

N.E.L.P.G. NEWS



NO.182 DEC 1997

EDITORIAL

1997 has been a mixed year the successful running of the J27 both on the NYMR and on the North Norfolk Railway has meant that the task of paying back the overspend on its overhaul is all but complete and future earnings can go towards its next overhaul. The Q7 did not enter traffic when planned but it did make a late bid to reach its allotted mileage; appropriately both locomotives headed the members' special over the NYMR on 18th October.

The K1 overhaul made steady progress through the year but has recently seen a sudden spurt in activity as the need to vacate ICI Wilton sank in. Although not entirely unexpected the termination of our 13 year relationship with ICI has very great significance. There is no doubt that without it the Group would have achieved only a small percentage of what it has accomplished during this period. Whilst the Group will be eternally grateful to ICI for the unprecedented partnership, it does not make the task of finding an alternative site any less difficult. Since the last issue very little progress has been made in this respect. Unless suitable premises are found it is likely that overhaul of NELPG locomotives will have to be based entirely on Deviation shed. Whether the Group's loyal and hard working volunteers will turn up at Grosmont throughout the year on Monday and Thursday evenings is understandably questionable. At least the decision has been taken to invest in major improvements at Grosmont which will be welcome whether an alternative to Wilton is found or not.

Blue Peter continues to lay the ghost of Durham with a succession of spirited, trouble free runs on the main line. Passengers and footplate crew alike seem impressed by its performances, which on a couple of recent occasions have helped to recover time lost by more modern traction! Even one EWS locomotive inspector was heard to remark that the A2 was the best loco on the main line! Praise indeed. 1998 holds the mouth watering prospect of the A2 back on the East Coast Main Line but this time working out of Kings Cross. Watch this space...!

In conclusion, on behalf of the Committee, I should like to wish all members a happy Christmas and a prosperous and successful New Year.

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

J27 No. 65894

On top of the 2,250 miles run on the North Norfolk Railway, the J27 has covered a further 1,964 miles on the NYMR up to and including 14th December. It is expected to run Santa specials from the Grosmont end on the final weekend of 20th and 21st December and may be used on services between Christmas and New Year.

However, in order for the locomotive to run, a number of important jobs have been necessary. On 9th November the LHS little end ran hot and destroyed the brass. The necessitated a new brass being made and fitted. At the same time the opportunity was taken to remetal and rebore both big ends. The locomotive was reassembled on 7th December, a long hard day. Special thanks are due to Richard Pearson, Fred Ramshaw, Eric Nott, Derek Shorten and Bob Gray for their efforts which enabled the J27 to run Santa specials on 13th and 14th December without problems. Furthermore Martin Lloyd and Terry Newman have replaced all the worsted trimmings on the locomotive with new ones.

T2 No. 2238

In store in Deviation Shed.

K1 No. 62005

Significant progress is being made and major steps forward are planned, which is good news bearing in mind that the locomotive must be completed in time to vacate No.5 depot by the end of March next year.

On 15th December the new valve liners were frozen into the valves using liquid nitrogen. On 17th December it was planned to give the boiler a hydraulic test, followed on 22nd December by a steam test. If both go well then it is planned to return the boiler from Chatham to Wilton during the first

week in January, and place into the frames. This will facilitate a mammoth amount of work and a big volunteer effort will be required in the New Year to get this work done and meet the deadline of 31st March.

The superheater elements are off site having new ends fitted and when completed the elements will be hydraulically tested before being returned to Wilton.

The tender is all but finished; the painting awaits the application of the red lining and the BR crests.

Q7 No. 901

The Q7 has amassed 2,160 miles, disappointingly somewhat short of its allocated total of 2,660. For a short time during October the locomotive was turned on the Pickering turntable, the Autumn gala freight train being the first train it worked facing north. It also enabled the tender to tender double heading of the members' special on 18th October. The locomotive was then turned to face south.

The locomotive has now been 'winterised' in Deviation shed i.e. the boiler and tender tank drained of water, and water and steam pipes disconnected, in order to prevent frost damage.

Planned winter maintenance work involves remedial attention to the middle big end and crosshead. The engine brake blocks also require renewing.

J72 No. 69023

In store inside Deviation shed.

A2 No. 60532 Blue Peter

Up until 29th November the A2 has run a total of 4,866 miles during 1997 - 1,368 on the NYMR, 1,408 on the Great Central Railway and 2,090 on the main line. This has been mostly trouble free, particularly on the main line,

with the only attention other than routine maintenance being the replacement of first the LHS trailing driving wheel spring, then the RHS one.

Following its performance on *The Irish Mail*, the A2 put up another sterling performance on *The Shap Attack* on 29th November and a northbound climb of Ais Gill with the Past Time tour on 6th December. Blue Peter is due to return south from Carlisle to Skipton with another Past Time tour on 20th December. The loco and support coach will then go to Haworth on the KWVR until February. During this stay the opportunity will be taken to carry out some preventative maintenance by decarbonising the valves. The next main line outing is a northbound trip over the S&C on 7th February.

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RAILTOUR REPORT

The Irish Mail duly ran on Sunday 2nd November but it was a close run affair. In the period up to that date John Hunt, Peter Robinson and Colin Hatton were given the task of deciding to run or not to run, as bookings only trickled in to Cohn Smith, who for this tour had agreed to try his hand at seat/ticket allocation. But to go back a step or two.

The Committee had duly considered, the proposals for main line running from September to December and believed NELPG should capitalise on the earning potential of Blue Peter in this, its last year of main line steam. *We* thus decided to promote the early season tours ourselves.

The excellent run of *The North Briton* provided us with a well deserved sense of euphoria which, we expected, would reflect on *The Irish Mail*, and our expectations were that this train would quickly fill. Unfortunately it didn't happen. This despite the wealth of publicity put out by Dave Whitfield, Maurice Burns and Cohn Hatton, who variously managed to get onto Radio Stoke, Ceefax and of course the Blue Peter TV programme.

Come decision day, when we had to confirm to EWS to run or not to run, we were still well short of breaking even, and at this point, John managed to negotiate a reduction in the facilitation fee, which meant on decision day we would only lose slightly more than our deposit, which we would lose anyway, run or no run. The decision was therefore easy; we run, and hope to get more bookings and good on board sales to lesson the loss.

This in fact did happen and I am glad to report that although the accounts for the tour have yet to be finalised, it seems that we might in fact break even, though we will not recover our locomotive fee.

Four weeks later the A2 was in action again, this time with a full train, when it headed Pathfinders' *Shap Attack* from Cardiff to Carlisle, with Blue Peter running over Shap in both directions. With a load of 13 coaches and miserably wet weather the A2 put up yet another memorable performance. A high speed run up the WCML to Carnforth and over Grayrigg was spoiled by a number of PW checks which meant that the climb up the 1 in 75 of Shap was restricted to Just 30 mph. However a 26 minute late departure from Crewe was turned into a 3 minute early arrival at Carlisle.

A 10 minute late departure from Carlisle preceded a spirited climb to Shap summit passed at 55 mph, not bad with 13 full coaches in tow! Despite some sustained 75 mph running thereafter, some time was lost leaving the Lancaster water stop due to slippery rail conditions and arrival in Preston was 18 minutes late. Once again, due to engineering works on the main line south of Preston, Blue Peter left the train and proceeded to Carnforth for stabling. When returning through the station passengers on the tour train gave a round of spontaneous applause to Blue Peter and its support crew!

A week later the A2 was in use again, leaving Carnforth on the Friday night and arriving in Crewe at 22.08 in readiness the following day's train for Past Time. Again the A2 performed faultlessly despite a variety of delays. Firstly the train was 33 minutes late leaving Crewe but by the time Blackburn had been reached and water taken, the train was back on schedule. However, with the A2 ready to depart right time at 13.20, it was held until 14.05 whilst flooding of the line at Clitheroe was inspected. A further check beyond Blackburn meant further delay, which was compounded by a signal check at Settle Junction. From a standing start with another load of 13 full coaches and

again in blustery and wet conditions, Blue Peter went up the Long Drag at a steady 45 mph (faster than Sir Nigel Gresley which preceded the A2 up to Ais Gill, according to lineside observers!). Because of the delays the Appleby stop was omitted, and eventual arrival in Carlisle was at 17.25, some 45 minutes late. Commenting on the A2's valiant performance Andy Staite, Director of Past Time said that *"he hadn't seen anything like it"*. Praise indeed.

The A2 was stabled at Carlisle and was due to run south over Ais Gill on 20th December as far as Skipton, and thence engine and support coach would go to Haworth. The A2's next main line trips are on 7th and 14th February out and back over the S&C and are once again being promoted by Past Time - details on 01543 411971.

Thereafter there is expected to be lull in main line outings for the A2 as all efforts will be required to get the K1 finished at Wilton and the site cleared by the end of March.

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WORKING PARTIES

These take place every Sunday at Grosmont for work on the Q7 and the J27. Contact Clive Goult on 01642 473451 or Fred Ramshaw on 01740 621301.

And at Wilton every Monday and Thursday evenings for work on the K1. Contact Paul Hutchinson on 01642 825880 or Fred Ramshaw on 01740 621301.

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MEMBERS' LUNCHEON SPECIAL

The annual members' special duly ran, being fully hooked in less than two weeks. Members were treated to a superb meal and gloriously sunny weather to appreciate the North York Moors in all their autumnal glory. 901 and 65894 coupled tender to tender worked the seven coach train and made a splendid sight as the two pictures in the NEWS illustrate.

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A WORD FROM THE SECRETARY by Colin Hatton

In October I attended the NYMR council meeting as NELPG's representative. Next year will see the twenty fifth anniversary of NYMR, and whilst planning for this is in its very early stages there is a hope that the 'Royal Train' of yesteryear will be repeated. This of course is of particular interest to NELPG as, at that time, it was hauled by our J27, then as P3 2392, double headed by No 29.

In October I also attended the Loco Owners' meeting on behalf of the Group. Resulting from this meeting we have a lot of contract work to do, covering a new agreement with NYMR, a definition of Home Base locomotives, and scheduled mileages for 1998. Further meetings will take place later in the year with NYMR.

On the railtour front you will have read of *The Irish Mail* hut the fact that it turned out to be a qualified success, is down to many people, but I would like to thank Eddie Bobrowski for donating to us a superb picture of 'Blue Peter' and Terry Weallands whose framing shop at Guisborough superbly framed it;



60532 speeds through Rhyl with the down Irish Mail on a wet and grey 2nd November 1997 (Maurice Bums)



65894 pulls into the down loop at Goathland with the pick up goods on 4th October 1997 (John Hunt)



65894 pilots 901 off Esk Valley viaduct with the members' luncheon special bound for Pickering on 18th October 1997 (Maurice Burns)



901 pilots 65894 at Eller Beck with the members' special returning from Pickering on 18th October 1997 (David Warren)

as a result, Dave Pennock and his team took more raffle money on the half empty train than he did on the full *North Briton!*

You will perhaps know that I turn our house into a telephone exchange to assist in the bookings for our main line trains. For *The Irish Mail* of the many calls received I will remember three; one from a father whose son of five has Leukaemia, who I had to dissuade from coming on the train as it would be a very long day for him.

The second was an old man who wanted to reward his old friend for looking after him in recent years, by giving him a surprise trip on our train, whilst the third was from a woman whose son is autistic but loves trains. Mr Bonney was absolutely delighted when I met him in Crewe, and Richard Pearson made the autistic young man's day by arranging a visit to the footplate and a sit in the driver's seat at Llandudno junction.

What a day! The locomotive ran well, with speeds of 70 - 75 recorded on the train and whilst the train got back to Euston twenty minutes late and the weather was overcast, it is fair to say, overall it was an excellent day out, thoroughly enjoyed by support crew and patrons alike, due to the efforts of many people in NELPG. This indeed is what main line steam is all about.

You will have read in my column in the last issue, that Maurice had decided to stand down as group CME. Some time ago Maurice indicated his desire to relinquish his responsibility for the overhaul of the K1 but I am pleased to say he is still looking after the boiler and firebox works - which involve perhaps, the most highly technical repairs NELPG have carried out in the steam raising area of locomotive overhaul and restoration.

At the recent combined loco sub-committee main board meeting it was unanimously decided that no one person will or indeed can, be responsible for the mechanical correctness of our locomotives. Therefore, from now on, locomotive caretakers will be wholly responsible for all aspects of their locomotives. Thus for example, Paul Hutchinson is responsible of the A2 and K1, along with Richard Pearson who is responsible for the J27, and also with Paul, the K1. The hope is that all working members will recognise these onerous responsibilities and give loco caretakers their full support.

Maurice, of course is not getting off lightly, as well as being involved as Chairman of the group, he will still form part of working parties, and he there to advise on technical aspects of locomotive overhauls.

I have no further hard news to give on alternative premises to ICI Wilton save that I am following up various ideas, but thanks are due to Allan Bowman who, along with Fred Ramshaw, has spent a lot of time travelling around Teesside looking at possible sites.

Following very close to *The Irish Mail* we hired out Blue Peter to Pathfinders for their 'Shap Attack' (to run up and down Shap in one day). The locomotive performed superbly, hauling the thirteen coach train up Shap at a comfortable 60 mph. "*Not a bad engine you've got there*" I was told as I meandered through the train, still selling our video, book and prints and I must say our on board sales team have not before experienced the sheer delight of the patrons at the day's excellent performance. In fact at Preston where Blue Peter came off, the crew were given a well deserved round of applause!! Well done Paul and his team.

During our last Committee meeting we agreed that Fred Ramshaw be appointed as volunteer liaison man. Do contact Fred on any group matters. He is extremely keen to get involved in this role, and hopefully better our communication links.

We have also set up a new Rail Tour Sub Committee which will be chaired by Dave Pennock (train manager on NELPG run tours). This will consist of myself, Maurice Burns, John Hunt, Paul Hutchinson and Peter J Robinson. Suffice to say at this stage its aims will be to organise and agree future Blue Peter rail tours.

Our 1998 programme will start in February and hopefully will provide some thrilling runs with this superb engine in this, nominally its last, year of main line steam. Although I should add, your Committee is contemplating an extension to this, which will mean the obligatory removal of some flue tubes and replacement of all small tubes.

For some time now (years in fact) the Committee have pondered on modifications to Deviation Shed. Martin Lloyd has taken suggestions under his wing and is proceeding to establish basic designs and quotations for a

working pit (similar to that recently incorporated by NYMR in their New Bridge shed, and an external lean-to which will replace the old box van and provide vital additional space in the shed. Such facilities are long overdue and will provide the Grosmont workforce with better access to the underside of locomotives. This, then, is the subject of this year's appeal.

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FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS.....by Maurice Burns

Almost half a lifetime ago, 25 years to be exact, I attended a meeting on behalf of the NELPG at the Darlington Council offices to see if there was a will to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. Three years later in August 1975 the S&D exhibition became reality and the highlight - the grand steam cavalcade - was watched by an estimated one and a half million people. The NELPG had four locomotives in the cavalcade - P3 2392, T2 2238, K1 2005 and 4767, then freshly named 'George Stephenson'. Those who attended the event will never forget the morning of the cavalcade as over 30 locomotives raised steam in Shildon Works yard. Even now that one day historical event is still claimed by local Councils to have been watched by more people than any other single event in the UK.

25 years on, a little older and wiser, I received an invitation from Stockton Borough Council to attend a meeting at Preston Hall Museum to see if there was a will to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the S&DR in the year 2000. I must admit to being somewhat sceptical of the possibility of any celebrations but the first meeting on 3rd December was similar to the one back in 1972. With representatives of the three local Councils, local museums and GNER present, there was a spirit to make something happen, even if the railway scene is rather different from that of 1975. Following initial proposals for

school painting competitions, my suggestion to have a celebration of world rail travel from 1825 to the future, involving a major exhibition and a cavalcade, left everyone speechless! Further discussion then centered round the need for any local celebrations to have a national or international flavour. If so then a major spectacle such as an exhibition and cavalcade would be required. If these were not possible then the celebrations would likely be a regional only affair.

With Shildon wagon works now closed and with track rationalisation widespread, options are somewhat limited. Nevertheless the search is on for a suitable site. If any members have any ideas for an exhibition site or venue for a cavalcade, please contact me as soon as possible on 01642 780794 A decision is required early in 1998.

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FOR SALE

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY by Tomlinson. This 1967 David and Charles reprint, with an introduction by the late Ken Hoole, is in very good condition, though it does not have its dust cover.

The book has been donated to the Group in order to raise funds. Anyone interested in purchasing this book is invited to ring Allan Toomer on 01642 530301 and submit their bid by 31st December 1997. The highest offer secures.

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given of the next Annual General Meeting of the Group to be held in The Ladle on Ladgate Lane Middlesbrough, starting at 7.30pm on Friday 8 May 1998.

Three board members retire each year by rotation; this year Maurice Burns, Clive Goult and Colin Smith retire.

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS by Colin Smith

Members are reminded that their memberships are due for renewal with this issue and a renewal form is duly enclosed. The members' appeal this year is to help finance the construction of a maintenance pit in Deviation shed. At present any work carried out underneath our locomotives in the shed has had to be done from between the rails on the sleepers and ballast, and with little headroom usually lying on one's back - hardly ideal working conditions! plans have been drawn up and estimates are being sought. As access for construction vehicles will have to be across the running lines, the project will have to be carried out in the NYMR's 'close' season between January and March. Therefore the sooner we can get construction under way on this essential facility, the sooner it will be available to ease and speed up work on our locomotives at Grosmont.

At 1st December 1997 the membership of the Group was as follows:-

Life	88
Ordinary	323
Husband & Wife	108
<u>OAP/Junior</u>	<u>96</u>
TOTAL	615

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COVENANTING by John Drew

On the reverse of the membership renewal form is the DEED OF COVENANT form which enables NELPG to reclaim the Income Tax payable on your subscription/donation. This year we are able to reclaim about £650 from 150 covenanters; many thanks to all 150 of you! If any one else would like to join that number you will be very welcome, just agree to donate a regular amount (your subscription if you wish) for at least 4 years. It all helps to support the Group.

All covenanters will find enclosed with this issue a card which gives the value and expiry date of their covenants. Please keep it for future reference. It will greatly assist the administration of the covenants if all covenants are maintained and paid promptly. In recent years I have had to send out reminder for unpaid money and I do not wish to have to do this year. Many thanks to all those who have contributed during 1997.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Friday 12th December 1997 **THE MIDDLESBROUGH TO GUISBOROUGH RAILWAY.** Slide presentation by Grace Dixon. Followed after the raffle break by members' surplus slide auction with bargains galore!

Saturday 20th December 1997 **BLUE PETER ON THE MAIN LINE.** Carlisle - Ais Gill - Skipton. Promoted by Past Time from Kings Cross.

Friday 9th January 1998 **35 YEARS OF RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHY** by Dr. Les Nixon

Saturday 7th February 1998 **BLUE PETER ON THE MAIN LINE** Skipton - Ais Gill - Carlisle. Promoted by Past Time from London Kings Cross. Details from 01543 411971.

Friday 13th February 1998 **RAILWAYS OF EAST ANGLIA** a slide presentation by Bernard Harrison.

Saturday 14th February 1998 **BLUE PETER ON THE MAIN LINE.** Carlisle - Ais Gill - Preston - Crewe. Promoted by Past Time from London Euston. Details from 01543 411971.

Friday 13th March 1998 **STEAM ON THE BIG BOX** another spectacular video presentation by Ted Parker

Friday 17th April 1998 **THE MIDDLETON RAILWAY** a slide lecture by Ian Smith.

Friday 8th May 1998 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** followed after the interval by **A PICTORIAL JOURNEY ON THE NYMR**, a slide presentation by Adrian Scales.

Meetings are held in the upstairs room of The Ladle Hotel, Ladgate Lane, Middlesbrough, commencing at 7.30 pm.

COVER PICTURES

Front: 60532 Blue Peter passes the imposing ramparts of Conway Castle in dismal weather on 2nd November with the outward run of The Irish Mail (Colin Smith).

Back (top): 901 stands on the Pickering turntable on 4th October 1997 prior to taking a freight train to Grosmont (John Hunt).

Back (bottom): 65894 storms past Water Ark between Grosmont and Goathland with the pick up goods on 5th October 1997 (John Hunt).

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