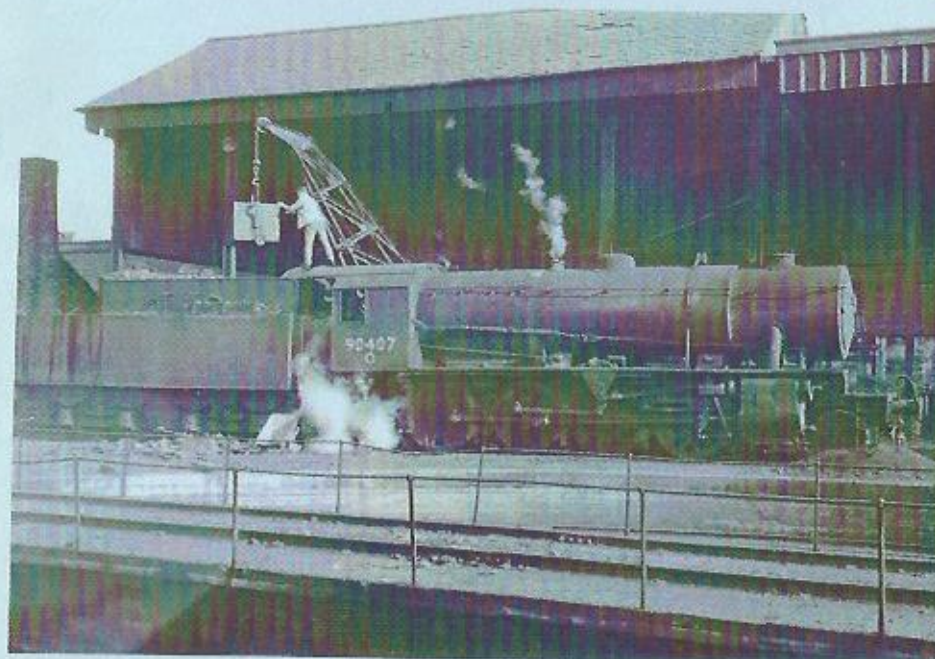


On Shed

Issue 45

Christmas 1998



The Magazine of the 8E Association



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Cover Photo

90407 being coaled at Northwich. Ex Woolley Colliery
9/10/65 A. Wilkinson

EDITORIAL

Issue 45

This is the first 'On Shed' for a year – issue 44 having been published in December 1997. The main reason for the absence of a summer issue was the lack of contributions. In past years this hasn't halted the presses – the shortfall in members' submissions being made up for by the various Editors' inventiveness. This is fine if the Editor has the time to produce a series of pieces to fill out the issue, but that is a commodity which I find in short supply, hence no summer magazine.

For this issue I must give many thanks to the following contributors who came up with the goods, and it will not surprise you that they are the usual stalwarts!

Colin Worrall – I have personally taken it upon myself to train his wife as a word processor. She now has the necessary skills to supply 8E copy on a floppy disk in Word 97 format!

Steven Worrall – thanks for the Robert article Steve (which was ready for the abandoned summer issue). Keep taking the photos and recording the progress – it is an important record.

Alan Ashurst – always ready to contribute and assist any 8E endeavour, not least the magazine. Most of us take Alan's behind the scenes efforts for granted, but where would the 8E be without him?

Chris Simon – besides his other 8E duties, Chris consistently produces something original for 'On Shed', this issue containing part II of his 'letter from America'.

Len Clarke – another reliable contributor (but how does he find the time?). Typing it all into the PC is a job and a half however (perhaps he'll get a computer for Christmas!).

Production of a quality members' magazine deserves more time than I have available at present so I reluctantly stand down as editor with this issue. It would be wonderful if a member with WP/DTP skills and a little time to spare could be found to take on the 'On Shed' editorship, but given the problems outlined earlier (not really surprising with a small membership) this will not be an easy task.

I wonder if an alternative may be to include occasional feature articles from guest contributors in Alan Ashurst's members' notes? Perhaps it is a subject for debate in a New Year meeting. I hope to be able to resume 8E activities in the future, but for now Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all readers. I hope you enjoy issue 45.

Alan Carr

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS.

July/August proved a hectic schedule for the 8E with visits to the East Lancs Railway, Whitegate Way Walk, John Penn's 'O' gauge garden railway and finally Stalybridge. East Lancs proved to be little disappointing with the railway being very quiet, although it was very nice to see Betty Beets Ivatt in black livery; or dare I say its correct livery.

Alternative power was provided by Class 50, 50015 which hauled us in a rather pedestrian manner to Rawtenstall and back to Ramsbottom, where we set hot-footed to the pub for refreshments and excellent it was too; highly recommended. Back to Bury for a wander around the station, then by tram and heritage dmu to Northwich. Members present were Mike Lenz, Steven Worrall, Chris Simon, Mr and Mrs Geoff Smithers, and myself.

Sunday 2nd August we descended on the Whitegate Way to meet Trevor Booth our guide for the day. What a brilliant day it was, sunshine all the way. We met Trevor at the former Whitegate Station then a short drive to Winsford where the tour started.

Trevor had obviously done hours of research into his tour and we were well rewarded with a most informative and enjoyable afternoon, even finding one or two relics (too heavy and large to remove in a Volkswagen van). The price of £3.50 included a booklet compiled by Trevor, excellent value well done Trev. We really enjoyed the day. Members present were Alan Ashurst, Paul Riley, Steven Worrall, David Lawless, Stephen Moore and girlfriend, and myself.

Sunday 9th August we visited John Penn's 'O' gauge garden layout. John and his colleagues made us most welcome.

The layout is phenomenal. Dave Healy, one of our members, was operating a section and even let our Chairman loose on the controls. I even managed to buy, YES BUY a 9E shed plate. You should all know where that is! Those who have booked for September will not be disappointed. Thanks again John for a cracking day. Members present were Fred Norrey, Nigel Wilkinson, Geoff Smith, Geoff Smithers, Steven Worrall, and myself.

Tuesday 11th August's visit to Stalybridge was a saga to say the least. Visits to Northwich station by Mike Lenz and myself found the booking office closed. No explanations, not even a notice! The station and platforms are in disgusting state, litter everywhere. Privatisation is not working in Northwich!

Unable to buy wayfarer tickets costing £6.60 at the station, we had to buy them on the train, costing £9.80. So a letter of complaint winged its way to North West Trains from S Worrall, who as yet has not received a reply! Tom, Mike, Steve and yours truly set off for Stalybridge via Manchester Piccadilly meeting Chris Simon, Gordon Heddon, Alan Ashurst, along the way. We all enjoyed a most convivial evening.

These summer outings have been very enjoyable and we will be planning more for next year. Northwich meetings continue to provide good support from the membership and long may it continue. Your magazine has again been compiled by Alan Carr, who deserves a great deal of credit for this important link for the members. We do not see enough of Alan due to work commitments but his contribution to the 8E is much appreciated.

Colin

CHESHIRE LINES. RE-OPENING OF THE WINSFORD & OVER BRANCH FOR PASSENGER TRAFFIC.

The Branch Line from CUDDINGTON to WINSFORD and OVER will be RE-OPENED for Passenger traffic on MONDAY, February 1st, 1892, and the following service of PASSENGER TRAINS will commence running on that date.

STATIONS.	WEEK DAYS.									
	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
WINSFORD AND OVER..... dep.	8 10	9 25	12 25	4 10	5 35	7 20				
WHITEGATE.....	8 20	9 35	12 35	4 20	5 45	7 30				
CUDDINGTON.....	8 30	9 45	12 45	4 30	5 55	7 40				
CHESTER (Northgate).....	8 40	9 55	1 5	4 40	6 10	7 50				
HAWARDEN.....	8 44	10 0	1 5	4 44	6 14	7 54				
WREXHAM.....	8 48	10 4	1 9	4 48	6 18	7 58				
NORTHWICH.....	8 52	10 8	1 13	4 52	6 22	8 2				
KNUTSFORD.....	8 56	10 12	1 17	4 56	6 26	8 6				
MANCHESTER.....	9 00	10 16	1 21	5 00	6 30	8 10				
STATIONS.	WEEK DAYS.									
	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
MANCHESTER..... dep.	7 28	9 33	11 40	3 38	5 43	7 50				
KNUTSFORD.....	7 32	9 37	11 44	3 42	5 47	7 54				
NORTHWICH.....	7 36	9 41	11 48	3 46	5 51	7 58				
WREXHAM.....	7 40	9 45	11 52	3 50	5 55	8 02				
HAWARDEN.....	7 44	9 49	11 56	3 54	5 59	8 06				
CHESTER (Northgate).....	7 48	9 53	12 0	3 58	6 03	8 10				
CUDDINGTON.....	7 52	9 57	12 04	4 02	6 07	8 14				
WHITEGATE.....	7 56	10 01	12 08	4 06	6 11	8 18				
WINSFORD AND OVER.....	8 00	10 05	12 12	4 10	6 15	8 22				

S.—Saturdays only.

All Trains are First and Third Class.

DAVID MELDRUM, Manager.

Liverpool Central Station,
January, 1892

36-360

J. H. WILLIAMS & CO., Printers, & School Lane, Liverpool.

No. 17

WARRINGTON MEETINGS - AND OTHER TOPICS

Members will probably be aware that the gatherings of our Warrington sub-group have been through a period of dormancy of late. My wife's admission to hospital in the spring for surgery led on to a fairly lengthy period of convalescence during which time the organizing of meetings was not high on our list of priorities, which I am sure everyone could understand.

It is pleasing to report that Doreen was up and about again in late summer after a successful outcome to the proceedings, but my own position with very busy spells of contract work for both Railtrack and Virgin Trains meant that demands upon my time prevented the expected resumption of fixtures in the Autumn.

Nevertheless whilst all this has been taking place the opportunity has been afforded to step back awhile and do some serious thinking as to what the longer term prognosis is for running evening meetings in the town, given the continued fairly modest support for these events and the organizational input required to keep them going.

For perhaps the last couple of years or so it has become apparent that changes would have to take place, with even complete abandonment a suggested possibility. This latter course of action would be particularly sad for the small band of regular supporters, some of whom for various reasons cannot get to Northwich regularly. The "Sid Roberts' Legacy" (of which more anon) has only come about directly through the holding of meetings in Warrington, so there are obvious spin-offs in our remaining active in the area.

In recent years we have struck up a constructive and cordial relationship with the North West Branch of the Great

Western Society, who also meet in the town on the same date (last Friday of the month) as ourselves. They too suffer from relatively small attendances and to help to alleviate this we have promoted one joint fixture per annum (usually in March) when resources could be pooled for our mutual benefit.

I have for some time felt that there was scope to build upon this and in late summer the 8E Committee was pleased to be approached by the GWS (NW) Committee directly on this topic as they were also having similar thoughts.

Three of us (Colin Worrall, Geoff Smith and myself) attended a GWS Committee meeting in September to further explore these suggestions whence it became clear that our GWS friends were also having serious reservations about their meeting room stating that the consensus among their members was that, despite the lack of bar facilities, our meeting venue provided a much better meeting environment than their usually cramped conditions at the erstwhile BRSA Club at Central Station.

The course of action now decided upon will therefore be as follows:-

1. The 8E Association will not promote any meetings independently in Warrington during the Winter / Spring 1998/99 period;
2. The GWS will transfer their 27th. November 1998 and 26th. March 1999 fixtures to the 8E Association meeting venue at St. Hilda's Mission Church Clubroom, Slater Street, Latchford (7.30pm) to which all 8E members will be very cordially welcomed. We will also help with promotion of these two events;

3. From September 1999 the GWS will transfer their meetings wholesale to St. Hilda's Clubroom. Attendance of 8E members will be encouraged at all events, although two official "joint" fixtures will be held in November and March for which the 8E group will be responsible for providing guest speakers, refreshments and other organizational input (to give the GWS ladies a couple of nights off!);

4. In addition, the 8E Association will promote a self-contained meeting in the summer months (June / July) during the normal "close season" of GWS indoor fixtures (but to which GWS members will of course be invited) which may well be a little different from the usual indoor events, e.g. outdoor "Heritage Walks" or suchlike.

Obviously the finer points of this scheme still need to be tied up, but the broad outline above will we feel operate to the considerable benefit of both societies in the longer term and we hope that all 8E folk will support these proposals in numbers!

The Sid Roberts' Legacy

The last issue of this magazine carried the sad obituary for our Warrington member Sid Roberts. A quiet and unassuming chap, Sid had enjoyed the friendship of our 8E Warrington meetings after becoming a member about five years ago until his unexpected and untimely death in the Spring of 1997.

Sid was an avid collector of railway memorabilia including books, video, slides, models and other items as well as being a fairly accomplished photographer in his own right with material going back to the mid-1960's. Thanks to the goodwill of his son Mark (a long-time friend and

neighbour from childhood days) much of this material has come into the possession of the Association and we have already benefited through a couple of slide shows at both Warrington and Northwich using some of Sid's slides.

What to do with the rest of the collection, in particular the video films, has been the source of some thought of late. A recent attempt to catalogue this material has been undertaken with Mike Lenz and we have decided that it would be rather sad (and not necessarily profitable) to break up the collection for resale.

It is felt that a better option would be to run a "Library" operation for the benefit of the membership at large, with tapes made available for a nominal charge (probably £1) for a month's hire to be borrowed and returned at meetings in Northwich and Warrington (and at other times by arrangement).

There are well over 100 tapes in the collection, covering a complete spectrum of the railway hobby from archive steam to modern image "news" type tapes. With a particular interest in the North Wales Coast, Sid had collected many tapes featuring steam activity during the last 10 years at Crewe Heritage Centre and along the coast line which in themselves will provide a considerable historical archive of trains we have been involved with in a "support crew" capacity.

We would hope to have the scheme up and running early in the New Year, with more details available at monthly meetings from January / February. There may even be scope to increase the library in future through similar bequests or with members wishing to donate any of their old tapes to us for inclusion in the scheme. It is envisaged that proceeds will go towards the "Robert" restoration fund and provide a lasting tribute to Sid.



Mike Lenz and Alan Ashurst with the 8E Association Sales / Publicity display at Helsby Methodist Hall during Helsby station 'Rail Open Day' - 26th Sept 1998.



Preserved Crosville bus reg LFM 810 (built 1951) at Helsby station forecourt providing the Frodsham shuttle service during 'Rail Open Day' - 26th Sept 1998.
(photos Alan Ashurst)

Helsby Station "Open Day"

We have of late struck up a relationship with the NORTH CHESHIRE RAIL USER'S ASSOCIATION who act in support of the Chester - Frodsham - Warrington - Liverpool / Manchester line, a group similar to the Mid - Cheshire RUA who support the Chester - Northwich - Manchester route.

We were very pleased to be invited by the NCRUA to attend the recent station open day at Helsby (26th September) which provided a now somewhat rare outing for our sales & publicity displays. Along with Bob Greenhalgh and Mike Lenz I enjoyed an entertaining day in Helsby Methodist Church Hall meeting (and making) a range of friends old and new who were keen to see what the 8E group is up to these days.

The NCRUA has been very active in attending to the gardens and structures at Helsby station recently and they are making a very good job of this. They hope to ultimately spread their influence to other stations in due course. Regular meetings are held in Helsby and I will be pleased to supply details if anyone is interested in going along to support this worthy group. It is hoped that further similar "open days" will be held in future.

MSJA 150th Anniversary

1999 marks the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Manchester, South Junction & Altrincham Railway, the Manchester - Stretford - Sale - Altrincham route now part of the "Metrolink" light rail operation but once a very important part of the main railway network and the springboard of many rail developments in Mid - Cheshire in the Victorian period.

This joint LNWR / MSLR (later Great Central) line gave the GC the impetus to expand its influence westwards and the importance of the line in the gestation of the Cheshire Lines Committee (although it never became part of the CLC network) should not be underestimated. Our friends in the Altrincham Electric RPS and the Mid - Cheshire RUA will be promoting a range of events in the coming year with which we have been invited to play a part.

We have indicated our support for these plans and hope to nominate a delegate to serve on the organising committee for the various events taking place.

Precise details are not yet to hand, although when firm plans are drawn up these will be brought to your attention at both our own monthly meetings and of course at the AERPS lectures which continue to be held in Altrincham Library on Friday evenings (15 January, 12 February & 12 March; 7.30pm).

Alan R. Ashurst



Here is the Home Page of UK Heritage Railways.
It is a huge reference point for UK and World preservation centres and events.
There is even a loco database. Try it out if you are able to access the internet.
The net address is:

<http://homepages.uel.ac.uk/1278/rly-pres/info.html>



**UK Heritage
Railways**



These pages are produced in association with the
Heritage Railway Association

My thanks to the University of East London for allowing these pages to be made available on their server.

UK Heritage Railways	Other UK Railway Pages
UK Heritage Railways Map	Railways Around The World
Events Diary	Latest News
Locomotives Database	Rly Glossary & Tech Diagrams
Preservation Picture Gallery	Key to Sites

These pages are intended to provide a guide to all heritage railways, preserved locomotives, preservation societies and railway museums in the UK. Like many things on the web it is constantly changing, as is the railway preservation scene itself. Where ever possible I have included details of special events and operating days, but you are advised to contact the railway directly at the given address for confirmation of, and full details of events, opening times and train timetables. If anyone has details of any web sites or railway sites and events they would like to see here, please email M.Dewell@uel.ac.uk with the details.

The answers to some **frequently asked questions** are available on the **FAQ** page.

Key To Sites

- Railway offering regular passenger rides between two or more stations.
- Site with short demonstration line (may also offer passenger rides).
- Tramway offering regular passenger rides.
- Museum (no passenger rides normally provided).
- Standard Gauge (4ft 8½ inches).
- Narrow Gauge.
- Site offering Driver Experience courses.



46211 *Queen Maud* leaves North London's Primrose Hill Tunnel en-route for Euston.

[BR Photograph]

WITH BRUSH & ROLLER, BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS

June came and I thought an opportunity to crack on with a couple of coaches at Cheddleton for the NSR, as a volunteer. The vehicles, a BSK and an RBR form a stationary buffet car service on the newly opened Platform 2. Externally they were in the usual faded run down condition of all redundant Mk I stock, though internally the RBR particularly is in good condition through a fairly recent BR refurbishment.

I had progressed the job quite successfully as and when time permitted – usually 2, sometimes 3 mornings per week through the early Spring. As the vehicles are in the open and at the time there had been some bright warm spells the job was progressing quite nicely. On hot days however, by midday with the sun directly overhead it was time to knock off.

By virtue of a six thirty start, a 40 minute drive through North Staffordshire's rolling hills on the 'Bee Emm', a good morning's work on the coaches and a ride back, altogether a delightful start to the day! Remember June? The month of the wettest drought on record. In fact in June very little work got done at Cheddleton because of the weather – most frustrating!

My interest in coaches came with the realisation long ago that, unlike a loco, whatever the weather work can be found to do on a coach. Internally / externally, timber or steel, finally painting and varnishing. Doors on coaches are a

case in point. Major surgery to steel skins and wooden frames is often required before painting. As doors can be detached fairly easily and transported by trailer this is the sort of job to be progressed at home under the carport.

Many happy hours are spent removing (by drilling out) rusted screws from hinges and door edges to release the steel skin from the wooden frame – also cutting out rotted steel and splicing in new timber to the frame where needed.

Final assembly of the 'new' door requires fabricating new sections in steel to be welded in prior to offering up the door to the coach.

Came July and Blue Peter was in the frame for an 'intermediate' repaint. After its Spring visit to Crewe and some mainline trips it had had a spell on the GCR before returning for the NYMR high season. During its spells out of traffic I would progress the repaint so that come the new season of mainline work – starting September – it would look as they say 'immaculate'.

The loco worked turn and turn about, one week on – one week off with Sir Nigel Gresley. In all Blue Peter's repaint took 9 days over 3 weeks to achieve a respectable finish. But there's always the knockers! A couple of drivers "Why bother? They were never like that in BR days so why paint it?" I have to gently point out that the loco was last done six years before and that

on her travels would be seen by tens of thousands, that we are not BR 30yrs ago at the end of steam, that we are in the entertainment business, that the ordinary visitor to the NYMR expects clean locos and coaches (and loos). You may dream that you're on the 'fish' from Aberdeen but the reality is that you're off on three return trips to Pickering with a train of happy holidaymakers and perhaps the best reason of all – NELPG are paying me! Give me strength!

Mid-September saw 532 take a NELPG special from Middlesbrough – Newcastle – Carlisle & Preston. A wonderful day out with some spirited running along the Tyne Valley, over Shap and down the WCML. A foretaste of some exhilarating trips in the coming season!

On B.P.'s completion the A4 Society asked if I would do likewise for 'S.N.G.'. Not a great deal of persuasion was needed, after all it is an A4 – a thoroughbred – and I had done it twice before. The first time in 1979 for Rainhill and Liverpool Rd. for the 150th L&M celebrations and then again after its mid-eighties overhaul and appearance at the 1986 visit to 'The Plant' (Doncaster works) for their 150th celebration and in that gorgeous garter blue - to stand alongside those beautiful LNER apple green racers of the ECML – a splendid occasion and not a dry eye in the house!

Let me give you an idea of what was involved in SNG's recent repaint. It required, after its spell of running on the NYMR service trains, a couple of days for the boiler to cool down. A thorough

cleaning and degreasing then took place. Sanding down and making good of loose filler and flaking paintwork followed.

Invariably the top of the boiler on a large loco takes a lot of punishment due to the heat and the difficulty of access for cleaning purposes. Two days were spent in 'preparing' the boiler prior to undercoat, gloss and varnish, and a further day on the lining out – altogether 6 days.

SNG is a big loco and involved mainly ladder work at 12 – 14 ft to the top of the boiler balancing and hanging on and of course applying the paint for a professional finish. Not a job for the faint hearted!

Starting at 7 o'clock in the morning and finishing late in the evening to avoid the midday heat it was certainly hot and sweaty and at times dirty work – over the boiler and under the skylights in Grosmont MPD.

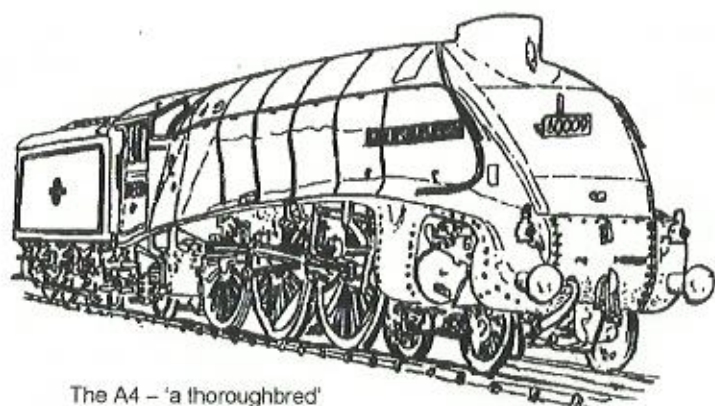
At its next rest period a thorough clean, rub down and revarnish to completion of tender and cab was the order, with the wheels also getting some attention. Finally she stood resplendent in the sunshine in her new paintwork at Grosmont, ready to run a series of railtours in her 60th year over her old stamping grounds north of Kings Cross.

Just as I put the final touches to the thoroughbred A4 came a request from the NYMR shedmaster Peter Smeaton. Would I have a look at class 24061 and give him a price for a repaint. I showed less than full enthusiasm having been quite busy as it was getting towards the end of September and obviously weather would be a factor. He said that the

loco was a good 'un but looked a mess and could not enter traffic in that condition. At that I relented. It meant one more loco for the MPD and one less loco up the headshunt among the derelicts – being in a national park such things are important.

24061 (class 24 Bo-Bo) was built at Crewe in 1960. It served initially in the London and Edinburgh areas before returning to Crewe diesel department in 1973. Withdrawn in 1975 it became a Derby works departmental loco and then the Railway technical Centre gave it a home for 8 years before final withdrawal.

Owned at various locations since then it came to the NYMR in 1994 and has had an extensive rebuild. It is now in early BR livery – green with narrow blue-grey bands as built D5061.



The A4 – 'a thoroughbred'

But of course the knockers appear again! "what are you doing a diesel for?" Well, I patiently explain that the NYMR requires large locos, 2 24s, 2 25s and a 50 in the event of fire risk, steam loco failure and for works trains and shunters for moving stock. Give me strength!

The problem in Autumn at Grosmont is that on dull days being in a deep valley the moisture hangs about. This inhibits drying of paints and therefore the work needs to be done in a manner to avoid the damp affecting the finish. However. Mostly dry fine days over the month saw the loco transformed.

To be concluded

Next: The Duchess' new clothes.

Footnote:

My reference to the L&Y loco in its temporary guise as a mid-European loco (see part one of Len's secret diary published in the last issue of this magazine) should have read 'Dear Mother it's a bugger' not 'Dear Mother it's a xxxxxx'. A mid-European joke?



Crewe 11:52pm - 12:08am

the once familiar features of mail-handling have now disappeared. Class 325 units have now replaced the elderly postal stock shown here. Manual handling of mail has gone. And do jugs in bedrooms still gently shake as the train passes? [BR Photograph]

Gently shaking jugs in bedrooms? Those BR publicity guys certainly had rich imaginations - Ed

"THE ROBERT PROJECT" Not Just Preserving A Locomotive

At first the thought of a restoration project conjures up images of hard dirty and physically demanding work. yes it is all those things, but it is also in my own opinion a whole lot more! The past two years since the start of the project have given me many highly enjoyable hours working on the project.

There are many hidden benefits of a day spent working on Robert and most of them must be experienced to be appreciated. One such benefit is for me anyway, the opportunity to learn about the inner workings of steam locomotive, the progressive removal of the moving parts that make up the engine's motion has taught me a lot.

Another benefit of working on Robert has been the chance to be able to learn to use some of the skills and tools associated with the preservation of the engine including welding and burning equipment and more recently arc welding. And also not to be forgotten is the opportunity to be around the comings and goings of the heritage centre,

especially when visited by a main line steam engine.

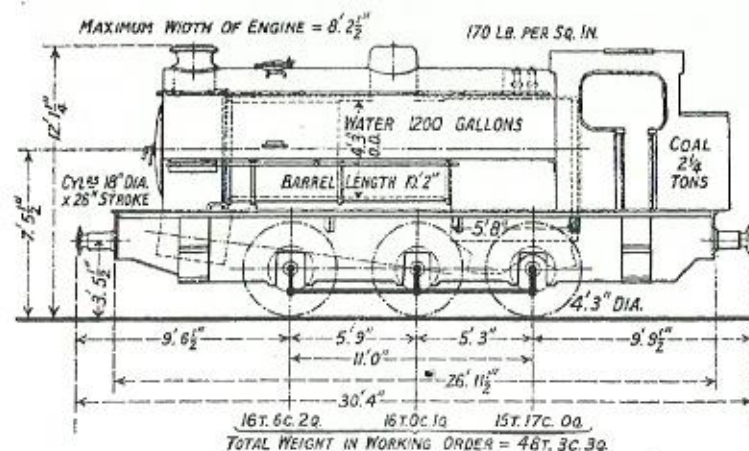
Another aspect of a day with Robert is the people working alongside you, Joe Butcher is a retired boilermaker, and is quite a character. And with my memories of the railway firmly in the B.R. blue era Joe's memories of working in a thriving engineering works offer a rare and much appreciated insight into the past.

It is a real pleasure to work alongside Joe and the other members of the team and learn skills and information of days gone by.

As I have mentioned above there is a lot more to working on Robert than is first thought, and is not just about the preservation of a steam locomotive it is in my opinion an excellent learning opportunity and one that is greatly appreciated.

My thanks go to all the "Robert" team.

Steve Worrall



Joe burns out rivets to aid removal of the smokebox (S. Worrall)

AMTRAK EXPERIENCE II

Chris Simon concludes his 1997 USA holiday report

During a holiday in California in 1997, Mary and I took the opportunity to travel by public transport on a couple of occasions. Less than impressed with Amtrak's performance on our first try, we decided to give them a second chance. As an alternative to a lengthy journey on the Freeway in a hire car to visit San Diego the economies of train travel were attractive.

Even for three people (we were being shown around on this trip by our son Phil), the cost of train travel was surprisingly cheap and we chose the morning train (the San Diegan) south from Carpinteria. We booked Custom Class; For a modest extra charge we would get reserved seats, free coffee tea or juice and a newspaper.

Having slipped out of our apartment, on no more than the odd occasion during our vacation, to observe the railroad scene, I was becoming familiar with the signal procedures and shortly before the train was due at 7:35 the signal light switched on (actually showing a red in the direction opposite to travel on a single line section). It was a few minutes before anything else happened; the anything else being the arrival of the Fire Department and the ambulance. A passenger had suffered symptoms of a heart attack and needed to be taken off the train before we could board. Why the Fire Department? US custom is for the fire-fighters to administer any oxygen - in any case the ambulance is really a taxi.



SAN DIEGAN Amtrak's morning train from Los Angeles arrives San Diego at the mission style station. Passengers now enjoy the new Amfleet cars placed in service only a few months before this August 1976 scene. Power, including heating, lighting and cooling needs, for these new trains is supplied by General Motors F40PH, 3000hp locomotives

Photo by Carl H. Stumer

(Trains appear now to be longer and powered by 2 locos, topping and tailing. The station has been remodelled, too. San Diego Trolley vehicle now pass through on the track where the train is standing in the photograph; these are electrically powered. Note the AT&SF logo under the arch of the building.)



San Diegan Baggage Service

Station	Southbound Trains--Read Down						Northbound Trains--Read Up								
	572	774	776	578	784	511	769	571	775	577	779	781	583	593	585
San Luis Obispo															
Santa Barbara															
Oxnard															
Glendale															
Los Angeles															
Fullerton															
Santa Ana															
Oceanside															
Solana Beach															
San Diego															

☐ - indicates that checked baggage service is available at this station on this train.

■ - Checked baggage is available only for passengers traveling on Train 14 beyond Los Angeles.

We found our seats in the Custom Class in a 1970's Amfleet Car which was quite disappointing in its ride characteristics (what really hurt was that everyone came in to use the free coffee, tea or juice dispenser!). By contrast, our return journey (as we were not able to book) was in the superior Bombardier-built stock, in Coach Class, making a mockery of the marketing.

The train was soon running alongside the California coast, with the morning sunshine putting a sparkle on the waves and the pelicans patrolling and then diving to catch fish. The journey south eventually involves passing through the sprawling suburbs of Los Angeles to enter Union Station for a twenty-minute wait before reversing to continue south.

There's a confusion awaiting the unwary visitors from north-west England. LA has a regional rail service on six routes in the greater LA area. Five of these routes radiate from Union Station, the sixth is an inland line effectively linking the outer ends of three of the five. This service is called Metrolink. The sight of double deck rolling stock (and sizeable locomotive depots) with the Metrolink name emblazoned made me smile! There's further eye-rubbing at San Diego where the Trolley (a light rail service with two routes linking downtown SD with the suburbs and the Mexican border) is (colour apart) identical with our very own Manchester Metrolink.

Back to LA, however, where a twenty-minute wait seems interminable. A crew change and we head out again past Mission Tower and then over Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe RR metals (all the signs still say A T & S F R R). Once again we saw that, however sparse the passenger services, freight yards are full of "toffsie" and "coffsie" - TOFC, trailer on flat car, and COFC, container on flat car.

The trip by train was comfortable (though not punctual) and a more interesting experience than travel on the Freeway. The trains were busy (partly because of infrequency) and very well- (perhaps over-) staffed. Eavesdropping on the conductors' radios could become addictive... with phrases like "We have a Highball!" to complete the American railroad atmosphere.

Chris

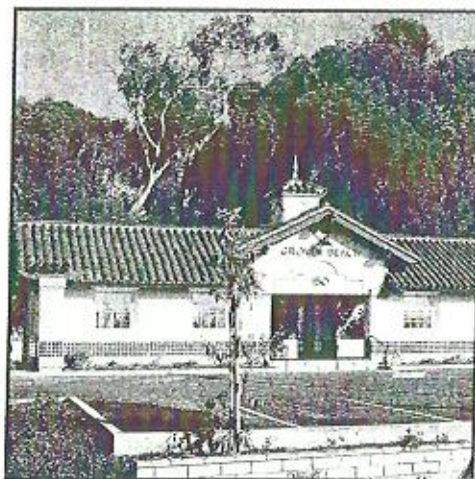


Photo by Karsten J Salin/Studio 4



48151 banked by 48463. Tunstead - Winnington hoppers, Hartford North 2/1/67
(photo A. Wilkinson)

monthly meetings

NORTHWICH MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month (excepting July and August) at the 'Lion & Railway' Hotel, Northwich (opposite the railway station). The meetings start at 7.30pm and embrace a variety of railway related topics.

Tues 12th January 1999

JOHN AUSTIN 'Steam on Canvas'

John is a member of The Guild of Railway Artists

Tues 9th February 1999

MIKE LENZ 'American Railways & travels in Cornwall'

A mix of USA rail video and slides from Mike's Cornish escapades

Tues 9th March, 1999

CHRIS SIMON presents a 'Quiz Night'

Tues 13th April, 1999

DAVE BRADEN 'Rugby & Great Central Archive Slides'

8E Member Dave (ex BR) returns by request

WARRINGTON MEETINGS

(Great Western Society – NW Group)

Meetings are currently held on the last Friday of each month, at the Railway Club alongside Warrington Central Station, starting at 7.30pm. The meeting for March is a joint 8E / GWS meeting at St. Hilda's clubroom, Slater St, Latchford (off the A50 Knutsford Rd.)

Fri 29th Jan NW Group quiz.

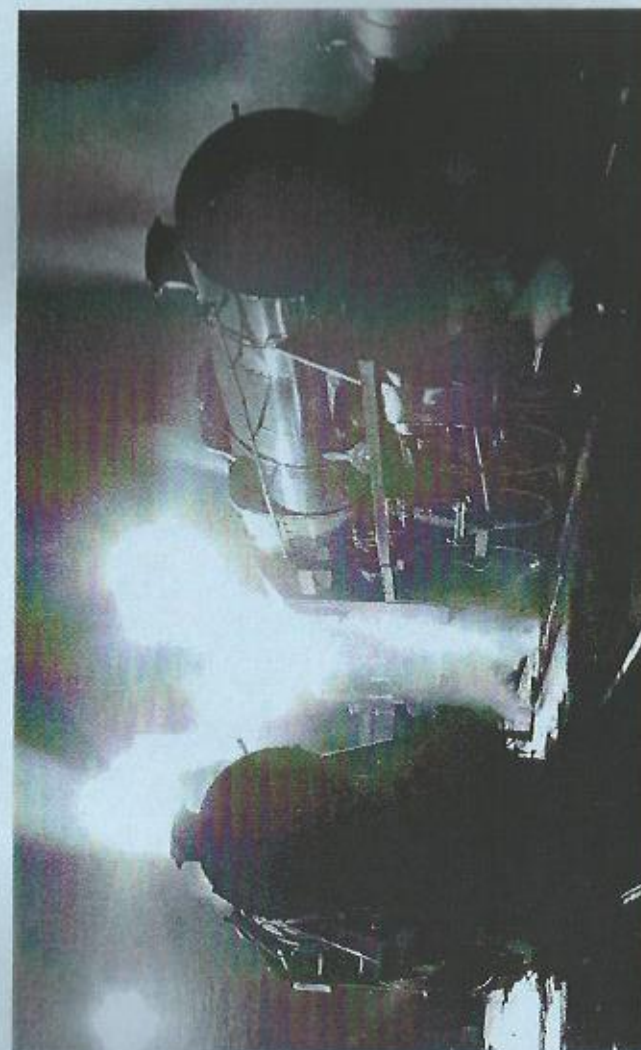
Fri 26th Feb NW Group AGM

Fri 26th March Sugar Railways of Java (Brian Pearce)

This is a joint 8E / GWS meeting at the 8E venue (see above)

Fri 30th April West Highland Line (K. Naylor)

8E members are encouraged to attend these meetings. The close link between the two Warrington groups is likely to result in more joint meetings in the future.



Northwich Nocturne circa 1948?

Not quite, you sceptics are quite right. It's Haworth yard 1995 (photo Alan Carr)



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