

N.E.L.P.G. NEWS



NO. 178 APR 1997

EDITORIAL

It seems that the long saga of the A4 Bittern - or Silver Link - is finally resolved and the locomotive will be sold after all to Dr. Marchington, a purchase facilitated by his company Flying Scotsman Railways. The A4 is therefore no longer part of the LNER Collection agreement with Geoff Drury. The locomotive goes perhaps with mixed feelings; to return the locomotive to the main line under NELPG auspices would have been quite an event, but the administration of the loan and the subsequent overhaul agreement with the Great Central Railway, had quite frankly developed into a scenario that those involved could well have done without. They will no doubt be relieved to see the A4 go. There is consolation, however, in that as part of the sale the Group will get to run the A4 for its first three trips on the main line.

The unfortunate saga of mileage payments for hire locomotives on the NYMR goes on and on. However, this is nothing new since the debate has been ongoing for a decade or more, with the value for money of hire locomotives vis a vis service agreement locomotives being the subject of regular and passionate argument! However, it is a matter for concern if the impression is given that relationships between the NELPG and the NYMR are at a low ebb. Thankfully, this is not the case. Working members at Grosmont enjoy a very friendly and co-operative relationship with the shed management and staff, and long may this continue. However, there is room for an improvement in dealings between the two organisations, not least a realisation by some NYMR officers of the debt they owe to the NELPG and the past contributions the Group has made. The NYMR might now find itself in a multi million pound business world, but it does so on the back of a not inconsiderable volunteer input not only from its own staff, but significantly from its supporting groups, such as the NELPG which have helped to build the foundations on which the present success is based. So long as the NYMR has to rely on hiring locomotives, and it must not be forgotten that 25% of this year's total NYMR mileage has to be covered by hire locomotives, the railway really cannot afford to alienate its faithful locomotive owners.

The NELPG regards the NYMR as its home base, which has recently been re-affirmed in the Locomotive Maintenance Policy. There is no alternative 'home base' which is in such close proximity to the majority of the Group's working members, indeed the membership as a whole, and notwithstanding difficulties that might exist, taking a more holistic view, the NYMR is the best steam line in the country and the Group is proud to have been associated with it for thirty years. Let us hope that loyalty and reliability will be recognised by all, and there can be a fair deal for all in 1998 and beyond.

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LOCOMOTIVE REPORT by Gordon Wells & Maurice Burns

J27 No. 65894

Following the completion of the winter maintenance work the loco was taken out of Deviation Shed on 9th March, coaled and given a steam test. The safety valves were set and checks carried out on the repairs in readiness for the start of the new season. Although the steam test was satisfactory it was found that there was still a problem with the regulator which still blowing through. This snag has since been cured with a minor adjustment to the closed stop position.

On return to Deviation Shed the engine and tender were parted to investigate the excessive play in the engine/tender drawbar. Although the adjusting nut could be tightened and, with a great deal of effort, compress the buffing spring, it had no effect on the actual drawbar itself. The problem was traced to the drawbar fixing assembly on the tender being pulled hard up against the tender dragbox preventing any further adjustment. The cause was that the drawbar had stretched over the years (pulling all those heavy coal trains) and it was necessary to remove the bar and send it away to be forged to reduce its overall length by 3/4 inch. The engine and tender were then reconnected and the tender nut tightened this time with the desired effect.

The loco was given an insurance company steam test on Friday 21st March and was used in traffic the following day. On the return trip from Pickering a cork was lost from the right hand big end, losing most of the oil, and the bearing ran warm although no damage was caused. The loco was in traffic on Sunday 23rd March and was also used on Tuesday 25th to cover for a loco failure. On both these days no problems were reported with the big end.

The locomotive worked a very special train on 11th April when it hauled a one coach train from Esk Valley to Grosmont conveying the body of Dave Prescott, the NYMR's operating manager, together with members of the family. He sadly died on 7th April after a short illness

The loco is available for traffic and in the months of March and April has run 720 miles, earning £3,132 in the process. The locomotive is performing admirably and is expected to be in traffic again during May and should leave the NYMR in mid June for a period of temporary loan to the North Norfolk Railway.

T2 No. 2238

In store in Deviation Shed.

K1 No. 62005

Progress at Wilton continues on Monday and Thursday evenings, principally on painting the locomotive and tender frames. A lot of time slippage is occurring if it is hoped to have the locomotive running again by 1998. On the positive side, however, the through air pipe (a new requirement for main line running) is being masterminded by Ian Jones, a new volunteer who has taken on responsibility for ordering materials and planning the work. Well done.

The locomotive brake gear is now rebushed (the tender is already done) by a local contractor. Extensive corrosion has been found near the tender steam brake cylinder, that will require much replating. The locomotive axleboxes are currently being refurbished by Richard Campbell and are expected to be finished by mid May, it is hoped to rewheel the locomotive and tender in mid summer.

At Chatham Steam the boiler overhaul is going well but further progress is determined by the completion of the frames.

Q7 No. 901

Members who read the April edition of Steam Railway magazine will have seen an item reporting a proposed visit to the Keighly & Worth Valley Railway by the Q7, complete with dates!. Many members have expressed concern at this item and indeed it came as a surprise to the Committee as the matter had never been discussed. The Secretary wrote to Steam Railway informing the editor of the facts, yet the same news item appeared again in the May edition. Rest assured, no decision has been made to run the loco anywhere other than the NYMR.

The above news item adversely affected the volunteer moral at Grosmont for a few weeks leading to a slowing of work but things are returning to normal and following the repainting of the normally inaccessible areas of the dragboxes, the engine and tender have been reconnected and the cab floor repaired and reassembled.

The six cylinder cocks have been removed, stripped down, obstructions caused by pieces of broken valve rings cleared, and the valves and linkages reassembled. The three piston valves have been thoroughly cleaned of carbon deposits and the heads removed from the left hand valve for repair. Problems have occurred with the manufacture of the new valve rings as after measurements were taken it was found that the NYMR had no material of the right size readily to hand and a blank had to be ordered for the foundry. When the material arrived and machining commenced it was found that the cast iron was porous in places, like a piece of Aero, and was useless. A replacement batch was expected at the beginning of April.

The cross shaft between the frames which operates the reverser position indicator has been removed for repair as it was again found to be twisted. It is thought that this was caused by a carelessly stowed slacker pipe which became jammed in the linkages in the cab.

Once the new valve rings are completed the valves can be refitted, the front end boxed up and the loco prepared for a steam test. Access to the pit in the repair shed is required for attention to be given to the clearances on the centre big end bearing.

J72 No. 69023

For the first special event weekend of the new season, the NYMR required a vintage loco to work with the North Eastern Saloon during the 'Victorian Celebrations Weekend' on 19/20th April and had intended to try and obtain a suitable visiting loco for this event. However, it was questioned as to why money should be spent on hiring a loco from outside when we already had one on the railway, the J72. Which is to a Victorian design, even if it wasn't built until 1951!

The only snag is that Joem's ten year boiler certificate expired on 27th February but in a surprise move the NYMR Shedmaster was able to obtain an extension to the certificate, as last year it had proved possible to gain a similar extension for the boiler of Lambton tank No 5. Unfortunately the sudden developments occurred after the publication of the February NEWS so it was not possible to give advanced notification to members.

The loco was taken out of store in Deviation Shed and into the NYMR running shed on 30th March where the boiler was washed out to prepare it for an examination by the insurance company boiler inspector. This took place on 18th April and was successful, with the insurance company granting a month's extension to the boiler certificate.

Over the Victorian weekend 69023 worked a series of shuttles between Pickering and Levisham using the NER Inspection saloon and the Thompson CL coach, the first time the latter had been used for public passenger carrying for over 20 years!

Behind the scenes investigations are currently underway into various options regarding the future of the loco. Although Joem is only a small loco a major overhaul will be complicated by the need to remove the complete cylinder block from the frames for a thorough examination as to the extent of the cracks in the block. In the worst possible case a complete new cylinder block may be required.

A2 No. 60532 Blue Peter

The A2 is performing well, with a gradually reducing outstanding work list. Jobs still requiring attention include modification to the baffle plate, attention to the smokebox door

joint and the ashpan spark guard. The steam heating relief valve has been reset and engine and tender hoses replaced.

See separate reports elsewhere in this issue about the locomotive's recent performances on the main line.

A4 No.2509 Silver Link

As reported elsewhere the A4 has now been sold so in future this locomotive will not feature regularly in the Locomotive Report.

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WORKING PARTIES

These take place every Sunday at Grosmont for work on the Q7 and J27
Contact Clive Goult on 01642 473451 or Richard Pearson on 01642 474978

And at Wilton every Monday and Thursday evenings for work on the K1
Contact Maurice Burns on 01642 780794 or Richard Pearson on 01642 474978

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LOCOMOTIVES IN DEMAND by Maurice Burns

As the UK heads for a steam power crisis - remember you heard it first in NELPG NEWS! - NELPG locomotives are much in demand, as are anyone else's that can haul a train! With some railways relying on hiring in locomotives, they receive quite a jolt when the supply begins to dry up. Even some 'premier' lines are not too flush with steam power and one of the top ten standard gauge lines had nothing more than one Austerity saddletank for its Easter services. A number of pleas for help have therefore been received and the Group is considering the following:-

J27 65894

The North Norfolk Railway just pipped the Nene Valley Railway. for the summer hire of the J27 and contracts should have been exchanged by the time members receive this issue of the NEWS. The locomotive should leave the NYMR in mid June and return in time for the autumn steam galas and Christmas running. With its six coach limit the J27 is not required by the NYMR in the peak season when eight and sometimes nine coach trains are the norm, thus allowing the locomotive to be used elsewhere and thereby earn much needed income initially to offset the shortfall in its overhaul costs. This arrangement is therefore mutually acceptable to both the NELPG and the NYMR.

Q7 901

A formal request from the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway to hire the Q7 has been received for use of the locomotive out of the NYMR peak season. The locomotive nearly went to the KWVR last December for filming but because the Q7 was precluded from using the turntable at Keighley because it was too heavy for the bridge on the turntable approach road, the loan was not pursued and the role went to L&Y No.1300 instead.

A2 60532

The East Lancs Railway and the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway both put in formal requests to hire the A2 for the summer main line fire risk period of June, July and August. However, the Committee has agreed to send the A2 back to the NYMR for the peak summer season, where it will resume last year's very successful partnership with 60007

J72 69023

Notwithstanding its unexpected return to traffic on 19th/20th April, the J72 is facing a major overhaul. Whilst the NELPG cannot realistically tackle the locomotive's overhaul for several years, the combination of accumulated funds from previous loans over the last ten years, and a prospective user 'local' to the north east, opens the door for the possibility of an overhaul by contract, and a move of the J72 away from its home base. The expanding Yorkshire Dales Railway has offered ten years work for the J72. The locomotive has been to Embsay before and the YDR is likely to have its own motive power crisis in 1999. This proposal is the subject of a motion at the NELPG May Annual General Meeting.

One thing about the demand for steam locomotives is that it is sometimes difficult to keep members abreast of fast moving developments, especially when it's newsletter only comes out every two months. In the intervening periods much can happen! Other societies and private lines have different publication regimes and publicity machines and it is therefore inevitable that, from time to time, information may appear in the national railway press before members get to hear about it in NELPG NEWS. We certainly do our best to tell

members first but beg their understanding if negotiations and contract signing dates do not coincide with NEWS publication dates.

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RAILTOUR REPORT by Maurice Burns

The untimely failure of 70000 Britannia with leaking tubes threw the spotlight on to Blue Peter which substituted on the planned runs on 22nd and 29th March, a reversal of the situation in 1994 when 70000 came to the rescue. With the A2 based at Crewe it had to run light engine and support coach back up the WCML to Carlisle on Thursday 20th March, memorable for its 'spirited' running and a superb view of the comet over Shap Fell!, in order to be in position for *The Ayr Raider*. On a train which originated in Birmingham at 05 01 (I) Blue Peter had in prospect a 260 mile route from Carlisle to Beattock, Motherwell, Glasgow, Paisley, Ayr, Kilmarnock, Dumfries and Carlisle

The highlight proved to be a high speed dash from Carlisle to Beattock summit The fact that the Chairman had placed a photocopy of a record breaking Duchess run to Beattock in the driver's window had nothing to do with this - or did it? To appreciate the significance of the A2's performance, compulsive reading is Eric Treacy and O.S. Nock's book 'Mainlines Across the Border' and a chapter entitled 'Record Breaking on The Caledonian'. Firstly some broad statistics:-

Carlisle to Beattock summit - 50 miles.

1955	Time for the Duchess hauled Royal Scot & Midday Scot (395 tons) to the summit	58 min
1997	Time for the A2 hauled Pathfinders Ayr Raider (445 tons)	58 min
1997	Actual time for the Ayr Raider	50 min

The gradient of Beattock bank is 1 in 75 for 10 miles from Beattock station to the summit

1955	Time for the Duchess to climb the bank on the Royal Scot & Midday Scot (395 tons)	18 min
1997	Schedule for the A2 to climb the bank on the Ayr Raider	15 min
1997	Actual time for the Ayr Raider	11 min 45 sec

The A2 performance is all the more remarkable in that it had 50 tons more than the load for the Royal and Midday Scots. The climb was indeed spectacular, speeding through the village of Beattock at 65 mph, the cut off was lengthened to 45% maximum as the



65894 turns back the clock as it heads a freight train past Darnholme on 8th November 1996 (John Hunt)



60532 with a matching rake of plum and custard coaches effortlessly passes Moorgates in October 1996. Scenes such as this will be possible again this summer (John Hunt)



NELPG's Maurice Burns and ICI's G. Ritchie, Teesside Services Manager, at the presentation of the AIRPS award, seen to the right, for display at the ICI Visitor Centre at Wilton (ICI).



69023 leaves Levisham with a Victorian shuttle on 20th April, showing the contrasting lines of the NER Inspection saloon and the Thompson CL coach (John Hunt).

gradient began to bite. With 445 tons in tow the summit was topped at 45 mph, a tremendous achievement for the locomotive, its crew of Driver Gordon Hodgson, Fireman Paul Kane, Inspector John McCabe, NELPG Representative Paul Hutchinson, and the NELPG support team. The rest of the day was perhaps an anticlimax but nevertheless went like clockwork, with water taken at Abington, Motherwell, Ayr and Kirkconnel, and coal at Ayr. Peter Watts of Pathfinders, promoter of the tour, which was full, was most complimentary of the Group's organisation and attention to detail.

Even before the 22nd March trip took place plans for the following week's railtour were being developed. This was *The Overlander*, promoted by Steamy Affairs with steam haulage from Cleethorpes to Chester. However, the trip hit further trouble when Railtrack LNE could not resource the clearance of the A2 over its part of the route, although the other Railtrack zones had done so. EWS advised that the A2 would therefore have to join the train at Nottingham instead. This meant that the arrangements for coal loading at Cleethorpes and fire brigade assistance for watering at Market Rasen had to be frustratingly aborted.

Thus the A2 and support coach travelled down from Carlisle to Crewe on 27th March, then to Nottingham at 05 00 two days later on the morning of the tour. The train loaded to 13 full coaches (500 tons) and the A2 put in another fine performance with some good periods of rapid acceleration and high speed running to Chester and back to Crewe. Alan Wilsmore of Steamy Affairs was also complimentary of our in-depth organisation.

The A2 subsequently worked *The Midlander* for Days Out from Crewe to Nuneaton, Leicester, Peterborough, Stoke Bank, Grantham, and back to Crewe on 19th April. On arrival at Peterborough, the A2 went to the Nene Valley Railway to turn and also worked trains over the line before its return journey. The A2 is booked to work two more trips for Days Out as follows:-

Saturday 3rd May - *The Waverley*. 60532 Crewe - Preston - Grayrigg - Shap - Carlisle - Beattock - Carstairs - Edinburgh. This is another tremendous test of hill climbing and high speed running for the A2. Picks up at Watford, Milton Keynes, Nuneaton, Lichfield and Crewe. Standard class £59, first class £75

Saturday 24th May - *The Flying Scotsman*. 60532 Edinburgh - Dunbar - Berwick - Newcastle - York. Picks up at Hertford, Stevenage, Peterborough, Grantham, Doncaster and York. It doesn't stop at Durham on the way back! Standard class £59, first class £85.

Further details and booking via Days Out Ltd. telephone 0115 941 9330, fax 0115 941 9274 In addition Cohn and Miriam Hatton are on the 'Blue Peter hotline' for last minute bookings - ring 01642 322706 between 18.00 and 22 00 only

DATE 22. 3. 97.
 TRAIN "The Ayr Raider"
 LOCO 60532, "Blue Peter"
 LOAD 11 coaches - 411/435 tons

DIST		SCH	TIME	SPEEDS
miles		mins	min sec	mph
0.0	CARLISLE	0	0.00	-
2.0	Kingmoor (2)		4.39	47
6.1	Floriston		8.39	71
8.7	Gretna Junction	10	10.57	66
11.0	Milepost 11		13.05	63
13.0	Kirkpatrick (13)		14.58	65
14.7	Milepost 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ (summit)		16.36	62
16.7	Kirtlebridge (161)		18.27	68
20.0	Ecclefechan (20)		21.24	64
22.7	Castlemilk (22 $\frac{3}{4}$)		23.57	64/71
25.8	LOCKERBIE	28	26.34	69
28.7	Nethercleugh		29.06	70
31.7	Dinwoodie (31 $\frac{3}{4}$)		31.36	73
34.5	Wamphray (34 $\frac{1}{2}$)		33.54	71/73
37.0	Murthat (37)		36.02	68
39.7	Beattock (39 $\frac{3}{4}$)	43	38.32	65
42.0	Milepost 42 (top 1/88)		40.46	56
45.0	Milepost 45 (top 1/74)		44.13	50
48.0	Milepost 48 (top 1/75)		47.57	46
49.7	Summit (49 $\frac{3}{4}$)	58	50.17	44
52.7	Elvanfoot (52 $\frac{3}{4}$)		53.23	64/55
55.2	Crawford (55 $\frac{1}{4}$)		56.00	59
58.0	Abington Loop (58)	68	61.12	-

Calculated power output:

over 6 miles past Gretna Jn and Kirkpatrick - 1700 edhp
 over 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles past Ecclefechan - 1550 edhp
 over 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles approaching Beattock - 1600 edhp
 over 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles Beattock to Summit - 2350 edhp
 over individual 2,3 and 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile lengths
 between Beattock and Summit - 2100, 2450, 2350 edhp

LETTER

Roseworth,
Stockton-on-Tees,
Cleveland

23rd March 1997

Dear Maurice,

Just a line to say thanks again for enabling myself and hundreds of fellow passengers on board yesterday's Ayr Raider railtour with Pathfinder to have such an exhilarating journey behind 60532 Blue Peter really took Beattock by storm, treating us to an exciting ascent of the bank which certainly set the adrenaline flowing, and then breasting the summit in fine style as an almost tangible feeling of satisfaction and elation swept through the train.

Thanks to the crew whose skill and expertise allowed the locomotive to demonstrate her true potential, but most of all, our gratitude should be directed towards the NELPG workforce who have obviously devoted so much time (plus blood, sweat and tears) into making yesterday's achievement possible. Congratulations to everyone involved. (If only the NELPG helicopter could have recorded the whole event on video!). It was a privilege to be there.

Best wishes,

Peter Spence.

Footnote - one video organisation took film at two points on the climb and from a moving car!

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THE COVENANT SCHEME by John Drew

Many thanks to the 160 members who currently covenant their subscriptions/donations to the Group. I am anticipating over £800 from the Inland Revenue for the year 1996, this is not including the refund from the covenant donation from NELPG Enterprises.

If you are one of the many tax paying members who do not yet covenant, please contact me at 14 Reasby Villas, Ryton, Tyne and Wear, NE40 3AT, and I shall send you the necessary form. If you cannot remember if you covenant, check the address label on the envelope. If the membership number is suffixed C, then I have a covenant in force for you. I will let you know when it is due to expire.

Covenanting is advantageous to all concerned, especially now that the tax rate is reduced to 23%. It is important that the Group gains maximum possible income from this source, it all helps the running costs of what is undoubtedly your favourite charity! I therefore look forward to your letters, and would appreciate the inclusion of a stamped, addressed envelope.

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A WORD FROM THE SECRETARY by Colin Hatton

During April Maurice Burns, Paul Hutchinson and I met up with Bill Parfitt and John Ritchie of ICI at the ICI Visitor Centre, Wilton where ICI has agreed to display the AIRPS award, certificate and framed print of 'Stirling Departure', the latter suitably inscribed "Restored at ICI No.5 depot by NELPG". All members can readily visit the centre to see these exhibits. It lies outside the actual ICI site, at the Kirkleatham entrance, just off the A174 road.

An earlier meeting saw Maurice and I discussing the future of the A4 Bittern with Geoff Drury, who is adamant that he will not extend the LNER Collection agreement beyond 2001 when it is due to end. However, the 'on-off' saga of the sale of the A4 is now on again and, to cut a long story short, the A4 has now *been* deleted from the agreement. The sale is expected to Flying Scotsman Railways Ltd. However, if the purchase goes ahead, NELPG will have the use of Bittern for its first three main line runs, hopefully in 2001, but depending upon its overhaul programme.

Yet another recent meeting was with the Yorkshire Dales Railway to discuss the future of the J72. This engine has, of course, been to this railway before and, with the imminent opening of the extension to Bolton Abbey, the railway is very optimistic about its future. The dilemma we have is what to do with this diminutive but attractive engine. It is too small to operate on the NYMR on a regular basis, but is ideal for a smaller railway such as the Yorkshire Dales.

the proposal is therefore to use the money accrued by the J72 and since the NELPG would be overstretched to carry out the overhaul itself, invite a third party (possibly the East Lancs Railway) to carry out the overhaul, including remedial work on the leaking cylinder block. The YDR would then have use of the locomotive over its ten year boiler life to the extent that the overhaul costs would be paid back. During this period the YDR would maintain the locomotive without charge to the NELPG. This proposal will be put to the membership at the May AGM.

Whilst it is intended that the J27 goes to the North Norfolk Railway for the summer period when longer trains, beyond the engine's comfortable capability, are in use on the NYMR, there is absolutely no truth in the rumour that the Q7 will go to the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway. How this story got into the national railway press is unclear, but I have been instructed by the Committee to inform all magazines that official NELPG policy statements will only be released by our Publicity Officer, Dave Whitfield. That this press speculation came out at the time of the locomotive owners' meetings with the NYMR to discuss mileages and rates for 1997 was most unfortunate.

There has been much debate, even acrimony, over the locomotive hire issue so, to try and keep members abreast of developments, it is well to remind you of a few of the salient facts. Firstly, clause 4 of our loco hire agreement with the NYMR provides the correct vehicle for increases in the mileage rates (bearing in mind our agreement lasts for ten years, it is essential to have an inflation proof clause. Whilst ours is not very well written, its intent is quite clear). Prior to 1991 that clause was used to increase the rate but that year, with the NYMR's finances in a somewhat parlous state, all owners agreed to waive the increase pending better days.

In November 1996 we met with the railway and pointed out that the time had come, with the NYMR exceeding their financial expectations in 1996, to increase the mileage rate from £4.00 per mile to £4.69 for 1997, the figure it should have been by using the manufacturing index linked formula in the agreement. In January 1997 the NYMR advised all loco owners that budgets had been set and no increase was available. This was not accepted by the owners, whose concern prompted a number of vitriolic letters to be sent to the NYMR management.

In early March, after many postponements, another meeting took place with NYMR management whereat a 'take it or leave it' mileage rate of £4.35 was tabled, amounting to about half of what loco owners considered it should have been. In order to accommodate this modest increase, I understand that the amount of loco hire mileage on offer had to be

reduced in order to pay for the increase and keep within budget. Moreover it was apparent that the NYMR had two locomotives 'in the wings' should their offer not be accepted.

Furthermore we were told that Blue Peter was not required, their preference being for 60007 Sir Nigel Gresley for which both ways movement costs would be paid out; this, by the way, was not a NELPG requirement for Blue Peter. (The NYMR have now 'found' mileage for the A2, in addition to that for the J27 and Q7- Ed)

It should be realised that the sums of moneys involved, relative to the NYMR' s annual expenditure, is small, but to the NELPG quite significant. For example, assuming our locomotives do 4,000 miles the following would accrue:-

@ 14.00 per mile	=	£16,000
@ £4.35 per mile	=	£17,400 (on offer)
@ £4.69 per mile	=	£18,760 (what it should be; a difference of £1,360)

It should also be noted that the annual mileage and mileage rate are insufficient to earn adequate funds to pay for a major overhaul. Mileage on other private lines and on the main line therefore subsidises overhauls.

Apparently when Brian Cooke referred to the early days picking out weeds from between the tracks, he was told by an NYMR officer "we are here to discuss the present, not the past". Now, I don't know whether that was a personal comment or if it reflects the view of the NYMR as a whole, but for my part I thought that's what steam railway preservation was all about!

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NEWS FROM THE LINE

1996 saw the NYMR break two very significant records; firstly, it carried a staggering 280,756 passengers, 10% up on the previous year This compares with figures of around 190,000 for the Severn Valley Railway and 180,000 for the Festiniog Railway. Secondly, an annual turnover of no less than £2,423,754 yielded a year end profit of £255,132, another preservation record. Such figures might prompt some members to further query the loco hire mileage debate but making a profit does not, of course, mean that there is an opportunity to increase either the miles allocated to hire agreement locomotives or the rate per mile. It will, however, encourage the loco owners to seek a more realistic rate for

1998! Locomotives used since the start of the season are 65894, 45428, 30926, 34101, 75014, 2253 and 3672. GWR 2-8-0T 4277 has also arrived and is expected in service soon. 69023 was also used over the Victorian weekend, and 60007 and 60532 are expected in May. Major relaying of track has taken place around milepost 17 in Northdale and the main crossover outside Grosmont tunnel has been renewed. At the shed, the new fabrication shop is complete and in use, and the running shed has been re-roofed

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 3rd May 1997: **THE WAVERLEY** featuring 60532 over Shap and Beattock. See text for details.

Friday 9th May 1997: **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** followed by an illustrated review of the year by John Hunt. 7.30 pm in the upstairs room, Ladle Hotel, Ladgate Lane, Middlesborough. See AGM supplement with this issue.

Saturday 24th May 1997: **THE FLYING SCOTSMAN** featuring 60532 Edinburgh, Newcastle, York. See text for details.

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COVER PICTURES

Front: 69023 leaves Levisham with the Victorian weekend shuttle to Pickering utilising the Thompson CL coach and NER Inspection saloon.

Back (top): 65894 brings Dave Prescott's funeral train into Grosmont on 11th April; he was buried at the parish church seen above the locomotive.

Back (bottom): 65894 heads out of Goathland at Abbots House on 10th April with a train for Pickering (all John Hunt)

