

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 7

AUTUMN 1982

SE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER.

No. 7. Autumn 1982.

Although since the last newsletter there has still not been any steam at Northwich (a matter which we hope will be remedied in the near future) there has, nevertheless, been plenty of activity within the Association. Previously the newsletter has been compiled by one of the Association's Publicity Officers, Mr. Peter Turner, who has now had to give up this task due to other commitments. It has fallen upon myself to produce this newsletter, but I must offer thanks to the various persons who have provided material which I hope will be of interest to members. I must also thank my predecessor for the time and effort which he put into producing the previous newsletters, and wish him well with his future projects. As this is my first attempt at this sort of thing I hope you will find the result to be upto the standard of previous newsletters.

Michael Lenz. Editor.

Committee Matters.

There are a couple of items regarding the committee which members may well not be aware of. The first of these concerns the addition of Mr. Peter Sheridan to the committee, who has been placed in charge of all working parties on the coach, as a result of his keen interest for working on the coach. The second item concerns the resignation of one of our Publicity Officers, Mr. Peter Turner, and that of our Sales Officer, Mr. Peter Coulter, both of whom we would like to thank, on behalf of all the membership, for the excellent work that they have both done for the Association, and to say that we wish them all the best in the future. With the A.G.M. coming up in November it has been decided to wait until then to fill these two positions.

Membership News.

The Association has passed its first birthday, with the membership now in excess of ninety people, and new members still joining at the rate of a couple a month. Already the first fifty renewals have been sent out, and the response to date has been very good, with just over half of these being renewed. However it will not be until the end of our second year that we can truly assess the Association's success or failure in being able to retain the interest of its members such that they will consider it worthwhile to renew their subscriptions.

Whilst on the subject of renewals, it would be much appreciated if members would return their completed renewal forms, together with their subscriptions, as soon as possible after receiving them. If a member has not renewed his subscription by a month passed its expiry date, then that person will be assumed to have cancelled his membership, and he will be removed from the mailing list. We look forward to your continued support in the future.

Michael Lenz. Membership Secretary.

Proposed Model Railway Group.

The suggestion has been put forward at a recent committee meeting that there may be members of the Association who would be interested in forming a model railway group within the Association. I have already had approaches on this subject made to me by a couple of members and I would be interested to know if there are any other members who would like to participate. If any members are interested would they please contact me either by telephone (Northwich 44959), or in person at the next ordinary meeting.

Michael Lenz.

Visit to Toton M.P.D. and the Great Central Railway, Loughborough.

Saturday 21st August 1982 found the 8E Association embarking on its fourth outing to date, this time with a double venue guaranteed to fully entertain both the modern image and steam loving members.

Leaving Northwich at 9.00a.m., in the now customary "Walkers" coach, with the first half of the party, an uneventful run to Warrington was made, where the remainder of the tour participants joined at 9.30a.m. Our route now lay along the A50 via Knutsford, Holmes Chapel, Stoke, and Uttoxeter travelling through pleasant Cheshire and Staffordshire countryside to our refreshment stop at the "Salt Box" Cafe (Hatton), where we arrived just after 11.00a.m. Entertainment on the way was provided both by Peter Turner's selection of beverages (alcoholic and otherwise), crisps etc., and also by the more vociferous members of the party whose reactions to the observation of various Crossville, P.M.T., Trent, Midland Red and similar vehicles en route, proved to be fairly amusing to the more "stable" members of the party. (Note: The author must here own up to a slight personal leaning towards this 'lunatic fringe' element, despite such conduct being somewhat un-becoming of a member of our illustrious committee.)

After our 20 minutes refreshments and P.N.B. stop, we proceeded via Etwal to Derby, passing the site of Derby Friargate (G.N.R.) station (closed in the mid 1960's) as we entered the town. Then off via the ring road onto the A52 and in no time we were approaching the twin villages of Stapleford and Sandiacre on the Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire border, from where the private road down to Toton (ex 16A) M.P.D. was taken, arriving at 11.55a.m.

We had two booked visits (12noon and 13.00 hours) but the very obliging shed foreman was content to allow us to go round the shed complex in one combined group and did not insist upon us taking an official 'guide', marshalling of our party being left in the care of committee members. This, of course, was much to our advantage, saving

us considerable time, whilst still allowing members to make notes and take photographs at will throughout the shed and shed yard. The usual collection of Classes 20, 25, 47, and 56 were present, but Classes 45 and 08 were not as well represented as might have been expected. A number of Class 31's, recently transferred from the W.R. and E.R. to Toton, were also observed. Oddments 'on shed' included carriage heating unit ADB 968002 (ex British Thomson-Houston Class 15 D8237), English Electric Type 4 40 157, English Electric Type 3 37 079, and (surprise, surprise,) ex L.M.S. 4F 0-6-0 4027 (B.R. 44027) from the Midland Rly. Centre at Butterley. Of course the depot seems rather odd these days without the one time ever-present "Peak" Class 44's (D1 - D10) which are now sadly all withdrawn.

We were underway again at 12.50p.m. for the half hour run via the M1 to Loughborough where a rather extended tour of the town's suburbs brought us eventually to the former Great Central Railway Station, now the headquarters of the "Main Line Steam Trust". Here the party split to sample the various delights of the re-born G.C.R. The Railway has an impressive fleet of locos, but unfortunately most of the larger examples are still undergoing restoration, such as 71000 Duke of Gloucester, 34039 Boscastle, 6990 Witherslack Hall, 92212, 45231, 61264, etc. most of which were inside the large shed building at the north end of the line. Recently purchased ex-B.R. Class 14 diesels D9516 and D9523 were also in residence at the depot, as were the serviceable ex-B.R. locos 61306 (B1 Class) and 4744 (N2 Class, B.R. 69523) with G.N.R. Single No. 1 (on loan from the N.R.M.) also 'on shed' along with various smaller industrial types.

We had not come empty handed, as a request had been made to Pat a few weeks earlier for his help in locating some fireman's shovells which were urgently required by the G.C.R. Through a local contact Pat had managed to obtain three of these, which had been held in stock by a Warrington firm (former suppliers of shovells to Dallam Sheds) for around 15 years! The 8E committee had decided to offer these as a gift to the

G.C.R. to help cement relationships between our two groups, and they were duly presented to Allen Grice, the shed foreman. Our reward for this soon appeared in the shape of ex G.C.R. "Director" 4-4-0 number 506 (B.R. 62660) Butler-Henderson, which was to work all service trains during the afternoon. Pat had requested the provision of this loco if at all possible, despite the fact that one of the industrial tank locos was the rostered engine for the day, in view of the long association of the "Directors" with Cheshire Lines services in the 1950's and early 1960's. Many of our members will no doubt have fond memories of these locos when allocated to Northwich and Trafford Park Sheds. "Mons", "Prince of Wales", "Gerard Powys Dewhurst", "Jutland", "Princess Mary", were regular performers on Manchester - Liverpool and Manchester - Chester services in former years.

A number of footplate passes were made available to us, one of which was offered to an ex-Widnes driver, who was allowed to take the regulator during the afternoon, much to his delight. Most of our party chose to make one round trip on the 5 mile line via Quorn to Rothley, spending the remainder of the available time around the shed and station area at Loughborough. Viewing of the small relics museum and photographic displays led on to reflections about the Great Central in general. How impressive the London extension to Marylebone appeared from the vintage photos taken during the construction of the line in the 1890's: the last truly main line to be built in the U.K. What a tragedy it is that this superbly engineered route, built perfectly straight, flat, and to continental loading gauge, was never allowed to develop to its full potential. Of course railway politics and inter-company rivalry have played as much a part in its downfall as any other factor. The final act is of course the recent closure of the Manchester Piccadilly - Sheffield Victoria "Woodhead" route, which has left Edward Watkin's dream of Manchester to Paris through trains via the G.C.R. finally and irrevocably shattered. Members interested to learn more of the chequered history of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway and its transformation into Britain's

last major Trunk Route are recommended to read George Dow's three volume work "Great Central" which provides much insight into this fascinating and at one time extensive railway system (the Western was not the only "Great" railway in Vrexham: David McIntosh will tell you more if you are in any doubt) which was always unloved by the "establishment" at Euston, King's Cross, and St. Pancras. Neither the L.M.S. nor the L.N.E.R. really wanted it at the grouping, and the latter always acted as if they were "saddled" with it, shedding few tears when responsibility passed to the London Midland Region in B.R. days.

We must be grateful that a little of the Great Central's pioneering spirit survives at Loughborough (and at Quainton Road also, to a lesser extent) to help us to reflect on what might have been had circumstances been different. Let us not forget that the "new" G.C.R. has not been without problems (notably financial) in recent years and SE members are urged to support the noble efforts of the dedicated team at Loughborough whenever possible. Remember, without past G.C.R. perseverance there would never have been a Cheshire Lines system at all. Our enjoyment at Northwich today owes much to Messrs. Pollitt, Robinson, and Watkin and many more G.C.R. worthies.

Our return journey from Loughborough commenced at 16.45p.m. for a short run to Coalville (ex 15E) depot where the modern traction fans were pleased to find another group of B.R. diesels on view at this strangely deserted stabling point. Travelling on via Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Swadlincote, and Burton on Trent, we rejoined the A50 to retrace our outward route, finally arriving back in Warrington shortly after 19.30 hours, and Northwich by 20.00 hours.

All in all, a most successful day out and thanks are due to all who helped to contribute to the running of the trip, including Walkers Coaches, B.R. at Toton, G.C.R. staff, SE committee members, and not least Pat Mullee.

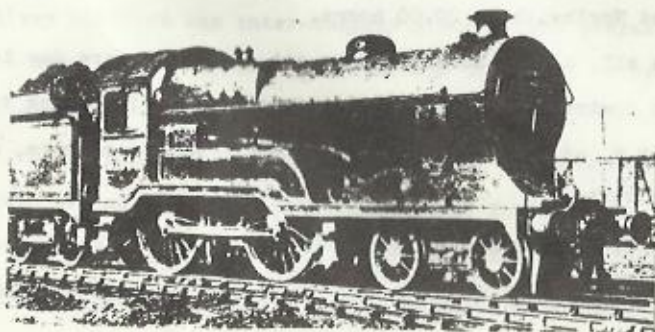
Now then, where shall we go next?

Alan R. Ashurst.

The Great Central Railway prospered by virtue of its freight traffic; until the Grouping in 1921 its passenger services were in the hands of a number of mediocre 4-6-0s and one outstanding type of 4-4-0, J.G. Robinson's 'Director' class. Designed in 1913, the ten engines of class 'D10' were elegant 2-cylinder machines with 6ft 9in. driving wheels, named after directors of the company.

They were followed in 1920 by an enlarged version, Class 'D11', of which the principal distinguishing feature was the large side-window cab. The majority of these eleven engines were named after battlefields of the war, such as 'Mons' and 'Somme', and soon all the light high-speed passenger trains on the G.C.R. line to Marylebone were handled by these two classes. After the Grouping, a few 'Directors' found their way on to the former Great Northern main line out of King's Cross, on such important trains as the 'Sheffield Pullman', and in 1924 Gresley built a further twenty-four for use in Scotland. To suit the Scottish loading gauge, these latter engines had cut-down cabs and boiler mountings, and were given fine old names from Sir Walter Scott's novels. 'Wizard of the Moor', 'Baron of Bradwardine' and others were soon a familiar sight on the lines radiating from Edinburgh and Dundee.

After nationalisation, withdrawal of the 'Directors' soon began; many of the Scottish ones were stored, and those in England were concentrated on the former Cheshire Lines. The last of them was withdrawn from service in 1962, with the exception of 'Butler-Henderson' which has been restored to its original condition for preservation.



By the time these notes appear in print, the first week of a series of trials using Class 20 (English Electric Type 1) locomotives, based at Northwich M.P.D., should be complete. In view of the impending demise of Class 25 locomotives, both I.C.I. and B.R. are investigating various alternatives for haulage of the limestone trains from the Buxton area, one of which is a proposal to use two Class 20 locos in a similar fashion to current freight workings in the East Midlands, where these locos are well known for their general reliability and capable performance standards. Tuesday 28th, Wednesday 29th, and Thursday 30th of September should have seen a pair of Class 20's working the 11.05 Oakleigh to Great Rocks, returning with the 15.39 Tunstead Quarry to Oakleigh, in the capable charge of our good friend Joe Fisher. If these and further trials prove successful, more Northwich men will be trained in the use of these distinctive single-cab machines, with a view to their introduction on a regular basis to most, if not all, of the I.C.I. Buxton to Northwich workings in due course.

8E goes American.

Returning to the saga of the wandering 8E Shedplate, I have to report that for the first time, as far as I am aware, our shedplate has appeared on an American locomotive, and not just any old locomotive, but a Union Pacific 4000 Class 4-8-8-4 known to most people as a 'Big Boy'. This event took place in June this year, and for those members who might think this is a leg pull, then they are welcome to view the indisputable proof of this happening at the next meeting, when a photograph of the loco (complete with shedplate) will be on display. In the next newsletter I shall go into more detail on this subject, suffice to say that those members who are unable to see the photograph may well find some surprises in store when they read this article in the next newsletter.

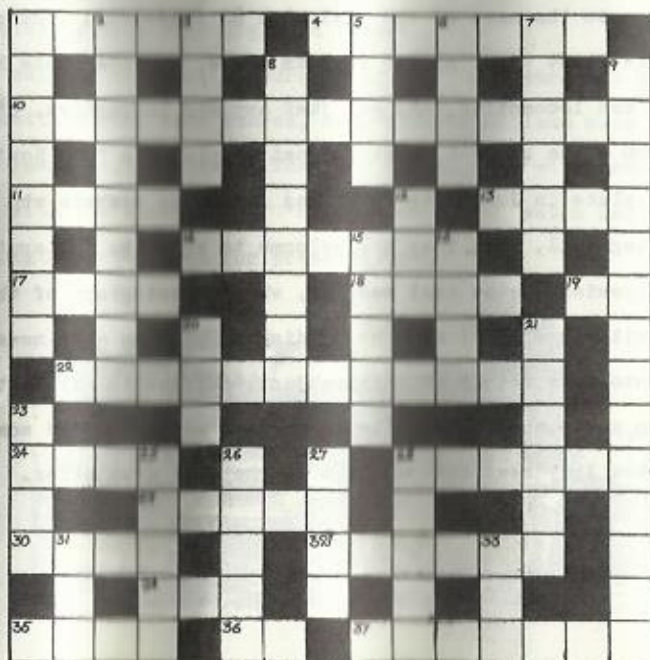
Railway Crossings No. 2

ACROSS

1. see I down.
- 4(36/7) This D-II sounds more like an N-15. (3-4-2-3-4)
10. It's agreed Ivan lives for steam engines, though can be hard to get at. (6-5-4)
11. This cat's a real swinger, even after 140 years. (4)
13. A mixed up Viking from Swindon. (4)
14. Designer keeps asking devious questions. (?)
- 17&20 I ogle an A-3 in the north west. (4-3)
18. Euston had a Doric one. (4)
19. A Geordie short-line? (2)
22. Keep on the move. It certainly has more go! (6-6)
24. Wood for east-coast coaches. (4)
28. This sainted island may not have been a Frenchman's favourite 'Jub'. (6)
29. The L.N.E.R. was supposedly never this. (5)
30. It sits in chairs. (4)
32. No late arrivals at the old homestead with this engine. (6)
34. Is this what old layabouts do to boilers? (3)
35. Type of engine for lightly laid or steeply graded track. (4)
- 36/7. see 4 across.

DOWN

1. Sounds like a pound-note. (8-6)
2. The writing is on the window in this case - usually. (2-7)
- 3.&23. A heavenly body to be found at Swindon? (4-4)
5. see 27 down.
6. A shortened quarter of the 'big four'. (4)
7. Man with designs on the M.R. (6)
8. Could this fortified building be in Stratford's river valley? (8)
9. An A-3 ruling Cheshire, perhaps. (6-8)
12. Reginald is pretty short, and a bit backward, but great all the same. (3)
15. A mixed salad goes down well on the L.N.E.R. (5)
16. Pat would appear to be a little baby. (4)
20. see 17 across.
21. The longest underwater tunnel in the world. (6)
23. see 3 down.
25. Lord Mountbatten's seafaring diesel? (5)
26. This 'pacific' seems a little short on a branch of maths. (5)
- 27.&5. This stately home sounds like a heap on the G.W.R. ! (4-4)
31. It's dirty work getting this out of steamers. (3)
33. Just the stuff for keeping things running smoothly. (3)



Local Steam - Autumn 1982 and beyond.

Both 46229 Duchess of Hamilton (from the N.R.M.) and L.M.S. "Black Five" (4) 5000 (from the S.V.R.) will be on duty in Cheshire in late October and early November. The Duchess will go through Northwich en route to Chester with a private charter on Saturday 23rd October. Here the loco will take over a "Welsh Marches Pullman" from the Black Five, which will have brought the train in from Hereford. The reverse operation will occur two weeks later, on Saturday 6th November. Precise details are still not available, but we expect to hold 5000 at Northwich during the intervening two weeks. Further information will be available in due course and we will endeavour to ensure all members are advised.

With the withdrawal of the fitters from Northwich M.P.D., and the removal of fuelling facilities, both events from Saturday 25th September, rumours are beginning to circulate re closure of the depot and such like. The Committee would like to reassure members that B.R. is MOST DEFINATELY NOT opting out of train crew commitments at Northwich, although the implications for the shed building itself have yet to be fully outlined. Nevertheless, we are in constant touch with both B.R. management, and private loco owners and operators, all of whom confirm that the future of steam operations at Northwich is not in doubt at the present time. Members will be kept fully informed of any developments, as your committee does not think it wise to keep such important matters secret from the membership. As a postscript, we hear that G.W.R. "Hall" 4-6-0 4930 Hagley Hall could well be our next visitor, early in the New Year.

A.R. Ashurst.

August Bank Holiday Weekend at Carnforth.

The bank holiday looked like living up to all expectations. The M6 was like a river, and at one point almost at a standstill due to poor visibility and a surfeit of caravans, coaches, and other vehicles full of holiday-minded people. By the time Carnforth was reached, however, the deluge had moderated to occasional vicious showers. We arrived in

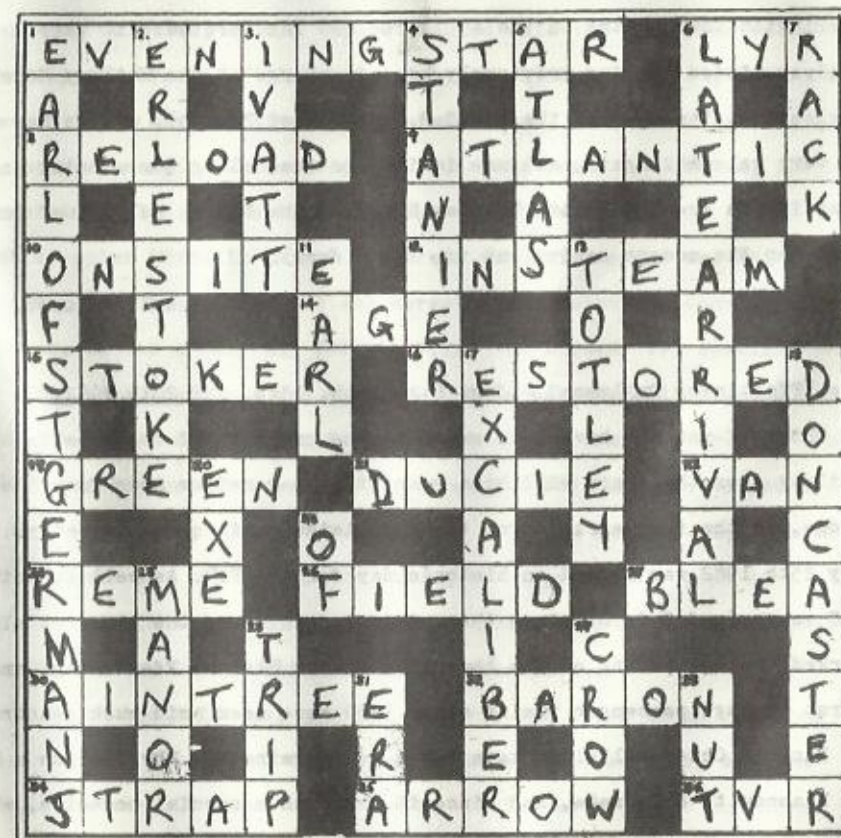
time for lunch on Sunday, and having booked in, adjourned to the canteen where we were assigned various duties while still munching. I went as the guard on the Crag Bank shuttle, and during the afternoon I saw other 8E members doing things like guarding on the 15" gauge line, and repairing rotten platform timbers. A meeting was held on the 3.00p.m. shuttle at which we were briefed on the events planned for the following day, after which we were given a guided tour of the whole site. After shoving a dead fire-engine to a new position on the car park we got cleaned up and went to the Station Hotel for the 'Dish of the Day' (that's a meal, not the barmaid), followed by a few pints at the Blue Anchor in Bolton Le Sands.

On Monday morning I awoke in the L.M.S. 12 wheeled sleeper to find the weather quite reasonable, and got a couple of hours shunting in before breakfast, with No. 39, a R.S.H. 0-6-OT, which Paddy was firing all day. During the morning everything was positioned for the days festivities. All engines capable of moving under their own power were to take part in the cavalcade, and intact but non-steamable locos were pulled out of the shed to allow for photography. No. 39 really earned her keep that morning, almost coming to a standstill while dragging out the two big continental pacifics, with her own handbrake screwed down to prevent slipping. I found that most of his fire had disappeared up the chimney during this manouver. Sir Nigel Gresley slid majestically off shed during the morning to work a "Gusabrian Coast Express", and by way of contrast I saw several 8E members coaling an 0-4-OST from cardboard boxes carried back and forth to the coal wagon! At 1.30p.m. the first cavalcade ran upto Crag Bank, each loco going on its own at short intervals, a brief description being given over the tannoy from the signal box. Much hilarity followed 5407 stopping with its chimney level with the signalbox window, filling the box with thick sulphurous smoke. The single line token went up on the last engine and was transferred to the other end of the line of engines at Crag Bank, ready for the run back, after which all the engines were disposed of into the right places for the second cavalcade at 3.30p.m.

The second cavalcade also went off without a hitch, except that some comedian coupled 5407 to Lord Nelson at Crag Bank. 5407's abortive attempts to start off were met with much derisory whistling from all the other locos whose crews all seemed to be in on the joke. Both of the cavalcades were under the sole control of 8E members and after the second cavalcade, a couple of hours were spent on hard shunting to put everything away again. Despite aching in parts I'd forgotten I had for the rest of the week, I can honestly say I haven't enjoyed myself so much for years, and I know Bob Meredith did, because he stayed there all week!

G.C. Smith.

Solution to Crossword in Newsletter 6.



Warrington Area Group Meetings.

Our regular Friday night venue in Warrington has changed from the Royal Oak Hotel to The PATTEN ARMS (opposite Bank Quay Station) where we were originally. This means that slides and films etc. are no longer shown. However, members felt there was more need to have a general "matter" (and booze-up) so that all that latest scandal and rumour could be fully discussed, instead of spending the evening in a more formalised way. Accordingly we are, once more, to be found in the front bar on the Hotel side of the building, from around 9.00p.m. onwards, and cordially extend an invitation to all SE members to come along for an entertaining night out.

Additionally, Sunday evenings now see a small band of members in residence at the Railway Hotel, Knutsford Road, Latchford (1½ miles from Warrington town centre on the A50). The new landlord here is very railway-minded (having previously been in charge at the Railway Hotel, Earlestown, the home of the L.C.G.B. North-West Branch), and he has made us very welcome. Again, all are invited to come along for a drink and a chat if you are bored with "Sunday Night at the London Palladium" (or whatever the modern equivalent is, these days).

Alan R. Ashurst.

The "Ffestiniog Pullmans" - June 6th, 12th, 13th, and 20th 1982.

Those of you who have been watching the progress of the Ffestiniog Railway over the years will have seen its top terminus move from Boston Lodge, in the very early days, to Tanygrisiau until quite recently. May 25th 1982 was indeed an historic day for the F.R. As well as being 150 years (and 2 days) since the original opening of the line, it also marked the re-opening of the through route to Blaenau Ffestiniog, and the first through passenger trains since 1939 were seen amid much celebration.

Back in October 1981 certain ideas had germinated. Why not run a train to Blaenau to celebrate, and since it was such a special occasion, why not make it something extra special.

And so it was that Sunday 6th June saw a special standard gauge train in Blaenau Ffestiniog. The "Ffestiniog Pullman" formed of the S.L.O.A. (Steam Locomotive Operators Association) privately-owned Pullman set, and the first of a series of four such trains to run, the demand having been so heavy.

Passengers on the first "Ffestiniog Pullman" saw their train arrive behind the green Class 40 no. 40 106. Due to problems at Crewe, the train left there 60 minutes late, but with some smart driving and efficient work at both Llandudno Junction and Blaenau Ffestiniog, we were to find ourselves in Portmadog 2 minutes early! After Chester, memories of the old scenic land cruises came back for many. What better way to survey the scenic North Wales coast and the splendour of the Conwy and Lledr Valleys of the Blaenau branch, than from the luxurious comfort of a Pullman car. At Llandudno Junction, 40 635 "Apapa" backed onto the train and we were soon off up the branch. It had been misty all along the coast, but as we started climbing and twisting above Betws-y-Coed, the skies began to clear, and on emerging into the grey, slate-tip waste of Blaenau, following the green isolation of the Lledr Valley, the sun was sighted.

Double-engine "Merddin Emrys" and train was waiting for us, together with driver Joe Clulow, and Dee and Mersey Group volunteer John Hopkins as fireman. It was a busy day for the F.R., for already two special trains had arrived, and that on a day when the branch was normally closed. The first had been a 6-car DMU off Newton Heath depot forming a special from Wigan and Warrington (our own SE/B.R. excursion-ED), and the second a ten coach rake of scruffy class 47-hauled Mark 1's from Euston - both private charters. Space was tight, and much thought had previously gone into deciding to stable the Euston train in the goods yard at North Western, and the DMU up the line continuing on to Transfynydd.

The trip on the F.R. was, as ever, superb. The views to be had from the windows of a Ffestiniog train must be unequalled anywhere else in Britain. No wonder it's one of the major tourist attractions in Wales.

Passengers had 50 minutes to take in Harbour Station, with its museum,

cafe, and shop and its surroundings. Then back for the return trip, and further glimpses of scenic wonder before return early at our pick-up stations of Chester, Northwich, Altrincham, Piccadilly, Stockport, Wilmslow, and Crewe.

The Saturday Pullman on the 12th ran from Crewe and Chester only, but with connections from the North West, Birmingham, and Euston. This time the green class 40, no. 40 106 took us all the way, running round at Llandudno Junction. The weather was superb, as it was on the following two runs, and on arrival on time at Blaenau, "Prince" was waiting on our special F.R. train for the return run to Portmadog.

The shortage of paths on the Blaenau branch on a Saturday afternoon, necessitated our Pullman departing around 3.00p.m., passing a service train at the only remaining passing point at Llanrwst. Passengers had the choice of returning by service train from Llandudno or else spending almost 2 hours at the resort before our Pullmans returned.

The Sunday 13th June Pullman was notable in providing class 33 diesel haulage as far as Llandudno Junction in the form of loco no. 33 008, named "Eastleigh". It was also notable in being only 50 minutes late off Crewe. Class 40, no. 40 009 hauled the 330-plus passengers up the branch, and we arrived in glorious sunshine to see "Earl of Meirioneth" and train awaiting us.

For the Sunday 20th June Pullman, time was maintained all the way (third Sunday lucky), haulage being provided by 33 003 and 40 168 to and from Llandudno Junction respectively. Certainly, so far as is known, everybody really enjoyed their day out - in fact some passengers (organisers excepted) actually paid to come on the Pullmans twice. Quite a number of thank you letters have been received, commenting on the cleanliness and comfort of the trains, the helpfulness of the S.L.O.A. and F.R. stewards, the detailed souvenir itinerary, and the organisation and quiet efficiency of the Travellers-Fare steward. Sales stands were manned by F.R. volunteers at both ends of the train, the main sales being

the Ffestiniog 150 years celebration booklet and the "Cambrian Rail" joint CCLAG/VORSA publication. Two raffles were also held, the first for the "Ffestiniog Pullman" headboard carried by each train, the cast aluminium plate being presented to the lucky winner during each return journey; the second, held over all four trains, was for an original oil painting by Adrian Powell of Southport, depicting "Prince" on a F.R. train, and the "Ffestiniog Pullman" train, both at Blaenau Ffestiniog Central. This painting was won by Mr. Bill Tate of Sale, who had travelled on the June 13th Pullman, having come with a party from the Manchester Model Railway Society.

No train or trains can run smoothly without the help and assistance of many people. In particular we would like to acknowledge the assistance of David Ward and Ted Gibbins of B.R., Bernard Staite and his hard-working stewards of S.L.O.A., Alan Heywood and other F.R. staff, and last but not least all those people within the Dee and Mersey, Lancashire, and Cheshire Groups of the F.R. Society who assisted with not just one, but four railtours within fifteen days.

A mighty effort you will agree, but surely worth it.

John Oates.

Locomotives at Northwich. The J10 and J11 Classes.

From the formation of the Cheshire Lines Committee until nationalisation, the company had no motive power of its own (excepting two Sentinel Railcars in the 1930's). The Manchester, Sheffield and Lincoln Railway was the first company to provide locomotives. This right continued when the Great Central was formed and passed to the L.N.E.R. at the Grouping.

With the importance of the salt industry in the Northwich area, freight engines had always been shedded there. The J10s and J11s had proved themselves over the years to be reliable locomotives.

The J11 was the first locomotive designed for the Great Central by J.G. Robinson. The newly formed Great Central Railway Company was an aggressive and progressive railway, and Robinson had wanted to act quickly,

and safely decided to build improved 0-6-0 and 4-4-0 tender locomotives, similar to Pollit's designs.

The J11 differed from the J10 in certain respects; it was 8 tons heavier (though this was not wholly accounted for by the J11's larger boiler). The new locomotive was sturdier built, with a larger roof than the J10, with extra support for the rear corners of the roof being provided by extending the rear grab handles on the cab. Both locos had Stephenson valve gear with rocking shafts to drive balanced flat valves over cylinders 18½" in diameter, with a 26" piston stroke. During World War 2, a start was made to replace the cylinder blocks with ones made to take piston valves. This resulted in the boiler being set higher in relation to the frames. This was to be a standard modification to make a standard L.N.E.R. class, but nationalisation brought other ideas.

Rather oddly, in 1900, Gorton continued to build the previous J10 design producing a class total of 40, whilst Nielsen Reid of Glasgow produced the first 50 J11s, which eventually became a class of 174 engines.

Earlier M.S. and L. enginemen had affectionately called the 0-6-0 locomotives "Bashers and Bull-Dogs", but the unofficial name of 'Pom Pom' is the one normally used for the J11, and also even the J10 (perhaps incorrectly).

The J11's tender was of the 3250 gallon type and differed from the earlier M.S.&L. design by having guard rails to increase the coal capacity. When a 4000 gallon tender was introduced it had coping plates in place of the rails, not because smaller coal was introduced, but because the rails were more expensive to fit. The basic tender design was not good, the coal on all tenders came to the fireman (until he himself had to bring it) at footplate level, and then had to be lifted into the fire hole. Across the tender are compartments for personal belongings, lamps, and tools; The coal is drawn from a central gap under these. If this gap was used by the fireman to enter the tender in order to move the coal forward, then he could not return to the footplate safely, whilst the engine was in motion. On other railways this difficulty was overcome by providing doors

at the front of the tender, but even as late as 1943 the L.N.E.R. tenders fitted to Bl 4-6-0 locomotives still did not have this facility. The combination of danger and difficulty of moving coal forward in the tender resulted in the practice of high stacking the front half of the tender (apparent in pictures of these classes of locos).

One J11 (number 16, built in 1909) had the distinction of being the first Great Central locomotive to be fitted with a superheater. This had 20" cylinders and Gorton fitted piston tail rods, the frames being extended to accommodate them (the Midland practice of allowing them to poke through the buffer beam was not used). The tail rods were not accepted as standard Gorton practice, on inside cylinder engines, as no apparent advantage was observed.

The J10s and J11s main use was for freight (goods and mineral) trains, although they could perform well on passenger duties, and given their head they could easily achieve 60m.p.h.

It is interesting to note the high regard in which Mr. Robinson was held, for with the Grouping and formation of the L.N.E.R. he was asked to become the Chief Mechanical Engineer. He considered the challenge, but at 66 years of age recommended a younger man for the post, a certain Nigel Gresley.

One of the Northwich drivers recalled a Northwich turn: two J10s, with tenders filled from back to front (as already described), regularly hauled oil trains to the West Cheshire Junction, there to hand over to a small Great Western pannier tank, which easily dealt with the train that had taken two tender locos to deliver it.

D.A. Rustage.

Reminder.

Would members please make a note of the dates of the monthly meetings from now until the year end.

October 5th. November 2nd. November 30th (A.G.M.), and December 14th.

Members Briefing - Some Snippets of Information.

Derby Works "Open Day" was held on Saturday 4th September, and a number of members visited the works, finding a reasonable quantity of locos in residence, despite the reported low level of activity at the works. However, many of these locos were for scrapping including members from classes 25, 40, and 45, together with a few Scottish based class 27's. Two steam locos were on view in the display area; Midland 4F 0-6-0 (4)4027, as seen by our group two weeks earlier at Toton depot, and Southern 'M7' tank loco (30)245, making its first public appearance for many years, after a lengthy period in storage, following withdrawal in the early 1960's. This loco had been repainted in original L.S.W.R. livery by the Derby Carriage Works apprentices, especially for the Open Day. Also noticed on the scrap lines were the original H.S.T. power cars W43000 and W43001, from the prototype "Inter-City 125" set no. 252 001, which have until late been in departmental service at Derby Research Centre. Preserved Class 44 "Peak" D4 Great Gable, restored to original 1959 B.R. green livery, was also on view in the works sidings.

It is understood that all of the Autumn/Winter 1982 SLOA steam trips announced so far are now fully booked. This must be seen as very good news for all in the 'preservation' movement. As far as we are concerned, it seems fair to speculate that SLOA may be encouraged to add extra trains to the programme if B.R. will agree. Of course, any additional "Welsh Marches Pullman" workings should, by implication, involve the 8E Association to some degree. Let us hope that this may prove to be the case.

The return of Ffestiniog Railway trains to Blaenau Ffestiniog this summer has led to greatly increased loadings on B.R.'s Conwy Valley Line from Llandudno Junction. Accordingly B.R. is actively pursuing the possibility of re-introducing loco-hauled trains on the line for the 1983 timetable. Tests have already been conducted using a class 40 plus 9 mark 1 coaches, although final composition and power for these workings is by

no means certain as yet. However, the scheme does seem to be a strong bet for introduction in some form or other next summer, to avoid the "full and standing" situation which has applied on many DMU's this year.

B.R.-built A2 Pacific 60532 Blue Peter, currently pretending to be L.N.E.R. 532 at the Dinting Railway Centre, will be steamed on Sundays 3rd and 10th of October. A recent inspection revealed the loco to be in a basically sound condition, despite many years of disuse, some of which were spent out of doors at a Yorkshire colliery before owner Geoff Drury was persuaded to bring this machine and his A4 60019 Bittern to more secure premises. Many would have thought that lengthy, costly work would be required before the A2 turned its own wheels again, but this is surprisingly not the case. This event must surely be worth witnessing, and 8E members are encouraged to support the Dinting Staff in this notable venture by, at least, going along to have a look.

Preserved Deltics 55 009 and 55 019 were officially handed over to the Deltic Preservation Society at a ceremony at Doncaster Works on Friday 20th August, after which they were towed north (by 37 100) to their new home on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, last minute "beaurocratic" problems prevented movement under their own power as planned. The acute motive power shortage on the N.Y.M.R. has resulted in the two locos being put into immediate operation there. Gala Days on the N.Y.M.R. are due for the last weekend in October, when all serviceable ex-B.R. diesels on the line will be in operation (Hymek, Warship, Deltics, Class 14A etc.).

Other withdrawn class 55s still languish in Doncaster Works scrapyard where they were observed by some 8E members over the August Bank Holiday. Since our coach trip in February, 55 007/08/10/14 have all been cut up, and 55 021 was just being started at the end of August. It is understood that cabs and part of the bodyside of 55 021 may be preserved for static display. All the rest are awaiting their turn for the torch, except,

perhaps, 55 015 Tulyar which is painted-up and separated from the remainder of the class.

Services on the "Cheshire Lines" system in 1983/84 should see little change as far as Chester-Northwich-Manchester trains are concerned. However, a major revision of Piccadilly-Warrington Central-Liverpool trains will occur which will break the pattern of services which has existed virtually since the line was opened in 1870. The hourly fast Liverpool-Widnes-Warrington-Piccadilly trains will continue to operate, as now, out of Lime Street. However, the stopping services which run Lime Street-Warrington Central and Warrington Central-Oxford Road as separate trains at present, will be withdrawn. In their place will be all stations from Oxford Road-Hunt's Cross trains, connecting into and out of the "Merseyrail" third-rail electrics, which will be extended from Garston back to Hunt's Cross in May 1983. Thus the original C.L.C. route via Cressington will, once more, take passengers from Manchester into Liverpool Central (albeit now the "low level" platforms). Hunt's Cross trains will run through to Kirkby on weekdays, and to Southport on Sundays.

Our 'artist' member Phil Creaghan has completed another of his superb action studies of main line steam at work. The current subject, an L.N.E.R. Pacific, was a special commission for S.V.R. General Manager Michael Draper, which has been framed, and was presented to Michael during the recent S.V.R. "Enthusiasts Weekend", when 8E members were again at work in Bridgnorth M.P.D. The picture has been donated to Michael as a token of our gratitude for his entertaining talk at our May meeting, when we all received a valuable insight into the "behind the scenes" activities of the S.V.R.

Contributions for this section, detailing any "up to date" developments on B.R., the private railways, or events in which the membership either, in groups, or as individuals, has been involved would be very welcome.

Alan R. Ashurst.

The Coach - Progress Report.

It is now almost six months since the last progress report appeared, and in that time a fair amount of work has been done on the coach, although this is not so apparent from the outside. The most noticeable external feature is the white painted buffer shanks and beam, partly white painted solebar and one white axlebox cover. This painting took place soon after the Open Day, and before any real ideas had been put forward for a definite plan of work on the coach. Since the coach is used to a large extent as a service vehicle at present, in order to provide sleeping accommodation for members working on visiting steam locos, it was decided to spend time initially on working on the coach interior to make it more acceptable. During the summer months, most Sundays have found Pete Sheridan and myself down at the coach by 10.00a.m., when we have then commenced working through till around 5.00p.m., with a break for lunch. Amongst the jobs that have been done are the removal of the metal and asbestos heat shields from the compartments (remnants from the former gas lighting); stripping down the kitchen stove for cleaning and removal of years of soot and ash; fitting of wooden cupboards above the sink in the kitchen, so as to provide more storage space; repainting the woodwork in the kitchen white, and polishing up all the metal surfaces (you can now see yourself better in the kitchen on the polished metalwork, than you could in the toilet compartments on the mirrors!); replacing the temporary wiring with a more permanent and neater system; removal of the toilet and washbasin from one of the two toilet compartments, and conversion to a storeroom, complete with cupboard and shelves (I just hope we do not have to move the cupboard out again, it took ages to get it in); fitting of 4 lockers into other toilet compartment and painting all woodwork upto washbasin level (we ran out of paint after that!); removal of door from corridor to brake end, with a view to re-using it when extra compartment is installed; general tidying up of the brake end compartment area in preparation for installation of new compartment. All in all, a fair amount of work, especially when there has only been two or three people

present on most occasions, although numbers have increased in the last few weeks. As always, if any member would like to help, then come to the coach any Sunday from 10.00a.m. onwards, and you will be made most welcome.

Michael Lenz.

For any members who might be interested there is a British Rail Merry-maker excursion from Northwich to March/Ely/Cambridge on Saturday 16th October. The price is £5.00 for adults and £1.00 for children and bookings commence from Monday 4th October (Saturday 2nd if you are a Rail Travel Club member).

As a member of a number of railway groups and a model railway society, I receive numerous magazines and newsletters during the year. I have noticed that in many of these there is usually a small section given over to letters from members on varying topics relative to that group or society. If possible I would like to introduce something similar in this newsletter, and I therefore ask members to write to me with their views on any matters that they consider relative to the Association, be they criticisms, suggestions, or anything which they feel they would like to comment on. At the same time if any members have any articles they would like to contribute for future newsletters, then please do so as they will be most welcome. I am proposing to make this newsletter a quarterly publication, with the next issue (Winter 1982) appearing in late December/early January, so I would be grateful if all contributions for the next issue would reach me by the end of November at the latest. Please send any letters or contributions to:-

Michael Lenz,

2 Manor Drive,

Rudheath,

NORTHWICH.

NORTHWICH 44959.