



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 17

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

December 1999

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AND SOCIAL)

As trailed in the last briefing, the Annual General Meeting of the South of England Group will be held at the Station Conference Room at Marylebone Station on 10th January. The meeting will follow the usual format, with the short formal session starting at 19.00, quickly making way for the festivities. The AGM will include a report of our activities and finances, together with an election for two places on the committee. This year, Philip Brown and Mel Draper are due to step down but both are willing to re-stand. Should you wish to nominate anyone else please send their name to George Rutter (address on rear). This will also be your opportunity to offer suggestions for other activities for the Group in the coming year. This can be for social visits - such as the annual summer outing - outreach events, or evening talks. So give some thought before the event - the committee will do the hard work of converting the idea to reality.

The social side of the meeting will include a buffet of seasonal refreshments and a convivial atmosphere together with a video and slide presentation of last years activities, and a quiz of railway related questions.

Attendance at the formal AGM is, of course, free to any member of the FNRM, but entry to the social side will be by ticket only, at a cost of £5 to cover the refreshments. If you wish to attend, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope, (together with a cheque for £5 payable to FNRM, if you want the refreshments) to George Rutter - address on rear. Tickets will be despatched shortly after the New Year - Millennium Bugs permitting!

OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The season of model railway shows has started and we have already attended two. On 23 October, we were at the Princes Risborough Model Railway Club show, held in Aylesbury. We had a fairly large space, and were provided with stands by the organisers - a very welcome aid to setting up. The show was well attended, despite the heavy intermittent downpours outside (aren't we glad we are inside at this time of year!) and covered three halls.

The following weekend, both Saturday and Sunday, we were at the Colchester Model Railway Exhibition. This is a major show in the south east, held in the Colchester Institute, with an impressive array of layouts and stands, some 78 in all. As last year, the show was well attended and our stand had been given a prominent position at the entrance to one of the large rooms (actually the gymnasium). Both exhibitions showed that the Christmas buying season had started and, by the afternoon of the first day at Colchester, we had already sold out of some stock. There was quite a lot of interest in the Railway Company Crests, and, not too surprisingly, the Christmas cards and calendars went quickly. At the end of the shows, we were left with only a small amount of stock unsold - in all taking some £720 during the two weekends. As always we had a good number of people interested in the NRM and its services and we distributed a good number of leaflets and travel advice on how to get there.

Looking further ahead, we have the East Bedfordshire Model Railway Show on 19 February, one of our regular events, and we are exploring a number of other events. Incidentally, the East Beds show will be held at Stratton School, Biggleswade and will feature the layout *Biggleswade* - yes a 4mm scale model of the town's station, and it's big! So come along and have a chat as well as seeing this superb exhibition layout.

NRM ARMoured LOCO

On the weekend of 20th and 21st of November, the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway celebrated its 80th anniversary of its first opening as a narrow gauge feeder line for quarried sand to the railhead with the LNWR line from Dunstable. What, you ask, has that got to do with the NRM?

Well, for those of you who have been reading previous Briefings will realise, the railway is host to the National Collection's Armoured Narrow Gauge Locomotive. This was built by Simplex for the War Department to use to ferry supplies to the front line during World War I - hence the use of armoured plating.

It is the oldest surviving petrol engined locomotive in the country and has, for several years, been stored in the shed awaiting overhaul. Much to the credit of the LBNGR, they completed the overhaul so that it could run during the celebrations. It made several return journeys over the line, hauling both passenger trains and demonstration sand trains, and appeared to perform well. Being slightly larger than the normal engines on the line, clearances are a little tight at times. The locomotive is shown at Pages Park station at the head of one of the demonstration trains awaiting departure to Stonehenge Works.