

WELLS RAILWAY FRATERNITY

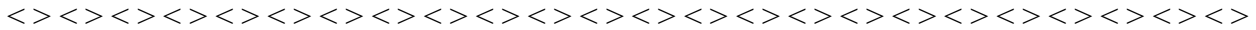
Newsletter No.195 - July 2019

www.railwells.com

Thank you to those who have contributed to this newsletter.

Your contributions for future editions are welcome;
please contact the editor, Steve Page

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Andrew Barclay 0-4-0 saddle tank "Lord Fisher" carries the Fraternity's headboard during our visit to Yeovil Steam Centre. See report by Andrew Tucker on page 6.

TOURISM AND THE LAKE BRANCHES – by Mike Peascod

Tuesday 9 April

At our meeting on the 9th April, we welcomed Mike Peascod who spoke on 'Tourism and the Lake Branches'. Most of his presentation concentrated on the efforts of the railways in the Lake District to develop tourism in the area - a subject which has not received much attention among enthusiasts as far as I am aware. Mike began with a brief survey on the beginnings of 'tourism' in Britain, perhaps originating with the courageous travels of Celia Fiennes in the second half of the 17th Century followed by the writings of the Revd William Gilpin and the discovery of the 'picturesque', thanks largely to the books of the caricaturist Thomas Rowlandson. Then came the Romantic Movement led by Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. Mike commented that William Wordsworth, born at Cockermouth, had been bitterly opposed to the building of the railways but nevertheless they arrived in the Lake District in the mid-19th Century. Railways in this area, such as the Furness Railway, were built originally for the conveyance of minerals, predominantly iron ore, and to gain access to Barrow-in-Furness, Whitehaven and Workington.

As the mineral traffic declined, the Furness became one of the first railways in Britain actively to promote tourism in its area and it did this by developing excursion traffic and introducing a series of tours, as well as well publishing guide books, postcards, etc. This policy was enthusiastically pursued through the efforts of two FR General Managers - Henry Cook (from 1866-97) and his successor Alfred Aslett (until 1918). At one time up to 20 circular tours were available, involving travel by railway, lake steamer and road coach and these proved extremely popular in late Victorian and Edwardian days. The Furness Railway also did much to develop Grange-over-Sands as a fashionable watering place whilst it had a fashionable hotel at Barrow - the Furness Abbey Hotel (from 1864 -1938). The company built up a charabanc fleet and, as early as 1861, invested in a gondola steam yacht - which still operates on Lake Windermere to this day under the auspices of the National Trust. Later, a special saloon coach was added to stock for the conveyance of VIP tourists. Even the railway's livery with red locomotives and blue and white coaching stock reflected the national colours !

We then saw a selection of photographs showing scenes on the Furness Railway branches. The Coniston branch opened as an independent railway in 1859 before being amalgamated with the FR three years later. It closed to passenger traffic just under a century later in 1958, and to goods traffic in 1962. Scenes featured various trains on the line over the years from soon after its opening until early Post-Grouping days, with motive power ranging from an early 2-2-2 to a later 4-4-2T. Stations on the branch, from the junction at Foxfield to Coniston were of an attractive standard design, built of local stone. Finally, Mike dealt with the various lake steamers which had operated on Lake Windermere – the *Swan*, *Raven*, *Cygnet*, *Teal*, *Tern* and *Swift*.

After the interval, it was the turn of the other FR branch, from Ulverston to Windermere Lakeside, which opened in 1869 and was closed to passengers in 1965. Part of this line is of course operated by the privately-owned Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway between those two stations although there are hopes of extending the length of operation in future. The original Lakeside station was demolished but there exists an excellent 7mm scale model of it, recalling its striking yellow brickwork with red and black bands. A short narrow gauge line ran along the quay, adjacent to the famous Mrs Bateson's Tea Pavilion.

TOURISM AND THE LAKE BRANCHES – continued

As part of its promotion of tourism, the FR also developed 'cross-bay' travel between Fleetwood and Barrow, using two paddle steamers, the *Lady Moyra* and the *Lady Evelyn*, named after the wives of the sons of the Duke of Devonshire. The latter, serving as the *Brighton Belle*, was lost during the War in 1940. Our final image of the Furness, was a look at the superbly restored 0-4-0 tender locomotive No. 20, which many years ago had been converted from a tank locomotive.

Mike concluded by dealing with the two other lines serving the Lake District - firstly the Cockermouth, Keswick & Penrith Railway, running from the West Coast Main Line to join L&NWR lines to Maryport, Workington and Whitehaven. This line was operated jointly by the L&NWR and the North Eastern Railway, initially for its mineral traffic but was also promoted for tourism, with at one time some 21 railway-based circular tours. This line was the first to receive the original BR lightweight diesel trains in the 1950s and for a while was used by the popular 'Lakes Express' until the line's closure in 1972. Hopes have been expressed of restoring the line between Penrith and Keswick but this looks extremely unlikely.

Finally, reference was made to the still surviving branch from Oxenholme and Kendal to Windermere. This short line has much of historic interest, including the Burneside Tramway, as well as serving Cropper's Paper Mills and a gunpowder factory. It was over this line, of course, that the L&NWR operated its famous and popular 'Club Train' taking businessmen daily to and from Manchester - as well as being used in the early promotion of another aspect of tourism - that of early railway-based cycling tours.

A vote of thanks to Mike for a most informative and interesting evening was moved by Chris Challis.

2019 PROGRAMME

10-11 August	Railwells Model Railway Exhibition	
10 September	The Orient Express and its Interesting Passengers	Roger Ellis
8 October	The Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway	Christopher Redwood
12 November	The Politics of the S&D Railway Closure	Colin Divall
10 December	AGM followed by Quiz – set by last year's winner	Jim Allwood

All meetings are held at Wells Town Hall, 7.00pm onwards for 7.30 start, except Railwells, which is 10.30 – 5.30 Sat, 10.00 – 4.30 Sun.

TO SCOTLAND FOR STEAM – PART 1 – by Brian Arman

Tuesday 14 May

Our final lecture of the season was held as usual at Wells Town Hall on the 14th May. As a now traditional feature of the Fraternity programme, our speaker on this evening was our Honorary Member, Canon Brian Arman. Brian's knowledge of the GWR and the history of Swindon Works is encyclopaedic and over the years, we have enjoyed many entertaining talks on aspects of these subjects. This year, however, we were promised 'something different' as the subject was to be 'To Scotland for Steam'- and our first surprise was when Brian appeared dressed in full Highland costume!

By way of introduction, he explained that he was entitled to dressed thus as he had Scottish blood in his veins on his mother's side. Unlike his knowledge of matters Great Western, he stressed that he really only knew comparatively little of the railways north of the border and asked for our understanding in this regard. Nevertheless, we were treated to a first-rate and most informative presentation, with photographs mostly depicting the railway scene pre-1968 with many historic views going back into pre-Grouping days. Brian explained that he had wanted to visit Scotland for many years but was unable to do so until 1974. His own photographs were therefore taken in post-Modernisation days when steam was notably absent and he accordingly had to rely largely on the work of others.

Our survey of steam in Scotland was on a geographical basis, starting in the south east with the lines of the North British Railway which extended from Berwick and forming the northern section of the East Coast Main Line to Edinburgh. then eastwards to Glasgow via Cowlairs (with its famous incline), and southwards over the Waverley Route to Carlisle.

After our usual interval for refreshments, Brian returned to the North British, crossing the Forth Bridge and travelling through the Kingdom of Fife, with its coalfield, and reaching Dundee via the famous (or should it be infamous?) Tay Bridge. From Dundee the NBR continued northwards to Aberdeen over the Dundee & Arbroath Joint Railway and using running powers over the Caledonian Railway. Finally, we traced the long NBR line to Fort William and thence to Mallaig.

Brian then turned his attention to Scotland's smallest main line company railway, the Great North of Scotland Railway which spread north and west from Aberdeen, reaching its northernmost terminus at Lossiemouth. The GNoSR works at Inverurie were featured and Brian was proud to tell us that the Great Western had played a major role in their development, Swindon advising on design, layout and workshop practice.

During the evening we had seen several hundred fascinating photographs taken over many years and featuring a great selection of steam motive power. Brian pointed out that his survey had only covered about half of Scotland and both companies featured had become part of the LNER at Grouping. The Caledonian and Highland Railways, which became part of the LMS, remained to be covered and he promised to return with Part 2 next year. This is something clearly to look forward to and we expressed our appreciation when Malcolm Barton gave a vote of thanks to Brian for a truly entertaining and interesting evening.

VISIT TO YEOVIL – Sunday 7 July

by Andrew Tucker

On a bright summer's morning a small group of members gathered at Yeovil Junction where the Yeovil Railway Centre was marking its 25th Anniversary. The Centre was established to preserve the 70 foot Southern Railway turntable and provide other facilities for main line steam. This it has successfully achieved; rebuilt West Country 34046 BRAUNTON was turned and serviced there a few days before our visit and Merchant Navy 35018 BRITISH INDIA LINE was due there with a railtour on 9 July.

When we arrived the resident Andrew Barclay 0-4-0 LORD FISHER was in the platform top and tailing a single coach along with a Fowler 0-4-0 diesel. We were greeted by the guard on the train who was Fraternity member Clifford Ison. He arranged for the WRF headboard to be carried by the steam loco and for members to ride on the footplate. Journeys were then made along one third of a mile of the former GWR Clifton Maybank branch. At mid-day we watched a demonstration of the turntable with the Ruston diesel RIVER YEO and this loco then gave brake van rides using a GW Toad brake van.

The other historic feature on the site is the former GW transfer shed originally built in 1864 to facilitate the transfer of goods from the broad gauge Clifton Maybank branch to the 'narrow gauge' LSWR. Now Listed this building houses the Centre's Museum and Refreshment Room. Part of the building on the platform is still used by Network Rail and it also houses the Centre's well stocked shop. A substantial modern building in the yard provides covered accommodation and maintenance facilities for locos and other rolling stock

Having toured the site and had our lunch we moved on to the Yeovil Model Railway Group's Open Day at Martock. Their large former farm building was busy with members and visitors. The members included three familiar faces from the Fraternity; Jim Allwood, Simon Kennedy and David Sedgeman. At least ten layouts were on display in both 4mm and 7mm scales. Some are the club's group projects and others belong to members.

Going in the door EVERCREECH NEW took centre stage. This was formerly Julian Birley's model of the station on the S&D's Bath Extension but when he moved away from the area it came to YMRG. Work is now in progress to add Prestleigh viaduct at the north end and Pecking Mill viaduct to the south. This has been cleverly arranged so that the fiddle yard from the YMRG's other large 0-gauge layout 'THE SUMMIT' can be utilised. We were pleased to once again see trains running through EVERCREECH NEW.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Membership Secretary would like to remind everyone that subscriptions - now £20 - are due at the September meeting

RAILWELLS – OUR ANNUAL MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 August

If you can help at Railwells but have not yet received a letter from Chris Challis, please give him a ring on 01749 938362. Chris does not, however, require as many stewards during the show this year, so your duty might only be for Friday or Sunday evening. Remember that members can gain free entry to Railwells by producing their membership card at the ticket office.

Railwells 2019 Layout list:

- | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------|
| P4 | The Somersetshire Coal Canal at Wellow
A 3'4" tramway carting coal from Radstock in 1826 | Tim Venton |
| P4 | Ilkley Engine Shed 1958
Midland and Northeastern Shed in West Yorkshire | Pete Tarver |
| P4 | Great Bardfield
A railway in East Anglia in the 1950's | Dave Hawkins |
| P4 | Faringdon
GWR branch terminus built by Stephen Williams | Rex Davidson |
| EM | Great Swilling
Originally built by the Bristol & Gloucester Railway | David Burnett |
| EM | Black Lion Crossing
A hypothetical bit of the LNER in North Wales | Geoff Kent |
| EM | Church Warsop
GCR factious branch to serve the colliery and locals. | Tony Gee |
| EM | Sheepcroft
Limited space diesel era layout | Stu Davies |
| Ng | Totnes
First outing Railwells 2008, quite a bit has changed since then. | John Birkett-Smith |
| Ng | Brixham
A view across Brixham, town, railway and harbour | Kevin Cartwrite |
| 2mm | Llangerisech
Set on the North West coast of Wales serving 3 periods, 1930,60 & 70 | Nigel Ashton |
| 00 | Marest, France August 1944
A small scene, showing Jinties supplying British troops. | Phil Smith |
| 3/4mm scale | Sefton Park
Trackbed drive layout, as there are no motors in the locos.
An 8' x 1' Midland terminus set in the early 1900's | Roger Orpwood |

RAILWAY JARGON or is it TERMINOLOGY?

by Roy Kethro

One thing you quickly learnt on becoming a railwayman is that there is an awful lot of jargon to get your head around. Over the years it became a sort of second language which is largely a complete mystery to Joe Public. Railway jargon constantly evolves with time and many of the expressions I encountered in my early years have fallen into disuse to be replaced by newer terms.

For example the '*signalman*' had origins as the '*bobby*' who in the early years of railways was the policeman controlling movements but is now referred to as the '*signaller*'. A gender neutral term reflecting the political correctness which appears to have taken over our language. There are a few old school drivers out there who still use the term '*bobby*' but they are few and far between and it is not a term you will find in any current day official publication.

While on the subject of signalling, many years ago the old '*signal and telegraph*' department became '*signal and telecommunications*' reflecting changing technology. The humble '*signal box*' evolved into the '*panel box*' or '*power box*' as the mechanical lever frame was superseded by a panel with electrical switches mounted on a track diagram indicating occupied '*track circuits*'.

When Slough New Integrated Electronic Control Centre was commissioned a few decades ago it was amazing to see that the panel had now become a row of computer screens side by side with a keyboard, a mouse and a lot of '*automatic route setting*' programmed in. A further development in recent years has seen the emergence of the '*signalling centre*' reflecting centralisation of the control and signalling functions over greater distances, once again due to advances in technology.

There has been debate in recent times regarding the tendency to refer to the '*railway station*' as a '*train station*' especially in the media. It definitely doesn't sound right to us die-hards but then buses go from bus stations not roadway stations so it's not really a logic which can be disputed.

To be continued.....

NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be issued in November 2019. Please sent any contribution to the Editor by the end of October.

AND FINALLY :

Did you know that the Great Western Railway bridge over the Thames at Maidenhead, is comprised of a pair of elliptical brick arches which, at the time of their construction, were the widest and flattest in the world. Each arch has a span of 128 feet, combined with a rise of only 24 feet 3 inches. The central pier was built on top of an existing small island situated roughly mid-stream. The Thames towpath passes under the right-hand arch (facing upstream) which is also known as the "Sounding Arch" due to its spectacular echo.