

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM and New Year Social was held on 9th January. 20 members attended. The formal part of the meeting included a report from our Chairman, Dr Ian Harrison, summarising the activities over the last year. Our Secretary, George Rutter, explained that the Group's financial situation was health with over £10,000 held in the main account and ready for application to Museum projects. As usual, two committee members were up for election. This year it was Phil Brown and Mel Draper, both of whom were re-elected. In addition, the constitution of the group was amended so the committee consists of a *minimum* of 6 members. This allows the committee to be expanded and we are pleased that Les Butler and Roger Smith have agreed to serve. At the same time, because of

domestic commitments, Norman Lee stepped down. The committee has since met and made some slight changes to the allocation of responsibilities. The Committee is now composed as follows:

Chairman Dr Ian Harrison
Vice-Chairman Alan Gosling
Secretary George Rutter
Treasurer Roger Smith
Indoor Events Phil Brown
Editor Dr Mel Draper
Outside Events Les Butler
Ordinary Member Roy Bell
The seasonal refreshments, provided by Margaret Rutter, were accompanied by a video show and a presentation of photographs taken during the summer outing to Darlington/York/Shildon. Mel Draper also gave a brief demonstration of the re-structured Web site.

MEMBERS' SLIDE EVENING

13 February 2006

There were twenty one attendees for the presentation of members slides.

Roy Bell commenced with a presentation of the ENRM trip to the Isle Of Man. We saw examples of all the systems - the steam railway at Port Erin, Groudle Glen, electric trams at Ramsey, electric and horse trams at Douglas, and the Shaefell Mountain Railway at Laxey. Roy noted there were originally 9 different systems with 6 different gauges! We finished with a look at the mines railway museum at Laxey, the Derby Castle Tram workshops, and Douglas museum with its early horse tramcar.

Mark Evans then made a presentation entitled "trails through the streets". This was a world tour of tramways starting with the 1860 tramway at Birkenhead.

We then moved to San Francisco to look at the cable car, originally driven by steam. In Wales, the Llandudno Great Orme system is also cable hauled but is more of a Funicular rather than a cable car, as is the Aberystwyth one. We then had a link with Roy's talk with IOM electric trams No 1 and 2, before moving to Carlton-Colville museum with its London Tramway, Liverpool Green Goddess, and Leeds cars. Glasgow had its tram system temporarily reinstated for its Garden Festival in the mid 1990s but Blackpool never did say goodbye them, and neither, at the other side of the world, did Hong Kong, which still has British-designed double deckers. We then looked at US trams and the PCC - the "standard" US single-deck tramcar. New Orleans still has

Lord Nelson -almost there!

After one of the most protracted overhauls of recent time, SR No 850 *Lord Nelson* is virtually back in one piece at Eastleigh. Three members of your Committee who are also members of the Eastleigh Railway Preservation Society heard about recent progress at the Society's AGM on 18th February. We have told you in these pages on previous occasions about the major problems that were discovered when the boiler and firebox were lifted out of the frames five years ago. Severe wasting and cracks led to the construction of a brand new (copper) firebox, foundation ring and wrapper, new front plate and smokebox and of course new tubes and stays. In fact, it might have been easier to start again from scratch! In January the boiler was reunited with the frames inside the now deserted Eastleigh works - the final job of the works cranes being to lift into place an item that came out of the same works in 1926.

When built, 850 was the most powerful 4-6-0 in Britain - though not for long, the GWR's *Kings* wrestling back the crown the following year.

In service, *Nelsons* were competent but not really much liked. As built they suffered from indifferent steaming and the long firebox was awkward for many firemen. Bullaid's alterations to Lemaire or Kylchap blast arrangements and changes to cylinder and piston dimensions eventually helped, but by then the Pacifics were in full flood and the *Nelsons* were relegated to the second division.

Why was 850 preserved? Certainly the experience of building the *Nelsons* gave Maunsell the engineering background for the *Schools*. The *Nelsons* have their

cranks set at 135° giving 8 exhaust beats per revolution of the wheels - but beyond that, there's not much unusual or particularly meritorious about the *Nelsons*. Perhaps it was someone's favourite engine! However, 850 has now returned to its spiritual home and the ERPS members are doing their very best to turn her out in a manner which befits the last occupant of that once great works. It is expected that it will take another 3 months for 850 to be brought back to operating condition. The new boiler has been successfully steamed on several occasions so the "ticket" clock is now ticking. Everyone wants to see her at the head of a train once more.

The plan is to run her in on the West Somerset Railway - a 36 mile round trip! - and then use her on the main line, including some "Cathedrals Express" trains and a spell at York on the "Scarborough Flyer" alongside *Green Arrow* and *Sir Lamiel*. We shall be looking for volunteers to help man our sales stand on all these trains.

We are intending that you will have the chance to see 850 in operation during her running in on the West Somerset. Until the engine reaches a more complete stage, we cannot go firm on dates, but mid-June looks a distinct possibility - see the article on page 7 for more details and how to put your name down.

We may also be asked by ERPS for volunteer labour to help prepare a new support coach they are hoping to acquire. We shall keep you posted on this, but if you might be interested in helping with the preparation of the support coach, please let George Rutter or Ian Harrison know.

Ian Harrison

EXCURSION TO EXBURY GARDENS

As you may have read in the *Review*, the York Friends are planning a visit down south, taking in Diddcot and Exbury Gardens. The visit to Exbury will take place on Friday 5th May and promises to be something special. Not only will the gardens be in full bloom - the Rhododendrons and Azaleas are prize specimens - but the owner, Leo de Rothschild, a life member of the Friends, will be on hand to give us a guided tour of his extensive 12¼" miniature railway. The railway skirts the existing garden and enters the new Summer Lane Garden with bridges and tunnels giving a tour of various themed gardens, on through a wood and back over some Lily Ponds. Overall, the railway is 1¼ miles long and the journey takes around 20 minutes. Lunch will be taken at the site and there

will be plenty of opportunity to wander round and visit the gardens.

Although the coach from York picks up at Diddcot on 4th May, this will mean an overnight stay. We are aware that many of our Group members would prefer just to make this a day visit, so we want to gauge interest and investigate alternative ways for us to get there. This could involve the hire of a separate coach with more convenient pick-up points, a train ride from London with connecting coach to Exbury, or simply shared cars down to the site from our various homes.

If you are interested, please get in touch with George Rutter, contact details on page 8. Once we know the numbers, we will be able to give a final price, but the cost of the day's outing is not expected to exceed £25, including entry to the gardens and lunch.

SUMMER OUTING

In addition to the proposed visit to Exbury Gardens (see above) we are now forming the plans for this year's Summer outing. You will recall that last year we had the trip to York/Darlington/Shildon. This year, the intention is to focus on the return of *Lord Nelson* to the main line. From the article on the next page, you will see that the locomotive is close to completion of its major overhaul and plans have been made for it to have a period of running in on the West Somerset Railway. Our intention, therefore, for this year's summer outing is that we make up a party to travel behind the engine during a one-day visit to this line while it is there. We aim to take in some of the other interests at the railway - it has something for most enthusiasts, playing home to the Somerset & Dorset Trust, the Diesel & Electric

Group in addition to its GWR "Gauge Museum" and "Blue Anchor Museum". The railway also has a major project to build a locomotive repair and servicing centre at its junction with the main line at Norton Fitzwarren - the first work on which has already started.

Unfortunately, because we do not know the precise date when *Lord Nelson* will arrive at the railway, arrangements are going to have to be made at short notice. The visit will, most likely, take place during June and, for planning purposes we are aiming for Saturday 3rd June. If you are interested in taking part, you should contact Les Butler (address on page 8), giving the weekends during June when you will be able to go, and whether you would prefer to make your own way to Taunton/Bishops Lydeard, or join in a shared coach from the London area.

its PCCs which have resumed running after Hurricane Katrina. The design permeated Europe, Belgium picking up the PCC after the war. In Germany, Duwag adopted PCC technology and produced a new, high-tech version from 1960s, and which is now found in Vienna, and other cities. We then looked at overhead railways in Chicago, Paris, London DLR, and the Wuppertal monorail. In the last ten years, new "light-rail" systems have been built in Baltimore, Los Angeles, San Diego, Strasbourg (using York-built trams), Manchester Metrolink and the West Midlands. Many used redundant railway track combined with some street running.

The boundary between traditional heavy rail and light rail systems is getting increasingly blurred, as Mark illustrated with photographs of Switzerland, France and Germany. Mark showed street running of steam, diesel and electric at Nordhausen on the Harz line. In Majorca there is even electric-loco hauled carriage running through the street before departing over the mountains.

The "half-way" Guided On-road Vehicle (GOV), with its overhead current collection but guided road wheels, may point the way forward for some, and Mark showed examples of some systems.

Phil Brown the picked up from Mark's previous talk of 2 years ago, reported in Briefing 34, which looked at station developments. Phil picked up the developments in the USA. We started at the subterranean Chicago station hidden under an office block, but well presented all the same. But a move to St Louis station shows the opposite extreme - a "temporary" bus-type shelter in place of the old station which has been converted to a shopping mall. Texarkana's "Tarrantula" Station is the only railway

station to straggle state boundaries (Arkansas and Texas). At Fort Worth "transportation centre" there is a new combined bus and train interchange. Then via San Antonio, and El Paso, to California, where we saw the restored Pinacate way/side station at Orange County Museum, and the changes at San Diego's stations. Colfax between Sacramento and Reno, is now off the railroad but is being restored, and made a contrast to Creston, which retains its original out-of-use station buildings but just has a shack for the passengers!

Roy Bell closed the evening with a look at his travels in Canada over the last decade. We saw various preserved steam engines connected with the Royal Hudson train at Squamish. There was a link with Mark's talk when we look at the new elevated Skytrain in Vancouver. Then up into the Rockies where we saw the various trains serving Jasper and its preserved steam locomotive at the station. A quick look at Calgary transit system, saw us return to the west coast and a visit to Victoria on Vancouver Island. While it is a lot smaller than its London namesake, it does benefit from having stained glass over the doors to its passenger building. Finally, Roy described his trip to the Canadian Railway Museum at Montreal which, unlike York, is difficult to reach by public transport, being some 30 miles from the city centre, past the end of the metro, and needing a further bus ride. When Roy got there, he found there were only 3 other people visiting! Basically, it is a series of tin sheds. Pride of place goes to the A4 "*Dominion of Canada*", but there is a selection of Canadian-built locomotives. Another shed holds a collection of tramcars. Some of the rolling stock is on display outside but most is in a dilapidated condition. It really shows our facilities at York are world-class.

ROCKET DOWN-UNDER

In *Briefing 37*, we noted that a 7 inch gauge model of the rebuilt *Rocket* was under construction at Taupo, New Zealand. Our contact came about through the Group's web site and contact has been maintained. Progress continues, and the builder, Mr John Heald, has recently sent these photographs. The motion has been operated on compressed air, the copper boiler is finished and clad with real wood. All that remains is to complete the pipework and build the tender. The engine

weighs in at nearly 40kgs (that's over six stones in old money) with the boiler full of water. John is now turning his thoughts to building the accompanying carriages. I've already sent him some photographs of the replicas of the first-class coaches at the museum, and he is now on the lookout for plans or drawings of the second and third-class types. We should soon see a sight, at least in miniature form, that hasn't been seen for over 180 years - the rebuilt *Rocket* at the front of a Liverpool and Manchester train.

Below: Side view including a box of matches to show the scale



Left - Front view with detail of smokebox door

Below: Detail view of cylinders and valve gear

