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THE



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THE 8E ASSOCIATION

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EDITORIAL AND INTRODUCTION

Although I did not know this at the time, the picture on the front of the magazine was to mark my introduction to the work of the 8E Association. It seems fitting that I should use it to effect this introduction in reverse.

It was taken in 1981, which - as anyone who is in the habit of clicking a railway shutter will know - was the year which saw the start of annual railway photography competitions. The prizes offered in the first (and biggest) of these competitions were breathtaking, and I was very envious of the photographers who I thought would be in contention. I considered attempting an entry myself, but felt that I would not have sufficient opportunities in the months ahead to compile a worthwhile portfolio. In any case I imagined that I did not have the necessary talent.

Then came Lord Nelson and Debt No. 1.

The Railway Press contained details of a steam special which was to run from Northwich to Leeds. I was going to be in Altrincham on the day in question and established that I would be able to snatch a photograph at the station. Because of the competition I actually pre-planned the photograph in advance to make the best possible use of the location. Something which I was not in the habit of doing on my photography outings.

On the day, the weather was kind, the smoke effect was voluminous, and the locomotive shone and sparkled in a manner which made BR ex-works condition seem drab by comparison.

The processed photograph was very much better than anything I had achieved before. So much so that I began to think that I might be capable of mounting a worthwhile entry after all. If I could continue to apply myself in the way I had done with Lord Nelson it might after all be worth a try. In any case, if the locomotives provided for the rest of the planned Standedge specials were to match Lord Nelson's condition, I simply had to turn out to watch them in any case.

In the event I was to draw great photographic inspiration from the engines which saw duty on the Trans Pennine specials. Of all the steam locomotives I have ever seen in Railway Preservation, none could compare with those which, for the next few months, were to move trains out of Northwich station. Seemingly, the group who prepared them were dedicated lager drinkers, capable of reaching parts which other support groups simply could not reach.

On inspection, the negatives which I obtained revealed that each glistening and impeccable smokebox carried its own badge of excellence. An oval disc bearing an 8E logo, the kite-mark of the Railway Preservation movement. To a fifties locospotter like myself, 8E was the shed code for the old CLC shed at Brunswick in Liverpool, and initially any connection with the Northwich specials escaped me. Steam Railway, in the person of Eddie Bellas was to provide enlightenment. I discovered that the shed code had been allocated to the Cheshire town in the sixties, when my interest in railway matters had - inexplicably - waned.

Eddie's article closed with an invitation to join the 8E Association, but having just lost my car in a road accident, I did not take up the offer. In any case I imagined that membership would imply a knowledge of the actual workings of a steam locomotive, a subject on which I am almost totally ignorant.

Then came Brian Dobbs and Debt No. 2.

I would travel ANY distance to see Brian's quite superb photographs, and when, in April 1984 I learned that he was to give a slide show for the 8E, attendance was mandatory. On the night of the meeting I enrolled as a member, more as a gesture of thanks than with the intention of making regular visits. However a list of forthcoming events persuaded me that I ought to consider monthly attendance. Subsequent meetings have given me the greatest pleasure and I am indebted to the fixture's secretary (Thanks Bob!) and other members whose behind-the-scenes efforts have ensured that very high standards have been maintained.

Finally, I have to mention Mike Lenz and Debt No. 3. Mike's work on the magazine was worthy of the highest praise and I looked forward particularly to those meetings which coincided with publication dates.

It was therefore, with very real regret that I read that Mike did not feel able to continue as editor. I was sorry to note that there was also some doubt in Mike's mind that a successor would be found. More than most I have debts to repay, and when I found that no one had come forward I decided to say, "Thanks lads", and I have volunteered to take over the compilation of the magazine.

However, as you might expect from someone "appointed" by default there are problems. The official mouthpiece of the Association should reflect the collective knowledge and standing of its members. No one is less equipped than I to do this job. As I mentioned my technical knowledge is a negative quantity. I could talk from now, until a Great Western engine reaches its destination with a steam special, on photography, but not, with any authority on any other railway topic. I cannot do the job without your help. In this issue I hope to show you how easy it is to contribute to the future success of the magazine. So if anyone else feels that there are debts to repay I would very much like to hear from them. Your response will decide whether we have a going concern, or quite simply a concern which is going.

COLLECTIVE EFFORT

As a fairly recent recruit to the 8E, there are large gaps in my knowledge of member's interests and I am therefore canvassing the membership to let me know exactly what these interests are. You will find a questionnaire at the back of the magazine for you to consider and complete at your earliest possible convenience. I am forewarned that this will be a waste of time, as this was tried before and the response was pathetic.

However, the situation has changed somewhat since the last

attempt, and in any case the Committee would also welcome the opportunity to ask what sort of future the Association can look forward to, and exactly what percentage of the membership are prepared to work for our continued existence.

British Rail's closure of Northwich shed will have a long lasting effect on the operation and function of the 8E Association. The servicing of steam locomotives, which - after the comparative failure of the SLOA specials over the Standedge Route - has been in constant decline, must now be regarded as an occasional as opposed to a prime activity.

The Association gained many members as a result of the access to Northwich shed which was an automatic right of membership, and when this loss is considered in conjunction with the dual resignations of Graham Roughsedge as Chairman, and Mike Lenz as Editor of the magazine, it really is important that questions are asked as to the viability, and the future conduct of the Association.

The purpose of the questionnaire is therefore twofold. Firstly, it is designed to provide information about the railway interests of individual members. Until I know what these interests are, I cannot be sure that I am providing a magazine that is appropriate to the needs of the membership. Secondly, it provides an opportunity for the membership to let the Committee know how they would like the Association to develop in the forthcoming - and critical - months.

Please make the attempt and consider, complete, and return the questionnaire, at your earliest possible opportunity. To rely on my mind-reading qualities really is not good enough. Telepathy is no counter to apathy. The Association can only progress through the collective efforts of all of its members. Each and every one of us has a contribution to make.

To ensure that the reasons for the questionnaire are more fully understood, the points of greatest importance are considered below at some length.

Membership and Finances.

On the face of it, it would appear that the number of subscribing Members has stabilised around the 80 mark, but already there are signs that the renewal rate is being adversely affected by the closure of the shed, and the connected absence of steam operations.

To some extent, the main-line servicing aspect and the access to BR property set us apart from other groups. We could if you like, offer something completely different. We were a support group rather than a social group. Now we are on the same footing as any other railway group which holds monthly meetings. It seems strange to talk about attracting new members when we have less to offer than previously, but this is what we must do if we are to offset the losses that must inevitably result from our diminished status. How do we achieve this? Advertising? Introduction of friends and acquaintances? An opportunity for every member to have his say is given on the questionnaire. Please give this most important matter your earnest consideration.

If we could actually increase our current membership instead of merely retaining our present numerical strength then the increased revenue could be used to good effect by the Committee. For example, the appearance of the magazine could be improved. These improvements could also be made if we could increase each members' financial contribution. This does not mean that we should increase the annual subscriptions. There are many fund raising exercises which we could apply which might in fact result in members spending less on their railway interests whilst at the same time increasing the Association Funds.

For example, how many members travel to monthly meetings by themselves or in a car with empty seats? It should be a simple matter for lifts to be arranged which would result in a collective saving. A proportion of this saving could then be spent on raffle tickets and sandwiches. Incidentally, how many people decline to buy sandwiches because they are too dear, or raffle tickets because they are not interested in the prizes offered? I would have thought that the object of the exercise was to support the Association and not to find fault with the value offered. Surely value has already been established in the provision of 12 monthly meetings and four magazines for an annual subscription of £5.

Another scheme could be to start a members 'library'. Almost everyone in the Association must buy at least four railway books in a year. We are all familiar with the opportunities to 'Choose 3 books from as little as 75p.' Would anyone be prepared to join these schemes and pass the introductory books on to the Association at cost. The titles obtained could then be lent out to members at a cost of 50p per month. If only 25% of our members take on this obligation and everyone then supports the scheme by borrowing books, then around £250 per annum could be expected to be added to Association Funds. With sufficient support, the lending library could be extended to include records, paintings etc. Your comments are awaited with interest.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity to improve our financial position would be to increase our presence at the shows and events which are held in our area every month of the year. The '150' exhibition at Chester, which raised the sum of £70 for the Association is a case in point. This sum could have been increased considerably if the Association had possessed a greater variety of articles for sale. Greater financial reserves would enable such items to be held in 'stock'.

Any fund raising exercise has a drawback in that people are needed to operate the scheme. There may be members, who, whilst not being willing to act as full Committee members, will be prepared to help with fund raising. Please indicate any offers of help or ideas for fund raising on the questionnaire.

The Magazine.

Considering the size of the Association, the magazine is a very creditable effort. I would like to say thank you to Mike Lenz for the many hours he has spent to raise the publication to such a very high level. The thank you is meant to be a public and collective one, but I am sure individual approaches would be most welcome. They would certainly be deserved.

Mike has mentioned that we could improve the appearance of the magazine. In the long run this will depend on the response of the membership to any fund raising exercises. As Mike has said, and the questionnaires will reveal, it really depends on the wishes of the majority. With collective effort nothing is impossible. With collective disinterest - I, like Mike - will get disenchanted, and the magazine could well fold..

It is of prime importance to increase the number of people who are prepared to contribute to the magazine. On my 'arrival' the cupboard was bare and I would like, if I may, to underline exactly how the membership can help to provide a stockpile of articles for future publication. Analysis of articles which appear in railway magazines shows that the subjects covered fall into a fairly small number of categories. Amongst these are:-

- 1) Recollections of childhood memories which usually involve descriptions of lineside or shed visits.
- 2) Coverage of outings of particular relevance or interest.
- 3) Discussions of technical subjects in simple terms.
- 4) British Rail operations past and present.

These, together with the news sections make up some 90% of all the subjects covered in the railway press. Categories 1) and 2) are within the capabilities of anyone. It is surprising how easy it is to produce an interesting essay on these subjects. There is the added pleasure that in writing such an article events will be recalled which have been long forgotten. Category 3) is well within the scope of a number of our members. If you have specialised knowledge on railway operations, signalling, locomotive practice and performance etc. I would like very much to receive an article on your pet subject.

The final category usually requires a certain amount of research to be successful, but some of you may welcome this challenge. Do please give it a try. To show how easy it is I have included articles I have written on the first three categories. If that does not convince you that I need your contributions, nothing will.

If you still feel that article writing is beyond you then please have a go at providing mini contributions as set out in the following text. It is very important that the topics covered in each issue are as wide ranging and varied as possible. Because I have had to write this issue myself it has become a photographic monologue. I apologise to non photographers for this. but it will continue to be a photography monologue if I do not receive contributions from people with more varied interests than my own.

The questionnaires will be analysed - with the aid of my trusty computer - and the collective opinions of the members published in permanent form. One of the most interesting computer listings I hope to produce will be that which shows the members who have declined the invitation to fill in a questionnaire. Is it too much to hope that this will also be the shortest of the listings available?

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

I am sure I speak for everyone when I say that the resignation of Graham Roughsedge as Chairman of the 8E Association was a matter of considerable concern and regret. More than anyone, Graham was responsible for the growth of the Association and we owe him a collective vote of thanks for all the time and effort he has so freely devoted.

He is a hard act to follow but I will do everything I can to ensure that the '8E' continues to grow and prosper. If I am half as successful as he was, I will consider it a job well done.

We have not lost Graham entirely, and the bulk of the Membership will in fact see just as much of him as previously. Only the Committee members will appreciate fully the extent of this loss.

Obviously, we wish Graham well in what is an arduous, but I am sure rewarding task, of organising and developing the growth and day-to-day running of the Llangollen Railway. I can think of no one better able to carry out these duties. We can help. The Society needs your support. I can think of no better way of saying thank you to Graham for all the work he has done for the 8E Association than to become a member - passive will do, but preferably active - of the Llangollen Railway Society.

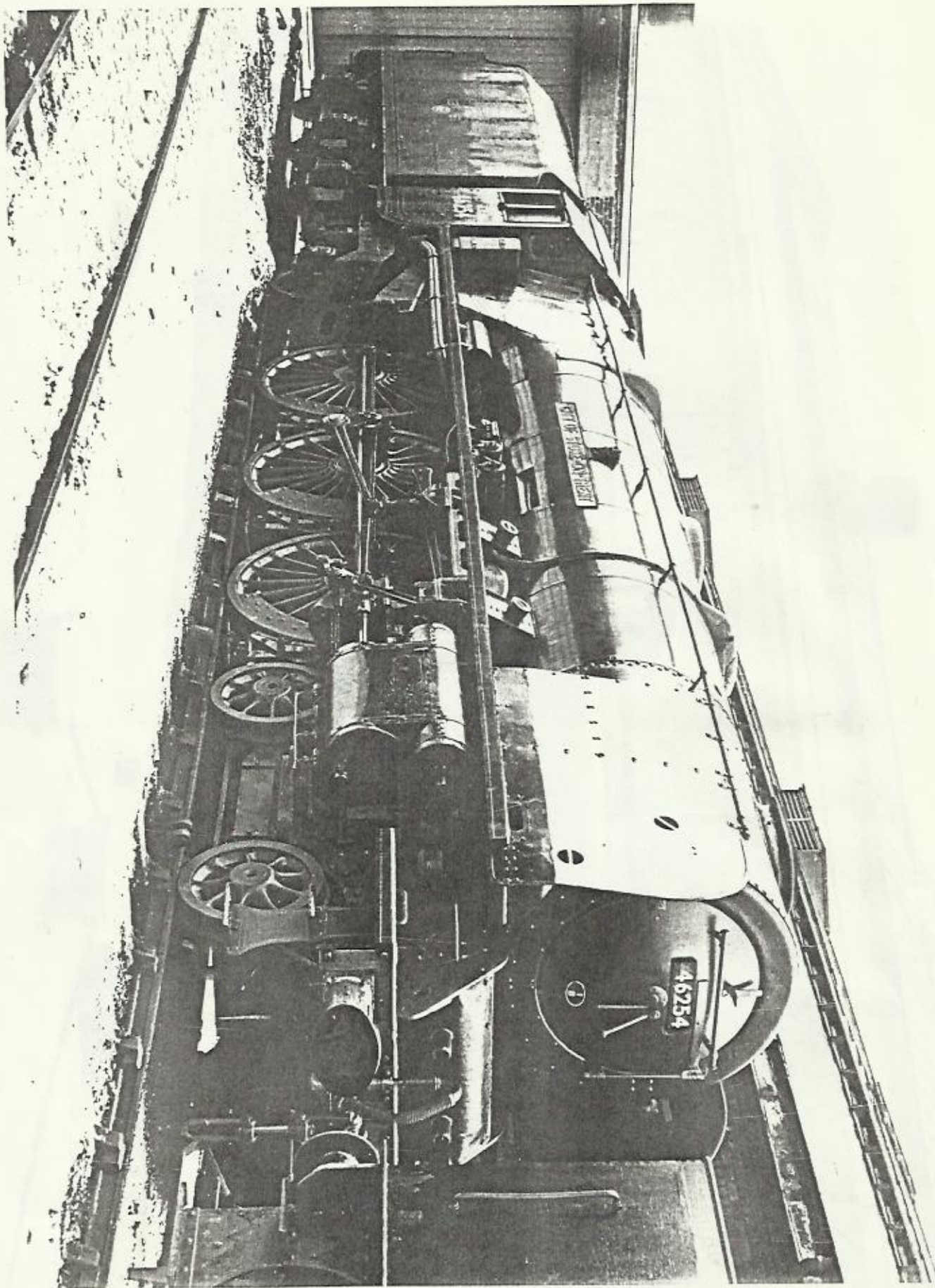
It remains for me to say a personal and very sincere thank you to Graham, and to wish him every success in the future.

Colin Worrall

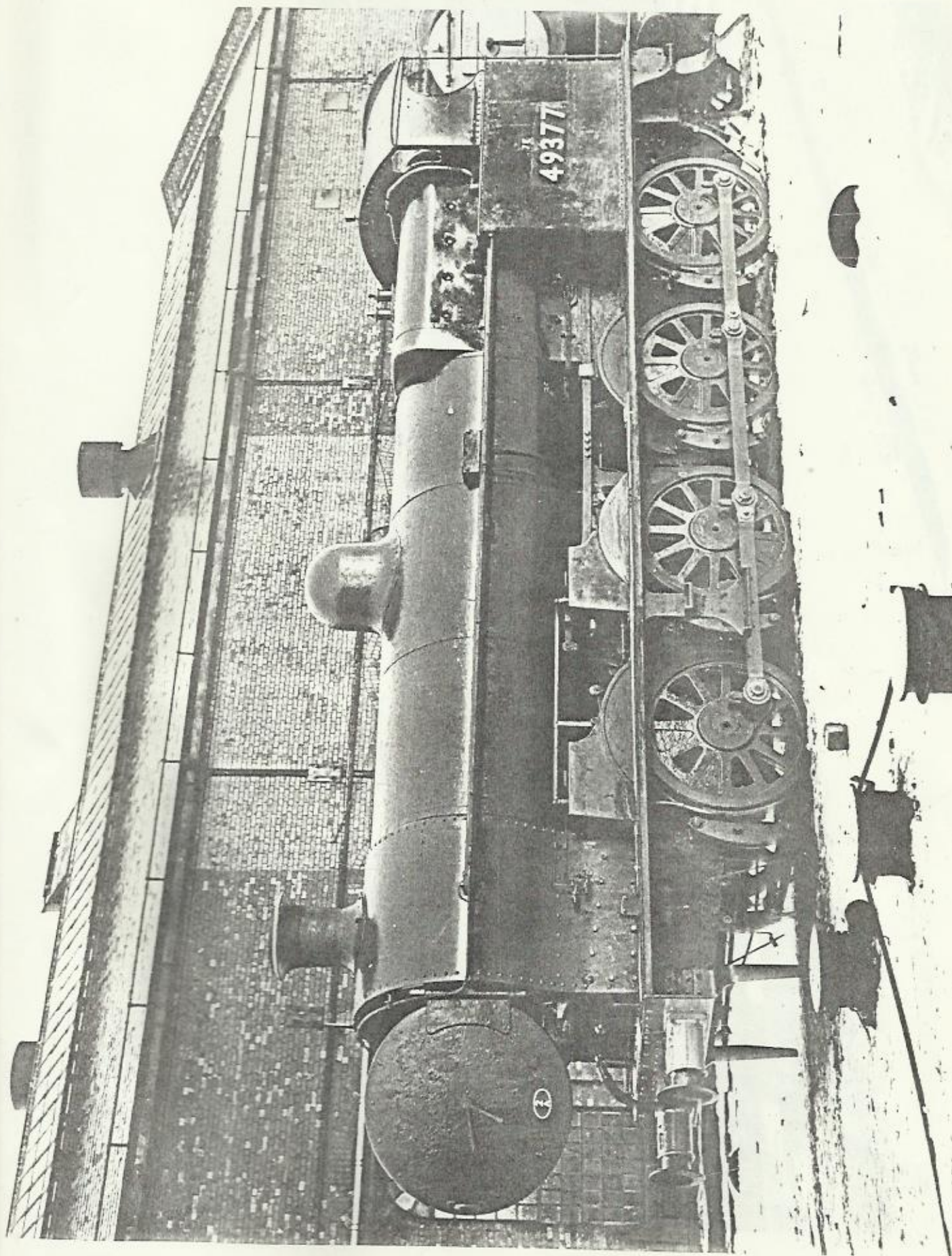
COMMITTEE MATTERS

This part of the Magazine is usually written by the Association Secretary, but I have to a very large extent pre-empted this job in writing what was, in effect, an extended editorial. My apologies are due to John House, who like myself, has just joined the Committee as a direct result of Mike Lenz's (not surprising) request to be relieved of some of the enormous workload which he has undertaken on behalf of the Association for so long. I promise to leave him a clear field in the next issue. Those of you who read his article in Issue 14 will know that John has dabbled in civil engineering from time to time and secretly yearns to be a musician. Like myself he has accepted a position on the Committee to repay the enjoyment that the work of others has brought since we became members. We both have come to learn that a great deal more work had been done on our behalf than we had imagined previously.

The main topics discussed at recent Committee Meetings have been the slow renewal rate and worsening financial position of the Association, and these discussions are reflected elsewhere in the contents of the magazine. Obviously we need to develop interests to replace the loss of steam activity. One suggestion has been that we organise a number of local tours and outings if the membership indicate that these will receive their support. More on this and other suggestions in the next issue.



TIME WAS - 1
Clean machine. Crewe in the winter of '58. 46254 City of Stoke-on-Trent stands, impassive, and impressive, as winter grips. Both ground and Pacific would soon be warmed. But time was fast running out for the Stanier machine.



TIME WAS - 2
Is this what a Super D would have looked like in preservation?
49377 wears an 8E shine with dignity. Crewe. Winter 1958.

MEMBER'S BRIEFING.

There has been no shortage of activity, on both the main line and private railway scenes since my last report.

Crewe Modernisation.

The summer got off to a good start in the North-West with the completion "on schedule" of the mammoth Crewe remodelling project, a scheme which has given the West Coast main line - and the Borough of Crewe - a junction station of which it can be proud, not least from the passenger facilities point of view.

Many of the original buildings, especially on the up side, have been refurbished and again portray the grandeur that was no doubt evident in the Grand Junction/LNW days when they were first built. The contrast between this and the dim and dingy condition to which they had deteriorated is most marked, and it is to be hoped that the travelling public will respect these smart new facilities, and not resort to covering the place with graffiti and litter as so often happens.

Unfortunately, initial operation of the new layout was less than satisfactory, especially during the first few weeks after re-opening, due to a combination of "operating difficulties" including train-crew unfamiliarity - pilot requests were the rule rather than the exception in the first few weeks - systems and equipment failures, reduced platforming capacity etc. After a while however, things began to settle down, as the people "on-the-ground" became more familiar with the revised layout.

80 mph running is now allowed through the station, and there will probably be progressive speed-ups in services in years to come. The overall scheme for Crewe is, however, only in its early days yet. Having obtained the desired station improvements, thoughts will now be turning to future traffic requirements relative to Basford Hall Yard and the Independent lines, the survival of which - on a long term basis - in their present form seems unlikely.

Shortage of motive power

The four re-instated Class 40's have played a major role in the "re-mods" at Crewe. Completion of the project does not signal the end for these veterans which have subsequently been deployed on other engineering and ballast duties in the North West. One or two machines have frequently been stabled at Arpley Holding sidings and Wigan Springs Branch depots between turns and all four were to be found at Warrington on one evening in July. Rumour has it that the Class 40's are to have an extended life on other engineering projects around the system, which highlights the current chronic shortage of Type 4 motive power.

The "new" 97405 is noteworthy in that it is carrying three separate numbers. The engineer's number and the original E.E. type number (260) on separate cab ends, whilst '40060' is displayed on one nose end! How confusing this must be to any new recruits to the train-watching hobby. Does anyone know of any other triple numbered machine operating on BR?

Shortage of electric power is also causing some headaches at the moment, as the many extra electrified route miles, now

operative in East Anglia have to be covered by the existing LMR 25kv fleet. Nine or ten Class 86/2's are required to keep the GE services running. This has led to an upsurge in diesel hauling "under-the-wires" from Birmingham to Liverpool/Manchester, which has also been a planned move for many S West/S Coast trains from May 1985. This can be expected to continue until the new batch of Class 87/2 locomotives start to appear in two or three year's time.

The re-instatement of withdrawn Class 82/83 locomotives - 82.003 and 83.009 still survive at Willesden and Longsight depots respectively - is being considered. These will be added to the small fleet of 4 of these classes which are being retained for empty stock workings at Euston. This will, in turn, release Class 81/85 machines for main line work.

BR may yet live to regret the recent wholesale cutting up of many other Class 82/83 locomotives, after only 20 years service. Surely, with suitable internal refurbishment, they could have been utilised to good effect for a few more years, pending the introduction of newly built Class 87/88/89 machines. On the European mainland, the life of electric locomotives has been extended to 40-50 years in many instances. As it is, we now have the farcical use of Class 81/85 locomotives on the crack WCML expresses, including the 110mph Glasgow trains, with obviously detrimental effects upon timekeeping.

No wonder the "Premier line" has such a poor performance record when compared with the ECML and other Inter-City services. Can you imagine what Sir William Stanier's response might have been if he had been asked to send Princess and Duchess Pacifics on loan to Stratford, with the result that the "Royal Scot" was relegated to a mixed traffic Horwich "Crab" or suchlike!!

Arpley to Skelton closure

Following the closure of the line on 8th July, there has been much clogging up of freight traffic at Warrington, where MGR coal trains now have to run round FOUR times on an out and back basis from Healey Mills. Previously, they ran direct to and from Fidler's Ferry without any reversals on route. With 20 minutes allowed for each reversal (a time often exceeded in practice) plus additional time taken over the revised route now operating, one can easily imagine the current scene at Warrington. It is not unknown, especially at night, for three of the four through platforms at Bank Quay to be occupied by MGR or other freight traffic, waiting for clearance of forward sections. There are obviously detrimental spin-off effects on WCML express passenger services.

Some complicated (and costly) diagramming has been necessary to accomodate traffic diverted following the closure. This is especially true of the "Peakstone" (Tunstead to Charterhouse Junction and return) and other Northwich line trains. Over a period of time, the additional cost will probably equate financially with the amount required to refurbish Latchford Viaduct and other structures in order to keep the Lymm line open. The position was outlined in full by Eddie Bellas in the October issue of Rail Enthusiast.

A review of the history of this interesting line will appear shortly in the 8E Magazine.

Curiously, all fixtures and fittings on the route are being maintained in an operative condition for the time being, which of course leads to speculation that a role may yet be found in the future for this "mothballed" route. We can of course only hope, but evidence of past railway closure proposals suggest that BR management do not usually reverse their decisions on these schemes, for obvious reasons.

Whilst the freight sector no doubt feel well pleased at having removed 22 "uneconomic" route miles from their own individual balance sheet, surely the system as a whole has failed to benefit from this absurd nonsense. But that is the way that Railway Accounting operates these days, with each of the sectors looking after their own patches, cutting costs wherever possible, even if this leads to an overall worsening of performance for the network as a whole. Many other instances of this senseless and uncaring attitude are beginning to show, but diplomacy prevents me from saying too much at this stage.

Summit Tunnel

On a more positive note, Summit Tunnel - on the L & Y Manchester-Leeds route - finally re-opened on Monday 19th August on completion of all necessary rebuilding work following the oil train derailment and subsequent fire in January. The day before re-opening, the general public were able to walk through the tunnel to inspect the work done. MGR traffic from Yorkshire to Fiddlers Ferry is now routed this way in an attempt to take the pressure off the overworked LNW Diggle route.

Birkenhead Mollington St

The proposed closure (previewed in a previous issue) was in fact deferred as the new facilities were not ready at Ellesmere Port for the target date of 30th September.

Electrics to Hooton

Merseyrail electrics are now running to Hooton. A new through DMU service, operated by Class 142 "Railbus" type trains, has been introduced from Helsby to Chester via Ellesmere Port and Hooton (reverse) to connect with these trains. The 142's are also scheduled for a number of other N. Wales/N. West area trains e.g. Wrexham to Bidston.

Other Merseyrail news

Revision of the services from Hunts Cross has meant that trains now run through to Southport instead of Kirkby, which should greatly improve access to this resort for stations on the CLC Warrington and Manchester route, and as a result for other stations in the N. Cheshire/S. Manchester area. (To Southport perhaps, but I cannot say that access to Liverpool has been improved - see Ed's letter - Page 44).

All the 503 Merseyrail units stored at Northwich have now been cut up on site, although it may well be that other sets are still lying around in the Liverpool area awaiting their fate.

Reduction in locomotive haulage

New "Sprinter" (Class 150/151) DMU's are being seen more regularly, especially on the Crewe-Derby and Derby-Matlock workings, although wholesale introduction of this type will probably not occur until May 1986. Eventually, these new units will be responsible for the removal of much cross-country/local loco hauled work as they become the staple power for all of BR's "2nd division" passenger services. Hull-Leeds-Lancaster trains are tabled for early changeover to DMU, although initially existing types will be used. This is of course a direct reversal of the much praised introduction of Class 31 haulage just a couple of years ago. The chance to sample Class 31/Mark 1 stock operation on this line may already have gone when you read this, as the Eastern Region want to abandon hauled trains as soon as possible.

Open Days and Events

I cannot remember a time when so many events were taking place in such a short period of time. "Spotters" must be having a field day. Many WR depots have been opening their doors as part of the GW 150 proceedings. I cannot use the word celebrations in view of the unfortunate loss of the month-long Swindon exhibition planned for August which must count as one of the largest let downs for enthusiasts (both steam and modern image) for a long time.

We must sympathise with those who have lost, not only a good show, but also those who have lost jobs as well. It would surely be harsh for any genuine enthusiast not to feel for the men of Swindon, whose proud traditions and undoubted skills are being cast to the winds, as were those of the men of Shildon, Horwich etc., etc. before them. Where will it all stop? No doubt there will be some satisfaction in Whitehall and Westminster when there is no railway left to close!

Back on the Open Day front, There seems to have been an event of one kind or another every week-end, with Coalville, Haymarket, Wolverton, Stewarts Lane and others adding to the expected openings at Reading, Canton, Cathays, Old Oak Common and Laira.

Noteable exhibits at Plymouth included 7029 Clun Castle (resplendent in 1960's BR livery), 5051 Earl of Bathurst (which still pretends to be Dryslwyn Castle) and Dart Valley Prairie 4566 which now often finds itself on WR main line metals following BR's decision to allow Buckfastleigh trains access to Totnes platforms. Also on view was the DVR's maroon Class 52 from the national collection, D1023 Western Fusilier whose hydraulic engines raised the echoes across her old 84A home base, reviving happy memories of 'sixties summer Saturdays' in the South West. The colourful scene was completed by chocolate and cream DMU's, green Class 50 and 47 locos, a "Gatwick Express" liveried Class 73 electric, Railfreight grey 37.196 (just named 'The Pol and Pen') and the British Telecom yellow 'all-over advert' DMU on the shuttle service to Plymouth. Altogether this was a very well organised show which more than repayed the effort of an overnight journey to Penzance.

Steam Up

On the steam railway front, personal visits to the Worth, Dart, and Severn Valleys and also the Torbay line, found all railways working satisfactorily. The DVR line to Buckfastleigh showing heavy patronage. How remarkable it is that such a great variety of steam haulage can now be enjoyed on these branches which were given up as lost by the national network. Looking back 15/20 years, even the greatest optimist would have found it difficult to forecast such a great steam resurgence.

North Woolwich Steam Museum

One new area where steam is set to gain a foothold is the North Woolwich Station Museum in East London, now the terminus of the 3rd rail D.C. extension of the Richmond 'North London' line. The former Great Eastern terminus has been completely rebuilt and houses some immaculate displays of GE artifacts and memorabilia, including an ex GE 0-4-0T No. 229. plus one or two other small tank locos.

Main line steam has already made an appearance here, as our own Pat Mullee came in with 'Flying Scotsman' some months ago hauling a Royal Train conveying the Queen Mother, who officially opened the exhibition.

Longer term plans envisage considerable extension of the site on to adjacent redundant land, where a loco servicing and operating base will be established in conjunction with the British Enginemen's group, who already have Merchant Navy 35010 Blue Star and Class 5 45293 under restoration in London's docklands.

As the BR line is now single from Custom House, a steam running line will be established on the redundant adjacent track bed, probably as far as Silverston.

Much Local Authority aid is going into this revitalisation of former derelict dockland areas, and, along with parallel environmental improvements, this will become a pleasant area for leisure pursuits in years to come. A visit is, however, strongly recommended even now. Admission is free and access could not be easier via the new 20 minute frequency electric trains. There is a loco in steam every Sunday.

Broad Street

Sadly the original North London terminus at Broad Street is now in the course of demolition, and this curious relic of the steam age will probably be swept away by the time these notes appear. It will be replaced by a temporary platform some 600 yards to the north of the original terminus, which will suffice until final closure of the line from Dalston Junction in mid 1986. Most traffic originally using Broad Street now continues eastwards at Dalston to serve Stratford and North Woolwich. Only the residual Watford morning/evening peak trains remain. Eventually these will be diverted into Liverpool St. when current redevelopment there and the building of the 'Graham Road curve' is completed (Target date 1986).

Ironically the EMU's associated with this route for nearly 30 years, the Class 501's, continue to operate in the area despite scheduled withdrawal in May 1985. However, they mostly work Euston to Watford workings with Southern Class 416 trains covering 'North London Line' duties proper. This situation is likely to continue for some time until train crew agreement can be reached to operate the services with Eastern Region Class 313's as planned.

Local News

Not much to report on at the moment. The proposed 'Heritage Centre' at Warrington Central Goods Yard does not appear to have made progress, and its future would appear to be uncertain. However, The future of the Middlewich Branch does appear to be safe as a decision has recently been taken to (quote) "Retain this route of strategic importance".

Strikes and rumours of strikes

We must all breathe a sigh of relief at the Guard's sensible ballot not to take strike action over the 'one man trains' issue. Whilst safety and other queries must exist over the introduction of these schemes, to even refuse to talk about progress with productivity matters, especially when no existing staff would lose their jobs, did seem to be pure folly. Strikes (and even rumours of strikes) only serve to undermine confidence in the industry by both passenger and freight customers who have proved only too well recently (i.e. in the absurd miner's strike) that they can and will take their business elsewhere.

Much freight operation is already in serious peril, and long term questions as to the future of the "Speedlink" network are being voiced at present. Needless strikes will only serve to get BR firmly established on the downward spiral of declining traffic = declining receipts = withdrawal of passenger services = closure of depots/stations/route miles = less of even more jobs. Thus giving the Government and BR management the golden opportunity to reduce the network without taking the blame themselves. Surely the best way forward for railway workers is to show what traffic CAN be moved, instead of finding excuses as to why it CANNOT be moved.

Absurd ideas such as the abolition of the Metropolitan Counties and the parallel 'Bus Bill' legislation seem to me to be far more worthy of fighting over, but I would maintain that the answer to all these problems is in the ballot box at the end of the day and we are only now reaping the rewards of putting our little 'X' marks against the wrong name in the past! Is your MP aware of how much profit the MC made last year? Perhaps you should write and tell him!

The light at the end of the tunnel?

Recent approval of the two Snow Hill tunnel schemes (London and Birmingham) should offer some exiting cross-city journey opportunities by the end of the current decade. Perhaps this is the ideal way to celebrate the GW 150 anniversary, with one of their major stations - closed in the early 70's after progressive run down of the Paddington-W. Midlands-Birkenhead trains - now looking set to re-open in the near future (at least to local traffic).

With Southern-London Midland through workings assured between Farringdon and Holborn, on a local basis, together with increased useage of Kensington Olympia for Inter-City traffic (Liverpool/Manchester to the Channel ports expresses from May 1986) here, at last, is an area of quite positive progress. Taken alongside the recent proposal to run 10,000 tonne stone trains for Foster Yeoman over Shap utilising FIVE Class 58's per train (you read it here first folks!), perhaps there is evidence of a continuing committment to Railways, at least in certain specific areas. So fingers crossed for the future!

Alan Ashurst

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

The run up to the festive season usually produces a good book or two and, in my opinion, the fare on offer for steam fans this year is particulary good. I do however tend to have a biased view on railway literature and I would welcome the submission of reviews of recent books by the membership. This will serve two purposes. Firstly, it will provide a more representative critique, and secondly it will give anyone who does not feel capable of writing a full article an opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the magazine. Obviously the review is of particular relevance if the book is regarded as particularly good or dismally bad.

Given the money (or more correctly my wife's money) there are four books that I would regard as being in the often quoted but rarely achieved category of "if you only buy one railway book in your lifetime, then let it be this one".

Three are by the same author/photographer R.J. Blenkinsop! Anyone seeing his "Glorious Years" in the October issue of Steam Railway (whatever has happened to the quality of reproduction lately?) would have difficulty believing that Mr. Blenkinsop is a photographer of the highest class. To their credit, Oxford Publishing Co. do full justice to his pictures and their "Tribute to the Western", "Western Cameraman" and "Big Four Cameraman" are highly recomended. The books are large size and most pictures are presented one to a page. The last named is a sumptuous compendium of four previously issued books covering the entire network. Quite, quite superb. All in a all, a splendid record of authentic as opposed to lacquered steam workings, a feast for both eye and memory.

Even more evocative of the steam age is Treacy's Routes North. To my mind the best selection of Bishop Treacy's superlative photographs that has been issued in one volume. Pictures that bring to mind the reek of warm oil, the acrid smell of simmering engines and the hundred and one sights and aromas of the working steam locomotive and its environment. Pictures where you can smell the smoke, hear the effort. Magic! David & Charles take a well deserved bow (not forgetting the co-authors Patrick Whitehouse and John Powell.) Bishop Treacy is of course beyond mortal praise.

If you draw the conclusion from the above paragraphs that I sometimes feel that the Publishers have as much to do with the success or failure of a book as the authors you would not be far from the truth. For example, I would buy any publication by

Janes without necessarily seeing the work in advance. Everything they do has that special quality. Particular the standard of reproduction. If you haven't seen their medium size colour books on steam and modern image do please take a look. Amongst the latest titles, in what is becoming a prolific series are, Southern Steam in Colour and Steam portfolio No. 1 - Great Western Revival by the splendid Hugh Ballantyne. Mind you, given the undoubted bias of our membership, the current re-issue of Mr Ballantyne's London Midland Steam in Colour might be a more appropriate title to seek out.

The point about the role of the publisher is underlined by the issue of the two latest titles on the Settle and Carlisle line. Settle & Carlisle Route Revisited by T. G. Flinders, which falls somewhat short of his original and excellent work, and Tribute to the Settle & Carlisle by Roger Siviter. Both are guilty of lacking essential quality in the photographs included, and share a tendency to rely on the aura of the line rather than the coverage being presented. Neither is helped by the size of the photographic reproductions (particularly the former) or by the inclusion of too much 35mm work of inferior tonal standard (especially the latter). Both books will sell on their title rather than their content. A philosophy that the railway publishing world could well do without.

Another of the same ilk which is still on the bookstalls, is the abysmal Scottish Scenic Routes. The picture editor of this publication should look up the meaning of the word scenic in the dictionary. The title, the cover photograph (and the dictionary) suggest that the eye should be in for a treat. In the event mere words have to suffice. Again a very large disappointment. Unless of course, you happen to be a railway historian.

There are photographers who do not allow their publishers to lower the standards that they have shown elsewhere. Brian Stephenson for example. His name on a book guarantees that you will be given pictures of the highest standards. For many years he has been producing black and white prints of enviable quality (from a 1950's Rolleicord!). I suspect that he does all the printing for any book with which he is associated. His LMS Steam Portrait (Ian Allan) is a case in point. Dozens of prints of superb tonal quality from an age when photography was a little short on technical know how and predictability. Quite an achievement. If you are into the good old days before the good old days, then this most certainly is for you.

Diesel and electric fans are less well catered for and it is the absence of suitable titles rather than personal bias which explains the lack of reviews. Paul Shannon and John Hillmer's Diesels in the North West is my own favourite. Coverage and content are both good, although once again I have to repeat my previous criticism that there are too many examples of moderate 35mm work. The pictures are competent but lack variety and, more importantly, that essential excellence which turns a good book into an outstanding one.

There are still a number of older titles in the shops which may be of especial interest to the membership, as they deal with the local scene. J. R. Carter's Footplate Cameraman (Ian Allan)

is one. Dozens of real steam pictures from Warrington, Chester, Liverpool and Manchester (not to mention one superb night shot of the Duchess on shed at Northwich). A note of warning however for those of you who are seeing the book for the first time. As you would expect the photographs are beyond reproach coming as they do from the lens of a recognized master photographer. The same cannot be said of the printing of far too many of the photographs. The technician who printed them for Mr. Carter is guilty of over enthusiastic holding back with the result that there are disturbing white patches on 18 of the pictures. They may spoil your enjoyment at first. They did mine. Given time their impact recedes. You may feel, that I am being overcritical. I accept that the age of the negatives may have contributed to the problem and acknowledge the debt to the printer, without whom the book may never have appeared. Given a choice of no Mr. Carter and Mr. Carter with white patches, I would take the latter anytime. The author/photographer acknowledges that his book has another serious fault. There are too many Duchess pictures!

Nigel Dyckoff's Book on the Cheshire Lines Committee is another previously issued title of especial interest. There is a new book by Paul Bolger which also deals with this subject. The former was a collection of very interesting photographs and did not seek to provide detailed information about the set up and history of the line. To some extent Paul Bolger's work fills in the details and provides a great deal of interesting reading on the early years (illustrated by some historic and rare pictures). Station and Shed plans are also provided. Taken together the two works (from different publishers) are complementary. Each supplies what the other lacks. One without the other is not as satisfactory as a prospective purchaser might have a right to expect. Try both before you buy.

Finally I should mention that modern technology is also bidding for a place in our Christmas Stockings. Railfilms (in the person of Nick Dodson, who will be visiting the 8E to give a show next year) have two videos out of especial interest. The first shows what 8E member Roger Nicholas gets up to by the lineside. Roger's films are always highlights of the 8E year and it makes quite a change to find him in front of a camera. The other film covers one of the preservation highlights of 1984. The pristine Coal Tank smoking away in Manchester's Victoria station and 'attacking' Miles Platting Bank on its frequent trips to Wilsons Newton Heath Brewery. If you can't wait until Nick's visit, details can be obtained by contacting Railfilms limited at The Mews, Chasefield, 19 Park Road, Bowden, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 3JJ. Incidentally, when I spoke to Roger I asked if we could expect to see videos of his superb steam age films at some future date. He was undecided. Would you please pester him when you next see him at the 8E. The railway 'video industry' could well do with a bit of real quality at the present time. Finally I should mention that there is now a computer game for Railway Enthusiasts. Called Southern Belle it allows you to drive a King Arthur Class 4-6-0 from London to Brighton. Scoff ye not! Friends tell me its very, very, good. I haven't seen it yet as my son's Christmas Stocking is not yet full and I am sure he would like it! It is produced by Hewson Consultants and is available practically everywhere.

Time now to give an illustration of the primary category of articles. This will in fact be the first in a series documenting the chronological development of my railway interests, from the time I was a child to the present day. (The last "episode" I have drafted is called 'to 8E or not to 8E'!) I hope that you find the article as interesting as those which have been done on similar lines by Alan Ashurst, John Little, John House et al. We all have these tales to tell so why not set pen to paper and send me the results. As I mentioned above this is worth doing even it is only to recall memories which are lying dormant at the back of your mind. It does not have to be grammatically correct. Readers will be too busy recalling similar experiences to the ones you are describing to take too much notice of any literary shortcomings.

PRIMARY DAYS

There are not too many advantages to being over 40, but if you are a railway enthusiast, there is the very real consolation that you lived through a period when the steam locomotive was the universal form of motive power on the British Rail network.

In Wigan, where I spent my childhood, you did not have to go looking for steam, instead, it announced itself to you. The still air, being relatively free of traffic disturbance, carried the clank and hiss of toiling freight engines for prodigious distances. Goods trains ran in seemingly endless procession on lines now long abandoned. You could not escape them. If you walked, you heard them; if you travelled by bus, the spiralling plumes of smoke betrayed their presence in the landscape.

I often think that the passing years must have magnified my impression of the number of trains which I saw, but it must be remembered that a few years after the War, the North West contained eighty motive power depots with over 2500 locomotives at their disposal.

This awareness of the existence of the steam locomotive developed into an active interest in my last two years at primary school, at a time when an infant British Rail had just celebrated its first anniversary. The school stood within cinder throwing distance of the thirty or so Super D locomotives from Springs Branch shed which were the most vociferous users of the Whelley loop line. This dual track railway ran the few miles across country between the main lines of the L & Y (at Hindley) and the L & N W (at Standish Junction).

The abundant freight traffic was hauled by Crabs, Black Fives and Eights, and also the ugly, but functional, Austerity locomotives. Occasionally there was a Patriot or Jubilee to admire, and where these were named locomotives they found especial favour with my school friends. For me however, nothing caught my imagination like the Super D's.

Visually, although their building plates denied this, they looked like some time-locked survivors of an age long gone by. They were the only LMS engines I saw regularly, which did not carry numbers on their smokebox doors; they had no side windows for the crew to look out of; the cab roof looked as though it

had been designed during a steel shortage, and the only small wheels to be seen were on the tender.

Once in motion, even greater differences were apparent. A chimney (not designed in a steel shortage) was provided, but its use appeared to be optional. Even allowing for the ravages of the war years, steam leakage was excessive, and more often than not, the locomotive was only a vague outline in the mist! If you think that I exaggerate, may I solemnly swear that I remember a number of occasions when these 'crop-spraying' machines caused me to throw down my notebook in disgust. Each time, a fifty yard dash alongside a moving locomotive had failed to produce a clear sight of the cab number, which had disappeared underneath billowing clouds of steam, pouring out of less than tight front (and rear!) ends.

The road at the side of the school was an un-made track which dropped steeply away from the gate to the playground, disappeared briefly under a short stretch of tarmac, and then emerged again a hundred yards later to plunge at right angles under the railway. This was not a route to traverse at breakneck speed unless your mother was good at sewing leather patches on trousers, but the sight of a Super D waiting impatiently at the signal just beyond the bridge, prompted many a headlong dash down the slope.

If you were quick and arrived before the signal was pulled off, you were spectator to the most thrilling of all my early railway memories. First, there would be a shuddering explosion, followed by an asthmatic, long drawn out wheezing noise, which was quite unique to Super D's. This ritual was then repeated - several times if you were lucky - until, either, there was a frantic squealing jerk forward, or, you were treated to the most spectacular steam locomotive version of running on the spot that you were ever likely to witness.

My own personal nickname for these engines was 'Hornbies'. This was because, like their model counterparts of the day, there was no visible, external means of making the wheels go round, and in addition, the locomotives showed no apparent preference for going backwards or forwards. Nor indeed, did they seem to mind if they were at the front or rear of their wagons.

Despite this comparison with toy trains I was very much aware that the Super D's were very real, full scale locomotives. My ABC insisted that as far as power was concerned there was little difference between my favourites, at 7F, and the Stanier Duchesses or Princess Royals which, just after the war, were rated at 7P. In support of the eight coupled, it has to be said that they hauled trains of prodigious length, and loads of more than fifty wagons were commonplace.

I have many treasured memories of the Whelley Loop, but one of the most indelible arose one early Spring afternoon, just as I was leaving school. The red and yellow fishtail signal some two hundred yards away indicated that a train was on its way. I walked down to the line and awaited its arrival.

Eastbound trains came on you in a rush. They were hidden from

view by a be-sleepered fence which followed the sides of a cutting rising steeply to your left. The cutting encompassed the Guinness Book of Records station, and continued under a road bridge for some four hundred yards until the eastern fringe of Haigh Plantations was reached.

As a result, every eastbound train made a dramatic entrance. The first you heard of its approach was a thunderous roar as the exhaust exploded on the underside of an adjacent road bridge. A few staccato beats later the engine burst into view and you had the briefest of side on sightings before the locomotive swung away, following the leftwards curve of the line for some three hundred yards before it passed out of your field of vision.

My pulse quickened as I caught a first glimpse of a couple of burnished buffers mounted on a sparkingly clean bright red buffer bar, raced as I saw polished chrome hoops around the glistening black boiler and almost stopped as the raised silver numerals 5552 appeared on the cabside. What a sight! The Silver Jubilee. That one magical sighting remains fixed in my mind for all time. A lifetime of railway observation will not produce an occasion to match this memory. Some years ago, a correspondent in the railway press, who presumably had similar memories to draw on, suggested that Leander be reinstated in Silver Jubilee livery as a tribute to Her Majesty's 25th year on the throne. Regrettably the suggestion did not find favour with the locomotive's owners.

Although the casual onlooker might have concluded that the Whelley Loop Line was only used by freight traffic, the regular observer would have discovered that there was in fact one passenger train on each weekday. Namely, the 5.10 from Manchester Victoria to Windermere. This nine coach train was entrusted to Black Fives, Jubilees and unrebuilt Patriots. According to the railwayman father of one of my school friends, these engines were the largest locomotives allowed to work on this section. However, interesting as this train was, it paled into insignificance when it was compared with the other occasions when coaches ran along the Whelley tracks. These special workings could be categorised as either diversionary or excursion traffic.

By virtue of a continuing spur, which ran on from the L & Y end of the line, the loop provided a diversionary route for West Coast main line expresses in the event of trouble in the congested Wigan area. I well remember two such occasions when trains, including the Royal and Mid-day Scots, puffed gingerly past the school. The extreme caution which was shown by the slow progress was very understandable. For example, the southbound trains had to negotiate a creaking viaduct, then a patch of dense, and in places encroaching woodland, before braving embankments and cuttings which ran over one of the most heavily mined and excavated areas in the country. How fortunate that the London Midland region did not display route availability on their cab sides. What the eye does not see, the mind does not take responsibility for!

It is interesting to reflect that the period immediately after nationalisation was characterised by a search for standard

locomotive and carriage liveries. The Stanier Pacifics which trod the Whelley gauntlet were painted either black or blue, with Polmadie engines showing an interesting variation on the theme. A supply of genuine Caledonian Blue (not the Lakeside & Haverthwaite variety) had been unearthed in Glasgow and applied to the first members of the class. Sad to say, this unofficial modification was short lived, for one of the engines worked through to Euston, was seen by a member of the Inspectorate, and the scottish enterprise was squashed forthwith. Blue engines were new to me at the time, and this, together with the element of surprise, probably explains why I vividly remember the passage of these trains, despite the thirty odd years which have flown since I saw them.

The diversions were of course chance events, and the greatest attraction on the line was the excursion traffic which held my attention throughout the fifties. My first knowledge of these workings came one bright spring evening whilst I was playing football by the side of the line. A coach, which seemed to be made entirely of glass, appeared, travelling sedately in a westerly direction. At first there seemed to be no visible means of propulsion and - I was only ten remember - I half expected to see a team of white mice scurrying before it. As the coach got nearer I was able to see that there was in fact a little Ivatt 2-6-0 pushing quietly at the rear. It seemed daft at the time not to have the engine coupled in front and I could not wait for the next day to ask my more knowledgeable friends for an explanation. I was duly told that the engine drivers were being shown the road for excursion trains which ran each summer.

Sure enough, the following Saturdays in July, August and September saw a dozen-or-so crammed to the door specials pass cameraless fields and bridges, for two magic hours between 10.30am and 12.30pm. Motive power was infinitely varied, and was drawn from sheds throughout Yorkshire and Derbyshire. Elegant Midland 4-4-0's contrasted strongly with Fowler's workmanlike Crabs and 0-6-0's. Stanier 2-6-4's and Black Fives coped quietly and efficiently with 10 to 15 coach trains, in mute contrast to the explosive progress of straining freight engines. It was not unusual for Stanier 2-8-0's and eight coupled WD engines to be given 20 to 25 bucket-and-spade filled coaches to haul all the way from the Midlands to the Fylde Coast. Any one of these trains had individual appeal, but pride of place simply had to be given to the rakes of varnished teak coaches which appeared behind sparkling Thompson B1's.

In later years, the 4-4-0's and 0-6-0's disappeared, but the introduction of the BR Standard types helped to maintain the variety. Particularly noteworthy was the use of the 2-10-0 engines, which, despite the heavy loads they were given, always seemed to run to time.

I bought my first real camera in 1958, and was soon the proud possessor of a lineside photography permit for the Whelley line, together with the stretch of West Coast main line running north from the junction at Standish. Sad to relate the ex-LNER engines did not appear in front of my camera in this period.

The track has long since been lifted and the Whelley line has

passed into history but not beyond memory. The pictures in my mind's eye are still strong. If only the boffins could take these latent images and convert them into electric impulses which could be recorded on tape and shown on a domestic TV.....

WITHIN EASY REACH

Each issue, I propose to keep the membership up to date with the activities of our nearest societies. Especially those who can (or may) provide the sort of locomotive contact that we ourselves were once able to provide in abundance. Each of them is deserving of your support. As I have spent so much time writing articles the 'news' will have to wait until the next magazine. For the moment you will have to be content with an outline of two of the lesser known societies whose progress will be reported in future issues.

Foxcote Manor Society. The Society was formed in 1972. Its objective is to restore 7822 Foxcote Manor to full working order following its 1974 purchase from Dai Woodham. Based in Oswestry the locomotive will eventually join the Llangollen 'fleet'. Indeed parts of the locomotive have arrived already! Anyone interested in taking out membership of the Society should get in touch with the Foxcote members who regularly attend the 8E meetings. Any Committee member will be pleased to effect an introduction.

Cheshire lines Steam Railway Group. Those of you who came to the October meeting and saw the very entertaining slide show provided by Brian Hickey will already know that a group has been formed with the intention of returning steam to former Great Central metals close to Chester. Led by Jack Hughes a former driver on the line, the Group was formed at the end of 1983. The initial intention was to use as much of the line between Mickle Trafford and Dee Marsh Junction, Shotton, as possible. However, because there were four Councils responsible for this relatively short stretch of track, and also because of the multiplicity of bridges which would have been costly to maintain, the Group are now concentrating on a four mile stretch from Mickle Trafford to the outskirts of Chester.

This stretch is the responsibility of Chester City Council who are now looking on the project favourably. Obviously progress will only be made if the Council buy the trackbed and then offer the Cheshire Lines Steam Railway Group a workable lease. Once this hurdle has been cleared, the Group are confident that motive power will not be a problem. Already they have been contacted by a number of locomotive owners and restoration groups who would like to run their machines on the line. It would be marvellous to have a working steam railway on our doorstep and the Group are deserving of our collective support and backing. Those of you who would like to join the ranks can contact the Membership Secretary, David Dennis (0244 372191).

I hope to feature all the latest news on such preservation groups as the Severn Valley Railway, Dinting, the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, Steamport, Steamtown, The East Lancs Railway, and of course the Llangollen Railway. I would very much appreciate assistance from any members who have contacts who could supply 'inside' information for these or any other 'local' groups I have not listed.

The second in my set of illustrative articles (being the first in a series of articles on exposure) deals with the 'technical' subject of automated camera exposure. I have tried to make the article as readable as possible. The sentences (for me!) are kept relatively short. To read and understand the article should not require special photographic expertise, and most occasional photographers ought to find something of interest in the text. There is however more to the article than first meets the eye. Those of you with prior knowledge of exposure should find much to think about. This is after all the prime object of the piece. To encourage photographers to develop an enquiring mind and stimulate personal photographic research. Questions will be posed and, as befits the title, all will be revealed in due course. When you have finished reading, I hope you will be prompted to write an article in similar vein on your own pet topic. Why the Class 56's are so unreliable; what is involved in the maintenance and restoration of a steam locomotive; which diesels put down more power at the rail etc etc. I know nothing about these subjects but I would certainly like to find enlightenment in a future edition of the Magazine. So come on. As the policemen said when asked where he lived - Letsby Avenue.

INDECENT EXPOSURE

If you own a modern 35mm camera, equipped with through-the-lens metering, you might be tempted just to glance through this article, or worse still, skip it altogether. And why not? When you have spent a not inconsiderable part of your ill-gotten gains on the latest and most infallible of automatic cameras, there would seem to be no need to learn about exposure theory. At least that is what your glossy camera brochure would have you believe. This is quite wrong. Any serious photographer can improve his output considerably by learning the fundamentals of exposure, and any competent photographer can lower his standards by placing too much reliance on his automatic marvel. As we shall see, the fundamental problem associated with automatic exposure control is that the designer of this type of camera has to calibrate his brainchild to cope with the average photograph of the average photographer. He is very successful in his labours. Statistically, over 90% of the pictures taken will be more than satisfactory. So, what are the reservations?

The point we ought to be concerning ourselves with is that a Railway Photographer is not an average photographer. Not too many pictures are taken by visualising, composing, and setting the controls for a subject, before that subject can be seen in the viewfinder. Then again, the average subject - small children excepted - does not roar into shot at speeds approaching 100mph. Also in other branches of photography, there is usually a second chance to make an almost identical second exposure. To some extent, no railway photograph can ever be repeated, and a high percentage of exposures will be of special importance or significance. Also prime cost per shot will usually be high, and it is essential that the most is made of each and every opportunity. Imagine travelling hundreds of miles to photograph Black Fives on the Kyle line, or the last Deltics out of Kings Cross and getting it wrong!

Modern camera technology is not always appropriate to, or

successful at, meeting these requirements. By way of illustration let us consider if the principles followed by the designers of an automatic camera can give problems in an everyday railway situation. I reserve the right to give the cameramen in my examples, the camera which will give them the most problems! Contrary to what you might expect this will usually be an expensive rather than a cheap model.

Imagine that you are out in the Fells awaiting a steam special. It is November and the soft mists of England hang deep upon the hills. Resisting the urge to burst into song, you set your camera up on your tripod, looking down the slope on your chosen stretch of track. After suitable adjustment of the controls, your viewfinder announces that your camera is ready to deliver at f2.8 and 1/500 second.

Dead on time - we are using our imagination remember - the special storms up the hill towards you. Having focussed and fixed your gaze on an appropriate fishplate, you squeeze your shutter release just as the front wheel passes over. Another one safely in the bag. But is it? When, in due course, you inspect the processed picture you are shattered to note that the front of the engine is completely blurred. So what went wrong?

The answer lies in the camera designer's use of a stepless shutter. When the viewfinder readout of your aperture-priority automatic camera informed that you were using a speed of 1/500th of a second, what was actually indicated was that the speed in use could be anywhere between 1/376 and 1/749 second. On a dank November day the actual speed could well be 1/390 second. In addition, when the dark mass of the train moved into shot this speed was probably halved to 1/195 second, which was not fast enough to freeze the movement.

Do not be misled into thinking that you will not have problems if you use a shutter-priority camera, or switch to manual mode on your aperture-priority equipment. The latter will not cope with the problem of taking an exposure for one picture and then shooting under quite different conditions, and as we shall see as this series of articles is developed, even the former type of camera can provide traps for the unwary.

Back to your imagination once more. This time your wait for a steam special is on a glorious Spring evening. White fluffy clouds, edged with gold from a setting sun decorate a pink sky. You have decided on a partial silhouette shot, using your favourite FP4, and find a location, again on an up slope, where a double semaphore and leafless branches link earth and sky. You have taken up a three quarter front position, carefully adjusted so that the three quarter rear sun will reflect on the entire length of the train, and throw essential illumination into the reciprocating motion. The shot calls for contrast, and much of its success will be derived from the superb cloud effects. You aim your camera high, to include as much of the spectacular sky area as possible. You reach for and attach your 3X Red filter.

Then comes the anxious wait. Every thirty seconds or so you nervously depress your shutter release as far as the readout position. You smile knowingly. Your viewfinder indicates that a

speed will be selected between 1/376 and 1/749 second. You then reset the aperture from the 2.8 in use to 3.5. The readout still shows 1/500. You have established that the speed used will be between 1/501 and 1/749 second. Great! You have full control and can rely on a manual setting of f2.8 and 1/500 second.

The thunder in the distance indicates the special's approach. The sun continues to shine. Everything goes to plan. The locomotive is working hard and the smoke effect in the cool twilight atmosphere is the best you have ever seen. You fire the shutter on the last exposure on your film and rush back home to develop what must surely be the finest picture you have ever taken.

Disappointment awaits you. The first 35 exposures are superb, but your master shot is at least 3 stops under exposed. No matter how much care is lavished on the print it will never give the effect you envisaged. Again you have to ask. What went wrong?

The camera I have equipped you with is fitted with a CdS cell to give the viewfinder information. This type of cell is much more sensitive to red light than both FP4 AND the silicon cell which is reading the light falling on the film's emulsion and adjusting the shutter accordingly. The two cell system is incorporated because the use of a cell to measure the light reflected from the film's surface is regarded as the most accurate method possible. However it is not practical when using such a cell to link it to the viewfinder readouts. A separate CdS cell (chosen for its cheapness) is given this task. The system works well. Except of course when you use a red filter. Then you get the unfortunate result that the shutter speed indicated in the viewfinder is different from the one read, and activated, by the shutter control cell. A final point is that you made no compensation for the fact that any automatic metering system gives a hopelessly optimistic reading when presented with a backlit situation.

As the Americans say, to capture once-in-a-lifetime shots requires more information than is contained in your forefinger. You must engage your brain before clicking the shutter.

There are many other camera 'sophistications' which can have a noticeable effect on exposure determination. Some cameras have 'see-through' mirrors and a scratch on the rear surface can be disastrous. On others, changing the viewfinder screen can alter the readings. There are even models which change the method of metering for different shutter speeds. It is not my intention to provide an exhaustive list of every possibility in this short article. It is up to every diligent photographer to thoroughly research his chosen equipment to see if there is anything in the way it takes pictures which can possibly - in any eventuality - affect his results.

Individual characteristics are not the only problem facing the Railway Photographer. As is the case with any type of picture-taking the railway cameraman must familiarise himself with the failings which are common to each and every metering system. We mentioned this above when we spoke of a 90% success rate for

automatic cameras. Talk of a success rate is really the wrong way to evaluate an automatic camera. The real worth will be shown by the failure rate which applies.

Again it might pay us to consider performance in practice. Let me ask you how many of the following situations will be handled satisfactorily by an aperture priority camera?

1) You are standing beneath the famous Victoria Bridge on the Severn Valley Railway. Camera in hand. Reversal film in camera. It is late in the year and the low sun on the far side of the Bridge, turns the shimmering waters into a silver pool. Suddenly a diminutive pannier drifts across, trailing a nostalgic rake of assorted wagons. You use a vertical format to take in the River and the wispy smoke drifting lazily upward from the locomotive's chimney.

2) It is 2am on a balmy Spring night. The year is 1980. You are in a time-warped North-West, and row upon row of steam locomotives simmer gently on either side of you. You set your camera up on your tripod, and take picture after picture in the tungsten-dispersed twilight. You use your delayed action timer to prevent camera shake as the camera shutter is open for 8 seconds which must be near the limit of its automatic operation. Ilford HP5, rated at 400ASA is your chosen material. An aperture of f16 is set to give the vast depth of field needed for this type of shot.

3) Despite the worst winter for many years, you have again ventured to the Severn Valley. Before you, 43106, icicles descending from every horizontal ledge, glistens in the low December sunlight. You take up a position to the rear of the Mogul, centre the cab - which looks as though it has been sprayed with Christmas glitter - in your viewfinder, and gently squeeze the shutter.

4) A little later, wellies having been tested to the limit, you stand by open lineside, watching the flurry of snow which announces the arrival of 5164. A polaroid filter is fitted to darken the clear blue sky, and Ektachrome 64 is being used to record the copper-topped green splendour of the engine, the chocolate and cream of the coaches, and the occasional patches of brown which peep through the snow covered trees, track and landscape.

5) Steam has returned to the East Coast main line. You stand, camera loaded with HP5, looking down at the dark mouth of a tunnel. Flying Scotsman bursts into view. Not too much steam, which is a disappointment, but the spotless engine contrasted against the grime encrusted brickwork is a splendid sight. You have promised to provide a 20 X 16 print to one of the support team, and intended to use FP4. The HP5 was necessary because your location proved to be in shadow when you arrived. Just to be on the safe side, you make a mental note to increase your development time by 25%.

6) After a long overnight drive, you stand, in constant danger of losing a precarious (and shifting) foothold, looking down on a single stretch of track, a few miles out of Kyle of Lochalsh. On either side of the line, vast blue lagoons of water - dotted with tiny islands - stretch all the way to a distant horizon. You are rewarded by the sight of the immaculate 5025, steaming well, and if the resulting Kodachrome transparency is up to standard, the strain on life, limb (and pocket) will all have been worthwhile.

7) The last Class 25 you will ever see in BR service, clanks a dozen or so wagons towards you. The Kodachrome 25 you are using in the strong September sunshine, should faithfully record every detail in the cornfield which bisects the line. The dazzling golden carpet slopes upwards behind the locomotive, and as you press the shutter, you note how clearly the leading edge stands out against the brilliantly lit backdrop.

8) You are recording the last three months of the Deltic Era. 55.002 noses out into the pale autumn sunshine which glances across the east end of Manchester Victoria's No. 11 platform. Twin plumes of white smoke stand out sharply against the dark shadows cast by the overall roof, which somehow has managed to escape the general demolition. The surrounding gloom contrasts strongly with the brilliance of the sun's reflections on the side of the locomotive, and the edges of the roof and the signal supports. Even your chosen HP5 will have difficulty recording the widely differing surface luminances.

--As you might have expected, none of the pictures will be handled in optimum fashion.

--As you will have noticed I have chosen to describe photographs which, if of prime quality, would have a privileged place in your collection.

--As you will come to learn, the list can be extended indefinitely.

-- King George V emerging from the dark depths of Paddington Station.

-- 44027 crossing the ribbon of land at Butterley Reservoir

-- The Torbay Railway engines leaving Kingswear

-- The Duchess amidst snow covered Cumbrin Fells etc., etc.

All will be less than satisfactory if you leave your automatic camera to decide the exposure for itself. A 10% failure rate assumes much greater significance if it contains a high proportion of pictures such as these.

Obviously there are common themes running through the above situations, and I will explain the underlying principles in the next article in this series, which I have called the 'Positive Negative'. It could of course be subtitled the 'Positive Positive'. As to the examples given, these will be dealt with in 'Follow Up'. One in this issue, the rest in the next.

I will no doubt receive a certain amount of criticism for leaving you in 'mid-air' as it were. However, as I said above, the purpose of this article is to persuade any interested reader to develop an enquiring mind about exposure and also the ability to recognize (and solve) any problems for himself. Please 'give it a go' and try to decide why your automatic camera has difficulty coping with the situations listed. If I may I will leave you with a simple illustration which should convince anyone that his automated marvel is not to be trusted, and that a study of exposure theory will produce tangible rewards. Take consecutive exposures, using identical lighting, and with your camera set on automatic, of the whitest and then the blackest matt surfaces you can find. Fill the viewfinder for each shot. The negatives (or positives) will be identical. Having established that your automated marvel can't tell the difference between black and white, do you really feel inclined to ask it to sort out, on its own, all the differing tones and colours that occur in the average photograph? Of course not. Help is needed. I will show you how to provide this in the next issue.

FOLLOW UP

Every meeting, and magazine issue, must pose a great number of questions. For the most part these are never raised or resolved. The purpose of this part of the magazine will be to enable the membership to seek answers for any queries that might occur to them. For example how many who attended the excellent lecture by Graham Lilleker in September, on the subject of the APT, came away wondering exactly what it was that went wrong, and exactly what benefits will emerge from the project in future years. There is a book out at the moment which may go some way to answering these questions. It is called APT - A promise unfulfilled (Ian Allan). Worth seeking out.

As promised I am using this section to set out an outline of why an automatic camera would have difficulty dealing with one of the situations set out on pages 24/5. The example chosen is number 1). The rest will be dealt with in the next issue, by which time I hope you will have attempted to outline solutions of your own. At this stage in our instruction, I can only indicate the problem areas. The underlying principles will be discussed at length in subsequent articles.

The first point is that no automatic camera can be expected to deal satisfactorily with a backlit situation and this is the basic reason why the subject described poses problems. Also, the use of reversal film will emphasise any errors in the exposure determination, as this type of film has much less exposure 'latitude' than is shown by negative material. Most photographers will have identified these problems, but there is a great deal of difference between knowing that there is a problem and knowing how to deal with it. The series of articles which I am writing should help beginners to cope with any situation which might arise.

A point that inexperienced photographers will have missed is that there are very often difficulties associated with using a camera in a vertical format. One of the greatest problems facing the camera designer is how to counter the influence of the sky area. Too much sky in a picture can fool an automatic metering system into thinking that there is much more light around than is the case. The designer's answer to this, is to minimise the effect that the top part of a horizontal format picture has, on exposure determination, and to increase the effect of the lower half. Great when you are in fact using a horizontal (or view) format. But when, as in our example, you do in fact use a vertical format, part of the area at the bottom which has been given increased sensitivity now reads directly from the sky area, yielding a far too optimistic exposure reading.

As this is the first 'Follow up' the section in this issue is a small one. Its size in the future will depend on you. If you think of any questions which you would like to see answered in future issues please get in touch.

PS. Why was Whelley Station a Guinness Book of Records Station?

THREE OF A KIND

This is yet another audience participation spot! Those of you who feel that a full article is beyond you might like to have a

go at providing material for this heading. Basically what I am after is a set of three descriptions. It could be the three best railway books you have ever read, the three finest classes of locomotives that there have ever been etc. etc. On the other hand it could be the three worst locomotives, or journeys, or perhaps a trio of BR decisions that you feel like letting of steam about. Another category which springs to mind is that of three humorous situations. You do not have to submit three descriptions if this is too much for you. I can always combine your submissions with others to satisfy the heading. Be my guest. The floor is yours. Pontificate as you may.

Once again I am providing examples to give you some idea of what I am looking for. Starting with the easiest category to tackle. I leave you to decide which category I have chosen.

In my formative railway years, there were precious few examples of books or articles which told you about the way a railway was run, and the demands that the steam age made on operating staff. The locomotive was all. Pictures of locomotives performing, descriptions of the places where the locomotives performed, and even tables of locomotive performance were the order of the day. Railway writing - perhaps because it was designed to remove the layman's idea that railway enthusiasm was a pastime for children who had not yet developed grown up pursuits - was dignified to the point of being stuffy. Dry as dust even.

Today's railway publisher could be expected to place a different emphasis on books commissioned. Especially with those titles which deal with the now terminated steam age. For the most part the readership will be looking for a nostalgic trip down memory lane. Books should stimulate and draw on this need in as many ways as possible. Both words and pictures should positively ooze nostalgia. Strangely, although the pictures were there in abundance no one used words to complement these pictures. No one, that is to say, until Janes Publishing made a welcome entry into the Railway Publishing World.

Brian Cooke's 'The Fall and Rise of Steam' not only provided a visual treat, the words were splendid as well. The package as a whole is a sheer delight. Thoughtful, caring and reflective. A book which has filled, and will continue to fill many an empty night. As befits a professional photographer, the work is a treasure house of photography ideas. Perhaps the finest example of how previsualisation and after treatment can add so much to picture taking. You and I will not be able to reproduce the effects shown, but the book's true worth is that it is an inspiration rather than a do-it-yourself textbook. Good as the pictures are, the text is even more praiseworthy. You can carry words in your mind much more easily than you can pictures. What a combination! Why had no one thought it necessary before? Thank you Author, Publisher and Co-Writer. Thank you very much indeed.

Another book which exhibits standards beyond the norm is Hans Steeneken's stunning 'All Trains To Stop', published by, of all people Ian Allan. Don't get me wrong, but Ian Allan are in the trade of providing Books for the masses. And very well they do it too. Here however is a different category of book. True it is ONLY a picture album, but there are great differences in the

standards of printing over the usual output. The book, with its 'leather' cover and beautiful, stippled fine art paper, is a joy just to hold never mind to look at. It is however the picture content which is the book's outstanding feature. An incomparable collection of two hundred evocative photographs of European Steam activity. Beautifully conceived and impeccably presented. This is more a study of railway atmospheres than rolling stock and motive power. A quite splendid record of an age that has gone forever, despite the supreme efforts of the preservationists. Every picture stimulates and inspires. Every inspection brings new pleasure. A four foot eight and a half inch book in both stature and content.

As I mentioned in my introduction I grew up blissfully unaware of the demands which a footplate makes on its working occupants. Terry Essery in his two volume 'Firing Days at Saltley' has changed that forever. These Bradford and Barton paperbacks tell of the author's workaday, comic, and heroic exploits - on the shovel - in steam's final fling in the late fifties and early sixties. As a child I fantasised about driving a steam locomotive. I imagined that it was a task far beyond mortal men, full of excitement and deeds of great strength and endeavour. Most 'footplate' books carry none of that imagery. There are now more books on the subject than there are Duchess Fans in the 8E. Yet, although these titles reek of authenticity, they fall far short of the vivid spectacle that I had attributed to footplate work. Not so with Mr. Essery. His masterpiece trades background details with the best of them. But there is more. It is the 'highspots' in his text which come nearest to striking the right chord in my imagination. The passages describing some of the exploits of his driver and himself generate an atmosphere and excitement that is almost 'Tolkienesque' in its descriptive quality. No one, to my knowledge, has painted a more stimulating and gripping picture of locomotives in full flight. If your heart has ever pounded in response to the sight and sound of a flat-out steam locomotive, then you owe it to yourself to ride the wind with Mr. Essery.

Funnily enough, it is always easier to criticise than praise. Those of you with axes to grind might prefer to submit one extended criticism rather than three small ones. For example:-

Roger Siviter is a photographer I have a lot of time for. His industry and output are admirable, and the railway magazines of the past decade are full of excellent examples of his work. I am indebted to him for his efforts. Not so my wife. She does not owe him anything. Rather the reverse. He owes her an apology. Some two years ago, knowing my fondness for all things to do with the photography of trains, she paid £12.95 of her hard earned money for a copy of his 'Handbook of Railway Photography'. Seldom can expenditure have brought so little return.

This very slender volume is printed on the cheapest paper possible - no doubt to disguise the limitations of Mr. Siviter's chosen 35mm format - and must qualify as the worst value ever offered by a railway publisher.

The 'soot and whitewash' pictures - chosen one ought to be

able to assume, as illustrations of all that is best in Railway Photography - are unbelievably poor. In fact my twelve year old son would think twice about showing a set of contact prints, such as is displayed on Page 22, to his friends. To use them in a treatise on photography defies description.

The text, which for the most part is set at an infantile level, is even worse. Schoolboy errors abound. There are more gems than in the Queen's tiara. It is difficult see how any budding photographer could draw any significant help from this book. Indeed, he will frequently be fed information which is meaningless and, often, counter productive.

What are we to think of someone who advises:-

- That you can only see differences between plate camera output and 35mm work in huge enlargements.
- That wide angle lenses are to be recommended because their great depth of field makes them useful for photographing double headers and shooting on gloomy days when wide apertures are required.
- That motor drives help you to catch that master shot.
- That the only problem for railway photographers who use a polarising filter is that increased exposure is necessary.
- That the use of a separate exposure meter involves merely pointing your meter at the subject and transferring the reading to the camera.
- That three quarter rear is a good shot to attempt in dull conditions because this places the locomotive further from the camera enabling a slower shutter speed to be used.

OR

- Who recommends baseboard composition as an aid to success in 35mm photography.
- Who uses a yellow filter on almost all his black and white work, because it improves the smoke effect.

There is more, much much more. My own 'favourite' is the comment that the use of a slower shutter speed and smaller lens aperture gives greater focal length, and increasing your shutter speed and opening the aperture decreases the focal length. I kid you not! This astonishing statement appears on Page 46 and is then repeated (as are most things) on Page 99.

The problem with a book like this, is that beginners might imagine that what is being presented to them is both good and universally accepted practice. It could take them years to get out of the bad habits expounded throughout this book. Some might never recover.

For example, on page after page the author blandly states that he burns in the highlights when printing. I will give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that he is successful. The reproduction standard is such that it is quite impossible to see ANY highlight detail whatsoever. Anyone who has done any amount of printing will know that repeated burning in is the result of clogged highlights arising because of faulty exposure and processing techniques. The text of the book confirms that the Author has such failings in abundance. His exposure 'advice' is

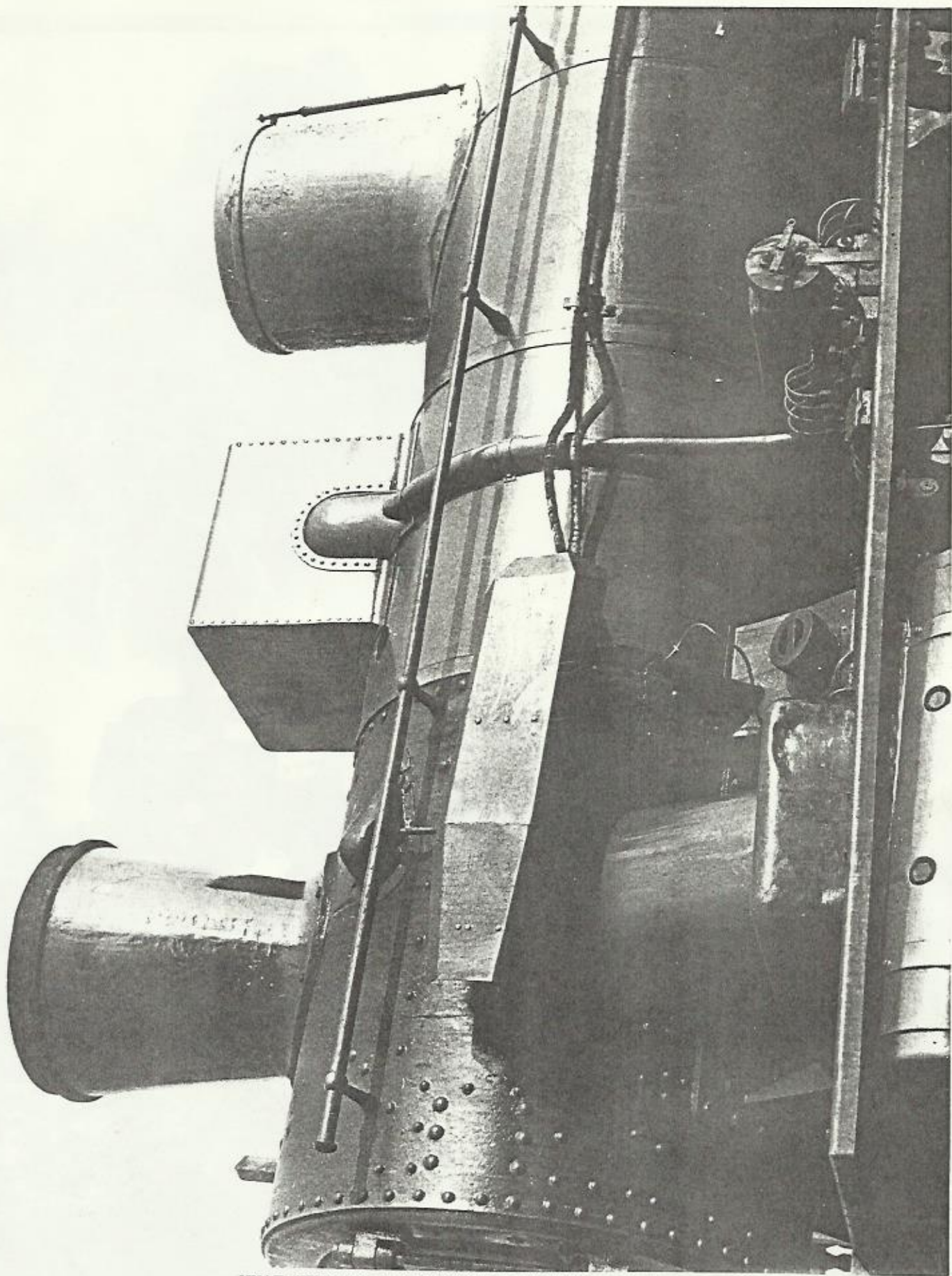
ludicrous in the extreme. I defy anyone to consistently produce quality negatives by using the exposure 'methods' set out. To outline all the errors in the book would require more pages than I have at my disposal. The author also prefers to use undiluted developers. Modern technicians tend to use diluted developers, especially with 35mm films, as the decreased concentration of developing agent, together with the more accurately controlled developing times which result, helps to produce more easily printable negatives which do not have too much density in the highlight areas. The point I am making is that it is most certainly not good practice to have to 'burn in' so large a proportion of your negatives. Prevention is better than a cure for this particular photography 'disease'.

One final criticism must be levelled at the text of this book. That of inaccuracy in the information presented, and an unfortunate inability to provide such information as is given, at the most appropriate point. For instance, a glossary is provided within the final pages. This does not, as is usual, provide extended definitions on the more technical points of the text. It merely repeats information which has already been dealt with - more than adequately - in chapter after chapter.

There is an exception. Reciprocity failure. A definition of this phenomenon is attempted, which reads like those instruction booklets for photography equipment which have been loosely translated from the Japanese. If we ignore the first 95% of the definition we conclude (I think) that an exposure meter cannot be relied on to give accurate readings in low light conditions. Ah so! With respect, the fact that an exposure meter does not work satisfactorily at the extreme limits (upper and lower) of its operating scales, is a fault of all calibrated read out devices (cf car speedometers). Reciprocity failure, or more correctly, failure to comply with the Law of Reciprocity is a property of the emulsions of negative and positive films, and may, depending on the conditions, work together with, or quite separately from, light meter failings. In any case, as the author accepts that there is a problem, should he not also have gone on to say how to correct this problem, and also to indicate where the problem might arise?

In simple terms, all the practical photographer needs to know about Reciprocity failure is that he should give more exposure at low light levels than might be expected, and that the separate layers of a colour film may exhibit different levels of reciprocity. Consequently unsightly colour casts may occur when using colour film at low illumination levels. Film manufacturers are happy to supply reciprocity information for each of their films to anyone requesting it (including the use of correction filters to avoid colour casts). This information is obviously essential for the serious photographer attempting night photography. No mention of this is made by the author, although he devotes a whole chapter to this topic. Perhaps he accepted that no serious photographer would read his book.

In the analysis it has to be said that I have derived great inspiration from Mr Siviter's book. Effort and application are more important to success than I imagined. It is obviously possible to be very successful in spite of your technique rather than because of it.



WHAT THE ELLA FITZGERALD IS IT?

Each issue I propose to publish a photograph showing a peculiar aspect of railway operations or architecture. Full details will appear in the succeeding issue's Follow Up. Contributions to this page would be most welcome.

On the offchance that help is needed with this months poser, I should mention that I would expect answers to be 93% wrong.



AIS GILL
34092 City of Wells.
Southbound Cumbrian Mountain Express.
3rd December 1982.

BRIDGE 137, BRASS MONKEYS AND BAGS.

Despite their complexity, modern cameras are outstandingly robust and reliable. The railway enthusiast uses these qualities to the full, and it is doubtful if any other cameraman - unless he takes pictures for a living - subjects his equipment to more rigorous treatment. Railway cameras are expected to go out in all weathers, to surmount walls and fences, and to receive batterings which, in another pastime, would yield the relief of a mandatory eight count. Surprisingly, failures are rare, but they do happen, as I was to find out on December 3rd 1983.

For some time, before the date mentioned, I had been promising myself a pilgrimage to Ais Gill viaduct to record the passage of a southbound Cumbrian Mountain Express. I have long regarded this spot as the premier location for the photography of main line steam in the whole of the country, and as I had recently purchased a Mamiya RB67, I wanted to obtain as perfect a negative as possible before the projected closure took place. Then if the Settle and Carlisle line was indeed doomed, at least I would have the means to produce an ultra-large black and white print, which I could hang on my wall at home, to remind me of the majesty and splendour of this magnificent route.

Opportunities came, and went. Whenever I was able to travel, the weather was unsuitable. I simply had to have favourable conditions as there was a distinct possibility that the trip might only yield the one photograph. Then came December 3rd., the early morning of which was cold, crystal-clear and cloudless. If the weather held, conditions would be ideal, and so I decided to make the long trek from Manchester to Mallerstang.

The recorded comments which I made on the journey north, confirm that the early promise was fulfilled, and the journey across Shap Fell was particularly memorable. I now use a micro-cassette recorder to the total exclusion of the more traditional biro and notebook. Notes can be made on the move, documenting such details as which junctions NOT to take, a feature which is of great benefit on future visits. The Olympus micro-cassette which I use also has other advantages. Surprisingly good train recordings can be made on metal tape, and the tuner section keeps me posted on road problems and Saturday sport. All this, in addition to the rapid documentation of every aspect of each camera exposure. Details which can be transcribed in neat and legible fashion on my return home.

The sun was still shining when I eventually reached Bridge 137, but despite this, the grass on either side of the viaduct crackled underfoot, and I was grateful for the secure grip afforded by my trusty Doc Martens. I was treading an unfamiliar path, for the opinions expressed above were reached from a study of the superb photographs, which, down successive decades, have been obtained at this spot. The photographs I had studied had also given me pre-conceived ideas about the picture I would be taking. I knew exactly where I was going to set up my camera. No point in being innovative and being wrong! I wanted a vertical format lineside-close shot, taking in the whole of the viaduct from parapet to foot. A foot which can only be seen when the leaves fall in winter.

I had arrived early, to ensure that I would obtain the exact camera position I had envisaged. Even so, there must have been a dozen or so people present when I reached the spot I wanted. Fortunately, the majority were lined up to take an horizontal broadside-on picture, from positions some distance to the left of the spot I had pre-selected. Much relieved, I set up my tripod at the extreme edge of the elevated ridge which gives a superb view of the last stages of the climb from Appleby to Ais Gill. As time passed, the line to my left grew thicker and thicker. No one made any attempt to join me. I began to wonder if I had indeed chosen the best angle available. I consoled myself with the thought that I was not completely alone. Throughout what had now become a considerable wait, I had enjoyed the company of one other cameraman. He had made the long journey down from Edinburgh to photograph 34092, and I was certain that his photographic judgement was beyond question. After all he was carrying a Hasselblad.

Despite this I still needed to reassure myself, and I turned over the reasons why I had selected that particular camera position in my mind. Just as education has its 3R's, railway photography has its 5L's, and I considered at length:-

the LOCOMOTIVE
the LOCATION
the LIGHTING
the LENS PERSPECTIVE
and
the LINEAR DESIGN

The LOCOMOTIVE was City of Wells. The clag machine supreme. There could hardly have been a more appropriate choice for the shot. The outline of this particular locomotive is much more forceful and dramatic than (say) a Jubilee or an A3, whose gentle, graceful lines are somehow inappropriate to such a rugged setting. There was also the plus that a three-quarter front position, such as the one I had chosen, is a much better camera position for a West Country Pacific than the side-on positions available to the cameramen stationed further up the ridge.

The LOCATION also could hardly be bettered. At the point where I had set up my camera, the backdrop of hills produced strong compositional lines leading the eye down to the point where I intended to place the locomotive. Also, at the planned point of exposure, the telegraph poles, which are such a distracting feature of many pictures taken at this spot, would be obscured by the train, and the vertical format chosen, would show the bridge arches down to ground level. This was important as there is nothing worse than chopping off such a structure in mid-brick. Support must not only be evident, it must be seen to be evident.

The LIGHTING was quite satisfactory when I arrived, with a low over-the-shoulder sun providing good modelling. Now however the bridge was in shadow and the background was sunlit, hardly an ideal situation. There was in fact a halo of brilliant light above the distant hills, and unless I took corrective steps the top half of the negative would be over-exposed. The extra exposure would make it difficult to do printing justice to the

locomotive's exhaust, and I therefore attached a graduated red filter to overcome this problem. I much prefer this remedy to giving extra exposure when making the enlargement, as this method accentuates the grain to an unacceptable degree.

Uneven illumination was not the only lighting problem I had to consider. As the sun had dropped down behind the hill at the rear, City of Wells would be lit entirely by the light from the sky. Skylight is what is known as broad source lighting i.e. the lighting source is spread over a large area. As advertising photographers know and demonstrate so well, one of the properties of broad source lighting is that it produces tremendous reflections from painted metal surfaces. For example, the launch of the Rover 213 relied heavily on photographs taken using this lighting set-up. 34092, of all the locomotives passed for main-line running, is unique in that the roof has a matt finish, and any reflection problems would be minimised as a result. I would still have to burn in the sides of the engine at the enlarging stage, but the problems would be nowhere near as severe as they would have been with the Duchess or Sir Nigel. Here it might have been desirable to use a polarising filter to cut the reflections down to a manageable degree, and the consequent loss of film speed would have been most unwelcome.

As I had decided in advance which picture I would be taking, and only possess the one lens for the Mamiya RB67, there were no decisions to take on which LENS PERSPECTIVE would be most appropriate to the location. In point of fact, the 90mm lens fitted as standard to the 6X7 camera (a slightly wide angle) was in fact perfect for the shot I had pre-visualised.

However, I did consider which perspectives I should use if I were to return to Ais Gill on some future occasion. There seemed to be great scope for the use of wide-angle lenses, but I could not see any point in the use of telephotos. This was odd, as a quick count revealed that over 80% of the photographers were using long lenses. Some were extremely long. I could not help but think that the location-anonymous pictures which would be produced, were entirely inappropriate to the superb setting. Like going to Buckingham Palace and, with the last shot on the only film in your possession, taking a shot of the door knocker. I tried to recall a published telephoto shot taken at Bridge 137, but none came to mind.

The final point to consider was if the LINEAR DESIGN of the picture would be satisfactory. I will enlarge on this concept in a separate part of the magazine and at this juncture I will merely comment on the plus points which my chosen camera position afforded. I have already mentioned the part played by the background hills. Moving the camera a couple of yards to the right of left, would have lost this compositional advantage. Another favourable point was that the railway track moved out of shot, some distance above the bottom right hand corner. If you look at your all time favourite action photographs, you will invariably find that the track does in fact leave at the corners. This design, probably without you realising it, implies and emphasises forward movement. I was trying to portray an engine struggling against a severe gradient, and the last thing I wanted was for visual trickery to suggest that the train

was rushing out of shot. Hence my satisfaction at the positioning of the track. To minimise this effect still further, I have given my picture solid black edges.

All things considered then, I concluded that I had made, what for me was the right decision.

However, all the planning and thought would be useless if the train did not put in an appearance. The scheduled passing time had long since gone and there was still no hint of an approach by the Bulleid. The sun, and its accompanying warmth had now disappeared behind the hill which rose steeply at the back. Temperatures dropped alarmingly. Then, after a wait of almost two hours, Wells came into view, struggling in most uncharacteristic fashion up the slope. It was later disclosed that the locomotive had been supplied with inferior coal, which quite probably ruined the day's outing for the passengers, but from the photographic point of view the spectacle was unforgettable. The train was crawling along, and instead of the smoke being slipstreamed away, it billowed upward and outward in what can only be described as nuclear fashion. The mushroom filled the gap in the hills in a way which only an artist could have envisaged.

I was so taken with this outstanding display, that I failed to notice the struggle which my Scottish companion was having with his camera. It had jammed solid. All attempts to free the controls failed. What a tragedy. Three hundred expensive miles, incredible locomotive pyrotechnics, but not one solitary exposure to mark the occasion and the effort.

Expecting the worst, I nervously fired my own shutter whilst the Pacific was still several hundred yards away. To my intense relief, the camera clunked in most reassuring fashion.

If the progress of the locomotive was lethargic, the same could not be said of my companions. Several shutters had still to be fired when a stampede bordering on panic occurred. Thermally clad limbs sped down the slope, and the first exhaust crackled into life, long before my own camera was safely back in its protective case. Wave after wave of cars sped after the special, spurred on by the thought that if, as seemed likely, 'Wells' was in trouble, then at least half-a-dozen hastily composed shots might be bagged before Settle Junction was reached. For my part, I had taken the shot I came for, and as neither my car nor my temperament are suited to fast driving, I slowly sauntered south.

Out of the shadow of the hills which stand guard over Ais Gill, the sun still shone strongly. I have never seen the area look so beautiful. It is usual, in this forbidding part of Northern England, for omnipresent black clouds to follow your every move, weeping frequently as though in perpetual mourning for 'lost lives of long dead navvies, whose sacrifices gave credence to Allport's reckless and uncaring pencil stroke. Today, all signs of grief were put aside. The Wind held her not inconsiderable Pennine breath, the Rain looked down through dry eyes, and the Winter Sun smiled benignly, as though in long overdue celebration of the labourer's achievements.

It was a day to load up with colour film, and go in search of Nature's majesty, but in the valley ahead of me, the Pied Piper of Wells was beating out a slow and laboured rhythm, and I, and countless companions were unable to resist the bidding.

Initially, I had felt quite pleased that I had been selective, and gone for one single shot. Motor-drive mania seldom produces satisfactory exposures. But, as I drove, doubts began to arise in my mind. Being inflexible is every bit as bad as being hasty. Bridge 137 would provide photographs for weeks, if not months to come, but I might never enjoy such perfect conditions again. Even if the exposure I had taken was everything I had hoped for, the outing could never be regarded as an unqualified success.

Obviously, there would be lasting lessons for me to draw on. And what of my Scottish companion? What should he have learned from the day? For him, camera failures would no longer be a matter of statistics. He would be well advised to research possible causes of camera breakdown. That much was certain.

In all probability, the demise of the Hasselblad was due to the sub-zero temperatures and the long wait on the exposed hillside. But how do you safeguard your equipment in conditions such as these? The problem was still in my thoughts as I watched Lord Nelson's spirited departure from Hellifield. The last traces of a spectacular twilight still lingered on the horizon, but only the vaguest outline of the train was discernable as the four cylinder approached the spot where I stood. Above the carriages it was a different story, for the billowing smoke glowed and flickered in the golden light from the engine's furnace. An unforgettable sight and one that would make an outstanding picture if only we had the expertise, technology and materials to capture it.

I did not move until the last rumbling echoes faded into silence, and then - my senses released - I began to realise just how cold it was becoming. I headed back to the protection afforded by my car. That was what it was all about wasn't it? Protection. One answer to the problem of extreme cold, must be to provide your camera with a cover which would keep out the freezing atmosphere. I considered this point at length, throughout my drive home down the long dark lanes of North East Lancashire. At first, my intention was to ask my wife to make me something, but when I got home, there, in my photographic catalogue was the ready-made answer. A double compartment changing bag.

I now own two. Both large. Outdoors they protect my tripod mounted camera from cold, rain, sand and dust. Used judiciously, they can also prevent condensation problems. Indoors, they facilitate the use of bulk 35mm film, ensure dust-free loading of development tanks, and zip snugly over my enlarger to make it totally light tight when I am trying to wring the last ounce of quality out of a special negative. In short they are indispensable.

I wish my Scottish friend could read this article, and thereby learn that advantage came out of his misfortune. I would like to think that he too has also profited from his experience.

For those of you who didn't recognize it, that was an example of the second category I listed in the extended introduction. The events described took place some time ago, but the description does not need to be restricted to past events. The essential ingredient must be that the events have a railway flavour and that they stick in the memory for some reason. It does not necessarily need to be a day out. The events described can be over a succession of days or leading up to a particular outing or event. Here are two further examples, this time of more recent happenings. First, I leave you in the capable hands of Len Clarke.

IT'LL BE ALRIGHT ON THE NIGHT

OR HOW TO IMPRESS PEOPLE WITHOUT REALLY TRYING.

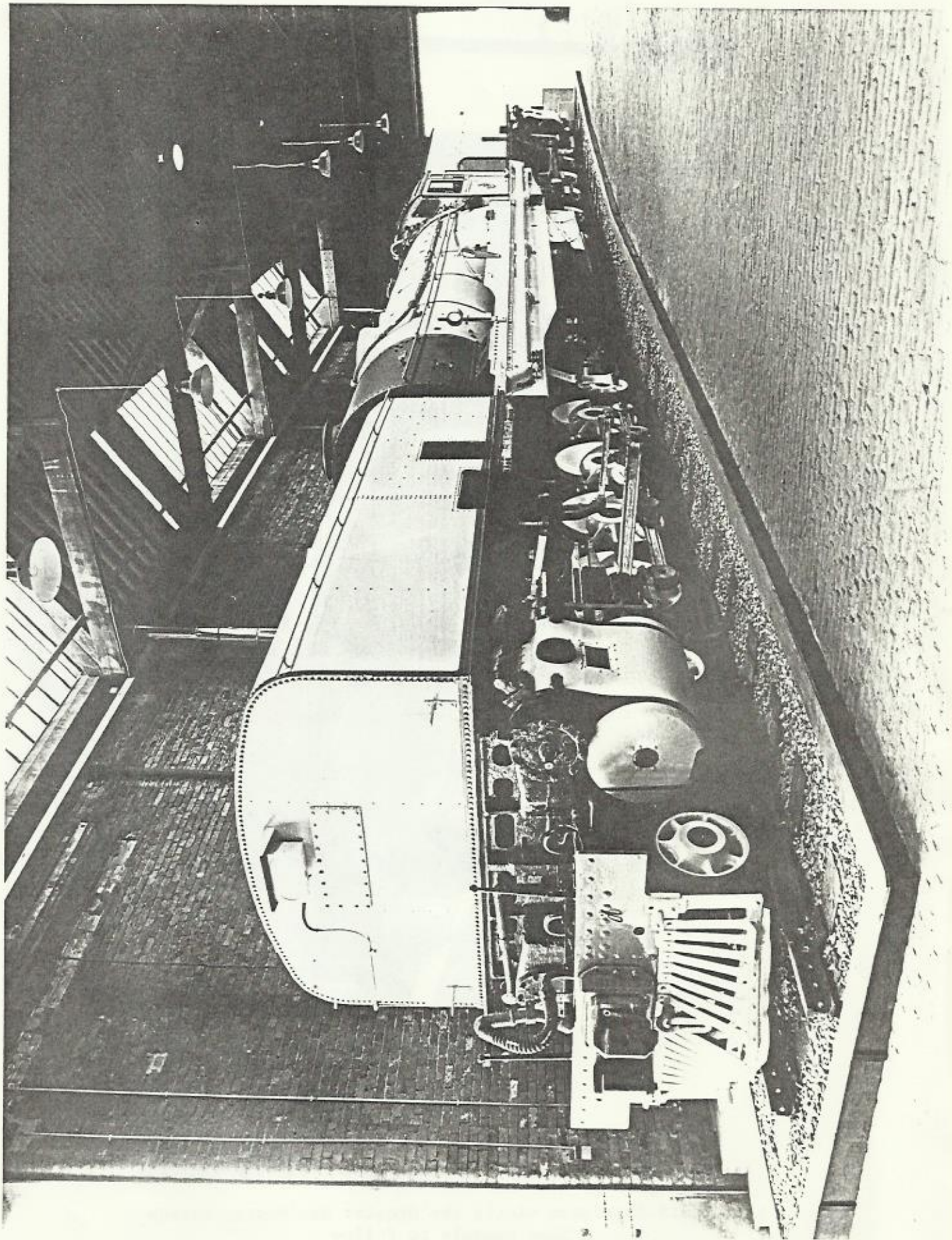
As the last week of the last session drew - in our principal's words - to a successful conclusion, and the winding-down process of presentations, games evenings etc. took on their usual pleasurable form, yours truly was hard at work trying to complete his part of the restoration of the S. A. R. Beyer Garratt steam locomotive No. 2351. All 240 tons of her 55 year old bodywork had benefitted from a considerable amount of hard work to get her into exhibition work for display. Initially, the work had proceeded slowly, but from May 6th, when six of our students had joined an M.S.C. Community Programme Scheme at the Museum, the progress had been startling.

Concentrating our minds the more to a successful conclusion loomed the visit of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on Thursday July 11th. The visit was arranged to enable Prince Philip to see the progress which had been made since his previous visit, when he was accompanied by Her Majesty the Queen. On this occasion there had been merely the open site of the then embryonic museum to look at.

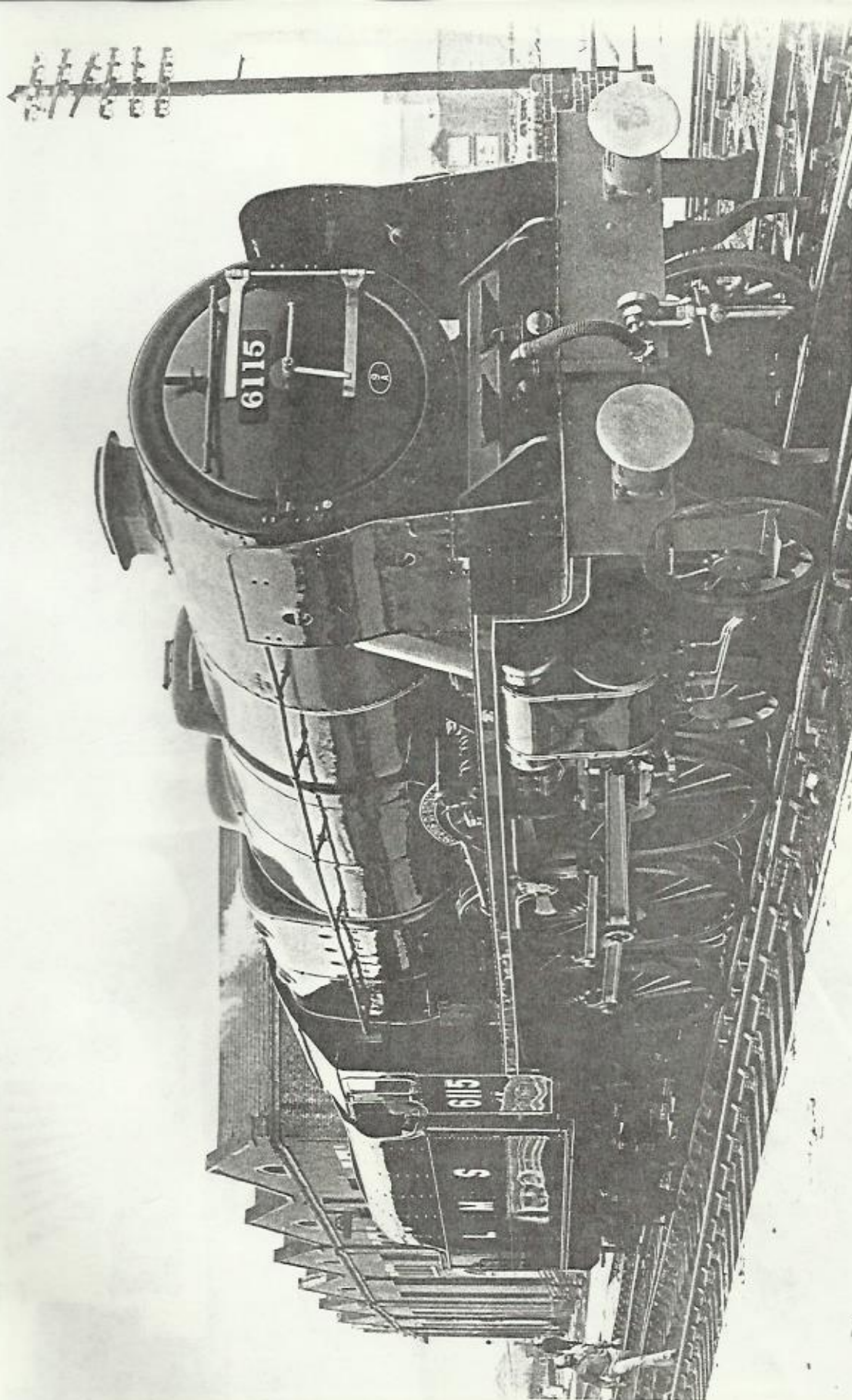
GMC, ever mindful to publicise their work at the Museum, had invited a considerable number of guests, councillors and VIP's. To show the museum in its working role, staff and working friends were to man exhibits and undertake tasks of restoration and demonstration for the occasion. Thus, at the last minute, I found myself in overalls with lining fitch and straight edge, demonstrating the 'lining out' of the cylinder covers of the Beyer Garratt. Twenty years in teaching has taught me - if nothing else - a thing or two about posing!

Also in attendance from the Support Unit was Sian Reed who was supervising two students who were giving a final polish to the motions i.e. the connecting rods and valve gear of burnished steel. An introduction to HRH was effected by Museum Director Patrick Green who explained G.M.C. involvement with the projects undertaken by college staff and students. HRH showed interest in the quality of the finish and the colour scheme of 2351. Sian explained the role of the Support Unit and also our efforts to integrate and involve our handicapped students.

After an interesting and rewarding (if tiring) day, the drive home, for some reason, took twice as long as usual, the result being before sitting down for tea I dozed off watching the television news. It was only on hearing my wife and daughter's



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Museum of Science and Industry



6115 Scots Guardsman visits the Greater Manchester Museum
A fine example to follow

peals of laughter that I realized that I had announced 'Guess who shook the Duke of Haddenburg's end!'

Len Clarke

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

A recurring topic at recent Committee meetings has been the suggestion that we ought to develop closer links with other groups and societies in our area. With this in mind I have been looking at the fixture lists published in the Railway Press, and have attended a number of meetings with a view to effecting a direct comparison with our own 'get togethers', and also with the thought that I could use the magazine to bring the membership news of activities which they might find of interest.

I realise that I run the risk of persuading members to join other societies to the exclusion of the 8E, but if our experience with the Foxcote and Llangollen Groups can be taken as a reliable guide, then we will in fact gain more members than we lose. In fact in recent meetings there have been almost as many 'visitors' as 'residents' in attendance. Some discerning people appreciate our efforts even if you ungrateful lot don't!

One meeting which appealed to me was held in Stafford on the second Wednesday in October. The advertisements extended an invitation to spend an evening with Stuart Blencowe and Peter Skelton. The last named is one of the premier railway photographers in the country. To someone like myself, this was an offer which I could not refuse.

In the event I did not see a single Peter Skelton photograph, but as it turned out I was not in the least bit disappointed. I had not read the advertisement properly. The evening was in fact a commemorative one for Bruce Chennell, who, tragically, was killed in a road crash in Turkey last year. To my shame, I have to admit that I was not familiar with Bruce's work. I was to find that he was a much travelled photographer of living steam. If wheels had been turned - in Europe and Asia - by steam power in the 10 years that Bruce was taking pictures, then he seems to have been there to record the working.

From 1975 Bruce had amassed no less than 15,000 pictures. A collection which is now in the custody of Stewart Blencowe. The evening was to provide a representative sample of his best work. Stewart confided that whilst the actual trips which Bruce made are well documented, he left no record of each individual transparency. From the commentary given it was obvious that a great deal of painstaking research had already taken place. However, with such a mammoth task it will clearly be some time before the accompanying words match the slides being presented. There was an interesting observation to make as a result of this deficiency. Peter Skelton was operating the projector, and only made a limited contribution to the evening (rather like using Nigel Mansell in the Grand Prix pits to change the tyres on the racing cars). At several points when Stewart had run out of things to say, Peter spent several seconds quietly studying the picture on the screen. The extent of Peter's engrossment provided as perfect a silent tribute as could be imagined.

The slides presented were absolutely stunning. A revelation no less. No other single period of 2 hours has changed my outlook on photography as did that evening's presentation. I have no knowledge of overseas steam which would have stimulated my interest. I was held purely and simply by the talent of the photographer. On first thought you might think that it is easy to take first class pictures when there is a procession of steam trains throughout the day, in countries where the climate produces a greater percentage of sunlit days than is found at home. To some extent this is true, but it takes organisation, vision and application to succeed to the extent that Bruce did. There was hardly a three quarter front in sight. Here in Britain I attempt, wherever possible, to use the landscape to improve my railway photography. One overriding impression of Bruce's work must be that he used steam trains to improve his landscape photography. In doing so he pulled out every trick in the book, and added a few more of his own for good measure. No wonder that Peter was reluctant to take certain of the slides of the screen.

I think you will have gathered that I thoroughly enjoyed my evening. I hope that the links which Peter Skelton has established with Janes publishing will someday soon result in a book of Bruce Chennell's pictures. I will be one of the first to buy I can promise you.

The evening was provided by the Continental Railway Circle. As the name implies this nationwide society concentrates on overseas railway workings and if your interest in railways is not restricted to things UK, you will be very welcome at their monthly meetings in Stafford. These are held in the BRSA building, which is on the west side of the railway line some 500 yards south of the main line station. Details of the lectures are to be found in almost all the non-modern image railway monthlies. Membership will bring you a very comprehensive and glossily produced magazine listing details of steam activities still functioning abroad.

So there you are. Three examples of reported events which I trust you will agree made interesting reading. Anyone with railway interests must have similar opportunities which arise in the course of enjoying the hobby. All you have to do is sit down and send me a report for inclusion in the magazine. Not too much to ask, is it?

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE 8E MAGAZINE

As a consequence of the changeover, and because I have had to write almost the entire contents of this issue, the Autumn edition is a little late in appearing. I hope however to revert to the usual publication dates as soon as possible. These are of course January, April, July and October.

Contributions should reach me by the following dates:-

Spring issue - March 7th

Summer issue - June 7th

Autumn issue - September 7th

Winter issue - December 7th

My address is The Editor, The 8E Magazine, 606 Liverpool Road, Irlam, Lancashire. M30 5AA.

There are two ways you can tackle an article on a technical subject. I have already given an example of a general review, now I would like to provide a second treatment. An in depth study of one particular aspect of the railway hobby. Have you ever wondered what makes a successful railway photograph? This article sets out to explain why certain pictures have visual appeal whereas others lack interest and impact.

LINEAR DESIGN IN PHOTOGRAPHY

From an early age, our eyes are disciplined to move in straight lines, picking up and passing on information as they travel. The information is collected and interpreted by the brain. This of course is the process of reading. The conditioning which results is carried over to the way we look at a photograph. One natural consequence is that the eye/brain combination is 'reassured' if there are dominant lines for it to follow. Interest is heightened if the lines lead the eye to subject matter of particular importance or significance. The eye reports this 'interest' to the brain, which compares the information presented to the 'store' of its owner's experience. The comparison gives rise to emotions about the picture being inspected.

There are three types of 'lines' which have a very significant effect on the impression created by a picture:-

- 1) Real lines
- 2) Imaginary lines
- 3) The borders of the photograph

REAL LINES include the contours of all the subject matter, but the lines of greatest significance in the photography of moving trains are provided by the roof and running board, and any railway track which is visible.

The roof and running board lines determine the perspective on any photograph where the train dominates the picture. This is at its most dynamic when low, frontal camera positions, cause the lines to diverge at the rear of the train, and at its most static when side-on camera positions are adopted.

The importance of perspective in action photography cannot be too strongly emphasised. It is very difficult indeed to create any sense of movement if perspective is absent. The beginner to railway photography invariably makes the mistake of including too much space round his train. Two important consequences are seen. Either there is a multiplicity of contour lines, or - if the area round the train is featureless - too few contour lines. The former condition makes it impossible for one set of lines to dominate and make any strong impression. The eye/brain combination is confused by the number of lines presented to it, and all feeling of motion is usually lost no matter how fast the train was actually moving. Even worse, the latter gives no predominant lines at all, either from the train or the area around it. A study of your favourite photographs will emphasise these points. You should find that there are repetitive themes in a large number of these pictures. It is important to be able to identify and then use these themes in your own exposures. If you apply yourself assiduously to this study, then you cannot

fail to see improvements in the standard of your output.

The above point is of greatest importance when the intention is to produce a picture which gives the impression of speed and/or effort. Any attempt to produce a dramatic action shot must make the best possible use of dynamic perspective, and I defy you to show me a successful action shot which does not possess dominant and dynamic lines which determine and set the perspective.

Dynamic perspective can also provide interest in featureless locations. Static train perspective is only permissible where the location offers scenic interest, which itself provides essential perspective and depth.

Railway tracks are laid in straight lines or curves. This fact can have an important bearing on railway pictures. There is a much greater impression of motion in pictures which are taken on curved track. Indeed the only genuinely dynamic straight-line configuration occurs where the track moves diagonally across the picture from one corner to another.

These optical illusions are a direct result of the reading processes. The flow of information when we read would be hampered if we were to appreciate motion when the eye was travelling in straight lines. The brain therefore suppresses the impression of movement when the eye moves in this way. The appreciation of movement is not suppressed when the eye scans along curves, or for that matter, diagonals.

A study of any book of first class railway photographs will confirm that these considerations actually exist.

Three final points should be noted about the visual effect provided by real lines:-

-- As was mentioned above, if there are no dominant lines, or there are too many lines for the eye to follow, confusion results and the picture will only be satisfactory because of its content or subject matter, and not its design.

-- Repetition of lines, to create patterns is especially pleasing to the eye/brain combination.

-- Combination of real (and imaginary) lines to create the well known geometric patterns (triangles, circles, squares, S-curves etc.) can significantly improve a picture.

IMAGINARY LINES are a product of the way your eyes actually take in the information placed before them. If you select any small word on this page, and fix your gaze on it, you should find that your eyes are focussing solely on the word chosen. All other words will be indistinct. Your eye is in fact incapable of creating a large, sharp plane of focus. When you inspect a picture, your eyes move incessantly, taking in a minute area at a time. Information about each area is transmitted to the brain, and it is the brain which assembles the whole picture in your mind from the information provided. In scanning a picture your eyes will constantly return to the main areas of interest, and regular paths will be created as your eye moves from one

important area to another. These 'paths' are one type of imaginary line. Another type occurs in any action photograph of a moving subject. Your eye/brain combination tends to create the path which the moving object might be expected to take out of the picture.

The concept of imaginary lines is difficult to grasp at first, but it is fundamental to the success of the great majority of railway pictures. The most vital aspect of an imaginary line is its length. For example, if you take your favourite action pictures and, using an opaque straight edge, you 'bring in' the border towards which the train is moving, you will find that the balance of the picture becomes increasingly unsatisfactory. You have reduced the imaginary line of movement by too great a degree.

It is the length of all the imaginary lines which determines the balance in any picture. The distances between the main points of interest, and between these points and the borders is critical. If you think about this you will realise that this principle is given scientific expression in the well known 'rule of thirds'.

Deciding what is, and what is not, good balance, is something that you were born with OR that you must learn by constant study of photographs which appeal to you. The converse is also true in that any photograph which you do not like will have poor balance which is a direct result of inferior linear design.

Once you are of the opinion that you have acquired an appreciation of the principles involved, you must consider their effect each time you look through your viewfinder. Take one regular example. How many photographs have you seen (or taken) where telegraph poles - or similar objects - close to the front of the train have produced a jarring effect. If the imaginary line between the front of the engine and the pole had been previsualised, and its length optimised, a much more satisfactory photograph would have resulted. Such objects are often unavoidable, and great care must be taken to ensure that they do not adversely affect your picture.

Before I made myself aware of the effect of linear design, I used to rush up to an accessible stretch of lineside, lean against a fence or bridge, and thump the shutter when the train filled the viewfinder. Now, I choose my locations with great care. The first essential is to find a spot where the real lines give a satisfactory composition. Then I set up my tripod and study the large image provided in the viewfinder of my 6 x 7 camera, previsualise the eventual position of the train, and adjust my camera position until all the imaginary lines are of optimum length.

BORDERS OF PHOTOGRAPHS provide quite a puzzle for the eye/brain combination. After all, this is something that is not encountered in the real world. To follow railway track which suddenly runs into a horizontal or vertical boundary, and then disappears is quite a shock to the system. As mentioned earlier the shock is minimised to a great extent if the track leaves the picture at the corners, where the solid effect of the

borders is minimised. Because the sides 'converge' on the corner they lead the eye into assumed motion, and the implied line of motion out of the picture is not impeded.

In general photography, text books tell you never to have dominant lines which lead your eyes out of the edges of the picture. This cannot be avoided in railway photography, as there will always be dominant lines leading out of the photograph. Black borders, such as those which appeared in recent months in *Railway World*, have the effect of creating a barrier beyond which the eye is reluctant to pass and instead returns to a further inspection of the photograph. As a result, the flow of information passing to the brain is more concentrated and any impression of the merits of the picture is therefore heightened. As has been mentioned, this device is more appropriate to static rather than action work, as the implied imaginary line produced by the motion of the train is effectively reduced.

If the principles outlined above do in fact apply, it should be possible to produce photographs whose success depends almost entirely on these principles. Examples are provided as follows:-

The use of curves to suggest motion - 3924 and 34092 City of Wells

Straight lines and perspective - 53809

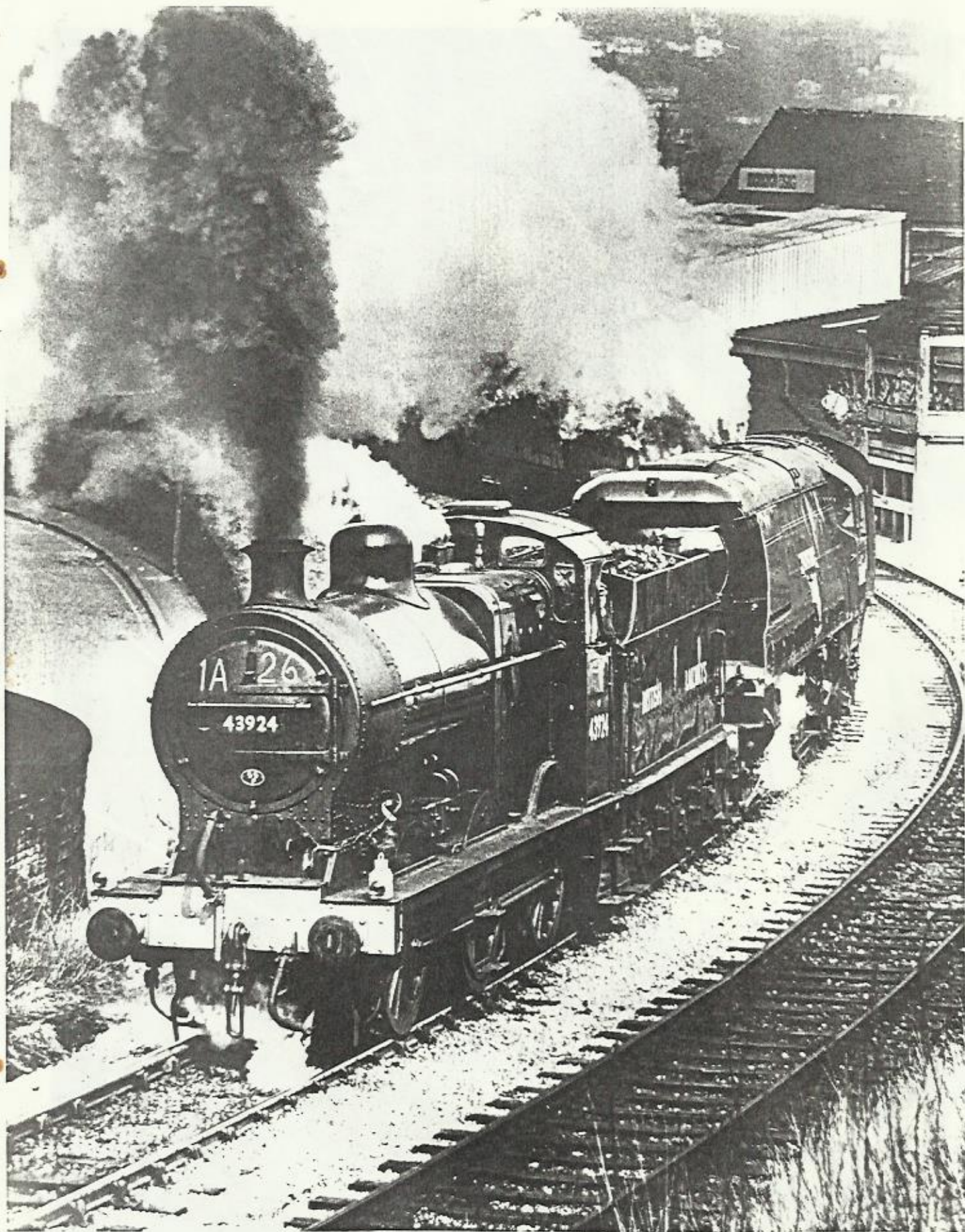
Dynamic Diagonals - 4498 Sir Nigel Gresley

Pattern - 4472 Flying Scotsman

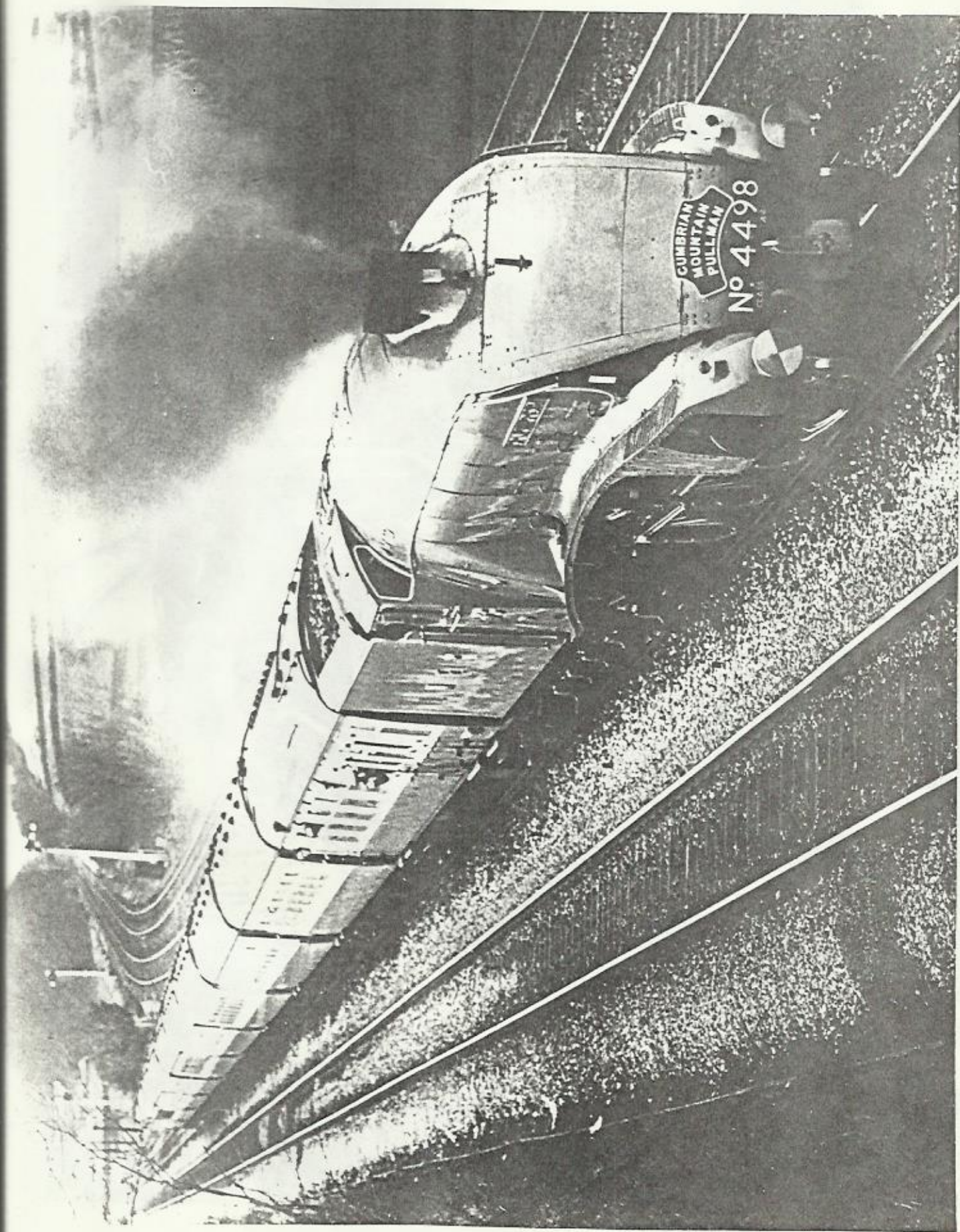
Finally I am including two shots of Steam in the West Highlands. 65243 Maude leaving Fort William and 5407 pulling away from Glenfinnan. Of the two, Maude has crisper lighting and superior smoke effect, and with due respect to Paddy Smith's engine, is regarded as the more 'interesting' locomotive. However, I feel that the Black Five shot is much more successful. There is too much confusing detail in the picture of the J36, whereas the picture of the 5 is uncluttered, allowing the viewer to concentrate on the train. The composition is helped by the triangle (an example of a geometric shape used to good advantage) formed by the track and the background hills.

The use of the triangle was previsualised. Anyone present at the time might have thought I was taking a casual shot. Not so. It was a time when the hills were alive with the smell of burning foliage and the noise of slipping driving wheels, and the resulting delays gave me plenty of time to set up and consider the shot. True, I did make the exposure sitting down, on a rock, in a field. But, it was the fifth rock I had sat on - so choosy was I about the composition - and I was sitting because my tripod would not go low enough to enable me to line up the elements of the triangle satisfactorily. The rock chosen provided me with both a comfortable wait and a superior camera position.

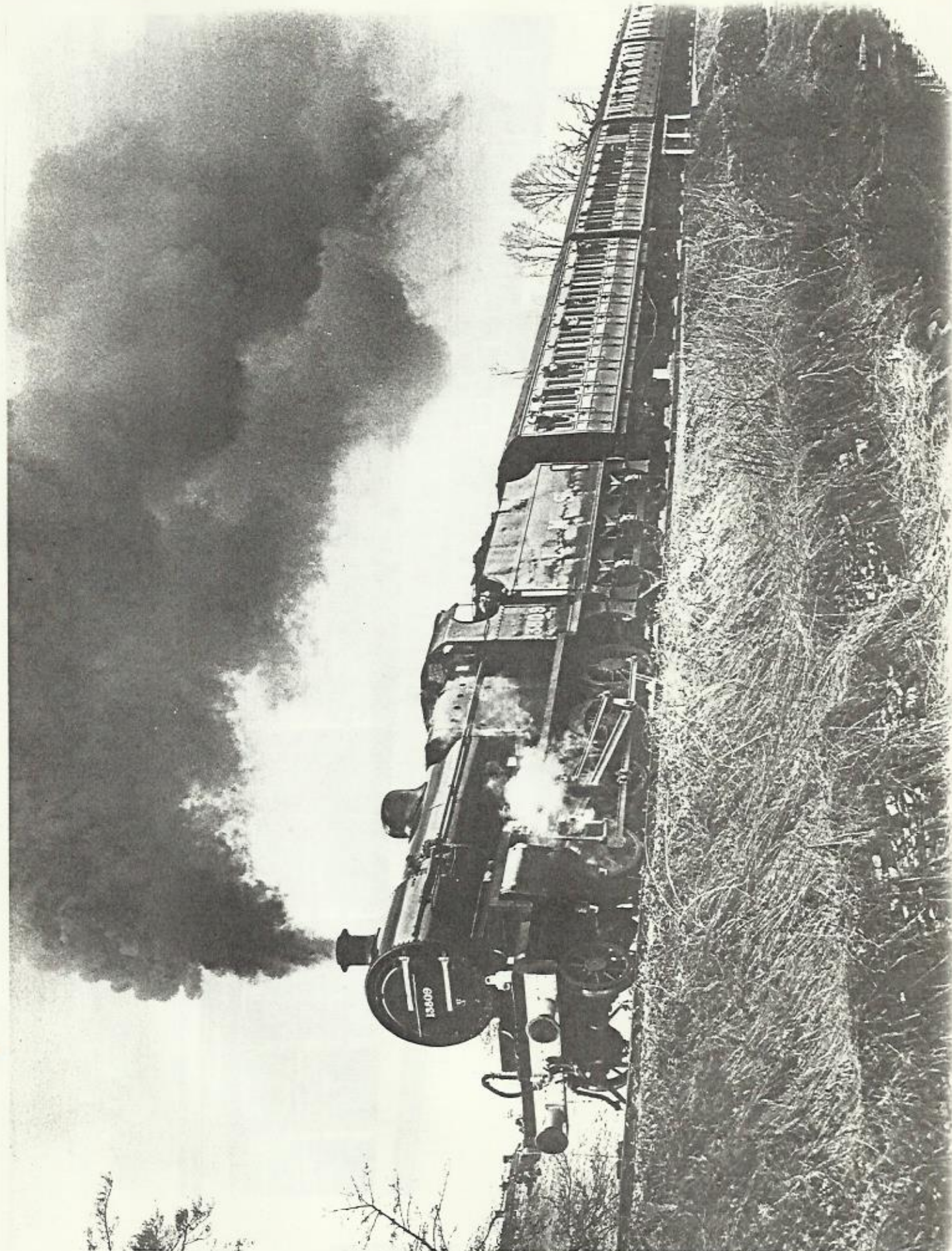
I believe the greatest single difference between the competent and the master railway photographer lies in the attention paid to linear design. To some photographers, this comes without thinking. They have an 'eye' for a good picture and in all probability never consider linear design. It just looks right. People like you and I however have to work at the principles involved.



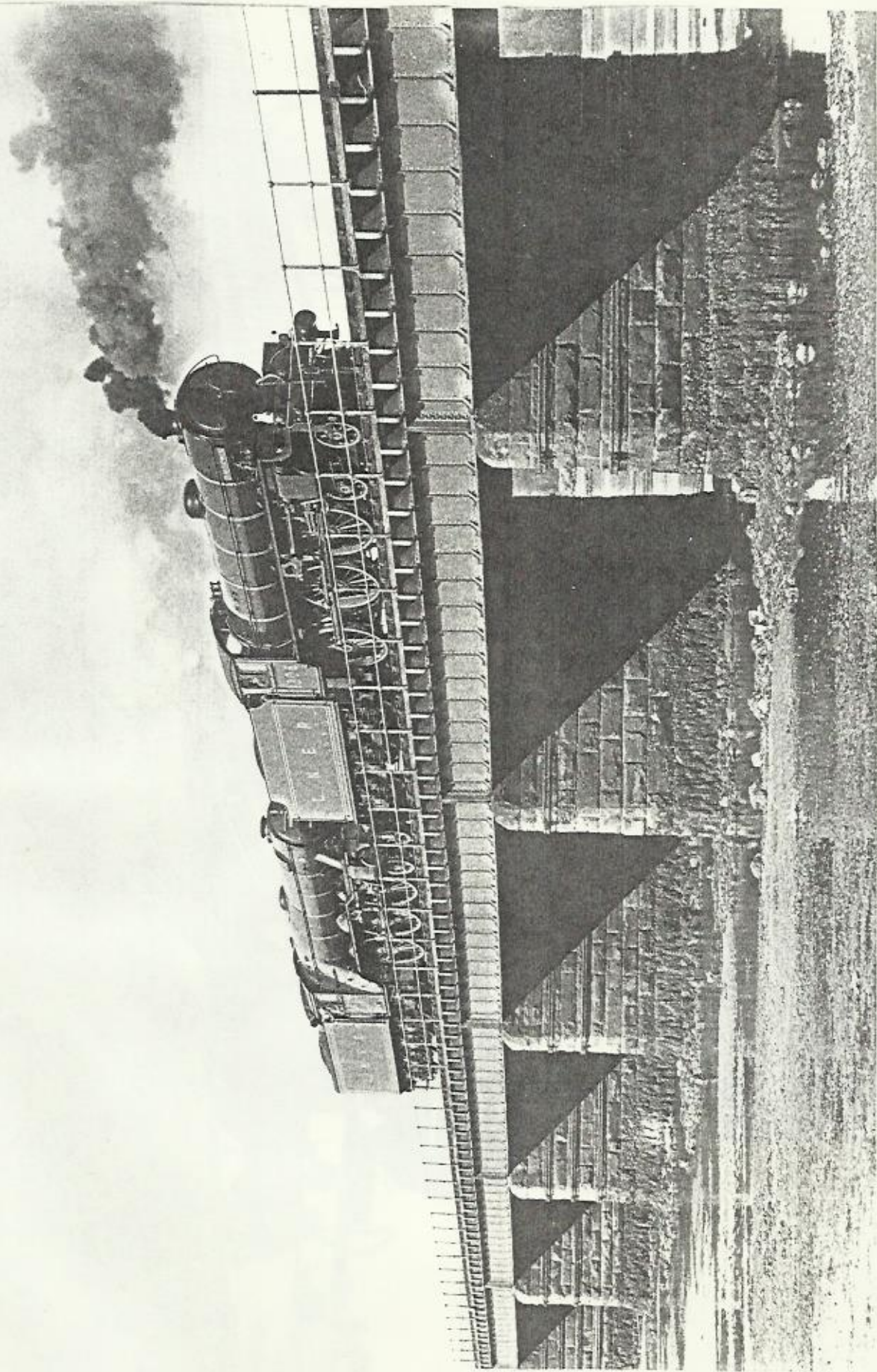
CURVES AND MOTION
3924 and 34092 City of Wells
Keighley
Keighley & Worth Valley Railway
Enthusiasts Weekend
March 1982



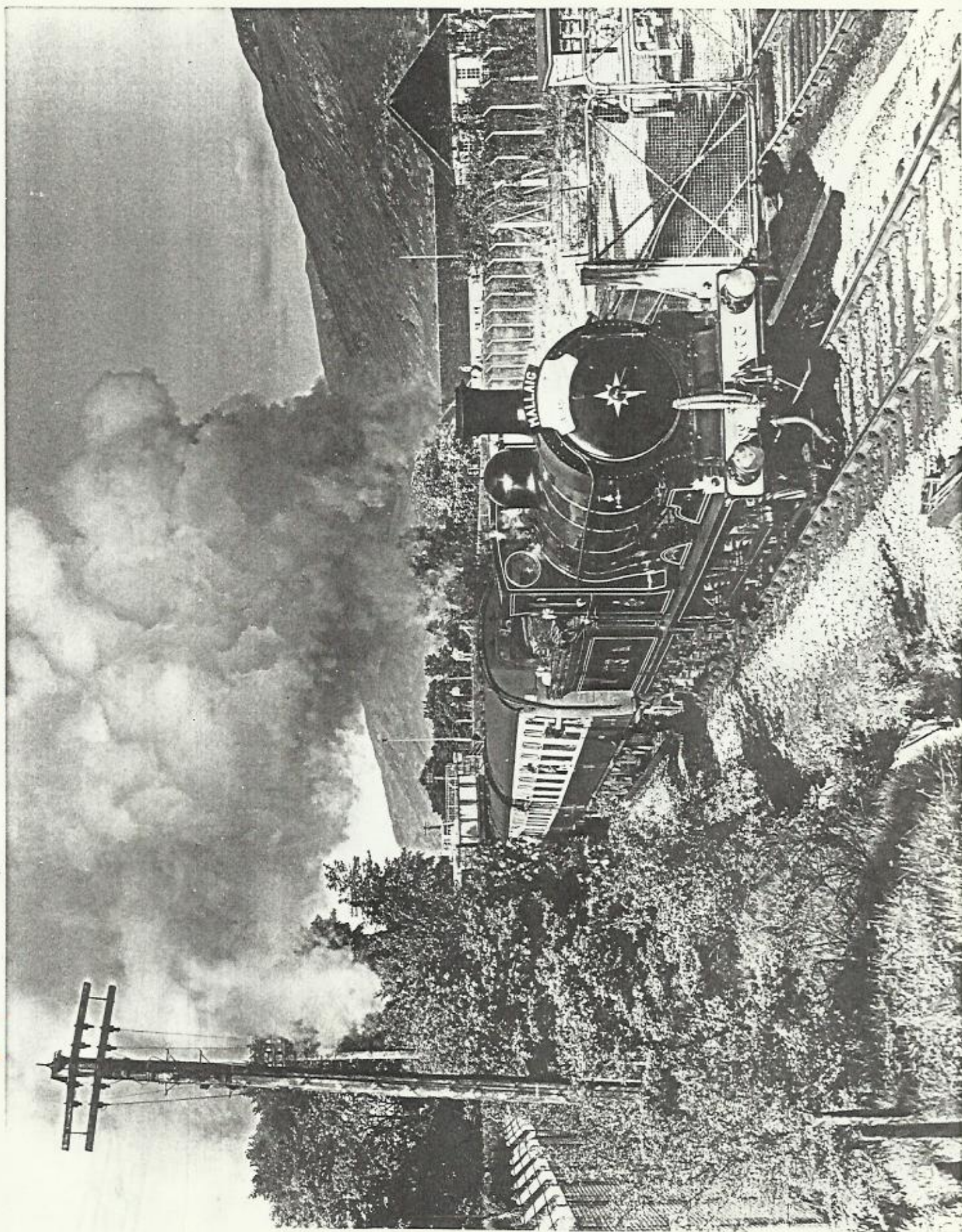
DYNAMIC DIAGONAL
4498 Sir Nigel Gresley
Approaching Settle Junction
Northbound Cumbrian Mountain Pullman
January 1982



STRAIGHT LINE PERSPECTIVE
13809
Enthusiasts Weekend
Keighley & Worth Valley Railway
Spring 1984



PATTERN
61306 Mayflower & 4472 Flying Scotsman
Southbound Cumbrian Coast Express
May 1976



WEST HIGHLAND - 1
Maude
Fort William
May 1984



WEST HIGHLAND - 2
5407
Glenfinnan
May 1984

LETTERS

Letters to the Editor form an important part of most magazines and these pages are available for anyone who would like any strong views they hold to have an airing. They can be straightforward or devious. Remember the Great Western legpulls we had. Again I am providing an example. Somewhat tongue-in-cheek, but designed to provoke a response from interested parties in our membership.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Sir,

Throughout industry and commerce there are examples of discounts and privileges given by concerns to those individuals or companies who purchase more of the goods and services provided by the concern than anyone else. British Rail see things differently. In their eyes someone (usually referred to as a commuter) who makes daily journeys by train, is a person to discourage. At least that is the impression given.

I never did understand why it is necessary to charge people more to stand in crowded rush hour trains (which must surely run at a profit) than to travel in deserted carriages later in the day (on what must be very uneconomic services to operate). To my mind the fault must lie with the people responsible for the 'interval' service. It is all very nice to know that trains are running at regular times in the day, but surely economic considerations should have greater sway than the facility to create a timetable more easily.

A prime example of the total disregard for the people who must ultimately pay BR's wages was seen in the timetable introduced at the end of September on the Manchester to Liverpool services which travel via Warrington and Hunts Cross.

The commuters on this line pay a particularly high price for using the services provided. A few years ago the decision was taken to extend the Merseyrail services from Garston to Hunts Cross. All very well for British Rail who can now terminate many trains ten miles short of Liverpool and conveniently adjacent to the Carriage Depot at Allerton. Their costs are minimised significantly. But what of the poor commuter? What has been his cost? For a start the chance of delays has now doubled as the commuter has to catch trains from both Mersey rail (or Miseryrail as it is known locally) and British Rail. Then he has to wait on Hunts Cross station which is totally devoid of any civilised waiting facilities. The station is an absolute disgrace. There is a sloping walkway on the east-west side of the station which has been covered with overhanging brambles throughout the summer. Lady passengers must have lost countless stockings to this unchecked foliage. Now the fall is here an additional hazard has been provided by the provision of a covering of slimy leaves which make it almost impossible to retain a foothold. And there is still frost and ice to come.

As I mentioned insult was added to injury a few weeks ago when the Merseyrail timetable was altered. The timings seem to have been chosen to make the greatest inconvenience to the commuter. The first train to leave Moorfields (the commercial centre) now

misses the connection by two minutes. People travelling from Sankey (ideal commuting territory) can only get to their home station by a quarter to seven (assuming punctual trains) if they leave their office on time. If winter commuters leave for the earlier train they now face a wait on Hunts Cross' cold, frequently wet, and exposed platforms of a quarter an hour or longer. The alternative is to stand in an unlit, totally unheated 'greenhouse' size shack. A shack totally devoid of hygienic standards and which even self respecting vandals would hesitate to enter. Quite, quite appalling. Does no one care enough to do something about this chronic, and ultimately costly injustice?

Surely it matters not what time of day the 'interval' trains run their pointless progress. Could not these be adjusted to ensure that the commuter - without whom no service could run - gets a decent break. The numbers travelling have decreased significantly since the introduction of this additional problem for the commuter, and I am forced to the conclusion that whilst British Rail may be getting there, less and less people are accompanying them on the journey.

FOOTNOTES

So there it is. My first issue is completed. Some of you will be shocked that there is no stiff cover, and no photographic reproduction on glossy paper. These economies are a direct result of the apathy which is becoming more and more apparent in the membership. My mandate is to provide a magazine that the Association can afford. To produce this issue to the same standard as Mike Lenz' previous issues would have cost around £125. Cost of a year's issues £500. At the moment less than 60 members have renewed their subscription. Total receipts £300. We need more commitment. So please introduce new members, renew promptly, attend meetings and buy as many raffle tickets and sandwiches as you can afford. Only by doing this and by supporting the 'library' scheme mentioned on the questionnaire can a group of our size produce a slick and expensive looking magazine. Action this day please.

** The passengers on the 'Southport Visitor' were informed that permission was being sought to run regular steam services from next year between Southport and Burscough. No firm details at this stage but fingers crossed.

** Look out for a new - and I feel important - name on the railway bookstalls. Silver Link Publishing. Headed by Nigel Harris who made such a great impact with his work on Steam World and who revolutionised Northern Railways. The titles out at the moment were not entirely relevant to the members interests and preferences (although Ron Herbert's collection of pictures in The Working Railway - A Railwayman's Photographs is first class in every way) but standards have been set which bode well for future publications. LNER reflections just out may be worth a look for those of you who prefer this inferior (to quote you know who) railway.

** Next publication date will be the second Tuesday in February. Please do your best to contribute to this issue. On behalf of your Committee may I wish you all the merriest Christmas and the happiest New Year possible.