



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 27

South of England Group

September 2002

Vice Presidents - Captain Bill Smith VRD, RNR; Alan Pegler

SUMMER OUTING

On 20th July, twenty four Friends joined the summer outing to the Severn Valley Railway. The party had arrived from all over the south and despite some problems on the main-line railway, we had all made it to Kidderminster in time for the 12.45 departure. We set out from Kidderminster aboard the Observation Saloon marshalled at the front of the train. We were hauled by 46443 on the 70 minute journey to Bridgnorth. During the trip north we enjoyed a superb buffet lunch served up by the two very professional stewards. Our position at the front of the train meant that we had a good view of the loco crew as they negotiated the line, some of which was still suffering from speed restrictions due to the earlier flooding. At Bridgnorth the party split, some going to view the delights of the town, while others took part in the guided tour of the locomotive workshops. The Railway has an impressive collection of heavy machine tools which, with their boiler shop, are capable of handling the heaviest of overhauls. Several engines were seen undergoing maintenance and restoration, including 80079, 75078, 47383, and 7714. Our knowledgeable guide was a young female volunteer - a welcome indication that the railway has a continuing future ahead of it.

Our return was at 14.50, the party dodging the rain showers to get aboard the observation car, some by way of the real-ale bar on the station platform. The south-bound trip had a number of station stops while we waited for north-bound trains to pass, both service passenger trains and footplate experience runs. The leisurely trip allowed us to finish our lunch - with sweet, cheese, and coffee, again served up by the stewards. The weather was fine during the return but on our arrival at Kidderminster, the clouds opened once more. This wasn't too much of a problem, as most of the party had decided to go round the station museum, shop and finish in the cafe - for a few more refreshments (surely they still weren't hungry!). By the time we had finished the clouds had cleared and we made our various ways home. All in all, a very enjoyable social outing and, as you will see, everyone was smiling at the end of the journey.



The Group in the Observation Car at Kidderminster

Photo: Ian Harrison

GIVING LORD NELSON A HAND

As you will know, the Group has given four cheques for £850 to the Eastleigh Railway Preservation Society to help its efforts to restore the NRM's SR 850 (30850) *Lord Nelson* to main line condition.

You also know about the horrendous condition of the boiler that was discovered after it was removed from the chassis. The Group Committee has been in close touch with ERPS all along and encouraged them to make a supplementary bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund to support the huge cost of rebuilding the boiler. That bid was successful, resulting in £167,500 for ERPS - but that is only half the total cost.

The Committee decided that this was the time to put your money where our mouth is. So we offered ERPS virtually all of our remaining funds in order to help them get "Nelly" back where she belongs. The beauty of this is, of course, that our money is effectively doubled in buying power by the Lottery money.

So on 3rd August, ten members of the Group made the trek to Eastleigh to see our Chairman hand over a cheque for £5000 to Mr Godfrey Olson, chairman of ERPS. The event was well covered by local papers and radio, [a cutting has been pasted onto our website]. We were grateful that a good number of members of our Group had made the effort to get there and show that we really are backing ERPS.

At present, 850 is the only member of her class that is a "Schools" - the rear drivers have been removed for tyre-turning. But once the boiler is back from Pridham's she will soon start to look like a steam loco again. The tender was badly corroded and has been virtually rebuilt, to include air reservoirs. There is still a major question as to where/if a Westinghouse pump can be accommodated for air braking. There is virtually no room anywhere around the frames, although the ERPS team have a place in mind - if a certain R Gibbon can be persuaded.

And the target is still to see 850 hauling a train into Portsmouth Dockyard on 21 October 2005 - the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar. Who could resist *Lord Nelson* alongside *Victory*?



Jesse Moody and Godfrey Olson holding the cheque

Photo: Ian Harrison

CRYSTAL PALACE STATION GUIDED WALK

On 28th September, there will be an all-day guided tour of the historic, Grade II* listed, station at Crystal Palace. The station has undergone extensive restoration over recent years and this visit, organised by South Central Trains, will give an extensive look at the history of the station and its surroundings. Doors open at 10.15, the formal proceedings commencing at 10.30 with an illustrated lecture on the High Level branch - 'The lost route to the Crystal Palace', by the respected railway historian Alan A. Jackson. At 11.30 Peter Robinson, of architects Robinson, Kenning & Gallagher, will give a presentation on the "Challenges in the restoration of the Low Level station". Lunch is taken at 12.30 and there will be an opportunity to see the Crystal Palace Museum, which has a wealth of information on the history of the Paxman buildings, the Brunel towers, and other aspects of Crystal Palace. At 14.00 there will be a guided tour of the Low Level station led by Peter Robinson. This will be followed by an optional walk along the

remains of the High Level branch, taking in the site of Pissarro's famous painting 'Lordship Lane station' (now in the Courtauld Institute gallery in central London). The day finishes at 18.00.

Cost for the event is £10, payable at the door on the day. The fee covers participation in the programme and mid-morning tea/coffee, but not lunch: there are many cafes and restaurants around Crystal Palace park.

South Central runs a frequent service to Crystal Palace from Victoria, London Bridge and other stations in south London. Crystal Palace can also be easily reached from Brixton tube station (buses 2, 3 and 322). The morning lectures will be held in the Lodge at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. From the station, follow the signs across the park to the Sports Centre: the Lodge is at the foot of the tower adjacent to the sports centre. Crystal Palace Museum is at the top of Anerley Hill, the main road adjacent to the Low Level station.

THE PENDON MUSEUM

KEN SURMAN

Ken gave an entertaining review of the history of the exhibition. The originator of Pendon was Roy England who came from Australia to Wanborough near Swindon in the late 1920s. He was in digs there with the local vicar, the Rev. French and his family. At that time, the Vale of the White Horse was a depressed farming area, full of thatched cottages. He fell in love with the place and vowed to preserve the scene by modelling the area. He started with the old Cawley Arms at Wanborough, near his digs. It was being rebuilt as a modernised cottage from an old thatched alehouse. When Roy saw what was happening, he rushed out with his notebook and camera to record the building and prepare the plan for a model of it.

The Inn was his first model. Roy then started his quest to record the buildings of the Vale, returning many times to measure individual cottages - so much so, that one young resident described him as "the measuring man". He concentrated on pre-1800 architecture ignoring Victorian and Georgian buildings. He didn't make accurate scale drawings, but produced sketches with detailed measurements. The difficulty was working out the height of buildings. It was easy for brick-build houses - simply count the brick courses, but the half timbered buildings were more difficult. The answer was a graduated clothes prop! In addition to his sketches, Roy was good at getting copies of old photographs from residents.

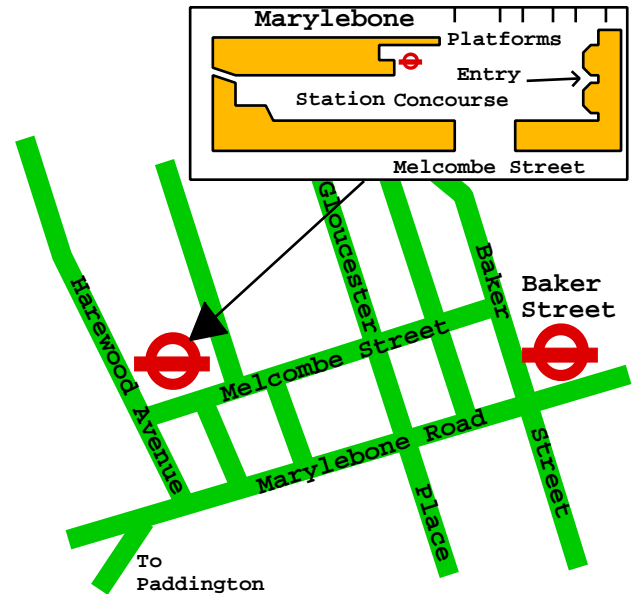
Roy returned to Australia in 1934 and didn't return to the Vale until 1948. At that time he lodged with a railway man and this, together with the demise of the GWR, stimulated Roy to become interested in, and record the railway scene. He persuaded his host to bring home railway ledgers which Roy faithfully copied. Roy only managed to finish the one model building before the war, but he started more models in these post-war period, catching up on his past records.

He developed some techniques to faithfully replicate the buildings in model form, but these were not very practical and progress on the model of the Vale was very slow. However, he was very persuasive, and soon drew together a group of supporters some of whom carry on his work, although currently there are only two architectural modellers. One of the supporters was a lady visitor from California, Helen Buckland, who was so captivated by the model, that she offered to sculpture the figures; her expertise is clear from the near perfect results. Roy had a wonderful eye for detail covering the minutia of a scene- his model of the shoemaker's house even includes shoes scattered all over the shop - just like the original in Uffington which burnt down in the 1960s, and the well known sign "Doosnt disturb Zippy" was taken by Roy from real life.

Even today, construction techniques are as near the original as possible, e.g. the hay rick is modelled from layers of hemp, every slate on the houses is modelled individually, every petal and leaf in the gardens is individually painted. Originally, the thatch was made from human hair, but these days they use plumpers hemp, made up into individual bundles and carefully teased out. Building are made from thick card, with windows and doors cut out and brick scribed with a blunt pen. It is then washed over with a white colour for the mortar and bricks individually picked out in different colours. All the models have a "cellarage", providing a base, and something to hold while making it. The scenery is built from a boxed structure of cardboard, covered with scrim and plaster in two layers. Trees are made from multi-strand wire covered with plaster or, more recently, adhesive from a hot glue gun, and "Woodland Scenics" foliage put on the branches.

The railway is an important part of the museum with models of the GWR, Midland and South Western. The collection of rolling stock started when Roy saw a GWR 0-6-2 tank in a Bristol model shop, which is still on show on the Dartmoor layout. He found Guy Williams, the builder of the engine, and for the past 50 years he has continued to make the engines for the layout. The Dartmoor layout started when Guy persuaded Roy that he wasn't building the Vale fast enough. This allowed visitors to see something moving, including the well-known heavy-goods, Kings and Castles going over the large trestle viaduct - not quite authentic - but impressive nevertheless! The class 28xx goods engine, on the heavy goods, has a lead-filled boiler and the tender motor - it has hauled over 100 wagons at a scale walking pace. All the wagons and coaches on the layout are hand made. For the Vale layout, they will need over 180 coaches, currently they have reached 100, so there is still a long way to go. They also need hundreds of wagons. Ultimately, there will be two sets of 30 trains, with some spares, all assembled according to Roy's notes and train formation books.

When they came to be registered as a museum they hit a problem. While they had a good organisation of volunteers, they didn't preserve anything! That is where the railway memorabilia comes in - while an add-on to the Pendon vision it got them museum status! However, Ken is worried that the standards for registered status keep changing and there is a danger they may lose it in the future. Let's hope that doesn't happen and this superb permanent exhibition continues for future generations to enjoy.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 11 Nov 2002 "Railway Heritage Committee", T Neil Buters, SRA
- 13 Jan 2003 AGM and Social, plus some railway related entertainment.
- 10 Mar 2003 "The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway", Paul Gower.

The meetings 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 commence at 19.00 and there will be a person on the door to let you in from 18.30. If you arrive after 19.00 and find the door locked, please telephone 0771 554 9907 There will be a voluntary collection to help cover the cost - a donation of around £1 to £2 per head, tea or coffee included. Guests are welcome.

OUTREACH REPORT

We have had two outings during the last period. The first was a two-day event on 6th and 7th July at Sandy for the model railway and toy collectors fair. We had a good position in the main corridor connecting two of the major display rooms. As a result we did good business. Being a collectors fair we had a lot of interest in the BR Pullman, silver-plated milk and sugar jugs - at one point having two buyers in friendly argument with each other over who got the last set.

On 4th August we made our first of two visits to Old Warden for the main summer flying display. We were in the main outdoor sales stand area. The weather was a bit variable, with occasional showers but luckily we had the new stand cover and proved that it was waterproof. Despite (or even perhaps because of) this, we did good business. The 2003 calendars, which were just out in time for this show, attracted a good deal of interest.

Our next visit will be on 21st September to the Mid-Essex model railway show at Shenfield, followed by Old Warden for the Autumn flying event. We then start our busy Autumn and Winter visits to model railway exhibitions throughout the south of England. The Farnham model railway club exhibition is on 12th and 13th October - held in Aldershot just to confuse people! Colchester follows on 26th and 27th October held as usual in the college buildings, and finally we will be at the major exhibition organised by the Warley model railway club on 30th November and 1st December at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham.

If you are interested in helping with the stand, (and as a result getting free entry into the above events) please get in touch with George Rutter. Numbers are, though, limited so please make contact soon.

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