



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 19

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

June 2000

STEAM ON THE MET' 2000

What may be the last in the series of the very popular Steam on the Met took place on the weekends of 20-21 and 27-29 May. This year, the locomotives in use were LNER B12 No 61572, LNER K1 62005, the GWR 0-6-0 pannier No 9466 and LMS 2-6-2T No 41312. As usual, the carriage stock was the air-braked LUL sets which meant that LUL's Electric Loco "Sarah Siddons" and class 20, 20227 now named "Sir John Betjeman" and repainted in Metropolitan colours, were needed to provide the necessary air pressure.

The FNRM South of England stand was in attendance for all five days. Our original intention had been to be at Rickmansworth for the first weekend, then moving to Amersham for the bank-holiday period. Reference to the weather forecasts made us change our mind! Our spot at Amersham would have been at the southern end of the station platforms and, despite our own stand cover, we felt that we were a little exposed. Instead, we remained in our well protected spot under the up platform canopy at Rickmansworth station. As it turned out we were absolutely right. On the afternoon of 27th May, storm clouds gathered and we were treated to some spectacular atmospheric - rain, thunder, lightning and hailstones - the latter were so big and produced so much noise on the station roof that it was impossible to hear anything else!

Despite the weather, and the competing football match at Wembley, the event was extremely successful, with heavy loadings on all trains. Rickmansworth also had other attractions in the form of the depot display and the canal festival (assuming you dodged the rain). At one point, the steam service seemed to be the only thing working, as the Metropolitan electric and Chiltern diesel services had signal problems on the way down to Baker Street (linked to the weather perhaps?)

Our stand attracted a lot of interest. The FNRM plaques of Railway Company Coats of Arms, which we had on show, drew a lot of complimentary comment and resulted in a good number of sales. We were so successful at distributing literature on the NRM that we ran out of leaflets before the event finished and a good deal of our stock had been sold as well. We seem to have persuaded a good number of people to consider a trip to York as one of their summer trips.

The event also marked the first outing of our moving display of a model of "Rocket". This proved quite fascinating to the children and adults alike - the latter wondering how it operated - see if you can work it out when you next come to the stand.

The following weekend the stand was at Loughborough Station on the Great Central Railway to accompany the running of *Green Arrow* and the GCR O4, the latter having just entered service after completion of the overhaul at Loughborough. The event went well and there was a little added interest by the antics of a film crew who were re-arranging the station for the filming of "Enigma" - a feature about codebreaking in World War II. Keep an eye out for it when it is released.

The photograph to the right shows LMS Class 2MT No 41312 arriving at Rickmansworth with an up train to Watford on 27th May with our stand in the background. The engine was loaned from the Mid-Hants Railway for the duration of the event and some will remember it was there that it hauled us on our 1999 summer luncheon special.

OLD OAK COMMON OPEN DAYS 6&7 August

Arrangements for the Old Oak Common open weekend on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 August are progressing well. The event is being organised by EWS assisted by RAIL magazine. It is anticipated there will be at least 30 preserved locomotives, Electric, Diesel and Steam, present, including 8 from the National Collection, plus other locomotives and rolling stock from EWS, other train operators and private owners. The army will be on site showing how military vehicles are loaded onto trains, Kidlington Railwayana Auctions will be holding an auction of railway memorabilia on both days and there will be several naming and rededication ceremonies.

There will be no car parking facilities on or near the site, so intending visitors should use public transport. The nearest stations are Willesden Jcn and North Acton and the No 266 bus (Hammersmith to Cricklewood) traverses Old Oak Lane and Victoria Road.

A shuttle service will also be running from Paddington into the depot. To use this service, in addition to your entry tickets, you will need to obtain a shuttle ticket (£5 per person - no reductions) through RAIL magazine. The coupon in RAIL gives details of the train times and how to book tickets. Essentially you will ask for tickets for a particular shuttle. If it is full, tickets will be issued for the next available service.

Entry tickets themselves can be bought in advance by writing to EWS Railway (Dept. 81A), 310 Goswell Road, Islington, London EC1V 7LW enclosing a cheque for the relevant amount payable to 'EWS Railway' and an A4 stamped, self-addressed envelope. Tickets are £7 adults, £3 children/senior citizens, £15 family (two adults and up to two children) available service. No tickets will be available at Paddington but entry tickets will be available at the depot gate in Old Oak Common Lane for visitors arriving on foot.

The South of England stand will be present to promote the NRM and provide information on the National Collection engines.