

N.E.L.P.G. NEWS



NO.203 JUN.2001

EDITORIAL

As Blue Peter slowly steamed into Darlington Bank Top station on the night of Saturday 9th June an era came to an end. It had begun with the eagerly awaited return to steam ceremoniously celebrated at ICI Wilton in December 1991, and in the intervening ten years the A2 has travelled the length and breadth of the United Kingdom putting up some memorable performances. There were some low points, notably the catastrophe at Durham in 1994, but these were more than overshadowed by the highlights. There were stunning feats on the infamous South Devon banks, Blue Ribband attempts over the Long Drag, and record breaking ascents of Shap, the most recent on 12th May. Perhaps most breathtaking of all was the magnificent climb of Beattock on 21st March 1998 when the A2 averaged no less than 64½ mph all the way from Carlisle to Abington, a record that may never be eclipsed.

A passenger on the farewell trip, NELPG member and self confessed Blue Peter 'fan', Fred Chrystal thanks, quite succinctly, those who have made this all possible and there can be few, if any, members who would disagree. Literally thousands and thousands of people will have travelled behind Blue Peter since its main line debut in March 1992, and thousands more will have watched it from the lineside, and all cannot fail to have been impressed or enjoyed the experience.

Time on the NYMR will be usefully spent, but few would argue that the A2's rightful place is on the main line. It might be the end of one era but, hopefully, soon be the start of another in the fortunes of Britain's most powerful passenger locomotive.

Whilst one chapter ends, another begins. Work on Hopetown Carriage Works to bring it into use has already commenced, with a view to having the premises ready for its first occupant, the Q6, by October. At the same time a detailed work programme has been drawn up to prepare the Q6 for its overhaul. This is, of course, splendid news, good for the future well being of the NELPG and welcome progress on the Q6 which — although hard to believe - last worked as long ago as 1982. It deserves a speedy return to traffic!

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LOCOMOTIVE REPORT by Richard Pearson, Martin Lloyd & Paul Hutchinson

J27 No. 65894

After the engine had passed its insurance exam and had the tender weighed it was available for traffic. However it was to be another four weeks before the engine was wanted for traffic, primarily because the railway had resorted to an emergency timetable during the Foot and Mouth epidemic; this time table needed fewer engines in steam and the railway chose to use its own engines to save money. When the J27 was eventually steamed in early May a leak had developed on a brazed joint where the slacker pipe boss is fastened onto the injector delivery pipe in the cab. This leak proved rather difficult to fix with repairs carried out with the pipe both on and off the engine. The difficulty lies in removing and refitting the pipe as one of the Air Ministry joints on the pipe is in one of the most inaccessible places on the engine, being accessed from up above the rear driving wheel behind the cab side, and from the front R/H corner of the cab behind the reverser and under the ejector. After three failed attempts to cure the leak, it was finally fixed by completely replacing the pipe and silver soldering on the slacker boss.

The engine ran during the NYMR spring gala 12th/13th May, double heading with No.29, and then on the normal service the next day, working the 16.50 off Grosmont on the evening of the 14th May so that the engine could be left at Newbridge yard. Engine and tender were split on the 16th and the J27 travelled by low loader to the KWVR on the 17th eventually arriving at Haworth at 11 pm.

On Saturday the 19th May the engine and tender were connected together and they received a full mechanical exam. Unfortunately a crack was discovered in the cylinder casting which meant removal of the L/H cylinder cover, along with the front running plate and lubrication pipework. Metalock visited Haworth during the following week to repair the crack and all repairs were completed by the Thursday night. The crack is in a similar position to the cracks we had in the casting last year but this crack is not as big. Let's hope that this is the last crack we will have in the cylinder casting although somehow I don't think it will be. The following Saturday (19th) the cylinder cover and running plate were refitted and the engine was lit up, the engine passing a steam test at 6.30

pm and was hauling the KWVR evening dining train at 7.30 pm; it then work services every day for the next week.

The engine should see quite a bit of use on the KWVR this summer since it is expected to steam on at least 35 days (it had already done 8 by the 10th June), and the J27 is the only operational tender engine on the KWVR this summer. The other two engines in use are the Taff Vale tank No.85, and a shortly to be completed after overhaul 'Jinty'.

As reported in the last News it has not been possible to repaint the J27 this winter, but it is hoped that we will be able to repaint the engine in the Autumn, probably after the NYMR Gala in October and before the Christmas Santa specials in December. The missing 2392 cabside number plate has now turned up, and thanks are due to everybody who helped during the search for the plate.

T2 No. 2238

A summer work programme has been put together by Richard Pearson as follows:-

Phase 1 — 1st July to 4th August — PRE ASBESTOS REMOVAL

- Remove the regulator from the boiler
- Photograph and label all cab fittings and pipework
- Remove/disconnect damper and drain cock linkages
- Remove/disconnect steam reverser operating linkages
- Remove handrails from boiler
- Remove ejector exhaust pipe from side of the boiler
- Remove and lift cab clear of the boiler

Phase 2 — 5th to 11th August — ASBESTOS AND CLADDING REMOVAL

- All work done by contractors

Phase 3 — 12th to 25th August — PREPARE BOILER FOR LIFTING FROM FRAMES

- Burn off smokebox to saddle rivets
- Remove the boiler to frame securing clamps on the sides of the firebox
- Remove remaining sections of the firegrate

- Remove/disconnect any remaining damper or drain cock linkages
- Remove/disconnect any remaining items that might foul the boiler
- Prepare a area/wagon for the boiler to go on

Phase 4 — 26th August to 1st September — LIFTING THE BOILER FROM THE FRAMES

- Boiler lift done by NYMR staff and steam crane, with our assistance
- Remove the ashpan from the boiler

Phase 5 — 2nd to 15th September — PREPARE THE FRAMES FOR MOVEMENT TO NEW BRIDGE

- Remove side rods and connecting rods
- Remove piston valve rod drive rods (between the frames)
- Refit the cab roof temporarily
- Secure the ashpan on the frames
- Secure the side rods and connecting rods on the frames

Phase 6 — 16th to 22nd September — MOVEMENT TO NEW BRIDGE

- Rail haulage from Grosmont to New Bridge

Phase 7 — 23rd to 29th September — ROAD HAULAGE TO HOPETOWN

- Transported on a low loader to Hopetown

Taking a locomotive to bits is the 'easy' part of an overhaul but there is still plenty to be done in these initial phases. If you want to be part of the Q6 overhaul from the very beginning, this is your chance to get involved from July onwards. If you can help, please ring Richard Pearson on 01642 475080.

K1 No. 62005

The completion of the locomotive's winter maintenance was not without incident! Movement to Thornaby for tyre turning was scheduled for 29th May and it was all hands to the pump to not only get it ready in time but also do some running on the NYMR beforehand. The former was accomplished but the latter was interrupted by the major fire at Fen Bog on 24th May that closed the railway for almost a day. The K1 had done some light engine running between Grosmont and Goathland and then assisted a train to Pickering. However, when the decision to suspend services was made the K1 was at the Pickering end of the railway and had

to spend the night at New Bridge before returning the next day. Then, the next week just before the locomotive was due to depart, 4277 derailed on the point work leading to the pit, with the K1 on the wrong side! However, the K1 did make it to Thornaby as planned.

At Thornaby the driving wheel tyres were turned, the axle loading on the pony truck compensated as a consequence, and a new brick arch was cast. Thanks are due to the EWS staff at Thornaby for accommodating us. Following arrival of the support coach with the A2, it was rapidly adapted at Thornaby for a season in Fort William, including the replacement of the gas cooker and associated fittings by Terry Newman. The K1 and the support coach then left Thornaby for York at lunchtime on Sunday 10th June. On arrival they were marshalled into the previous day's train which provided the unusual spectacle of two class 31 diesels, the K1, and 13 coaches from York to Carnforth via South Milford, where water was taken, Castleford, Leeds and Skipton.

The K1 ran satisfactorily though a problem with the AWS relays that manifest itself approaching York had to be remedied at Carnforth by the provision of a replacement relay box and a new battery.

The journey from Carnforth to Fort William was scheduled over two days — Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th June. The consist eventually comprised 61264, smokebox leading, 62005, tender first, the two support coaches, seven coaches for the Jacobite service, and 31190 bringing up the rear. The class 31 is West Coast Railway's stand by locomotive at Fort William. The tender to tender running was a compromise following Railtrack concerns over both locomotives running tender first all the way from Glasgow to Fort William (even though it had been done every preceding year since 1984!).

The first stage of the journey to Mossend was uneventful, including a spirited run up Beattock. One benefit of the move was that each member of the three man support crew was able to lineside the train since it was necessary to get the Group's 'new' support car from Teesside to Fort William, so each took it in turns to drive part of the way.

Leaving Mossend the next morning all went well until pulling away from the Springburn line at Cowlairs West Junction. There was an almighty bang and the tender drawbar pin broke. Fortunately, despite the fact that there was approximately 500 tons in tow, the two safety links did their job. The train was brought to a stand at Ashfield station and, with the 31 on the

back, the decision was taken to draw the train back the short distance to Cowlairs. Here, the K1 and its support coach were left adjacent to the sad remains of Eastfield shed, and the B1 and its train continued to Fort William. Fortunately the failure did not result in any injuries, any other serious damage to the locomotive, or any delays to other trains.

It was then necessary to advise John Graham, our CME and Brian Penny of our Vehicle Acceptance Body of the failure and agree a repair. Thanks to the mobile phone, the afternoon was spent trying to organise a new pin and eventually it was agreed that the SRPS at Bo'ness might be able to help. After recovering the top half of the pin and taking the necessary measurements, the support car came into its own by transporting the support crew to Bo'ness where the SRPS's Brian Thompson was waiting. He just happened to have some steel bar acquired for the very purpose of making drawbar pins which was the right size. We left him to it at 19.00 and went for a much needed meal and by the time we returned at 22.15 the pin was finished. After profuse thanks and some liquid refreshment for Brian by way of our appreciation of his efforts, the support crew got back to Eastfield at 01.00 on the Friday morning. Too tired to fit the pin then and there, all retired to bed.

An early start to raise steam saw the pin fitted by about 07.45 and there was a palpable sigh of relief when it slotted straight in, but in our enthusiastic haste we had forgotten to grease the pin, so out it had to come out again before being refitted! The good news was conveyed to West Coast Railway at Fort William and Carnforth, and later to John Graham and Brian Penny.

That, however, was not the end of our problems since at one stage we were facing the prospect of another two days marooned at Eastfield, which is not the most salubrious of areas. However, it was eventually possible to provide a crew to move the K1 and its support coach to Fort William that afternoon, arriving in Fort William around 21.00. The journey up was satisfactory, with the engine and tender riding very smoothly.

The K1 was therefore able to work its rostered turn on the Saturday, two trips from Tulloch to Corroul, conveying the participants in the Lowe Alpine Mountain Marathon, and start the Jacobite service as planned on Monday 18th June. Good loadings saw the train increased from 6 to 7 coaches on the Thursday and Friday, and the K1 coped very well. During the second week of operation a problem arose with a sticking front hopper ashpan door which will require urgent attention before the next two week

period of operation. Flange lubricators are also to be fitted to the leading tender wheelsets; these will be similar to those already fitted to the trailing driving wheels, and will help to reduce flange wear.

Thanks are due to Martin Lloyd and Malcolm Simpson - as well as Brian Thompson — for their valiant efforts, perseverance and patience in getting the K1 up to Scotland. In the meantime a new engine drawbar pin has been made and the safety links and pins will also be examined and replaced if necessary. Finally, an inquiry will be held to try to ascertain the reason for the drawbar pin failure and see what lessons can be learnt.

Q7 No. 901

On display inside Deviation shed.

J72 No. 69023

In store in Deviation Shed.

A2 No. 60532 Blue Peter

Since the publication of the last NEWS, the A2 has operated special trains from Crewe to Carlisle and back, twice, Nuneaton to Blackpool and Birmingham to Bath and Bristol. On all these trips the locomotive ran well, with no mechanical or boiler problems.

Its final trip was on 9th June which is reported on at length by Danny Fawcett. On arrival at Darlington the locomotive and support coach retired to Thornaby shed to join up with the K1 . The intention was to leave the support coach and continue on to Grosmont, with a booked 00.43 arrival on the Sunday morning. Sadly the NYMR was unable to accept the locomotive at that time and it was to be the following Thursday before the A2 arrived back on the NYMR.

It was used over the two days of the Thomas and Friends weekend of 16th/17th June and was used for normal service trains beginning on 25th June.

As previously reported, it is planned to use the A2 on NYMR services until the autumn, when its firebox condition will be re-assessed. The outcome will determine the immediate future of the locomotive after this season.

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WORKING PARTIES

These take place every Sunday at Grosmont for work on the Q6 and the A2. Contact Richard Pearson on 01642 475080 or Fred Ramshaw on 01740 621301.

Even though the A2 is back in action, it will require routine maintenance, and there is now work in earnest to do on the Q6.

Each of the respective Locomotive Engineers are always in need of assistance, so if you can help, please contact any of the above and come along and help out, join in the fun, and find out the latest news.

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BLUE PETER BOWS OUT IN STYLE AND MARKS THE START OF NEW ERA FOR NELPG **by Danny Fawcett**

In 1939 a certain Lord Rosebury was feeling very much a celebrity. A racehorse owned by him had won the 2000 Guineas and the Derby - it's name? Blue Peter. In 1948, in accordance with LNER tradition, one of the new Peppercorn designed A2 Pacifics was named after the race-winner

and put to work on the Eastern Region of the newly formed British Railways. It was withdrawn from service in 1966 and bought for preservation by the late Geoff Drury who later put it into the custodianship of the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group for restoration to working order. For the last 10 years Blue Peter has graced main lines all over the country from Aberdeen to Plymouth and from Cleethorpes to Blackpool. It was thus most appropriate that it made it's farewell trip before retirement pending further overhaul on Saturday June 9th - Derby Day 2001, and once again put in a thoroughbred performance.

Hauling a twelve coach, 550 passenger loaded train, Fragonset Class 31's Cerebrus and Chimera set out from Newcastle and headed to Crewe via Huddersfield and Manchester-creating not a little interest in their own right. Arrival at Crewe was more or less to time and Blue Peter wasted no time in backing onto the train ready for a prompt 12.58 departure, the load was now increased to 13 coaches with the addition of the support coach.

With a gross load of 510 tons there had been some concern over water usage as a leisurely passage of over two hours had been timetabled to Carnforth including pathing stops at Preston and Barton loop: on the day there was additional complications resulting from PWay work in the Warrington area and diversion off the WCML.

At 12.58 Blue Peter was eased out of Crewe by Driver Bill Andrew with Frank Santrian on the shovel. The locomotive was not unduly extended, perhaps with a view to the delays expected ahead but clear of a 20 mph slack at Wigan the locomotive accelerated up Boars Head bank to reach 38 mph and on through Coppull Hall at 45. Down the grades towards Preston Blue Peter was running well with speed in the 70's such that control waived the Preston stop and the train was soon accelerating back over the 70 mph mark and past the second waived stop at Barton loop. Now some half hour early and with green lights beckoning the train thundered on until adverse signals finally halted progress in the through road at Lancaster. Ten minutes or so later, after the passage of a local and a stopping Virgin express, Blue Peter was on the move again raising the echoes over the River Lune as the Kiwi chime whistle wailed it's farewell.

Reaching the sanctuary of Carnforth Yard some 15 minutes early, the support crew undertook a slick watering operation to replenish the tender and following a check round, the train moved off towards the Lakeland fells still 15 minutes early. Driver Andrew did not unduly press Blue Peter on the rising grades towards Grayrigg and adopted a steady as we go



Malcolm Simpson (l) and Peter Maynard prepare 60532 at Crewe on 1st May for the record breaking run to Carlisle the next day (Colin Smith)



Martin Lloyd and Toni Young fit boiler lagging to the K1 at Grosmont on 3rd May (Colin Smith)



Maurice Johnson receives a token of appreciation for his work on the A2 and K1 from Paul Hutchinson at Grosmont on 19th April, with Fred Ramshaw, Malcolm Simpson, Martin Lloyd and Bill Angus (John Hunt)



Dr. Stuart Nichols presents the Hopetown agreement to NELPG Chairman, John Hunt, at Darlington on 9th June (Danny Fawcett)

approach. The weather was not good as the train forged up the grades with heavy drizzle, progress was further checked by a 40 mph slack above Oxenholme and speed at Grayrigg had fallen to 29 mph. The locomotive had been well managed, however, as Blue Peter was now opened up along the Lune Gorge levels such that passing Tebay the train was travelling at 74 mph . Driver Andrew now asked a little more and the chimney noise rose as Blue Peter responded, past Greenholm and Scout Green she sped and settled into a steady rhythm, working on full regulator at little more than 30 per cent cut-off the train cleared Shap Summit with a flourish of whistling and 210 psi on the clock at a creditable 31 mph. The run down to Carlisle was relatively uneventful though speed was above 70 mph as the train ran through the empty fields of the Eden valley.

Arrival at Carlisle was a full 30mins early and as the locomotive ran down for servicing, the tour patrons headed into the rain soaked streets of Carlisle to seek their own refreshment. It should be noted that during the Carlisle stay the city was treated to a 15 minute downpour of monsoon proportions, such that a local hostelry fire alarm was triggered by water ingress though the ceiling! - and all this time the support crew were trimming coal and refilling the tender - spare a thought for these lads without whose exertions steam on the main line could not exist.

Backing down onto the train together with it's complement of soaked support crew, Blue Peter made an on time departure bound for Newcastle. By this stage two further Class 31's Bletchley Park X and Gryphon had been attached to the rear of the train ready for the run down the ECML and to take the train on from Darlington to York. The trailing weight had thus increased to the equivalent of perhaps 17 coaches and with the curving 1 in 107 grades to Brampton now thoroughly wet and greasy, speculation was intense as to what may happen. Now in the capable hands of Driver McCabe of Beattock fame, the train set off and after slight slipping on the outskirts of Carlisle the exhaust beat strengthened and quickened. Whether any assistance was being given at the rear was not clear at the front of the train though the absence of any exhaust from the Class 31's would indicate not. In any event the sounds from Blue Peter were magnificent as she stormed up the climb in the rain. Hardy photographers were in evidence as she stormed though Scotby and Wetherall and again as Brampton, which was passed at no less than 44mph with perhaps 650 tons in tow! The run along the Tyne Valley was relatively uneventful, though some very adjacent greenery lead to the side of the train being plastered with smashed leaves on arrival at Hexham,

where more water was taken in the rain. Needless to say the 'tight' allowance of 44 minutes for the 40 mile section was not achieved!

For 'operational reasons' the train was not allowed to enter Newcastle Central and therefore a further stop was made at the Metro Centre to set down passengers from the area before the train swung right onto the Low Fell avoiding line. For the inevitable pathing reason, the train was again halted alongside the Low Fell Royal Mail depot with the stiff climb up to the ECML right ahead, and it was still raining. After several minutes the right away came and after one slip, Driver McCabe started Blue Peter and her massive load away up the grade. The condensing exhaust and steam rose high up into the gloom and rain providing perhaps the most atmospheric views of the whole trip. As the train breasted the climb and swung out onto the East Coast main line it was widely acknowledged that this had been an exceptional piece of driving.

With NELPG Locomotive Caretaker Paul Hutchinson now in the cab as owner representative, he had vowed to lay the ghost of Durham where in 1994 the catastrophic slip had resulted in the wrecking of Blue Peter's motion and led to Paul leading the project team which returned her to running order. In the gathering gloom and drizzle, conditions identical to that fateful night in 1994, the Kiwi chime wailed out on the approach to Durham, through Durham station and right across the viaduct and the site of the accident; it was an unforgettable moment especially appreciated by Gill Drury and her family who were most welcome guests of the Group.

Forging up the grades out of Durham, now a little later than booked, it was hoped that the pathing stop at Ferryhill would be avoided, but approaching Heft Mill the slow line feathers were on and the train crawled along the loop line to an angry red light-which turned green almost as the train halted!

Off again for the final run to Darlington, Blue Peter was quickly back into it's stride bowling along through Bradbury and Aycliffe before adverse signals indicated the approach to Darlington. Past the site of the old Darlington steam shed the Kiwi whistle started up again, loud and long it blew as the train swung into Bank Top station, the whole of Darlington must have heard it! The brakes were applied for the last time and it was all over. Faces full of mixed emotions crowded round the locomotive - I think it's fair to say there were not a few tears shed at the end of this wonderful locomotive's present main line career.

In the midst of all this emotion Blue Peter formed the backdrop to the start of a new era for NELPG when the Curator of Darlington North Road Railway Museum , Dr Stuart Nichols ceremonially handed the lease for part of the former Hopetown Carriage Works to NELPG Chairman John Hunt. These premises will form the long sought after new restoration works for NELPG and it is hoped that Darlington built 0-8-0 Q6 63395 will enter the works for full overhaul in September. Dr Nichol expressed the hope that this lease handover would mark the start of a long and happy relationship between NELPG, the Museum and the people of Darlington with their proud railway tradition. The sentiment was endorsed by another loud blast on Blue Peter's whistle before she steamed off towards Thornaby shed.

For performance details of the June '9th trip I am indebted to Dr Peter Rodgers who described the trip as 'a good, solid run'.

So Blue Peter's career on the main line is over. Her presence has graced the scene since 1992 and she has rarely been found wanting. NELPG is proud to have been involved with the operation of such a fine locomotive and discussions have started and will continue to take place regarding overhaul for a further main line period. This is likely to be some while hence and will of course involve not a little expenditure.

To anyone wondering what NELPG will be doing now - well the A2 left it's support coach at Thornaby where the K1 was already waiting to take it to York on Sunday 10th June; here it picked up the stock from Saturday's trip and headed to Carnforth. By the time this article appears it will be sharing duties on the Mallaig extension for the summer period. Meanwhile Blue Peter will be using its pulling power to haul trains on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway until it's future overhaul details are decided.

In the meantime, watch this space regarding developments at Darlington and if you wish to become involved in any of the Group's activities please contact Dan Fawcett, Publicity Officer, on 01609 771302 or by E mail at nelpg@fawcett89.fsnet.co.uk - you will be most welcome. Full information regarding Group activities is also available on www.nelpg.fsnet.co.uk

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HOPETOWN CARRIAGE WORKS by Richard Pearson

With the permission of Darlington Council, access to the building has been allowed and work has already taken place towards getting the premises fit for use.

By 14th June a total of 13 light fittings were installed and working, using a temporary supply. This will facilitate the clearing out of the building and the preparation of working areas. This in turn will allow the fitting of more lighting, a permanent electrical distribution board to provide supplies to sockets and machines, as well as 110v sockets and a welding socket. An internal breeze block wall needs to be demolished, a new access door provided, and a new mess room and toilet will also need to be constructed.

If you wish to help in getting the Group's new overhaul base up and running please contact Richard on 01642 475080. So far thanks are especially due to Fred Ramshaw, Arthur Robinson, Richard Pearson and Dave Martin for their work in making the Darlington base happen.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT by Dave Martin

At its first meeting after the AGM the Committee re-elected John Hunt as Chairman, Peter Robinson as Treasurer and yours truly as Secretary. John Graham remains as CME and Danny Fawcett keeps the publicity portfolio. All nine positions on the Committee are now filled with elected members. Consequently Danny and myself were co-opted again for the coming year.

I have recently received a draft agreement from Darlington Council for the lease of the western part of the Hopetown Carriage Works. We hope to have this agreement sealed in the very near future. Here is very little more that I can report on the procedural front, as June's Committee meeting has had to be postponed. The Committee will be discussing the response to the

members;' questionnaire At its next meeting: I would like to thank all those members who took the trouble to respond, especially those who live many miles away! Overall, however, the number of forms sent back was very disappointing.

On a more positive note, all of the trips with the A2 were completed successfully, despite what was inferred in a somewhat lengthy but ill informed article in Steam Railway! Those of you who travelled on any of the trips hauled by the A2 this year will realise that there is nothing wrong with the locomotive. We have, on occasions, suffered from poor coal, inexperienced crews and slippery rails but we have always reached our destination without assistance if, sometimes, a little overdue.

I was lucky enough to travel on three of these trips — those on 12th May and 2nd and 9th June. I helped out on the NELPG sales stand on the first two trips and helped steward on the NELPG trip. The climbs over Grayrigg and Shap on the NELPG trip were very impressive, but those climbs on the 12th May trip were truly awesome! I can assure you that the punters on all three trips were highly satisfied! Many could not understand why the locomotive was going to leave the main line when it was obviously in such good condition.

Once again much praise is due to the support crews for their unstinting efforts, especially when a one day steam trip involves three or four days away from home. Other unsung heroes include Dave Pennock and his colleagues who took sales stands on five of the trips. This involved driving over 100 miles to get to the train and the same distance back home afterwards. Some of these trains left at unearthly hours compared with our own trip; both Steamy Affairs trips left Crewe at 07.15, whilst the Birmingham — Bristol train left at 07.30 and the others before 08.30! The end result, however, was a sales income of £2,000 to be added to the NELPG coffers.

As one spell of main line running ends, another begins. On 10th June I watched the K1 trundle through Northallerton en route to York and Carnforth. Later that week the locomotive double headed with the B1 to Mossend and on to Fort William. Steam services were due to start on the West Highland extension on 18th June with 62005 on the first train. This is a fitting reward for Martin Lloyd and his small band of helpers who have worked continuously throughout the winter and spring to ensure that the K1 was in a fit condition to go 'main line'. Even when 62005 left Grosmont the work was not complete — tyres had to be turned at Thornaby

before it continued to Carnforth. I know that Martin has, at times, thought he would not get the work finished in time, but in true NELPG tradition it went to the wire, but in the end it was 'mission accomplished'. Well done to all those members involved in the preparation of our locomotives and the operation of their main line trips.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

This was held on 1 May 2001 at The Ladle and was attended by 37 members. Compared with recent AGMs this was a relatively quiet and brief meeting lasting just over one hour. The Chairman in giving his report, wished to add his thanks to Allan Toomer who gave up the role of meetings organiser after nine years last December. Although Allan was not present, members showed their appreciation for his work. The Directors' reports were received and approved with only minor comments from the floor.

The motion to give authority to the Board to spend up to £30,000 on Hopetown Carriage Works was carried after some discussion. The Chairman explained that although the initial agreement with Darlington Council was for three years, there was very chance that it would be renewed in the future as long as we wanted the site. On the other hand, the BASF premises — although likely to be rent free — was only available for three years.

The Secretary explained the work needed to be carried out by the NELPG at Darlington. This was likely to cost up to £20,000 but the extra £10,000 was included in the motion just in case unforeseen extras surfaced. The questionnaire had been circulated to members to ascertain the likely amount of help to be available for each site.

The Secretary confirmed that John Graham, Martin Lloyd and Richard Pearson had been returned unopposed to the Committee to serve for the next three years. John Marsland was approved as auditor for the Group' accounts and thanked for his efforts to date.

Under AOB the Chairman reported that the joint Maurice Burns/Committee statement had not been formulated yet. This had been due to various delays involving the personnel concerned. The statement would be made available to the membership as soon as it had been agreed by all parties.

Ted Parker reported that The Ladle was not to be demolished after all. However, the future was not clear and he feared that the cost of the room hire may be increased considerably. In the event of this happening he asked members for possible alternative venues. Peter Robinson reported that 396 seats had been sold for the railtour on 9th Jun and that the first class accommodation had been sold out!

The meeting closed at 21.40.

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LETTER

Haddington,
East Lothian

18th June 2001

Dear Dave,

BLUE PETER'S FAREWELL TOUR

No one connected with steam and particularly those with affection for Blue Peter could fail to have been touched by the poignant scenes at Darlington as she stood waiting to come off the train at the end of her last main line run.

Over the past ten years she has given enjoyment to hundreds of 'fans'. As one of those fans, I realise that this privilege is down to commitment, dedication and hard work of NELPG members.

I would like all those connected with her to know how much their efforts are appreciated. Firstly, of course, thanks to the Drury family for continuing to entrust her to the NELPG; to Paul and the support crew and all who maintain her; the railtour team and all the folk behind the scenes.

I realise that Blue Peter's future is uncertain and will be governed by many factors but please, please, let my hope that she will grace main line metals again, not be in vain.

Regards,
yours sincerely,

Fred Chrystal

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MEMBERS' ANNUAL LUNCHEON SPECIAL

This has been arranged for Saturday 13th October 2001 and is expected to take the same format as in previous years i.e. two return trips between Grosmont and Pickering with lunch being served on the intermediate Pickering — Grosmont — Pickering leg. As the J27, K1 and A2 should all be back on the NYMR by then, we could be spoilt for choice as to motive power!

Full details of the arrangements and the menu, together with a booking form, will appear in the August NEWS.

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COVER PICTURES

Front: 60532 forges up Shap at Greenholm with the Group's A2 Farewell tour on 9th June

Back (top): 61264 pilots 62005 north of Abington on the WCML on 13th June

Back (bottom): With the Ben Nevis mountain range as a backdrop, 62005 storms up the 1 in 68 climb from Tulloch to Corroul on 16th June (all John Hunt)



One of the flange lubricators now fitted to the rear driving wheels of the K1 (Maurice Johnson)



60532 tops the 1 in 75 climb from Stratford on Avon at Wilmcote with a Shakespeare Express returning to Birmingham on 15th April (John Hunt)



60532 leaves Blackpool and its unmistakable landmark with the returning Blackpool Belle to Nuneaton on 26th May (Eddie Bobrowski)

