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<<< 50th ANNIVERSARY YEAR >>>

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Thank you to those who have contributed to this newsletter.

Your contributions for future editions are welcome;

please contact the editor, Steve Page

Tel: 01761 433418, or email page564@btinternet.com



Ivatt Class 2, No.46447 at Cranmore on our Footplate Experience day.

THE 1960's – MEMBERS' FILMS AND PHOTOS

by Andrew Linham and John Reakes – 9 January

The meeting at Wells Town hall on the 9th January 2018 took the form of contributions from two of our members - both recalling the railway scene of 40 to 50 years ago.

First we had the privilege of seeing two cine films made by Andrew Linham which he had laboriously converted into digital format. Many of us had seen the first film before but not in its new format. Andrew explained that when he had made it using a new cine-camera in 1964/65, filming often from the first coach of the train, he always had a tape recorder with him. Much later he found the tapes and, with much skill, in recent years had been able to add the actual sound to many of the scenes which he had filmed. Thanks also to modern technology he had been able to enhance the quality of both film and sound.

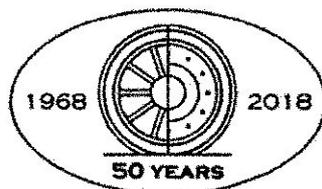
First of all we were taken on a trip over the Cheddar Valley Line and then over the Somerset & Dorset branch from Highbridge to Evercreech Junction. From here we completed our journey over the S&DJR main line via Templecombe to Broadstone Junction and then over the SR on to Bournemouth Central.

Andrew's second film was entitled 'Symphony in Steam' and he reminded us that he had shown this film to a Fraternity meeting held at the Swan Inn many years ago but had now digitally set it to music - featuring movements from a Schubert Symphony. The film consisted of a series of scenes featuring express trains, mostly travelling at a good speed, taken on the Waterloo to Weymouth line in the last days of steam on the Southern Region. Naturally Bulleid 'Pacifics', in original and rebuilt form, proliferated but the result was a treat for the eyes whilst the musical accompaniment enhanced the enjoyment greatly.

A vote of thanks to Andrew for providing us with some superb entertainment was given by the Chairman, Colin Price.

After the refreshment break, John Reakes showed a series of transparencies taken in the 1970s of the railway scene in our 'own' local area, ranging from Westbury to Frome, Castle Cary and Yeovil Pen Mill. Locomotives were interesting with early Modernisation Plan types being much in evidence. John, having always lived in the Cranmore area then showed us some interesting photographs of the East Somerset line, in pre-preservation days, and traffic at Merehead and Whatley Quarries before ending a most enjoyable presentation at Kilmersdon Colliery. It also made a pleasant change to go back to the days of slides and a projector!

A vote of thanks was given by Chris Challis.



STEAM AROUND BRISTOL

by Gerry Nichols – 13 February

Unfortunately our booked speaker for the meeting on the 13th February was unable to be with us due to a family bereavement, and we were, therefore, most grateful to Gerry Nichols, from Bristol, for agreeing to step into the breach at very short notice. Gerry gave us a splendid photographic presentation entitled 'Steam Around Bristol in the 1950s and 1960s'. The photographs were all taken from the vast collection of colour slides, (now being transferred onto computer format), taken by the noted Bristol enthusiast, the late Mark Warburton. For most of his working life, Mark was employed by the Port of Bristol Authority and, as his duties took him daily to the then three docks - in the City itself, at Avonmouth and at Portishead - he had the opportunity to record aspects of the railway (and shipping for that matter) scene in and around his native city, and, in his leisure time, of the wider Bristol area.

Gerry began the survey at the western end of Box Tunnel and then proceed along the original Great Western main line through Bristol and as far as Yatton. Particular treats were shots of *Mallard* passing St Anne's Park station on a special and *Silver Jubilee* at Temple Meads. Next, to the delight of the audience, we travelled along the Cheddar Valley and East Somerset lines through Wells. Returning to Bristol we first followed the North Somerset line as far as Hallatrow before going along the Avon Gorge to Portishead.

A look at the Badminton route and the approaches to the Severn Tunnel featured several South Wales expresses, hauled by immaculate 'Castles' and 'Britannias' before we returned once more to Temple Meads station down the long incline of the Filton line and through Stapleton Road. The Clifton Down line to Avonmouth was next with that through Henbury back to Filton Junction. Not unexpectedly, Mark had recorded steam operation within Avonmouth Docks when the PBA still had a sizeable fleet of six-coupled shunting locomotives, built by the local Peckett and Avonside companies. We saw a 'Banana Special', a passenger train from Paddington that was run occasionally in the days when the vessels operating the banana trade offered limited passenger accommodation to and from the Caribbean. Also of interest were shots of an early railtour visiting Avonmouth, and of the so-called 'Zoo Trains' - excursions from South Wales to Clifton Down for visitors to Clifton Zoo. The latter could produce all sorts of motive power from 56XX 0-6-2Ts to 72XX 2-8-2Ts.

Despite a pronounced GWR bias, LMS enthusiasts were then catered for with a look at the Midland route out of Bristol towards Gloucester.

As the clock ticked towards 10 o'clock, it was obvious that Gerry could have gone on much longer but all good things have to come to an end. John Uncles, who had been a close friend of Mark Warbuton's, gave Gerry a warm vote of thanks for providing us with an evening of pure nostalgia. Not only had we seen numerous steam locomotives in action - although an occasional diesel did creep in, including the new Bristol Blue Pullman - we had been reminded of many features of half a century ago, such as station buildings, signal boxes and so on, which have now long disappeared.

FOOTPLATE EXPERIENCE – Friday 9 March

- by Steve Page

On Friday 9th March, 24 WRF members and friends met at Cranmore for a footplate experience, courtesy of the East Somerset Railway. It was a wet, drizzly day, just to remind us that railways operate in all weathers, but this did not dampen the enthusiasm of those who attended. The railway was not open to the public that day, so we had it all to ourselves.

The cafe became our base for the day, where refreshments were served, including an excellent “all-day breakfast”. After lunch we were given a talk by Richard Harman, author of the book “The East Somerset & Cheddar Valley Railways”

The locomotive in use was Ivatt Class 2, 2-6-0 No.46447, built in 1950 at Crewe. First allocated to Crewe North shed, followed by a variety of other depots, finally to Springs Branch in 1964. Withdrawn in December 1966, and sold to Woodham Bros, Barry for scrap. Purchased by the Ivatt Locomotive Trust, 46447 was eventually brought to Cranmore for restoration and hauled it's first passenger train in preservation on 26th October 2014. It is now on long term loan to the East Somerset Railway.

Every half-hour, from 09.30 until 16.30 (with a break for lunch) we travelled in pairs on the footplate from Cranmore to Mendip Vale and back. Under the supervision of the traincrew, one of us would drive, the other firing, then swapping over for the return trip. I was firing on the outward journey, and was pleasantly surprised to find that it was easier than I thought it would be to aim a shovelful of coal into the firebox, and not to scatter it all over the footplate, much to the fireman's relief! Running in reverse, the enclosed tender-cab was much appreciated, even though some rain was blown in through the sides. Then it was my turn to drive back. The driver explained how to set the reversing gear and open the regulator, and we were off, the exhaust barking as we climbed back up the steep gradient from Mendip Vale, under the bridge at the summit, then easing off to drift downhill. To add variety, we stopped at Merryfield Lane in each direction, trying hard to stop in exactly the right place; not easy, given the limited view forward from the cab and the platform being on the opposite side of the track. All too soon we were back at Cranmore, slowing to a gentle stop just short of the platform, as it was full of carriages.

The bookshop on the platform was open, as was the East Somerset Models shop in the car park. Other attractions included guided tours of the signal box, the engine shed, to see work in progress on the GWR 2-6-0T “Goliath” and the Cranmore Traincare & Maintenance Services workshop, where carriages are restored for other heritage railways.

At the end of the afternoon, all participants were presented with a certificate proclaiming that they had “successfully” driven a steam locomotive.

Thanks to Andrew Tucker, Roy Kethro, Ian Elliott and all the staff at the East Somerset Railway for a most enjoyable day.

50th ANNIVERSARY MEETING
with
LYNTON & BARNSTAPLE RAILWAY EXTENSION PLANS

by David Edwards – 13 March

The Chairman, Colin Price, welcomed everyone to the meeting which would mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Fraternity. After his introductions, the Chairman led the meeting in a minute's silence to remember those members of the Fraternity who had passed away during the society's half century.

During the first half of the evening, members had an opportunity of voting in a photographic competition where the only stipulation was that entries should feature a railway subject taken over the past 50 years. An early refreshment break accompanied this process but, in addition to the usual tea and coffee, members were able to enjoy wine and cheese in celebration of the anniversary.

For the second half of the evening, we were to enjoy a comprehensive presentation given by David Edwards on the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. For reasons now not known, the Fraternity has always used a silhouette of an L&B 2-6-2T as its logo and thus it was appropriate to feature that railway in our celebrations. David is the Honorary Secretary of the Somerset & Bristol Area L&BR Support Group, supported by its chairman, Mark Bladwell.

David began with a brief account of the history of the railway, which was built very much at the instigation of the publisher and newspaper magnate Sir George Newnes. For economic reasons, the line was built to a narrow 'two foot' gauge and it was opened in 1898. Passing to the Southern Railway at the Grouping in 1923, the railway was closed and dismantled by that company in 1935. Dreams of rebuilding the railway led to the establishment of a society in 1962 but this only survived for a couple of years. A further initiative in 1979 was successful and the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Association was set up. Progress was slow at first and the first acquisition was that of Barnstaple Town Signal Box in 1987 - this was sold some 10 years later - and for some years the Association successfully operated a miniature line, known as the Lynbarn Railway, at Clovelly, before selling it in 2005. The first significant step towards the reopening of the L&B took place in 1995 with the purchase of Woody Bay Station and this became the Association's headquarters, whilst in 1998 a Trust was set up to secure the rebuilding and operation of the line.

A short length of track was laid and the first railway operations took place in 2004 with a small diesel locomotive and with steam in the following year. The first phase of rebuilding the line - a mile-long section from Woody Bay to a temporary station at Killington Lane - was completed and opened to traffic in 2006. David then summarised and illustrated the various locomotives that had been used on the line since 2004. Of particular interest, of course, were the visit by the new-build 2-6-2T 'LYD' which was normally based on the Ffestiniog Railway, and the arrival of the new Baldwin replica 2-4-2T No. 762 'LYN' in 2017, the latter having been financed by a group of L&BRA members (the '762 Club'). David also referred to the work done in restoring various items of rolling stock, mostly by volunteers, and the return to the line of one of the original coaches.

50th ANNIVERSARY MEETING - continued

The Association naturally had to devise many fund-raising activities, including a novel time-share scheme at Chelfham, and the costs of obtaining all the necessary legal consents to enable the line to be reopened were, of course, considerable. The second stage of reconstruction was being divided into two phases, the first from Killington Lane to Blackmoor Gate (about 4.5 miles); and the second from there to Wistlandpound Reservoir (about one mile). A third stage envisaged the reinstatement of part of the line back towards Lynton. David concluded by saying that he was delighted to report that, only in the previous week, planning permissions had been granted for four of the five applications made, and there was now no obstacle to work starting on the rebuilding of the line to Blackmoor Gate.

A vote of thanks to David for such a full update on the L&B was given by Ken Smith.

Finally, the Chairman announced the winners in the Photographic Competition:

1st Prize (£30 book token), John Barlow
2nd Prize (£20 token), Andrew Tucker
3rd Prize (£10 token), John Barlow.

THE SNOW TRAIN IN '82

- by Andrew Tucker

The recent snowfalls reminded me of an unusual journey to work 36 years ago. For a short while at the beginning of the 1980s I worked in Bristol, making the daily commute by car from Evercreech. Heavy snow at the beginning of 1982 meant that the village was cut off for several days but when local traffic began to move I came up with the idea of getting to Bristol by train. The next morning having cautiously driven the three miles to Castle Cary station I arrived to find a single car DMU idling alongside platform 1. The ticket office was manned and I was informed that no through trains were running on but the 'bubble car' was providing a shuttle service to Westbury. There I could catch a train from either Portsmouth Harbour or Brighton to Bristol.

Along with a few others I boarded our short 'train' and we rattled off through the snow covered countryside picking up more passengers at Bruton and Frome. After a short wait at Westbury I joined a Class 33 - hauled service coming up from the south and destined for Bristol. Heading through Trowbridge and making our way down the Avon valley to Bath the train became very well loaded. I do recall that the electric train heating was working well which was just as well as the carriage was very draughty. On arrival at Temple Meads I then had to trudge across Bristol to the office which was just off Park Street.

After spending a couple of hours sorting things out in the office and gathering up some work to take home I retraced my steps to Temple Meads. My train back to Westbury was formed of another trusty Class 33 and a set of mark 1 coaches. Unfortunately I cannot remember how I got from there back to Castle Cary; it may have been that by then some through services were running on the Taunton or Weymouth lines.

A couple of days later conditions had improved sufficiently for me to try driving to Bristol. Even by this time the main roads were not entirely clear and there was a particularly tricky bit on the A37 north of Gurney Slade where there was room for just one lane of traffic with high walls of snow either side. One cannot help but think of the situation at the nearby summit of the Somerset & Dorset line that was blocked by snow in 1963 and on earlier occasions. Horrendous conditions for the railwaymen trying to get things moving.

In the summer of 1982 I was fortunate to get a job in Wells so my journeys to and from work got much shorter but without any opportunity to travel by train.

THE BARRY SCRAPYARD STORY

by Roger Hardingham – 10 April

For our meeting on the 10th April, we welcomed Roger Hardingham, the proprietor of Kingfisher Productions and co-author of the book 'The Barry Scrapyard Story', who provided us with an enthralling presentation on that legendary scrapyard in South Wales. Roger began by posing the question how well railway preservation in Britain would have fared without the Barry contribution. His interest in the subject began when he was still a teenager and his involvement in the early rescue and the purchase of a SR 4-6-0 from the scrapyard.

Roger then gave us a brief history of the development of Barry Docks, in which the famous Welsh entrepreneur David Davies played a significant role. The dock, built in the late 19th Century, was designed to deal with the export of coal in competition with the Cardiff docks dominated for many years by the Taff Vale Railway. Its success peaked in 1923 when some 100 million tons of coal were exported.

In the 1920s a company, Woodham Brothers, established a scrap yard on railway land dealing with a wide range of materials. Originally the two brothers involved were Dai and Billy Woodham but the latter died at a comparatively young age, leaving Dai as the main proprietor. With the Railway Modernisation Plan in 1955, it was realised that British Railways would have some 16,000 steam locomotives for disposal over a relatively short period and that it would not be able to cope with this amount of scrap at its own workshops. Dai Woodham bought his first batch of locomotives in 1959 and all of these were broken up at Barry but at a fairly sedate rate. The reason for this was that there were also many thousands of obsolete wagons and vans also available and the labour costs in breaking up such stock, much of which was wooden-bodied, was far lower than dealing with the complexities of a steam locomotive and recycling the various metals involved. Woodhams continued, however, in purchasing locomotives as a form of reserve against the future. The number of locomotives at the scrapyard grew steadily, reaching 110 in 1964 and peaking at 221 in 1969. A significant proportion of the engines were of Western and Southern Region origin, as the cost of their transport to Barry was obviously cheaper.

From about 1980, the supply of wagons began to dry up and the cutting up of locomotives was resumed. By this time, however, the scrapyard had gained much interest from railway enthusiasts and in 1979 a Barry Rescue Movement Action Group had been formed whilst two years later, the National Railway Museum carried out a survey of the surviving stock there. Dai Woodham realised that there was money to be made from the sale of his locomotives and thanks to such publications as 'The Barry List', a steady sale of locomotives in varying states of completeness, began - the 'Great Get-away' had started. During the time that Barry dealt in locomotives, a total of 84 were scrapped, leaving some 200 to be saved for posterity, the largest group being Bulleid 'Pacifics'.

The cost of purchases naturally rose as the years went by, from about £2,500 in the earliest years, but preservation groups were also faced with raising half as much again to cover transport costs. At first, locomotives were moved by rail as far as possible but soon road transport became the norm. Dai Woodham was not a sentimentalist but a realistic business man and, in some cases, tenders were disposed of separately - for instance, several went to the scrap yard at Briton Ferry where the chassis, stripped of their superstructures, were used as 'carriers'.

THE BARRY SCRAPYARD STORY - continued

In the second half of his presentation, Roger surveyed the range of locomotives which arrived at Barry. A few diesels were broken up, including the early North British-built A1A-A1A 'Warship' No.D601 *Ark Royal*; the last BR steam locomotive to be cut up was 2-10-0 No.92005. The first to be rescued in 1969 were the Midland '3F' 0-6-0 No. 43924, destined for the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, and the SR 'U' Class 2-6-0 No.31619. In 1976 Roger was involved in the purchase of SR 'S15' 4-6-0 No. 30506 and its transport to Alresford on the Mid-Hants Railway, using a Wynns' heavy duty lorry and trailer, took five days. The road out of Barry involves a climb at a gradient of 1 in 7 and this caused some consternation.

Roger mentioned and illustrated many of the notable locos rescued from Barry, including No.71000 *Duke of Gloucester* (which originally was sent to Cashmore's yard at Newport by mistake!), S& D 2-8-0 No.53808, LMS 'Jubilee' No.45699 *Galatea*, SR 'Q' Class 0-6-0 No.30541, GWR 2-8-2T No.7200 and LNER 'B1' No.61264. One well-publicised event was the moving, in 1985, of GWR No.6023 *King Edward II* to Bristol, sponsored by the Harvey's wine company. Of particular interest to the audience was the fact that the first Bulleid 'Pacific' to leave Barry was No.34092 *City of Wells*. The last loco to leave Barry for a new home was GWR 2-6-2T No.5553 in January 1990, leaving the final 'Barry 10' to be disposed of over the following years.

Very little remains to recall the once extensive railway sidings which were the site of Woodham's Yard. The area has now been redeveloped with fashionable apartment blocks and it is hard to visualise a site which played such an important part in the present-day railway preservation scene.

A vote of thanks to Roger for a fascinating and well-illustrated presentation was given by Simon Kennedy.

2018 PROGRAMME

8 May	Modernisation to Privatisation 1968 – 1997	John Chalcraft
12 June	Swindon Works – Part IV at STEAM Swindon	Brian Arman
	<i>A day at the former Works – Coach leaves Wells Bus Station 8.30am</i>	
10+11 August	Railwells – Model Railway Exhibition	
11 September	Fires Dropped: The End of Steam on BR	Les Nixon
9 October	Meal at the SWAN HOTEL – <i>followed by</i> From Mozart to Moldova	Colin Boocock
13 November	The Unknown Warrior: The LMS Patriot Project	John Barrowdale
11 December	A.G.M. <i>followed by</i> Quiz, set by last year's winner,	Brian Neill

AND FINALLY :

Did you know that one of the earliest films made by the Lumiere Brothers, “L'arrivee d'un train en gare de la Ciotat” in 1896 featured a close-up shot of a steam train pulling into the station. Moving pictures were still a new phenomenon at the time, and rumour has it that the audience were so terrified on seeing the approaching train that they screamed and fled to the back of the room!