

N.E.L.P.G. NEWS



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EDITORIAL

The last six weeks have been quite successful, not least because, subject to final agreement, a new base for locomotive restoration has been found on Teesside. It is proposed to join the A1 Locomotive Construction Company in the old S&D Hopetown Carriage Works, next to North Road Museum. The new A1 occupies the eastern wing of the building and it is proposed that the NELPG will occupy the western wing. Preparatory work has already started and if all goes to plan, the Q6 could be inside the building by the end of August. This really is good news because it means that all those itching to get cracking on the Q6 will shortly get their chance, the traditional Monday and Thursday evening Teesside working parties can, hopefully, be resurrected, and our relationship with the A1 project will be an important step in establishing the Darlington site as a centre of engineering excellence with mutual benefits for both groups. The prospects are potentially quite exciting, so it is hoped that all goes well with the final negotiations.

Meanwhile the K1 has returned from a thoroughly enjoyable spell at the tenth anniversary Steam on the Met event. Last year Kevin Gould, NELPG founder member, said that to drive his own engine - 75014 - on the main line at speeds in excess of 50mph, on one of the most intensely used lines in the country, was the highlight of his railway involvement. Now NELPG has done it and he was right - it was a tremendous, never to be forgotten experience. It was also a great team effort, not least when the K1 was temporarily withdrawn with an increasingly severe knock. To diagnose the problem, dismantle the locomotive, take the bits back to the North East, get them repaired, return them to Neasden, put the engine back together successfully in just five days was a marvellous achievement, and a tribute to all concerned.

Thereafter the K1 acquitted itself very well easily attaining 56mph on the 1 in 106 climb from Rickmansworth with 250 tons in tow. Elsewhere the A2 was also doing well. Fresh from its successful spark arrester test it covered over 550 trouble free miles in Scotland. The J27 is now in use on the KWVR. All three locomotives have something in common - they have all been subject to gradual improvement under the guidance of their respective managers in an effort to enhance their reliability and performance. Men and machines are a credit to the NELPG.

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT by Richard Pearson & Martin Lloyd

J27 No. 65894

The locomotive entered traffic on 11th April after the winter break but only ran for three days before being stopped with no less than four broken springs, and one sheared spring hanger link. Unfortunately when the link sheared, the spring hanger bracket moved, stretching the fitted bolts that hold it to the frame.

One spring was replaced the following day but as we only had one spare locomotive spring, the four broken springs were sent away to Springline for repair. Unfortunately delivery was six weeks because three of the springs had broken top leaves which are a special forging. The shortest possible delivery from the foundry was four weeks, plus another two weeks for the assembly of the springs. The cost of the repaired springs was £500 each. Two new, additional springs have been ordered so that we will have three spares.

The spring hanger links and nuts were examined and as they were in generally poor condition, and have a history of shearing - this was the third in two years - it was decided to replace them all at a cost of approximately £1,000. The adjusting nuts sit against a rocking washer that allows the nut and link to rock as the spring camber changes as it flexes. These washers were also badly worn and were also replaced at a further cost of £300. The fitted bolts that hold the hanger brackets to the frames were also replaced.

The four repaired springs, new links, nuts and washers all arrived at Grosmont on Friday 4th June, were re-assembled on Sunday 6th and the engine weighed on Thursday 10th.

Monday 14th June saw the J27 return to traffic for just one day and it was rostered so that it worked the last train of the day from Grosmont to Pickering, then worked light engine to New Bridge yard. Sadly, the locomotive suffered yet another broken spring, this time on the tender. A small working party took place at New Bridge yard the following day to split engine and tender and replace the spring. The next day the locomotive was

moved by road to the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway where it was unloaded at Ingrow and towed to Haworth.

The locomotive was steamed on Sunday 20th June and entered KWVR traffic the following day. It is due to stay on the railway until the middle of September. To find out when the J27 is running members should ring the KWVR on 01535 645214.

T2 No. 2238

Whilst the locomotive is still in store in Deviation Shed, a small start has been made on its eventual restoration, by lubricating the axleboxes in readiness for moving the engine. Andy Harper, the NYMR's boilermith, is to carry out an internal examination of the boiler to assist in evaluating the work necessary for its overhaul. Neal Woods has started preparing a critical path analysis to ensure the locomotive is overhauled strictly to MT276.

K1 No. 62005

Martin Lloyd gives a graphic account of the events leading up to and during the Steam on the Met event elsewhere in this issue.

The locomotive was delivered back to the NYMR by road on Friday 4th June but was not moved back to Grosmont until 15th June when it worked the 10.20 Pickering - Grosmont train. It has since had its boiler washed out, which was long overdue having been in steam 36 days since its last washout. The opportunity was taken to attend to some outstanding repairs noted during its sojourn on the Met. The steam brake handle was slipping on the ratchet and this has been fixed, a engine/tender safety link, probably damaged at Ruislip, was replaced with a spare, and both injectors, which were badly wasting water, were fixed. It was found that the water cord packing at the top of the inner cone required replacement.

The K1 was due to re-enter NYMR traffic over the weekend of 26th/27th June.

Q7 No. 901

Whilst still in store in Deviation Shed, some work has recently been carried out. The boiler and tender were drained shortly after the locomotive was withdrawn from traffic, but the foundation ring has since been washed out, the firebox and smokebox given a thorough clean, and the grate and brick arch removed. The tender coal space has been cleared of coal and washed out in readiness for a coat of protective paint.

The Group is aware of the hot bearing but as the locomotive is not likely to be moved it has not, so far, received attention. However, it is planned to jack the engine up, probably in September, to examine the journal and axlebox to determine what remedial action is required.

J72 No. 69023

In store in Deviation Shed.

A2 No. 60532 Blue Peter

The Railtour Report recounts the A2's recent main line activities but its various forays have meant only routine maintenance. Whilst on the NYMR the locomotive was used over both the May bank holiday weekends covering a total of 504 miles. In between the boiler was washed out and the damaged LHS grate support replaced with a new casting. This carries the left hand set of rocker firebars and had burnt away quite badly. attention, once again, was given to the continuing piston packing saga The problem now appears to be the springs. As an interim measure the old ones have been put back and new ones are being made which will hopefully cure the problem once and for all.

The locomotive is currently at Bo'ness and a working party over the weekend of 26th/27th June was expected to take down the middle big end in order to replace the felts, since the big end was using an excessive amount of oil.

STEAM ON THE MET by Martin Lloyd

As usual there were several deadlines. We had to have the loco in Newbridge yard, cooled down with both boiler and tender empty by Tuesday May 11th ready for transportation to the Ruislip Depot of London Underground Limited.

Before that, the loco had to appear at the head of the "Thank you to BP" train on the previous Sunday May 9th. This had to be scheduled so that the K1 would, under normal circumstances, have been the light engine returning from Pickering at 18.00 but on this occasion, would be left at Newbridge yard.

Before departure to The Met we needed to fit a spark arrestor system but the engine was still in NYMR traffic up to and including Tuesday May 4th. The spark arrestor needed to be evaluated by Brian Penney during our loaded test run which he had agreed could take place on The Met on Thursday May 20th. One of the factors in accepting the invitation to take the loco to the Steam on the Met event was that we would get the final stages of our mainline certification, economically, by saving all the Railtrack, crew and coal charges.

There are, in fact, two spark arrestors. There is a blast-pipe basket of familiar appearance designed and drawn up with the aid of a computer programme, in good time, and a primary screen almost completely covering the front tubeplate designed on the back of an envelope at the last minute because we had too many conflicting ideas. The blast pipe basket was manufactured by a small firm in Stockton and trial fitted one evening whilst the loco was still in traffic (and hot). The materials for the primary screen were obtained, from various sources, on Thursday May 6th (i.e. with only 3 days to go) and knocked into shape by Maurice Johnson, culminating in a midnight finish by Maurice, with some assistance from us, only hours before the BP trip the next day. It would have been nice to spread the work over into the Sunday but to have had the BP coppersmiths hauled by 34101 Hartland whilst the K1 was in bits in the shed would have been unthinkable. In the end it was worth the midnight oil. The BP party thoroughly enjoyed the day, with the coppersmiths each getting a ride on the footplate. However a slight knock on the RHS of the loco was commented upon by Ray Sowerby, who was on the train, but we

were confident that it was because of rather generous side play in the big end - a problem we were aware of and had on our list of things to do next winter.

The basket spark arrestor was finally fitted at Newbridge yard on the Tuesday, with the haulier's lorry standing-by ready to whisk the loco off to Ruislip! The necessary drilling and grinding was aided by our new generator.

On Saturday May 15th, two of us took a heavily laden hired car with all the necessary paraphernalia down to Ruislip Depot and coupled engine and tender together. The car had been loaded, from other vehicles, in the car-park of the Ladle Hotel, during the interval of the NELPG AGM the previous evening. The loco would stay at Ruislip for a few days for the fitting of Westinghouse air brake control equipment. All LUL trains are air braked, even the old Mk 1 vehicles we would be pulling, so a driver's brake valve and temporary pipe work had to be fitted. The air supply came from, either a class 20 diesel or the Metropolitan Railway electric loco Sarah Siddons (both preserved locos). Sarah is fondly regarded by all the LUL staff and is part of their small "Heritage Fleet".

The first weekend's team arrived at Ruislip on Wednesday May 19th. The loco was prepared and lit up ready for transfer, in steam, to Neasden Depot, the next morning. Ruislip is the only depot with good access for locomotives arriving by road but Neasden is the home base for the steam event, hence the need for this movement. At Neasden there is a little single road engine shed with non electrified track and a pit. There is also an adjoining mess room with cooking and toilet facilities which are ideal for the operation. The locos were coaled and serviced here.

For the inter depot transfer, our loco hauled a train of coaches used as our sleeping accommodation and vans allocated as tool stores for the 4 locomotives running the service. Terry Newman drove and Bernie Lyth fired this train for the 15 mile journey, our first over LUL metals.

After only a few hours we were off again on our first serious run, from Neasden Depot, through Harrow on the Hill and Wembley Park to Amersham. This was our proving run for the Met, our loaded test run and our spark arrestor test for Halcrow Transmark, our vehicle acceptance body. Brain Penney was on board and he was happy with the spark arrestor and the performance of the locomotive. Unfortunately he was not happy with the

speedometer and cannot grant us our certificate until the fault is rectified. He also commented on our "knock". Brian was happy with our diagnosis but warned us to keep a watch out for any deterioration.

The following day saw us out again for a practice at the parallel running, a feature of the Steam on the Met working which sees two trains depart simultaneously from Harrow on the Hill and running side by side for the 6 miles of four track main line to Moor Park. Each train pulls ahead then drops back, several times, so that the passengers can all see the locomotives working at speed. All this is done at up to 50 mph, flashing through little stations and inside a timetable of LUL trains running at 7 minute intervals! Our knock was still there but seemed no worse.

Saturday dawned and we took part in the parallel running for real. Several hundred passengers proved by their smiling faces that they were having fun. So were we. Then we ran our share of the main events of the day, the shuttle service from Amersham to Watford and return via Rickmansworth including 6 miles of a 1 in 100 climb. This sounds chicken feed to those used to the 1 in 49 of the NYMR but it was twice the distance at more than twice the speed and proved to be quite a challenge.

After our second round trip our knock was a little louder but observations from the cab, whilst moving, still led us to believe it was big end side-play. At the end of the third trip the knock was causing some concern and after an examination during the 45 minute layover, it was decided, in consultation with the organisers, to miss the last of our turns and return to Neasden Depot at reduced speed. The various conflicting diagnoses from the many knowledgeable people at Amersham were put to the test and we decided that we had two, probably unrelated problems, since the RHS centre side rod brass was loose in the rod. Between them, Richard Pearson and Roger Paddison, a remarkable man who is the guiding force behind the whole Steam on the Met operation, diagnosed that the RHS piston was loose on the piston rod. This was detected by putting the loco with the RHS crank pin on top dead centre, then, with brakes hard on, opening the regulator and moving the reverser from full forward to full back gear thus putting steam to one side of the piston then the other. Repeating this a few times gave us our knock. The operation was repeated for the LHS but with out any knock.



The west end of the S&D Hopetown Carriage Works at Darlington. After demolition of the wall in the foreground, locomotives would enter the building through the double doors (John Hunt)



The new A1 60163 inside the works on 20th April (John Hunt)



60532



With Penyghent prominent to the left, 60532 crosses Ribbleshead viaduct en route from Hellfield to Carlisle on 24th April (John Stiles)

There then followed a number of hurried phone calls. By an incredible stroke of good fortune, the A4, Sir Nigel Gresley, was at Bounds Green depot in readiness for the following day's trip from Kings Cross to York. Roger Barker, our full time good egg, lent us his crosshead splitter and Roland Kennington, in the final throws of getting Flying Scotsman finished, was still at Southall and lent us micrometers and callipers. Ian Storey said that he would be able to carry out the repairs so we spent all day Sunday dropping the RHS rods, removing the offending brass, (it fell out) and removing the RHS piston. We also took the LHS cylinder cover off to make sure that the piston on that side was secure, and it was. We also laid the connecting rod out flat, on a rail, and measured up the bearing alignment with a vernier and deduced that the rod was not bent. Incidentally we had asked Ray Tranter from the SVR if they would be willing to take on the repair - admittedly before we knew what the problem was, and he said that they couldn't do the work in the required time scale of a week.

On Sunday night we loaded half a ton of ironmongery in Malcolm Simpson's car and came home. Malcolm then went to Ian Storey's works on the following morning. Ian agreed a method of repair with Brian Penney, then machined the bruised taper in the piston head, built up the piston rod with weld and sent it for heat treatment. Meanwhile he made a new side rod brass, Fred Ramshaw collected enough white metal from Hardy's Non Ferrous in Middlesbrough and took it through to Morpeth. Ian white metalled the new brass and machined it to the size specified by Neal Woods, who had done the measuring at Neasden with the borrowed micrometers.

Malcolm collected the repaired items on the Wednesday night and we went back with them to Neasden on Thursday 27th May. Malcolm scraped in the radius of the new brass to fit the crank pin then we pressed the brass into the rod. Neasden Depot doesn't have a big press so we had taken with us a 25 ton jack and we used it, with packing and spacers, to press the brass into the side rod which was laid flat, suitably packed up level, under the loco front buffer beam. It was quite touching to watch the old girl gently push her own brass into place with gentle persuasion. We had a small crowd of astonished LUL maintenance staff around us during the operation.

By now we had enough of our support crew to lift up the side rods and con rod. We then fitted the repaired piston and rod with assistance from Roger Paddison and a fork lift truck, then re-fitted the cylinder cover. We checked

that the piston was on the rod in exactly the correct position by "bumping" it against both ends of the cylinder and marking the slide bar with the limits of travel before connecting the cross head to the con rod. We were delighted to find that the amount of travel of the piston, in operation, would be within the bump marks by an equal and correct amount.

The loco was then pulled outside of the repair shed for the first time in 5 days and was lit up. Roger Paddison had arranged a test run to Amersham and back for the Friday mid afternoon. At less than 12 hours notice we were slotted into their 7 minute time schedule without any problem. Some of the fast LUL trains were routed onto the slow line to give us a path. Railtrack would have wanted 16 weeks for a similar exercise! The trial run went without a hitch with the knock absent and the side rod brass just a little warm. We were greeted as sort of folk heroes by the other support crews who were " gobsmacked" at our achievement. The organisers were very appreciative of our determined efforts to return the locomotive to traffic for the second, Bank Holiday, weekend. We congratulated ourselves and we went out for a meal that evening and had a celebratory glass of Lucozade.

The rest of the weekend went like clockwork and was just pure magic with, we were told, bigger crowds than last year. With almost all of the LUL volunteers giving their time free the financial surplus went to children's charities and the RNIB.

The London Underground is, in fact more than two thirds above ground. Lines like the Metropolitan were built by the "cut and cover" method and as a consequence only run on or just below the surface and have a generous loading gauge. The "tube" is a much tighter fit and runs as much as 200 ft below ground. Amersham is the highest point on the LUL system at over 300 ft above sea level. Places like Ruislip and Neasden are massive depots, Neasden has over forty repair and storage roads, all with four rail electrification. The standard gauge track has a centre live rail at +450 volts and the outside fourth rail at -150 volts so you can imagine these large depots and the multi-track main lines are just a sea of steel rail. With eight and nine car electric sets running every few minutes almost round the clock.

To be just a small part of this huge, complicated, busy system, even for only a few days was amazing. We talked to one of our conductors called Tim (the conductor knows the road, the signals etc, and is responsible for keeping the

volunteer driver right), and he drove tube trains for a living. He started to volunteer on another preserved railway but was discouraged by the clique telling him of the responsibility involved. He said that he carried more people a week than they do in a year. And that about sums it up - an operation of a colossal scale.

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-WORKING PARTIES

These take place every Sunday at Grosmont for work on the K1, Q6 and the A2. Contact Richard Pearson on 01642 475080, Clive Goult on 01642 473451 or Fred Ramshaw on 01740 621301.

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-ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Chairman's Report was omitted from the previous issue. It was circulated at the meeting and is now reproduced for the benefit of members who were not at the AGM.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT by Dave Martin

47 members attended the Group's AGM held on 14th May. The Chairman apologised for the omission of his report from the AGM Supplement. He stated that nothing sinister should be read into this - simply the lack of time in a very busy period of work for the Group.

A number of questions were raised concerning the A2's 'midi' overhaul in 1998. These concerned the overrun in time and increases in cost. Paul Hutchinson fielded these questions stating that more work had to be carried out than had been planned and other work earmarked for 1999 had been brought forward. Martin Lloyd took questions on the K1 which centered on problems which had arisen since the locomotive had returned to steam but could be traced back to work carried out during the overhaul.

The Chairman thanked all the Committee members and the locomotive caretakers for all the hard work they had put in over the year and reminded the meeting that all were volunteers and this was their hobby and we shouldn't ask too much of them. He also pointed out that the three locomotives available for traffic were now in better condition and a credit to all those who worked on them.

The Treasurer's and Secretary's Reports were accepted with only a few questions. Peter Robinson, Paul Hutchinson and Terry Newman were elected to the Committee. All three motions covering the Q6 overhaul, increases in membership subscriptions and the offer of the Presidency to Geoff Drury, were all passed nem con.

Before the first meeting of the Committee following the AGM took place, Clive Goult resigned from the Committee. Clive felt that his efforts could be better spent working on the locomotives rather than in the Committee forum. May I take this opportunity to thank Clive for his efforts and hope he will continue to help out on the locomotive front.

At the last Committee meeting the holders of the position of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer remain unchanged, but Richard Pearson, the J27

Locomotive Manager, and unsuccessful in the AGM election by just one vote, was co-opted onto the Committee for one year.

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RAILTOUR REPORT

The A2's spark arrester trial became a bit of a farce, being timed wholly in daylight! However, a weeping washout plug prevented the locomotive doing its light engine proving run from Carnforth to Preston and back on Monday 19th April. This was hurriedly rescheduled for the evening of 23rd April but with the coaching set for the following day's Settle and Carlisle trip. This became both the light engine proving run and the spark arrester trial! On a wet and windy night the A2 and its eight coach train stormed north out of Preston back to Carnforth and, with Brian Penney on board, passed its test. The A2 then took its empty train to Hellifield in readiness for the Saturday run.

On the Saturday the eight coach train was healthily full and a pleasant run to Carlisle and back took place, almost to the minute. crewed by West Coast Railway staff the engine performed faultlessly and easily with its light load and generous schedule, imposed due to the trackwork restrictions on the S&C. The break in Carlisle just allowed enough time for one group of passengers to hire a car, drive to Steel Road, drive up the trackbed of the erstwhile Waverley route as far as Whitrope summit, including a 'run past' near Riccarton Junction, visit Shankend where the signal box and viaduct still stand, then return to Carlisle and catch the A2 with just two minutes to spare! The A2 was returned from Carnforth to Pickering by road in time for the May bank holiday.

Blue Peter left the railway again on the evening of 9th June, this time by rail, with the 75014 support coach. The run to Thornaby, Darlington and up the ECML to Morpeth for water, then Millerhill yard near Edinburgh, culminated

with arrival at Bo'ness, on the shores of the Firth of Forth, at 09.20 on the Thursday morning. The next day it took an 11 coach SRPS train from Bo'ness to Edinburgh, via the suburban loop, then conveyed VIPs to a function at Dunfermline where the passengers alighted. The journey back was as empty stock, which was stabled at Millerhill by mid afternoon. It was an easy, short but enjoyable day out.

The next day the A2 worked two circular trips from Edinburgh, over the Forth Bridge, along the Firth of Forth coast through Kirkcaldy to Thornton Junction, over to Cowdenbeath, Dunfermline and Inverkeithing, back over the Forth Bridge, right at Haymarket to Craiglockhart Junction, up through Morningside and Niddrie, onto the ECML at Portobello and back into Edinburgh Waverley. The weather was unfavourable and there were some operating delays, but around 700 passengers were carried during the day. After the second trip the train returned to Bo'ness.

Since leaving Grosmont the A2 had covered 561 miles and the smokebox had not been cleaned out. When it was, there was just a barrow full of char. Now it will be necessary to get a SC addition to the shed plate!

60532 is expected to be used on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway on 27th June then on another special train from Linlithgow to Preston, via Edinburgh, Carstairs, Beattock, Carlisle, Shap and Carnforth on Saturday 10th July; for booking details ring 01383 822944 or 01698 263814 (Mon - Fri 7pm - 9pm).

Planned trips in July and August will not now take place, so it has been decided to bring the A2 back to the NYMR after 10th July, until the beginning of September. On Saturday 18th September 60532 is scheduled to run from York to Crewe via Castleford, the Calder Valley, Copy Pit and Blackburn for Past Time Rail - 01543 411971. A week later Pathfinders propose to use the A2 from Crewe to Carlisle via Blackburn and Ais Gill - details from 01453 835414. On Saturday 9th October the A2 is planned to run from Carlisle to Crewe via Ais Gill and Blackburn for Steamy Affairs - 01553 828107.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 10th July 1999 **BLUE PETER ON THE MAIN LINE.**
Linlithgow - Edinburgh - Carlisle - Preston. See text for details.

Friday 10th September 1999 **THE RAILWAYS OF IRELAND** a slide
show by Richard Barber.

Saturday 18th September 1999 **BLUE PETER ON THE MAIN LINE**
York - Castleford - Calder Valley - Copy Pit - Crewe. see text for details.

Saturday 25th September 1999 **BLUE PETER ON THE MAIN LINE**
Crewe - Blackburn - Ais Gill - Carlisle. see text for details.

Friday 8th October 1999 **STEAM AROUND THE WORLD** a slide show
by Dave Whitfield.

Saturday 9th October 1999 **BLUE PETER ON THE MAIN LINE**
Carlisle - Ais Gill - Blackburn - Crewe. See text for details.

Saturday 16th October 1999 **MEMBERS' LUNCHEON SPECIAL ON
THE NYMR.** See text for details.

Meetings commence at 7.30 p.m. in the upstairs room of The Ladle Hotel,
Ladgate Lane, Middlesbrough.

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COVER PICTURES

Front: 62005 crosses the Grand Union Canal between Watford and Croxley
with a Steam on the Met special on 22nd May 1999 (John Hunt)

Back (top):60532 at speed reflects the setting sun at Eden Lacy with the
return 'Not the Spark Arrester Test' on 24th April 1999 (David Warren)

Back (bottom):65894 approaches Levisham on 11th April 1999, its first
day in traffic (John Hunt)



Martin Lloyd and Neal Woods ponder the fate of the K1 inside Neasden depot on the evening of 22nd May



60532 eases through Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh with the VIP trip to Dunfermline on 11th June (John Hunt)

