



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 18

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

March 2000

8th AGM of the South of England Group

Our AGM and social was held on 10 January 2000 at our new venue, the meeting rooms of Marylebone Station. Our Chairman, George Rutter welcomed 35 members and guests. Alan Pegler, our vice President, sent his apologies. Frank Paterson from the Friends' Executive Council and representatives from the Eastleigh Railway Preservation Society were welcome guests.

George gave a brief review of our activities in 1999. We had five indoor meetings with an average attendance of 20. There were a number of other activities - a return visit to St Pancras Chambers in March mainly comprising Friends from afar. Our summer outing was to the Mid-Hants Railway for a guided tour round the sheds and lunch on the special train.

Our outreach and sales stand covered 26 days at 16 events. We had a sales turnover of £6345 producing a surplus of £2053 with another third going to the museum shop or Friends Enterprises. The surplus goes towards our support fund for the NRM. After two poor years our sales have now recovered to the levels of 1996. We were helped by Rocket's visit to the Kent and East Sussex Railway, the Marylebone Station centenary, and *Green Arrow's* visit south - although it would have been better had the engine been on the mainline a little more. We will shortly make a donation of £5000 to the museum toward the new "Works", although it is still to be decided specifically on what it will be spent.

We have a full timetable of indoor meetings for the year. Our summer outing, an organised visit to the London Transport reserve collection at Acton, has still to be confirmed. ***Please let George Rutter know if you are interested.*** Philip Brown and Mel Draper, who's terms had expired, were re-elected, and Norman Lee also volunteered to join committee.

George then introduced Frank Paterson who has been associated with the FNRM since its inception in 1968. He was involved in running the *Mallard* specials and raised £230,000 towards the costs of running the *Duchess of Hamilton*. Frank explained about the FNRM's preparation of

the definite history of British Railway Signalling, the first volume of which, authored by Frank Hall, is due to be published in April. The total series will be 11 volumes. He then described the latest FNRM project - NAROH - the National Archive for Railway Oral History. Although there are tapes at the Museum recording many hours of reminiscences of railway staff, there is no index. The National Lottery has granted £95,000 towards the project but this must be matched by effort in kind. The aim is not only to index what already exists, but to add to it by interviewing many more railway workers; not only drivers and signalmen, but unusual jobs, e.g. ratcatchers. Bob Urie has volunteered to lead the project and the target is to obtain 500 interviews, covering all regions. Excerpts from the recordings will be used to accompany the exhibits at the Museum. The project is also looking for interviewers who should be knowledgeable about the general railway scene, good listeners, and willing to commit to 10 interviews per year; expenses will be paid. ***If you know of anyone who has a railway story to tell, or if you would like to volunteer to be an interviewer, please let George Rutter know.*** Frank finished by paying tribute to the Southern group for their help to promote the museum in the south.

The EPRS then gave an update of progress on *Lord Nelson*. The tender and bogies are now complete, the chassis has been repainted, the bearings checked, and all cab fittings have been restored. All that need to be done on the chassis is to clean the wheels and fit them back in the horn blocks. Roger Pridham is getting on with the boiler, and the ashpan is being refurbished. A new air-braking system will be installed while the chassis is accessible. This may introduce a slight delay, but the end of January or beginning of February will see chassis together. It has now been agreed that, when the loco is complete, it will be finished in Southern Railway Malachite, also known as Maunsell, Green. The group predicts that the loco will be ready for steaming in June 2001.

We ended the evening, as has become traditional, with Ian Harrison's video presentation of the year's events and a quiz which, as usual, demonstrated how little we seem to know about railways!

"Steam on the Met" 2000 20/21 and 27/28/29 May

It is reported this year is to be the last for this popular event. If this proves to be true many local residents who have become regular witnesses of the fun and spectacle will be as disappointed as the enthusiasts, some of whom travel from afar to attend the event. It had its origins in the Chesham Branch centenary of 1989 and, with the support of London Underground staff, all of whom donate their time and effort, has been repeated most years since then. Do come along and see this British "Plandampf". Up to four steam locomotives will be operating trains at roughly half-hour intervals between Watford (Metropolitan) and Amersham. All of this has to fit into the normal diesel and electric services - so it seems like you never know what is about to appear around the corner. This is very likely to be your last opportunity to see it. As usual the Group will have its sales stand at Rickmansworth for the first weekend which also coincides with the Canal Festival (connections are normally made by vintage bus). During the second, Bank-Holiday, weekend the stand will be at Amersham. The photograph at the left shows K1 62005, from the Great Central Railway, at Rickmansworth station on a train to Amersham on 22 May during last year's event. The locos for this year's service will be announced shortly.