

REPORTS ON INDOOR MEETINGS

The Photographic Collection of the National
Railway Museum 15th September 1997

Ed Bartholemew, Curator of Photographic Collection at the NRM, used 160 slides taken from the collection to illustrate his talk.

His first examples were of the erection of Saltash bridge in 1858, and from two albums of the Midland extension to London. By 1870 Railway companies employed their own photographers for official shots of new engines and railway works. The latter show factories which would now have the H.S.E. apoplectic. Also covered are the companies' social activities - hospitals, bands, parks, sports, political meetings and, of course, their contribution to the wars. They photographed their passenger and freight systems but, with the exception of the LNWR and GWR, rarely with active locomotives. Customers' operations were photographed and even house removals. Docks feature extensively, covering buildings, operations and the company ships. Some photographs are more controversial; pictures of the rat catchers at St Pancras recently drew complaints from animal-rights activists as promoting cruelty to rats! By the late 1880s film emulsions were sufficiently advanced to capture moving images and amateur photography started. Maurice Earley, A. P Herbert and others all feature. In these private collections there are few photographs of people, but family photographs of railway workers are a valuable source which plug this gap.

The collection now has over 1.2 million photos with contributions from about 200 named photographers. The largest negative is 3 x 2 ft, and the smallest a microscopic slide of the Menai Bridge, only 2 x 1 mm. It is still growing, most recently through the efforts of the NRM's own photographers. The collection is currently transferring to a purpose built store at York with financial help from the Friends. A group of 6 Friends are re-wrapping the negatives at the rate of 1000 per day, an essential task since some of the reserve collection is held in decaying boxes, and even cake tins. As these are treated, some are computer scanned and all have details entered onto a database. The long term objective is to put these details onto the Internet. Ed acknowledges complaints about lack of access levelled at the NRM photographic collection but he believes this "black hole of the collection" is now being addressed.

The Glasgow Area in the Post-war Years

17th November 1997

Hugh Gould ended his career as South Wales manager for BR and is a long standing member of the Friends. He painted a word picture of Glasgow, his home town, illustrated by his own photographs from the 1950s.

His early railway memories were of commuting to school between Jordanhill and Charing Cross (Glasgow). This could be hauled by anything since Eastfield sheds used it for testing. Hugh distinctly remembers B1 1264 in ex-works condition being used on two consecutive days on these trains.

While at university, he spent summer vacations working on the railway. His first summer was spent at Drumchapel, his second at Glasgow Green where he worked the signal box and remembers having to remove the old bedsteads dumped on the track over night before the first train came through. In the two summers from 1954 he worked as a guard and had the opportunity to learn many of the roads. On one occasion he recalled running into an East-Coast character at Edinburgh when he was sitting in the rear vestibule of a Pullman brake. He got thrown out, but got even with his opponent when he returned later as an inspector. Queen Street was also full of characters and provided him with an ideal opportunity to learn how to run a railway.

In 1956 he finished his degree and went for selection as a traffic apprentice, but he put this off when he was given a job as a Queen Street guard. But finally he started as an apprentice at Bishopbriggs. This is where his slide tour finished.



The South Eastern Career
Development Centre is
located off Meymott Street.
Approximately 5 mins walk
from Waterloo or Blackfriars

Forthcoming Events

5 Jan 1998

AGM and Social

plus some railway related entertainment. See item on front page.
Ticket to cover food & drink £5 from George Rutter

16 March 1998

"After the Last Train"

Mr Greg Beecroft, Estate Surveyor (Works) of Rail Property Ltd, will talk about his experiences in caring for the forgotten buildings, bridges, viaducts and tunnels on disused railway lines. Many of these are listed buildings of historic significance

18 May 1998

"London's Victorian Railways"

Mr R Brasier, London Transport Museum will give an overview of the great railway building age in the capital

The meetings will be held at the South Eastern Career Development Centre, off Meymott Street, London SE1 (near Waterloo Station), starting at 7pm, doors open at 6.30 pm.

FIRST PARALLEL OUTING

On 5th October, the Group was present at two events simultaneously - the Yeovil Open Weekend and the Shuttleworth Collection Autumn Air Display. How did we do this? As those of you who have visited the stand recently will have noted, we have been blessed with the donation of some "clip-fit" modular display screens. By dividing these, we were able to produce a small stand which was ideal to take to the Shuttleworth and install inside one of the hangars. So successful was this small stand that we nearly ran out of sales stock. As usual, the Yeovil show was well attended with visiting enthusiasts, some arriving by special excursion train. Overall, then, an excellent way of spreading the message at opposite ends of the region.

LECTURE VISIT

As shown in Briefing 8, members of the South of England Group were invited to a lecture by Dr P.N. Jarvis given to the Historical Model Railway Society at Bletchley Park on 26th November. This was held in the beautifully restored ballroom of the Mansion. Dr Jarvis entertained us with a two-part presentation; the first on the history of the Festiniog Railway and the second on the rapid developments at the Welsh Highland Railway. A most enjoyable and educational evening, in what could be the first of these combined events.

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