



# The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 8

**South of England Group**  
Vice Presidents - Captain Bill Smith VRD, RNR; Alan Pegler

May 1997

## SoE GROUP FIFTH AGM

George Rutter, our chairman, gave a brief review of our activities in 1996, which proved to be our most successful year to date. We had four evening indoor meetings and a visit to Sir W McAlpine's museum, together with four issues of our 'briefing'. The outreach stand had no less than 16 outings some being 2 & 3 day events, in all amounting to 26 days of promotion of the NRM. The start came in the bitter cold of Loughborough over the New Year's weekend and culminated with our presence on the Duchess of Hamilton tour from Euston to York via Shap, Glasgow, Edinburgh & Newcastle. We also visited Epping, Old Warden (twice), "Steam On The Met", Ipswich, Bressingham (for 2 weekends), Cranmore, and Bedford. At the start of the year we had £2,000 in our investment account and £560 in the current account, and closed the year with £5247, and £1144 respectively. After paying the expected invoice for £650 from Friends Enterprises this leaves us with an increase in our funds of £3181. Thanks go to all those who helped on the sales stand for this outstanding result. Alan Pegler has accepted the committee's invitation to become our second vice president. Richard Causebrook did not seek re-election and, as no nominations were received, Mel Draper, who is the co-opted briefing editor, was nominated and elected to fill the vacancy. The Chairman and committee expressed their thanks to Richard for his assistance since the Group was formed.

The coming year should show no reduction in the levels of activity. Phil Brown has already lined up speakers for the indoor meetings quite some way ahead (see overleaf for details). The sales stand will be visiting many events throughout the year and the annual summer outing will this year be organised to the Leighton Buzzard Light Railway, see separate item.

## USING OUR FUNDS

As you will have seen from the latest edition of the FNRM Newsletter, the NRM is preparing a substantial bid for Lottery funding. The bid has already passed some of the early hurdles and stands a good chance of succeeding. The Friends have been asked to provide some of the "matching" funding which is required to qualify for the Lottery money. At a meeting of the FNRM council held at short notice in York, it was agreed to commit £50,000. Our Chairman, George Rutter, agreed to contribute £5,000 from the South of England group funds. The money will go towards one of the projects forming part of the bid, a complete refurbishment of the Museum workshop, including the building of a new viewing gallery overlooking the workshop and the East Coast Main Line. In recognition of our contribution towards these improvements, there will be an acknowledgement of the part played by the South of England Group. The actual form of this has still to be finalised, but we hope it will include a plaque and some form of display drawing attention to our existence for those visitors who come from the South. We will keep you informed of developments.

## A DOZEN DUCHESS PACIFICS

While "our" Duchess is nearing the end of its current boiler certificate, several new Duchess engines are just entering service. Admittedly, they are rather smaller than 229, being to 7/4 inch gauge. If you want to see the smaller versions in action, 12 of them will be at a rally at Stockholes Farm Miniature Railway on 29th June. The railway is located in Belton between junctions 1 and 2 to the south of the M180 near Doncaster.

## MICHAEL TURNER PRINTS

By the generosity of Michael Benn and Associates, the South of England Group have, for some time, been selling print copies of the railway paintings of Michael Turner. There are 25 different prints in the range, covering steam, diesel and electric locomotives at various sites throughout the UK. Illustrated opposite, is a very much reduced copy of one of the prints. This one, titled "Southern Belles", features rebuilt West Country Pacific "Bodmin" passing one of its un-rebuilt sisters, at Southampton Central. Each print is 310mm by 255mm (that's 12" by 10" in old money) printed on matt bonded art paper, and comes in a wrap-round card folder with description of the scene, the locomotives and background to the picture. Michael Turner, who is a member of the Friends, has signed some of the prints. Each print and folder costs £3, or £4 signed. The prints have proved very popular on our stand and some of the titles are now nearly sold out. They are available exclusively from the South of England Group and all of the monies raised go towards our support fund for the NRM. If you want to find out more about the prints come and see the range at our stand at any of the events described overleaf. Alternatively, send George Rutter a stamped addressed envelope and he will forward an illustrated order form. If you order by post there is a £1.50 charge to cover postage and packing, for any number of prints.

## SUMMER OUTING

We are again organising an annual outing for Friends in the South of England. This year we have arranged to visit the Leighton Buzzard narrow gauge railway. Situated on the outskirts of Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, this 2ft gauge line runs for 3 miles from Pages Park to Stonehenge Works. The railway is host to a 1918 vintage ex-War Department, 4-wheel petrol driven Simplex engine from the National Collection. We will be attending the heritage weekend event on 6th July, and are making arrangements for the sales stand to be at the Pages Park terminus. Please meet by the stand at approximately 11.30. The railway is easily found by following the signs from the centre of the town. Car parking is available at the site. If anyone intends travelling by train, please advise either Mel Draper or George Rutter and we will arrange for you to be collected (the station is about 2 miles from Leighton Buzzard station).

Leighton Buzzard - "Doll" at Page's Park