of inches before demolishing the end wall of the workshop.

So he had a locomotive, how about track and some wagons? A local sugar-beet factory offered to sell some old private-owner wagons, rails and chairs. The latter turned out to be ex-GER 1880 vintage, so a real bonus for the fledgling museum. BR Derby offered John a selection of brake vans at a standard £650 – scrap merchants were not interested in tendering for them because of the large amount of concrete dead-weight in their chassis. They were stored at Tinsley Yard which wasn't road connected, but for an extra £10 BR offered to run it over to the nearby Sheffield Freightliner yard and lift it onto his lorry. John hired a haulier and, at the appointed time, they were waiting at the freight-liner yard, but no brake van! It turned out that there was a permanent way possession between Tinsley and there, meaning that the brake van was making a 20 mile detour around the outskirts of Sheffield.

One day, while he was out spraying the fields he stopped by a local house for tea. The lady of the house said she had noticed his diesel locomotives and suggested he speak to her brother, who owned two steam engines. John didn't need too much persuasion and quickly found out that both were 0-6-0 tanks, perfectly suitable for his planned sites, and what's more, the owner was under

notice to quit his current site. They arrived at Mangapps quickly afterwards in 1987

Then, out of the blue, came a call from a manager at Liverpool Street, who said that he was planning the celebrations for the centenary of the Southend line. They intended to run special trains but needed some extra attractions at the Southend area, and Mangapps seemed suitable. On the day, five double deck buses arrived, full to capacity. He had a few demonstrations of signalling, but couldn't give much by way of rides as the lines were not cleared for passengers. Something had to be done to regularise this, if general public openings were to be regular happenings.

He got in touch with the Department of Transport inspector, Major Peter Olver, who visited Mangapps. He gave permission to build about ¼ mile of track, all that was then easily possible without having problems with public footpaths. Once it was ready, Major Olver came back to inspect - the volunteers standing to attention in crisp BR uniforms. He was happy with the state of the line, but John owned up to the facing points lock not being fully installed. Major Olver said that was no problem, just clamp it temporarily until you get a permanent installation, then just write to let him know – no need for further inspections, and he got his Light Railway Order.

John really wanted a longer run, but the public footpath was a problem. The solution was to put in a sharp curve and gradient and pay for the path to be deviated by a small amount. The result was a ½ mile run, but any further would involve crossing the footpath, a high pressure gas pipeline and drainage ditch. With the legislation changing, this will require a Transport and Works Order, which will be costly and prone to all kinds of objections – so the ½ mile of

track is it, although there is also a short branch they can use on busy days.

In 1992/3 he was invited to join the Association of Railway Preservation Societies. During his address to the AGM that year, he noted that all his signals were on show to the public, unlike the NRM – Andrew Dow, then Director of the NRM, was guest speaker! But he parted on good terms with Andrew. He must have, because in 1996, Richard Gibbon telephoned to ask if John would be interested in having the Haddiscoe Junction signal box which was, at that time, located 70 yards inside the Science Museum. They would pay for the move, but John had to organise it. A full 24 hours jacking, winching and rolling saw the 'box out of the hall. It must be one of the few signal boxes which has moved past a locomotive (*Puffing Billy*), as well as past Buckingham Palace! Richard hosted a visit for John and his volunteers to the NRM afterwards, including a tour round the NRM reserve collection. John said to Andrew Dow that it needed to be on public show - don't worry about presentation and interpretation as the public will enjoy the rummage. This must have had an effect, because the Warehouse came about soon afterwards.

Recently he visited Canada and northern USA and found a caboos available at Fairfield, Iowa. The move was organised by Andrew Goodman who for some strange reason seemed to be in the locality at the time. It may have had something to do with two streamlined locos, but Andrew, and John's, lips were sealed. I suspect the caboos will not be the last addition to John's collection.

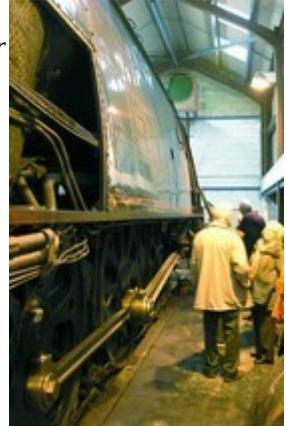
The Mangapps railway is open every Saturday and Sunday for visitors and John highlighted the major event this coming August Bank holiday to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the railway.

MID-HANTS RAILWAY & WINSTON CHURCHILL

Members from the Group paid a visit to Ropley works on 22nd January to view progress on the cosmetic restoration of steam locomotive No. 34501 *Winston Churchill*. The locomotive is partially stripped with some of the cladding already being re-painted.

Right, Part of the boiler cladding removed, and motion being cleaned

Below, the Group examine the painting of the cylinder covers.



During the visit the Mid Hants Railway was presented with a print of the *The ACE at Battledown*. Also present were Philip D Hawkins, the artist of the painting, and James Lester, fireman on 34051 on 30th January 1965 when the locomotive hauled the Funeral Train from Waterloo Station to Long Hanborough in Oxfordshire, the nearest station to Bladon where Sir Winston is buried.



Philip D. Hawkins, Colin Chambers, Ian Harrison and Jim Lester



Philip also made a presentation to Colin of a print of another of his paintings of locomotive No. 34501, "Into the Night". Philip is making a donation from sales of prints of that picture to the 34051 appeal. Both pictures will be displayed in the West Country Buffet at Alresford Station, together with sales order forms.

The Mid Hants Railway was selected by the NRM to carry out the restoration work in recognition of the skills that the railway possesses and of the quality of the workmanship at Ropley. The Watercress Line is currently custodian of two other NRM locomotives – 850 *Lord Nelson* and 925 *Cheltenham*. The presentations were made in front of the former of the two in Ropley yard. Further details on the progress in the restoration of the locomotive will appear in future editions.

The painting *The ACE at Battledown* depicts 34051 hauling the Atlantic Coast Express in 1960 at Battledown flyover near Basingstoke. Also in the picture are 35029 *Ellerman Lines*, currently at York, which was sectioned to demonstrate the interior workings of a steam locomotive; and 30777 *Sir Lamiel*, now part of the Museum's operational steam fleet but once based in Basingstoke.



The Group enjoy lunch in the West Country Buffet at Alresford Station

RESTORATION OF GWR 2-8-0 No 4253

Charlie Masterson & Brian Atkins

On 10th February, Charlie and Brian gave an illustrated talk on the work of the 4253 Locomotive Group. This is based at the Kent and East Sussex Railway which, while having plenty of experience in overhauling locomotives, had never tried to restore one from scrap condition. This is the challenge faced by the Group. But why a 2-8-0 on a line which is renowned for Terriers and Austerities? The reason is that once the connection to Robertsbridge is complete, bringing a link with the national rail network, the number of passengers is expected to increase significantly, and 5 or 6 coach trains are going to be the order of the day. A suitable locomotive will therefore be essential if double heading is not to be de-rigour. There were some who doubted that a 2-8-0 would be suitable for the line, but one was hired in from the Bodmin and Wenford Railway and proved that it had no problems. After all this class was designed to handle coal traffic on lightly laid and sharply curved colliery lines.

After leaving BR service in 1963, 4253 went to Woodhams yard at Barry, remaining there until 1987 when it was moved to the Pontypool and Blaenavon Railway, but little restoration work was done there. In July 2011, the 4253 Group purchased the locomotive, applied grease and oil – just sufficient to allow Allely's to move it to its new home in the Garden of England. It wasn't all roses though. The locomotive was allocated spot at the back of the locomotive shed with only limited working space. Nevertheless, the boiler and tanks were removed and a temporary tent built over the engine. This has allowed the team to virtually rebuild the whole of the front of the engine, including fitting a new buffer beam. The frames have been needle-gunned, the brake gear rebuilt, including fitting new

bushes as needed, and new sand boxes fabricated. The cylinders and pistons have been dismantled for refurbishment; one took four weeks to loosen the cover before the piston could then be removed with relative ease.

The rear of the frame had suffered extensive corrosion damage due to water leakage from the tanks while in service. Most of this has had to be cut away and replaced. The frame stretchers have all been removed, cleaned and re-riveted back to the frames. Some of the items took a bit of persuasion to come loose, but a bit of heat and application of that well-know tooth-loosener, Coca-Cola, worked wonders! All the wheels were removed and each took a full day to clean before they were sent to the South Devon Railway for turning; all have now been returned.

Meanwhile, the boiler was lifted and some 300 man-hours have been expended on needle-gunning it. It is in surprisingly good condition, though the tube plates and the lower part of the outer firebox wrapper, on both sides, will need replacing. The regulator valve, steam pipes and superheater-header are all in good order. Inspection of the boiler inside showed that BR maintenance wasn't all it should have been – some 25 barrow-loads of scale needed removal. A quote is now being sought for the boiler completion.

Quite a bit of the locomotive has been cut away, but that doesn't mean that this material has gone to waste. The boiler and superheater tubes have found new uses as egg timers and clocks. Each boiler tube can be used to make enough egg-timers to buy ten new tubes.

The bunker was removed and put aside in a nearby field. Here it was knocked apart as there was little of the old cladding which was recoverable. What was

recovered was the angle-iron framework. This was in relatively good order and provided the jig for cutting and drilling the new plates. Each of the new ¼ inch thick plates was temporarily bolted back to the angle-iron frame and then riveted. So far 1400 rivets have been fitted and there are still a few hundred to go. The only original parts from the bunkers are the ducket, handrails and steps.

The side-tank geometry is complicated because of the need to accommodate the pumps and operating rods, with many of the plates bending through three dimensions. Replacement plates were delivered in July 2013, and were first painted in primer before rivet holes were, as for the bunker, copied from the original angle-iron. The job then started of re-riveting. This is progressing well. All the rivets are fitted using the traditional methods of heating cherry-red and then hammering from both sides – typically fitting well over 400 rivets in a working session. This begs the question of how to fit the final plate. Bearing in mind the baffles inside the tanks, and the complicated geometry, someone is going to have to go on a crash diet in order to get inside and, hopefully, out again after the job is done.

The pony-truck is ready to be refitted, but more work is needed on the rest of the motion. A connecting rod was donated from the West Somerset Railway. It had been partly machined wrong for their use but could be rectified for use on 4253. But they still need to source another for the other side. A vacuum pump was donated by a railwayana collector. They

still need a few other items, a flue tube, safety valves and lubricators – so if you have anything spare

The Group has also benefited from some unexpected donations. Swindon College were clearing out their old workshop stores and approached the Group to see if they were interested in a lot of “imperial” material as they were now “metric”. A trip with a lorry recovered steel plate, reamers, drills and associated tools, all bearing marks in good-old inches. Dungeness Nuclear Power Station also donated a lot of Whitworth spanners of all sizes – it took a day and six people to move them.

Members of the Group are very hands-on. Work parties of a dozen people come in on Tuesdays and Sundays each week – different people each time. They have a good following of new volunteers, all being taught new skills by the old hands and are attracting several younger members. Indeed, the chief engineer of the project is only 28 years old – his other job is as a loco-fitter and driver on the KESR. Currently they have 210 shareholders, all of whom may join in with the work, and newcomers are always welcome. So far the project has spent about £180,000 out of the estimated £360,000 for the whole project, so even if you can't help with the work, a donation would be welcome.

As we heard from Mark Yonge last year, progress on the Robertsbridge extension is moving ahead quickly. The challenge is which will be finished first - the line or the loco to run on it?

OUTREACH REPORT

The stand has attended two model railway exhibitions – the regular East Bedfordshire one on 8th February and a new one, the Leamington and Warwick club's event at Stoneleigh Park over the weekend of 8-9 March. The latter was

very popular and we were made very welcome – again placed next to the Great Central Railway stand. Perhaps the thoughts of a NRM out-station at Leicester North is getting well known in exhibition circles.

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>