



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 78

South of England Group

July 2015

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

LONDON MUSEUM OF STEAM AND WATER

Our Outreach stand has been invited to the Museum (a.k.a. Kew Bridge Steam Museum) for their “August Steam Up” from 28th to 31st August. The Sierra Leone Railway Museum is also expected to be there - you will recall that this is twinned with the NRM. Those with good memories, might also remember that we used to hold our evening meetings at Kew Bridge in the early 1990s. If you would like to help man the stand, please get in touch with me (Mel Draper - back page).

Ed Fagan, Operations Manager, has also asked for our help. Part of his duties is the recruitment and rostering of volunteer railway and stationary engine drivers. The Museum houses the largest collection of water pumping machinery in the world, each engine in the collection is unique, from the 1820 Boulton and Watt engine, the oldest working engine on its original site, up to the Grand Junction 90 inch (piston diameter) engine, the largest working engine in the world; the

collection also includes a short 2 foot gauge railway to demonstrate to visitors how the water companies used railways to move sand and coal about the site; this now gives rides to visitors. The railway is very popular with younger visitors. Unfortunately they are struggling to recruit volunteer drivers. Last month, for the first time in 40 years, the museum was nearly without steam due to a lack of man power – railway operations were suspended and only a restricted schedule operated indoors.

Ed, who is a 229 club member, wonders whether any FNRM members would be interested in the the opportunity to volunteer their time to drive the railway locos and perhaps the stationary engines? With our existing collaboration with the National Archives, just across the river, it looks like Kew could, once again, become a focus for the South of England Group.

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MEMBERS' EVENING

13th April was our Members' evening – an opportunity for members to show some of their collection to others. We started with two archive recordings from Gordon Roberts' collection, detailing the work of the local railway in the area he hails from - Leominster to Kington. The first was shot in the mid 1950s before the railway closed to passengers, the second when it was a goods-only service. Both were originally shot on 16mm film and were accompanied by an amusing narrative in the local accent. The latter film showed some of the, probably unofficial, fly-shunting which took place in the, then, over-grown yards along the route.

Ian Harrison then showed a DVD he had prepared which showed the background to the restoration of 34051 *Winston Churchill* for the recent NRM exhibition. Ian's film set the background using archive footage, before recording the work of the Mid-Hants Railway in

bringing the locomotive back to pristine condition, finishing with the roll-out at the NRM Great Hall in January of this year. Ian had copies available to members, in return for a donation to the restoration fund.

We finished with a slide show by Tom Kolisch who presented some of his "holiday snaps" of recent trips to the railways of the West Highland, Brocken, Alsace and Sri Lanka. The latter included coverage of his trips on the Viceroy special train on this country's lines, which are finally being re-opened after the civil war. He also had some back-scene views of one of the halls at Mulhouse during the FNRM visit last year, the one which "officially" was out-of-bounds to visitors – there is no stopping some people!

We had more material than time permitted to show, so there is plenty in reserve for next years' equivalent event.

POSSIBLE VISIT TO WROUGHTON

Many of you will know that the Science Museum has an out-station at Wroughton. This is an old RAF station on the hills to the south of Swindon, which is used for the storage of items when they are not on display at the main museums. While most of the pieces there are associated with the Science Museum itself, the NRM, which is part of the Science Museum Group, also has the opportunity to send to Wroughton items which are not immediately needed. Recently, for example, many pieces of railway signalling equipment have been transferred there.

Wroughton used to have one or two open weekends a year, but in recent years these have been curtailed.

We thought it might be useful to get an appreciation of what is at Wroughton in

case the opportunity arises in future for FNRM-funded projects targeting appropriate items there. We have therefore been making enquiries to find out whether a visit is possible. However, organising it has proved difficult.

The problem appears to be that, with the cut-backs, the number of staff at Wroughton is extremely small. In addition, the site is large and dispersed, and the building are not designed for visitors, some having confined spaces and potential hazards. This means that any visit will need to be supervised and, due to the resulting staffing costs, will need to be made mid-week at a time when one of the members of staff can be released to act as guide. This also means that the number of visitors will be restricted – it has been suggested no more than 18.

The visit, should we be able to organise it, would be for any member of the FNRM, not just those in the South of England. It would be useful to know who would be interested in going so, if you are interested, please contact the editor. Please give a contact e-mail/telephone number as that would allow us to let you

know, and check your availability, should the Science Museum offer a date at short notice. You will appreciate that because of these restrictions, it is unlikely that we will be able to organise travel to/from Swindon though it may be possible to arrange for car sharing for the trip.

A CURIOUS SCRAPBOOK

In April I got an e-mail from Tim Proctor at the NRM who put me in touch with The V&A's Museum of Childhood. They had two "scrapbooks" which were described as covering "train-spotting". Tim didn't feel they would be of interest to the NRM but asked me to take possession on behalf of the Friends.

When I arrived in Bethnal Green, Alice Sage, a curator, was there to meet me with the two books. She explained that one of her predecessors had acquired them unofficially to help with the identification of models in their Hornby railway collection. They didn't prove particularly useful in that role and had been languishing in the back of a storage cabinet for many years. They are hardbound, foolscap size and, sure enough, contained lots of cuttings from railway periodicals of the mid to late 1960s. As such, they are not of a lot of interest.

However, what is interesting are the pages of the book underneath the cuttings. Luckily the sellotape, which had been used to fix the cuttings, had aged becoming non-adhesive and very brittle. This meant that most were peeling away. What was uncovered was intriguing.

Many of the hand-written pages had steam locomotive numbers tabulated, with shed numbers, and grouped by the month of their withdrawal. Elsewhere, there were tables of [probably] train rosters tabulating the days of the week,

number of hours worked and over-time and rest-days due. Other pages, listed train destinations and routings and, strangely grouped with a "stage number" in the last column. The latter were numbered in sequence either 1 to 6, or 1 to 12.

The questions are "what was the purpose of the book" and "to whom did it belong"? In answer to the former, I and a few others who have seen it, believe it may have belonged to someone working at a locomotive depot in the Birmingham area (from the train destinations shown). The withdrawal dates of locomotives may have come from staff circulars, and the rosters seem to indicate someone involved with the shed administration. As to the answer to the second question, at the end of one of the books is a drawing, in a child's hand, of an A4 (albeit a 4-4-2 version!) with two signatures and dates. Was this the son of the books' original owner who made use of them for his cuttings once the books had been discarded?

If anyone has any other thoughts please get in touch with the editor. The books are currently stored at the FNRM office in York until we can find out more appropriate location. Once we have identified its original purpose, we may either be able to re-unite it with its original owner, or find a good permanent home for it; which is what Alice would like us to do.

THE NEW N.R.M. MINIATURE RAILWAY

After attending Friends' meetings at the end of June, George Rutter and I had the opportunity to join colleagues inspecting work on the new 7¼ inch gauge N.R.M. Miniature Railway outside the Station Hall. As work on the project was in progress, the party all had to don high visibility jackets to go "on site", and we were restricted to the east end of the area of the railway.

Our guide explained that the line ran alongside the former platform at the edge of what is now the car park for museum visitors. This is where there had been standard gauge track, on which locomotives were positioned during Railfests.

The railway has separate departure and arrival platforms adjacent to the childrens' play area outside the Station Hall. The ride, which is expected to last 8 to 10 minutes, will see the train running to the far end of the car park area twice but, because of the presence of a diamond crossing, not using the same track twice. Attached is a rough diagram of the track layout, based on the description that we were given of it.

At present, the railway has its miniature Deltic 55002 *Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry*, (a.k.a. K.O.Y.L.I.) but delivery of a miniature Class 47 47798 *Prince William* is imminent.

A feature will be the possibility to offer "driver experiences" with the railway's locomotives. To this end, in the stations area, there is a third track, buffered at each end, but with exit and entry connections to the running line. Driver Experience participants would receive their "basic training" running back and

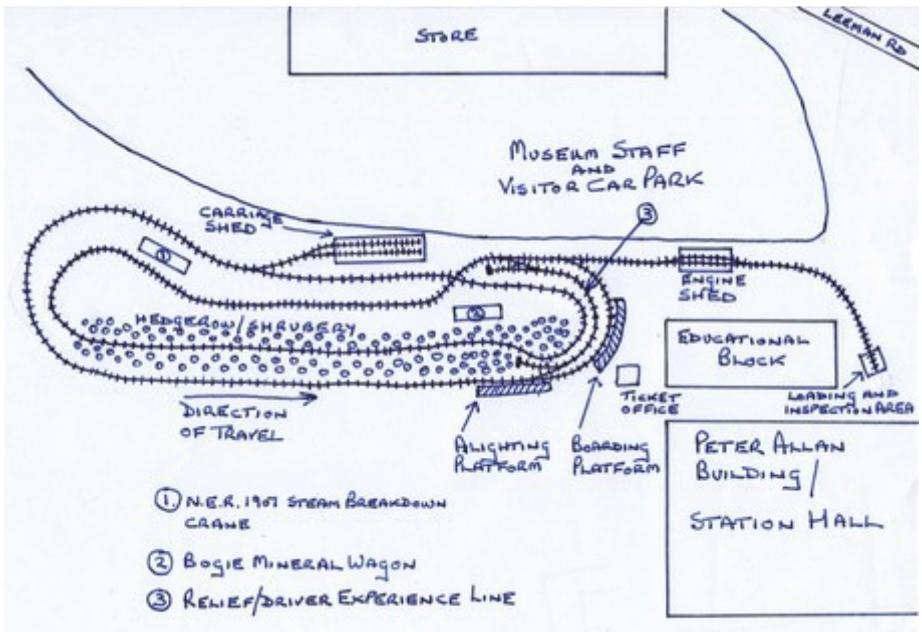
forth on the third line and, if felt competent enough, would then be permitted onto the full running line.

Work on the railway is continuing, with ballasting to be completed, buffers to be installed and the signalling system to be erected and commissioned. An engine shed is in the process of being built, the line beyond it going to a test and inspection area, and to a hydraulic lift unit, which will allow the easy loading and unloading of visiting locomotives and stock to and from their transporters. The main contractors seem to be on the home straight, with, besides the above, mainly landscaping, fencing and public walkways still to be done, before its opening, due at the end of July.

Roger Smith

As a post-script to the above, we have received an enquiry from Dr John Feller in Sydney, Australia, who wants to find a good home for a 15 inch gauge live-steam working model of *Flying Scotsman*. This had been built, or rather nearly completed, by Great Northern Steam at Darlington, UK, along with two carriages. However, that firm then went into receivership, but Dr Feller, who had funded all the work, managed to get them transported to his home in Australia. As Roger notes, the NRM miniature railway is 7¼ inch gauge, so no match there. I suggested he approach the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, which is 15 inch gauge, to see if they are interested. But if anyone else has a wish for a 1/3rd scale model of this iconic engine (and 3km of track!) I'll put you in touch.

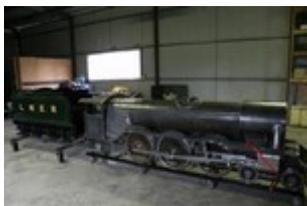
(Editor)



Above – A rough sketch, not-to-scale, showing the layout of the new miniature railway in the south yard



Above – two photographs, taken through the Museum car park fence, a works train on the left and K.O.Y.L.I. on the right. The bogie mineral wagon in the left picture appears to be an Engineers' ballast discharging vehicle (a "Shark"), judging by the three control wheels at the end.



Left – The 15 inch gauge miniature *Flying Scotsman* in Australia, but in need of a new home; any takers?

WINSTON CHURCHILL FUND - FINAL POSITION

The NRM exhibition, "Churchill's Final Journey" ended in early May with the departure of Pullman car *Lydia* back to its owners. The locomotive and baggage car have remained in the Great Hall, along with the information panels. However, FNRM Council and the South of England Group committee have agreed that this will mark the formal closure of the restoration appeal. So how did we do?

According to the latest figures, the total amount raised has been £38,967, i.e. around 11% under our target of £44,000. Overall, that is not a bad result, bearing in mind that the original target, when the fund was launched, was £35,000. The launch dinner back in 2011, got us off to

a very good start, and each year since then we managed to add £5-8,000. The latter came via individual donations, some through "Sponsor a bit of Winnie" which allowed components to be sponsored and, more recently, via the sponsorship arrangements through the sale of "The ACE at Battledown" prints.

The shortfall is being made up by FNRM central funds which will also receive any further donations, for example via the sale of the prints.

To give recognition to those who made donations to the fund, the South of England web site has a list of donors. You can see it by going to the news pages.

OUTREACH

Our Outreach stand visited the Leamington and Warwick Model Railway show on 7th and 8th March at the Warwick showground. The weather was good and both days were well attended, albeit that your writer went down with a cold half way through the show!

At the end of March we were back at Alexandra Palace for the London Festival of Railway Modelling. We had our, now usual, spot immediately opposite the theatre in the West Hall, so plenty of opportunity to hear about how the models were built and what the leading manufacturers had planned. Generally, it seemed a little quieter than previous years but we still had a

successful weekend.

May 9th saw the stand at Bushey for the South West Herts Model Railway Show. Again, attendance seemed a bit lower than previous years but we attracted a reasonable number of customers – including several purchases of the Hamilton Ellis "Watford High Street" carriage prints (if you can't sell them in Bushey, where can you?).

Our remaining outreach work for the rest of the year is shown below. It is possible there may be others arising at short notice. If you would like to help at any of these shows, please get in touch with the editor.

PLANNED OUTREACH EVENTS 2015

28-31 Aug	London Museum of Water and Steam, Kew Bridge
17 Oct	Tring & District Model Railway Exhibition, Cotteslow School, Wing (to be confirmed)
28-29 Nov	Warley Model Railway Exhibition, NEC Birmingham

EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME

Our meetings coordinator, Jeremy Moore, has organised another excellent series of lectures for the coming season. We start with a talk by the NRM's new Head of Curatorial Team, Andrew Mclean, who will consider how the National Collection can be best used by the Museum. Andrew took over the reigns earlier this year and has some big challenges ahead. It will be an opportunity to see what is coming up and where we can help.

The following month, we will welcome the chairman of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway, Peter Mills, who will give us an update on the progress and plans for this ambitious narrow gauge resurrection project in North Devon. Those who came on the summer outing last year will remember that during the visit to Alan Keef's works at Ross-on-Wye, L&B locomotive *Lyn* was under construction and *Lyd* was in the car park on a low loader. While these are not based at the L&BR, it will be interesting to hear how the railway is getting on with its current

fleet and plans for extensions.

The Autumn series will end with Kim Winter, a trustee of the War Office Locomotive Trust, who will present archive film of World War 1 narrow gauge railways from the archives of the Imperial War Museum and the National Film Board of Canada. The films includes footage of Baldwin 4-6-0s, Dick Kerr and Westinghouse petrol locomotives, and much else. There are a few shots of Standard gauge locomotives and workshops, and a fleeting glimpse of a French Péchot-Bourdon articulated locomotive. Kim will start by describing the work of the War Office Locomotive Trust, which is involved in the restoration of the 2 ft gauge WW1 Hunslet 4-6-0T. The locomotive should be fully restored by the end of this year and on public display in mid 2016. It will be based Apedale in Staffordshire but will travel around the country for educational purposes.

LEICESTER NORTH MUSEUM

In case you missed the announcement on 22 May, here is an edited extract from the Great Central Railway's web site.

The Great Central Railway, The National Railway Museum and Leicester City Council are delighted to announce plans for a new railway museum in the city are firmly on track. The new attraction, "Main Line" will see iconic locomotives on display and tell the story of how the railways changed the city. It has received earmarked funding of £9.5M from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The building will sit alongside the Leicester North terminus of the Great Central Railway, with heritage trains arriving alongside the exhibitions. The

building will be designed with floor to ceiling glass windows. Close up views of trains arriving at the adjacent station will provide a dramatic context for the static exhibits. Personal histories and small objects will help interpret the railways' role in everyday life and how they transformed the city, helping businesses boom and communities change. Sole surviving GCR freight engine, Class O4 number 63601 and Class V2 *Green Arrow* will go on display at the museum. Development funding of just under £500,000 has been awarded to help the partnership progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date. See: <http://www.gcrailway.co.uk/news/>

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>