

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

9th January 2006

AGM and New Year social gathering

13th February 2006

Members Slide Evening

See item on page 7

13th March 2006

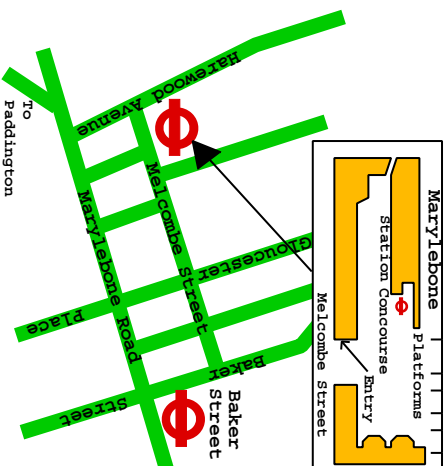
European Railways

Alan Walters

10th April 2006

Signalling on the Great Cockerow railway

Tony Howker



The meetings will be held in the Conference Room at Marylebone Station. Please enter from the door at the left within the gateway at the entrance to 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 - we suggest a donation of around £1 to £2 per head - tea or coffee included. Guests are welcome. Meetings usually finish by 21.00.

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The Friends of the  
National Railway Museum

Briefing 40

South of England Group

December 2005

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

## OUTREACH REPORT

Because of lack of space, there was no Outreach report in the last *Briefing*. This therefore covers activities in the last six months. The period started at the Sandy Train Collectors Fair on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July which was reasonably well attended. Our stand had its now customary position near the entrance. Next to our stand was a freelance model of a transport museum, which seemed quite apposite, and the stand owner made sure to point people in our direction if we had failed to get at them first! There was a vintage bus service connecting with the local rail service, which seemed to attract several passing customers from the area, even if they didn't arrive by train.

The following weekend, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July, we attended the East Hertfordshire Model Engineering open weekend at the rear of the Garden Centre, Great Amwell, near Ware. In addition to running trains on their extensive 7 inch gauge track, there were two large marquees erected nearby, which housed a wide selection of layouts and trade stands. We were located in one of these opposite a large LGB layout and close by a five-steam gauge 1 layout. The weather was fairly warm and humid, which attracted the customers but also made things a bit sticky in the marquee. With families coming in after visiting the Garden Centre, we had plenty of opportunity to advertise the benefits of a trip to York. Having put up with the sticky conditions all day, on the Saturday evening there was an opportunity for exhibitors to let their hair down at a barbecue, and try their hands at driving one of the miniature live steam locomotives round the track.

We had a fairly active Autumn of model railway exhibitions. This started with the two day Farnham & District Club show at Aldershot on the weekend of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October. This was followed by another 2 day event at Colchester on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October. Up until then, you may recall that we had been basking in good weather, but winter set in for the Royston show on 19<sup>th</sup> November. Luckily we had been moved from our usual place in the corridor (next to the Gents toilet) to a

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room, thankfully well insulated, further inside the building. All these exhibitions have shown a healthy attendance and our takings have been generally up on last year. Second-hand videos and books are going extremely well - so if you have any spare stock now seems to be a good time to donate it to us and help generate some funds.

Our year finished on the weekend of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> December at the National Model Railway Exhibition at the NEC, Birmingham. Here we joined several hundred other exhibitors at the country's largest such show. Attendance was similar to last year, at around 18,000. We did a very good turnover, running out of calendars, Christmas cards, and several other lines before the show closed.

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### THE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT OF THE NRM Jim Rees, Rail Vehicle Collections Manager, NRM

Jim Rees gave a "free-form" talk to eighteen members of the Group on 10<sup>th</sup> October about the engineering department's activities. This is by no means a large department - including Jim, there are eight people. These include Ray Towel who is well known to the Group from out support outings; he is currently fully engaged keeping *City of Truro* running. There is a professional joiner, who also undertakes the shunting movements around the site; a trainee (who is already a past fireman); Rod Litton, who has now taken the position of CME; and Dave Burrows, who is workshop manager. We were surprised to hear that Dave has been with the Museum for 30 years, and he is due to retire in Spring - we wish him well. Despite the shortage of skills in UK, the department has a good spread of disciplines and the only skill not in house is boiler maintenance and repair. Although the Museum has had some very successful events over the last two years,

Although it is expensive to attend, the results for than outweigh this, not only in sales but contacts. Many had visited the NRM over the last year and were all impressed by it, many vowing to return.

Looking to the future, we start the year at the East Bedfordshire Model Railway Exhibition, at Biggleswade on 11<sup>th</sup> February. On 4<sup>th</sup> March we attend the Abingdon Model Railway Exhibition, which is a new venture for us. Then we move to the London Festival of Model Railways at Alexandra Palace on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April. This is the South East's largest show and well worth a visit. As always, the latest list of forthcoming events is on the web site.

such as Railfest and the acquisition of *Flying Scotsman*, it is regrettable that these have eclipsed the work on *City of Truro* and the Super D. This stimulated a discussion on the merits of the press in supporting the return of engines to steam. Although bringing in considerable funding, they do stretch human resources. Ideally Jim looks for there only to be two mainline engines in operation at a time, providing backup but allowing driver familiarisation and optimising support.

*City of Truro* has worked very hard since its restoration, mainly on preserved lines. Unfortunately mainline use has been minimal due to its lower power rating limiting the size of trains and thus earning potential for the train organisers.

A lot of effort has also gone into preparing stock for Shildon. Jim believes that not all of the stock should be restored to operational condition. In some cases, particularly for unique items, it is better to

railway tradition.

Another area where the K&ESR have been in the forefront has been the provision of facilities for wheelchairs. We were shown pictures of HM the Queen Mother as she inaugurated the coach in her capacity as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. Her special train, "The Lord Warden", was hauled by an austerity - it is not often that these ubiquitous industrial locomotives hauled a royal

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### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NEW YEAR SOCIAL

The AGM takes place on 9<sup>th</sup> January and will be held in our normal meeting place at Marylebone Station (map overleaf). As usual, we hold the AGM as part of a social event with accompanying festive refreshments, some railway-related amusements but really an opportunity to chat amongst friends. There will be a review of the last year's activities, so there will be plenty of chance to relive the summer outing and other events.

Attendance at the AGM is free for any member of the FNRM, where ever they live, but there will be a small charge to

train, complete with headboard and appropriate headcode.

During questions the inevitable question of restoring the connection to Robertsbridge was asked. With two busy roads to cross, this will be very much dependent upon road developments in the area, particularly to the busy A21 London to Hastings road.

*Phil Brown*

cover the refreshments for the social. This will be £6 (the same as the last few years). If you wish to attend, please complete the enclosed slip and return to George Rutter as soon as possible, and at the latest by 6<sup>th</sup> January.

Every year, two of the committee members stand down. This year it is the turn of Phil Brown and Mel Draper. Both are willing to restand for election but if you wish to put yourself forward, please contact George. Although our constitution only specifies there should be six elected members, we are able to co-opt people, so don't be shy in coming forward.

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### MEMBERS SLIDE EVENING

By popular demand we have another members evening on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2006. The idea is to give members the opportunity to give a short talk of about 10-15 minutes, illustrated by no more than 20 pictures. The subject can be anything to do with transport on rails.

I already have one offer and ideally need another 5 or 6 volunteers. If anyone has a pet subject, or memories of a particularly memorable rail related holiday, please let either myself or Mel Draper know, preferably before the AGM. I will then

put together a programme for the evening. If the illustrations are not on 35mm slides, Mel and I can convert them to a digital format and use the computer projection facility. However, conversion needs time and we would have to be given the material at the AGM if it is to be ready in time.

*Phil Brown*

## KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY REBORN

### Donald Wilson, K&ESR Ry.

For our November meeting we welcomed our host at Marylebone when the Station Manager, Donald Wilson, joined us to talk about the life and times of the Kent & East Sussex Railway. The K&ESR was a typical Col Stephens line, built and operated on a veritable shoestring. Taking advantage of the 1896 Light Railway Act, the railway had been built at minimal cost to open up the agricultural land between the SE&CR lines to Ashford and Hastings. Considering the economical building methods, it was remarkable that so many of the buildings were still around over 100 years after its 1900 opening. However, the use of unguarded level crossings added to the difficulties in taking over the line from BR: indeed they refused to sell the final bit into Robertsbridge because of level crossings over two busy roads.

Once more in the search of savings, the rolling stock and motive power reflected what was available secondhand - resulting a variety of motive power. Fortunately, the railway was able to buy at low cost a number of LB&SCR "Terriers", displaced by inner London electrification, which served the railway well. This tradition continued in the early days of preservation as the yard filled up with a variety of locomotives belonging to members. Over the years an effort has been made to concentrate on a batch of 1950s built "Austerity" 0-6-0T, obtained from MOD in as new condition. These powerful tanks were ideally suited to the light rail, steep gradients and tight curves allowed by the Light Railways Act.

Donald illustrated his talk with photographs of the K&ESR in operation, then through the desolation following run down and closure by BR, to the

restoration of services over a 40 year period. Passenger services were withdrawn in 1954 - long before Dr Beeching - and the line north from Tenterden to its connection with the Ashford line at Headcorn lifted. The line to the Hastings line at Robertsbridge remained open until 1961 for freight and summer hop picking specials. This connection to the Hastings line was later to cause BR a headache when they contracted to deliver an ex GWR railcar to Robertsbridge, overlooking the loading gauge restriction of the Hastings line! Immediately after final closure, efforts started to purchase the remaining line whilst the track remained in place. After a number of false dawns, the line had eventually reopened in 1974, but only from Tenterden to Rolvenden. In the following decades, the line has been extended in stages until, as a Millennium project, it opened to Bodiam exactly 100 years after its first opening. In an effort to minimise operating costs, the K&ESR had been amongst the first to use railcars: first steam then a petrol engined railbus based upon back to back Ford model T chassis. So it was appropriate that the first public service in 1974 should be operated by the GWR railcar.

To support the progress a number of marketing initiatives had been made. The railway was one of the first preserved lines to provide "Wine & Dine" trains - one of Donald's initiatives, to justify refurbishing the interior of a coach. Along with the Santa Specials, the "Wine & Dine" trains provide much of the railway's income. With the withdrawal of dining car services on much of the British railways, the K&ESR can be seen to be preserving this most pleasant aspect of

conserve them in their current condition.

Surprisingly, the next engine acquired after Flying Scotsman was an ex-NCB Austerity. Why such a mundane workhorse when so many others exist on preserved lines? The reason is that it is in original working condition. The NRM has also just taken ownership of the ex-Zambian 4-8-0 narrow-gauge engine, which David Shepherd rescued from Southern Africa. The debate will continue on whether to conserve or restore it to working condition.

Jim then presented a selection, centred on two engines, from the 4000 pictures stored on his laptop.

#### A3 Flying Scotsman

The workshop maintenance has shown that a surprisingly lot of original material still exists on the engine, but it has clearly had a hard life. Jim remembered his most disappointing journey taking the engine to York from Doncaster for Railfest. This was behind a Class 37, because of holes in the firetubes and worn white-metal bearings. It has gone through three boilers, and is currently operating with an A4 boiler. This is the real "Achilles heel" of the locomotive. When the washout door was opened it was found to be plugged solid with scale. As the northern water cleaned out the boiler, more problems emerged, as leaks emerged all over. Some of the boiler plugs had even been fitted with domestic gas plugs - and expected to bear 250 psi! Alan Pegler had the wisdom not only to buy a spare boiler, but a spare set of cylinders. However these are not now in good condition. The right hand cylinder on the engine was split from end to end, and had been poorly repaired by a weld. It has now been professionally stitched welded. A replacement A3 whistle has been sourced to replace the South African whistle. This

will be fitted at a suitable time.

The engine has been used much more extensive at the NRM than before - 3 days a week rather than occasional use. The result was that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day - the Thursday - bits tended to drop off. Amazingly one trip was completed 3 mins early with a superheater element out of its header. This shows how effective the Kylechap ejector is. The trip to Shildon hauling the PM, was abandoned the previous day when the crown stays were found to be not threaded. This decision was taken on the basis it was better not to risk doing Bin Laden's job!

The Gresley "clang" is present and due to some lack of alignment somewhere in the chassis or wheels, but this can only be fixed during the next major overhaul.

#### V2 Green Arrow

Boiler life has been extended to 10 years, but it is beginning to suffer, but not as much as *Flying Scotsman*. Most of our attention was on the results of the accident when the middle connecting rod came loose. It went very quickly which is puzzling, but it meant there was only a little damage to the crank pin. Tests are being run but it looks as though it is not too bad. The conrod finished up lying across the frame stretchers. The piston was at the front of the travel and blocking the ports. This meant there were no steam leaks, so they just gather up the bits and ran back to York, arriving only 15 mins late! Bits were handed back by the public, including some which didn't belong to the engine, but some still are missing. The monoblock casting has a crack but otherwise doesn't seem too badly damaged. Serendipitously the NRM had a spare centre conrod, but there will be a lot of studs to replace.

Ian Harrison proposed the vote of thanks to Jim for his enlightening talk.

## The Orange Empire Railway Museum

It was during a visit to friends in Los Angeles that it was mentioned by my hosts that they were going to take me to a museum in Paris. After driving for about an hour on the infamous LA freeways we reached the small town of Perris, pronounced - you guessed - "Paris".

Not strictly a railway museum, the Orange Empire Railway Museum maintains the memories of the Pacific Electric Railway. The red cars of the PER arguably formed the largest mass transportation system in the world at their height in 1926. The PER is an example of the "Inter-urban" electric railways which sprung up all over the USA in late 19th and early 20th centuries. Essentially trams (sorry - trolley cars) with a significant mileage of dedicated rights of way and higher top speed - much like today's metro systems. Many had a significant freight traffic, but were killed by the coming of the car. By the 1930s the network of freeways in the LA area and the availability of cheap reliable automobiles caused the PER to go into decline. Its end was somewhat poignant. Bankrupt, it was taken over by Goodyear, who took the opportunity to remove competition to the automobile and the

motor bus. Would it have been different had the PER cars run on rubber tires?

On my first visit there was the chance to look at the preserved cars, collected from a variety of different interurban systems. Being a week-end, there was the opportunity to travel on one of the refurbished cars on a track around the site.

When I went back to California in 2004 I was keen to revisit the museum. Over the years, the trackage had extended and the Pinacate railroad depot of had been re-erected to serve as a shop and ticket office. There is a connection to the adjacent line of the Burlington Northern-SanteFe railroad. As it was midweek, all the "carbarns" were locked. A walk around the site showed admirable efforts to reproduce the days of the PER. Amongst the exhibits was a railroad car converted into a roadside Diner. Not everything was electric, with Union Pacific 2-8-2 steam locomotive #2564 on display, but not apparently steammable.

Why "Orange Empire"? Because the area was once all orange groves. See their website at <http://www.oerm.org/index.htm>

*Phil Brown*



*The Pinacate Tramcar stop*



*Yakima Valley Trolley #297 electric loco (left) and Hutchinson & Northern #1, built by General Electric in 1921 (right)*



*Pacific Electric Car #418 built by the Pullman Car Co in 1913*



*Union Pacific 2-8-2 "Mikado" #2564 built by American Loco Co in 1921*