

Evening Talk - NRM Posters

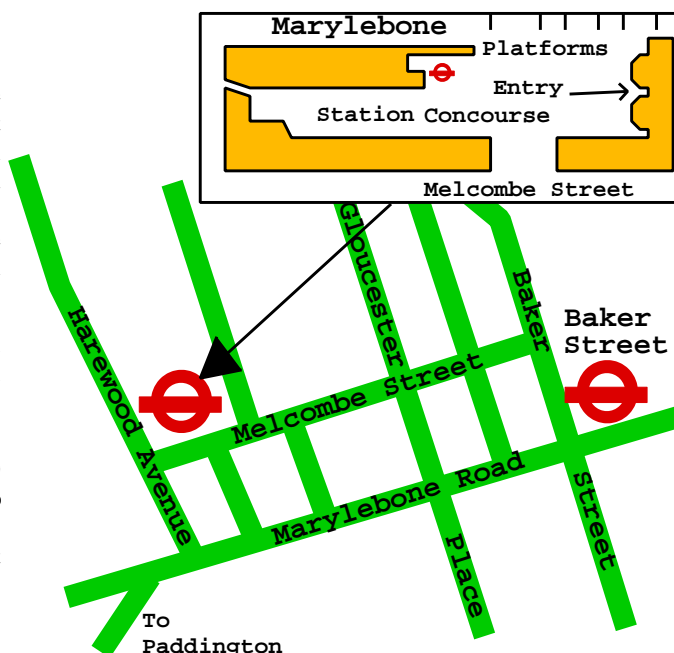
On 15 November, Beverley Cole, curator of the poster collection at the Museum, came down to give us an insight into this impressive collection. The meeting was held in our new venue, the Station Manager's conference rooms at Marylebone Station. It was very well attended, which was something of an embarrassment, as the room normally only has 12 chairs (such is the slimmed down size of modern station staff!). Nevertheless, we accommodated all people who came. The venue is well suited to our needs, being at the top of the building on the east of the station and overlooking Melcombe Street, although being well above the traffic noise.

Beverley gave us an extensively illustrated talk of the history of railway company posters from their inception, as simple information bills of railway times, through to the modern multi-coloured graphics, with which we are more familiar. Beverley started with a brief over-view of the approach to conservation of the collection's posters, now amounting to some 7000 examples. All of these, of course, were intended for relatively short lives, so they often need stabilisation to prevent further deterioration. However, sometimes when an old display board arrives and the poster is removed, it uncovers several others underneath - most of which were only exposed to the elements for a few weeks and so are in excellent condition.

In the late Victorian and Edwardian times, the posters became more ornate, and Beverley illustrated the development by showing how the seaside resorts gradually using the advertisements to differentiate themselves and their desired clientele. After the Great War and the amalgamation, the "Big Four" entered into a period when they were competing strongly with each other on various routes. The advertising poster was at the forefront of the battle, and Beverley gave devoted a major part of her talk in comparing the styles and approaches of the companies. It was during this period that well-known artists were engaged by the companies with some stunning results. We were shown examples of their work, such as the LMS series produced by Royal Academy artists, the LNER animal series by Frank Newbold and the stylistic designs illustrating their restaurant and express train services, and the Southern posters of the well-known little boy at the end of the platform - Beverley recalled at least 10 different people who claim to have been the lad! One of the most interesting Southern designs was the two of Waterloo at war and peace and Beverley used the slide projector to intercut between the two to show the differences and similarities. By comparison, the GWR was a late starter and it wasn't until the late 1930's before it produced its more impressive designs.

Beverley finished her talk with a preview of a new exhibition at the NRM which opened on 1st December. This is dedicated to Southern Railway posters and titled "South for Sunshine". It will be well worth seeking out the next time you are in York.

Beverley asked for our help in identifying any contemporary posters which may be worth securing in the collection. So if you see any noteworthy posters during your travels do make a note of the title, rail company and location, and drop her a line at York - remember history is being created all the time, if only we notice it.



Forthcoming Events

10 January 2000 - *AGM and Social*

An opportunity to meet other members and partake of festive refreshments. Dust down those little grey cells, because there may be an opportunity to test your railway knowledge. See item on front of this Briefing.

13 March 2000 - Peter Lugg *Aspects of the Great Western*

South of England Members have a chance to hear and see the superb presentation given to the York Group last year - see Newsletter No 83, page 6 for details

8 May 2000 - Martin Dawes *By Rail to Southgate Cemetery*

An opportunity to hear the results of some unusual history on the GNR funeral service in the mid-Victorian period

The meeting will be held in the Meeting Room at Marylebone Station. Please enter from the door between Upper Crust and W.H. Smith's Bookstall at the East side of the station concourse. The talks will commence at 19.00. There will be a voluntary collection to help cover the cost - donation of around £1 to £2 per head. Guests are welcome.

The West Coast Main Line in 1899

A number of friends took up the invitation from the Bedford branch of the Historical Model Railway Society to their lecture at Bletchly Park on 24 November 1999. A packed library were transported back to 1899 when Mr Peter Davis gave a talk on the London & North Western Railway which he illustrated with a number of "lantern slides" showing "recent" photographs of trains on the Premier Line as well as stations along the line to Carlisle. Among the stations illustrated was the terminus of the Stanmore branch, which had been acquired recently by the Railway. Local interest was provided by photographs illustrating the "recent" rebuilding of the locomotives used on the

Bletchly to Bedford line. The audience were given details of the "latest" financial report of the Railway, which showed a healthy return on capital for the shareholders. Mr Davis reminded his listeners that the London & North Western Railway "had until recently" been the largest joint stock company in the United Kingdom.

Returning to the present, after a cup of tea, the visitors were able to admire a number of excellent models of L&NWR locomotives and rolling stock.

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