

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

8 January 2007

AGM and Social,
plus some railway related entertainment.

12 February 2007

"The NRM Search Engine Project"
Richard Taylor, NRM Collections Access
Manager

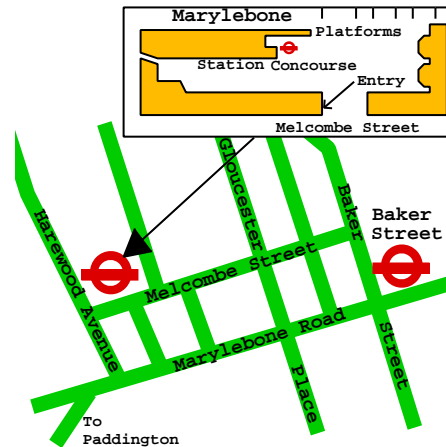
12 March 2007

A film evening
with Frank Banfield.

16 April 2007

Members video evening.

*Note: the date changed from normal
second Monday of the month due to
Easter Holidays - see item on page 6*



Meetings are held in the Conference Room at Marylebone Station. Please enter from the door at the left within the station entrance gateway. The talks commence at 19.00 but 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 is a voluntary collection to help cover the cost - we suggest a donation of around £1 to £2 per head - tea or coffee included. Meetings usually finish 21.00 and guests are welcome.



The Friends of the National Railway Museum

Briefing 44

South of England Group

December 2006

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

OUTREACH REPORT

Our first event was on 7th October at the Beaconsfield Model Railway Exhibition. This was a new venture for us, a small local show in an area we have not previously visited, so giving us exposure to a new audience. It went well with a reasonable number of attendees.

Next weekend saw the stand at the Farnham model railway exhibition - in Aldershot!! Yes, it's slightly strange that the exhibition that used to be at The Maltings in Farnham has been held in Aldershot for nearly 10 years now, and we've been there for most of them. For the past couple of years our stand has been by the main entrance - everyone is so busy putting their tickets away or telling the kids to be quiet that we have to get them as they leave!! Sales were moderate, but a local dealer in pictures regularly buys a job-lot of our Turner prints and mini-posters - we're very happy that he does!! The hosts, the Farnham Model Railway Society have a superb "N" gauge model of Basingstoke in the late '60's: it reminds your Chairman of all those happy hours commuting from Basingstoke station to Waterloo.... If you fancy being on the stand next year the dates are 13 and 14 October 2007.

Then east to Colchester on 4th & 5th November. This meant that there was

some competition from Bonfire Night which might explain why the Saturday was reasonably busy but it was very quiet on the Sunday and, overall, attendance seemed a bit lower than last year.

Two weeks later, on the 18th, we were at Royston for another exhibition. We occupied a hall some distance from the entrance, made necessary because this show seems to be gradually expanding. Our location didn't seem to deter the public, since we had a steady stream all day, including the local mayor. Our only problem was the room temperature - we finished up having to open the windows, and in mid-November - global warming or what!

The final event this year was at the National Model Railway show at Warley on 2nd & 3rd December - just after the

(continued overleaf)

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(see note on page 7 if unable to access this site)

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press date of this edition, so look out for the report next time.

This has not been our only outreach work. We have been present on a number of steam specials. Although the promised runs by *Sir Lamiel* and *Lord Nelson* didn't materialise due to problems with the locomotives, we were on board the run by *Green Arrow* on 25 November from Kings Cross to York. Also, thanks to the assistance of Railway Touring Company we have been able to join some of their runs to York, hauled by 60009 *Union of South Africa* and 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*. On 2nd December 60009 takes the route from Kings Cross, and on 9th from St Albans. The Duke goes from St Albans on 16th and from Kings Cross on 23rd. These are, nominally, intended to take visitors to the York Michaelmas

Fayre, but we'll see how many of them we can attract to the NRM.

Overall then a very busy period over the last few months. Next year we intend to have two "base-camps" for stock and stands, one still with George Rutter, which will service the south and west of London, and the other with Mel Draper/Phil Brown, servicing the north and east. We hope this will provide even more flexibility and coverage at events around the region.

At present, events planned include model railway exhibitions at Biggleswade (East Bedfordshire) on 10th February, Abingdon on 3rd March, and Alexandra Palace on 24th & 25th March. As always, if you want to lend a hand, and get in free to the associated exhibition, please give George Rutter a ring

LIFE OF A RAILWAY JOURNALIST OR EDITING

The RAILWAY MAGAZINE®

Philip Marsh, Editorial Assistant

Phil joined the *Railway Magazine* after 33 years working on UK's railways, and he still does three weeks a year with the West Coast Railway Co. servicing the Scarborough Spa Express.

When he spoke to the Group on 9th October, the November edition had just been issued - you will recall this was the LNER souvenir edition. When this had been planned 6 months previously, it was realised it would be tough to get it produced during September, which is a

"short month" (only 30 days). What wasn't planned is that the editor went off to Tibet and the rest of the team was involved in getting the special Virgin record-breaker train organised! It is a tribute to the team that they managed to succeed in all these tasks. The Virgin event came out of the blue. The company telephoned the *Railway Magazine* office to see if they would partner the Glasgow-Euston run. Initially they were asked to sell only part of the seating, but as it

TWO PALACES OF BUSINESS



As reported in the *Review*, GNER have sponsored the FNRM to produce a history of the NER York Headquarters building. This 64-page, soft-bound A4 booklet is lavishly illustrated with colour and monochrome photographs, showing contemporary and historic views of the building, its predecessors, and the people associated with it. There are line drawings, detailed historic notes and architectural descriptions of the building, with a full index. What's astounding is the price - it is free to members! If ordered via the Friends Office in York, you will pay £5 postage and packing, but Friends in the South who attend our lecture evenings or the outreach stand over the next few months, can pick up a copy in person by showing their membership card, and so avoid postage costs.

SOUTH OF ENGLAND WEB SITE

Those of you with access to the Internet may have been having difficulties accessing our group site. The problems started in early September when York HQ took up the work to create the main FNRM web site separately from the Museum's site. This avoids the need to work through the Museum, and NMSI, computer services department and so gives a good deal more flexibility. It was with this in mind that we had registered the generic Internet domain name <http://www.nrmfriends.org.uk> a couple of years ago. Our site is the "south" sub-domain. Unfortunately, when the main domain was made live it stopped our sub-domain from working. This side effect also meant that the e-mail routing to "chairman", "editor", "secretary" etc, also fail to work. That is a bit unfortunate since it had already proved useful in bringing in a number of e-mail orders for

some of our special product line. While this situation persists, please access our web site either via the link on the main web site <http://www.nrmfriends.org.uk> or since I host the site on my own web area, you can also get there by typing in my full web address

<http://Homepage.ntlworld.com/ms.draper/index.html>

Please also use the e-mail addresses shown on the rear of this *Briefing*. This problem is being investigated and normal service should resume shortly.

Despite these problems in getting to it, the site itself is fully up to date and includes details of all our events plus back issues of all the Briefings and other interesting items. By the time you read this, there should also be available for download a new version of the Rocket leaflet, which we will be giving out to older children who visit the stand.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NEW YEAR SOCIAL

The AGM takes place on 8th 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. Attendance at the AGM is free for any member of the FNRM, wherever they live, but there will be a small charge to 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 6th January**.

Members of the committee serve for a period of three years following election and this year Roy Bell and George Rutter come to the end of their term in office. Both are willing to restand for election but if you wish to put yourself forward, please contact the committee secretary (George). Our constitution specifies a minimum of six elected members, and we are able to co-opt people, so don't be shy in coming forward.

CHANGE OF DATE FOR THE APRIL MEETING

As you will know, our evening meetings normally take place on the second Monday of each month January-April and September-November. However, this coming year, 2007, sees Easter Monday falling as the second Monday in April. In order to avoid any conflict with your domestic holiday arrangements, we have rescheduled the meeting to be on the 16th April. When you get your diary, please

make a note in it! This is also a members' video evening. So if you have any home videos of interest, please dig them out. Cine film that has been transferred is equally welcome. We will be able to take either VHS or DVD and the system in the Marylebone Station meeting rooms will be able to project the recordings on to the big screen. So this will be an ideal opportunity to see your recordings in the fullest detail possible.

SUMMER OUTING 2007

The time is approaching to make arrangements for the Group summer outing. We seem to be making a custom of basing this round York every second year, and this coming year will be no exception. You may have noted from the Review that 2007 marks the 30th anniversary of the Friends and to mark the occasion there will be a celebration dinner on the evening of Friday 22nd June. The following day is the Friends AGM, so we intend to base our outing around these two events. The current thinking is to organise a trip along the Keighley and

Worth Valley Railway on the Sunday, with lunch arranged either on the train or in a local hostelry, and some tours around the railway facilities. Being in Bronte land, this also gives some alternatives for any spouses who are not so attracted to railways. Our events organiser, Les Butler, is currently investigating arrangements, including the possibility of hotel accommodation in the Leeds area, giving us good access to and from York, Keighley and the South. The details should be clearer by the time of the AGM so those attending will get more information then.

turned out, all 400 available seats were snapped up within 18 days. The *Railway Magazine* editorial staff of 5 people were responsible for taking all the bookings by telephone - a disruptive process when trying to concentrate on putting the magazine together. However, raising £36500 for charity was a great success.

Nick Pigott, has been the editor for 12 years, the only other full-time staff being the Deputy Editor, Chris Milner, and Designer, Paul Bickerdyke. Phil and Brenda Brownjohn, the other editorial assistant, are both part-time.

During a typical day, the office receives 50 to 60 e-mails, various press-releases (some of them pretty wacky - like self-cleaning carriage loo seats!) and 30 photographs submitted by post. All of these require quick decisions on whether they should be used. Phil gave some tips to erstwhile photographers on how to get past this stage, viz: be selective (only provide your best one or two shots, not hundreds of them!); give detailed captions (location, date, time, train destination); include your name and address; and don't adjust the photograph on a computer before sending it. The latter is particularly important in these days of digital photography - the magazine designer is much better than you at allowing for publication ink tones, and he can deal with virtually anything other than drastic over-exposure or out-of-focus shots - providing they are newsworthy.

Publication deadlines are much shorter than they used to be. When John Slater joined, there was a 6 to 7 week lead time between getting the copy ready and distributing the finished copy (that explains why the early editions of the

magazine reported "news" that was several months prior to the cover date. Now, the copy is signed off the day prior to printing and distribution. Some of the articles, of course, can be prepared well in advance. An example was the "Grantham Crash", the idea for which came when the son of the station inspector contacted the magazine with documents taken from the station at the time of the crash and held in the family ever since. This material was followed up and the article prepared over several months of careful research. This is also a good example of how the magazine has become an authoritative source, but even so, there is still room for readers to add extra information - which several did following the "crash" article and their comments featured in a following edition. Another good lead came when a contact told them of his encounter with the niece of Sir William Stanier, the result of which was the article that appeared in the February edition which Phil authored.

Phil gave us an overview of the backgrounds of the regular contributors, all of whom will be familiar names to you. Surprisingly, some of them have never visited the magazine offices and the office doesn't even have a home address for one of them - what a bashful lot they are!

The circulation of the *Railway Magazine* continues to grow. Currently there are around 13,000 subscribers with a total circulation including newsagent and shops sales of some 33,000 copies per month. This is 15% up over the last 2 years. The average age of the readership is 59, which may sound old - except their main competitor has an average reader's age of 65. I refuse to disclose what the average age of our audience was, but we could do with a bit of new blood!

ROMANCE AND RAILWAYS

Dr Jill Murdoch

It was another full house, with 19 members present on 13th November, when Jill came to give us a slightly unusual talk based on her research at the Institute of Railway Studies at York University. Jill started by warning that there would be few photographs of trains or engines, but she still managed to keep the audience engaged during her fascinating talk.

She commenced with a quote from a recent holiday programme by Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen "Train travel in Ireland has lost none of its romance. It really feels like you are stepping back in time". Since he was at the time travelling in a high-tech train, moving at high speed and containing other modern travellers all going about their ordinary business, this statement when taken at face-value seems totally inaccurate. Yet everyone instinctively understands what he meant.

So, what is meant by "romance and railways"? There are certainly plenty of books in the Museum with "romance" in the title, but little explanation of why it is romantic. The word gets used in some quite surprising settings; Jill quoted from one passage in a Victorian travel journal - "The dishonest side of railway travelling is not so romantic in England as it is overseas". Apparently, the writer felt it far more romantic to be attacked by brigands in the East or Red Indians in the Wild West, than mere ruffians in a carriage on the old LBSCR! The extraordinary use of the word "romance" is not the preserve of railway or travel books - she had come across an interesting monogram in the British Library when making her researches called "Truncheons - their romance and reality" - each to his own, I suppose!

So what does the dictionary tell us about

romance? Jill quoted from the Oxford English Dictionary which gives a pretty woolly definition. This is nothing new, even that English wordsmith Samuel Johnson was concerned over the loose use of the word in the 17th Century.

Perhaps the most relevant application of the word is when, according to the OED, it is used "to describe a story, often involving travel, e.g. the Arthurian Stories." It is, perhaps, this use that is meant when we talk of the "Romantic Art" movement of the mid 19th century. But this movement was supposed to have been established as the communion of man and nature. This implies that Railways as new would be despised by the Romantic Artists. Wordsworth as a follower of the movement was known to be anti-rail, but even he, in 1833, wrote a poem describing how railways merged in with the land as if they had always been part of the countryside. However this view didn't last and, in 1844, he wrote his well-known damning poetic indictment of the Lake District Kendal line. Perhaps all is explained if we think of Wordsworth as one of the early Nimbys!

The early Wordsworth views were shared by others. Ralph Waldo Emerson - stated that "When a science is learned in love, and its powers are willed by love, they will appear the supplements and continuation of nature".

Perhaps the epitome of this explanation is the famous romantic painting by Turner "Rail, Steam and Speed", produced in 1844 and showing a train on the then-new GWR crossing Brunel's flat-arched bridge at Maidenhead. Most art critics of the time hated the painting, both because it concentrated on the industrial rather than idyllic and its novel use of blurred

images. But the idea fitted the concept of romance as a journey and determination of a quest and it is one of the most popular items in the National Gallery. Incidentally, Jill recommended a close-up inspection of the painting because of its amazing detail - far more than you will see in any reproduction.

In Victorian writing, the railways, with their determination to build and operate a public service in the face of challenging opposition, was often compared to the challenges faced by the knights in the Arthurian legends. Ruskin was one Victorian worthy to speak of the locomotive in a comparison with a living creature - a view that many of us share. That most Imperial of all Victorian writers, Rudyard Kipling, even found time to glorify the railway machine in "The King" of 1894.

Even the railway companies themselves seem to have been caught up in this thinking. As an example, the Southern Railway's "King Arthur" class are the most obvious example to cast back to the old romantic stories. It was, however, a well-thought out bit of promotion, hedging its bets for both those customers who yearned for a past golden age, as well as the modern technology of its state-of-the-art locomotive engineering. The 1920s and 1930s posters also draw on the aesthetics of the romantic art, both in UK and overseas.

Nowadays, it seems that any steam engine epitomizes the golden age- i.e. the yearning for something that has been lost. Hence the rise of the heritage railway, which, to many represents Britain at its greatest. Yet when the railways were being built in the early 19th century, the public were complaining in the press that Britain had already lost its pre-eminent position in the world!

Travel and adventure are an essential element of romance. We see this echoed in recent documentaries, such as those of Paul Thoroux and Michael Palin. Perhaps the epitome of this was the original Orient Express, a heritage that the modern-day reinstatement has capitalised on; and there is no more obvious example of this than its Valentine Day journeys, when a concierge is on hand to "pop the question".

Freud associated trains entering tunnels with sexual connotations. The locked compartment of a train compartment was also a new experience for Victorian ladies. At the opposite end of the social spectrum, the vision of people crowded together in 3rd class were considered threatening. Although women travelled alone even then, artists warned of the moral danger to females finding themselves in a carriage alone with a strange male. Abraham Solomon's first version of the encounter in a railway carriage had to be withdrawn and redrawn because of public opinion. In the original a woman is seen talking intimately to young man, while her father is asleep.

The 1899 song "Oh Mr Porter", by Marie Lloyd, reflected the worries of forced male/female meetings on trains. The film "Brief Encounter" also deals with unexpected meetings and is often described as the most romantic film ever made. It was released in 1947. Arguments still run about whether it promotes or was against illicit romance following the disruptions to family life cause by WW II. Jill ended her talk by pointing out that even today, despite the interruptions of mobile phones and Internet, a rail journey can still be an adventure in a space outside everyday life. Even recent adverts by Virgin Trains, which harked back to 1930s films, show that romance is alive and well on the modern railway.