

N.E.L.P.G. NEWS



NO. 97

OCT. 1983

Dear Member,

The 150th anniversary of Shildon works would no doubt have passed with ~~little fuss~~, overshadowed by the imminent threat of closure, except for H.R.'s in organising a steam hauled passenger service between Middlesbrough, Darlington and Shildon, using the Group's K1. Although arranged at very short notice, B.R. seemed well pleased with the day's events and the K1 performed very well, eliciting favourable comment from the B.R. footplate crews and inspectors. The fact that the engine ran 260 trouble free miles in 24 hours, after ten days of, at times, frenetic preparations and examinations which necessitated the manufacture and fitting of a brand new blastpipe, is quite an achievement and tribute to those who made it possible. But there was no respite for the K1; as soon as the last passengers detrained at 8.15 p.m. that evening, 2005 took water then went to Tees yard to work a freight train to Grosmont. Ten hours later the engine was once more earning its keep on the N.Y.M.R. working service trains between Grosmont and Pickering, just as it had been doing during the peak season, amassing nearly 6,000 miles in the process. The engine - and the Group - had been equal to the demands placed upon it, not only by the N.Y.M.R. but also by B.R., and once again had not been found wanting. Even the J72, pressed into service in the K1's absence, rose to the occasion and ensured that the N.Y.M.R. was able to fulfil its advertised steam service. This unexpected end of season flourish continued when, against at one time seemingly overwhelming odds, The Aberdonian ran more or less as planned, was enjoyed by a full complement of over 550 passengers and resulted in record receipts. The culmination of this Autumn of content occurs on 29th and 30th October with two specials using 69023, one to thank those who made the acquisition of the J72 possible, and the other, also using the K1, for the benefit of the membership as a whole.

Two lessons can be learnt from the above events which have far reaching consequences for the Group insofar as its relationship with the N.Y.M.R. is concerned: firstly, as in the past, the Group has been able to provide steam motive power virtually on demand, though at times excess requirements have stretched the Group's resources. Secondly, income from mileage and railtours has put the Group in a sound financial position capable of funding, for example, the imminent replacement of the firebox crown stays in the K1 and the cylinder reborng of the P3, both expensive specialist jobs, but very necessary. The continued availability of the Group's engines, however, depends on such investment but this can only be justified if either the locomotives are guaranteed use or there is guaranteed income. If railtour income cannot be taken for granted, the only source of Major income is N.Y.M.R. running. Without guarantees in this respect the future of the Group's locomotives must be in some doubt. This is by no means a new problem, having been the subject of previous debate with a view towards formulating an agreed locomotive maintenance policy with the N.Y.M.R., and this is still being actively pursued. However, the expected increase in N.Y.M.R. service engines in 1984 and the railway's need to severely prune its expenditure, have highlighted more than ever before the urgent need to secure agreement on future locomotive policy. In this respect the Group has good allies in the D.T.G. and D.P.S. who are also likely to feel the effects of any belt tightening and who are also faced with the same investment dilemma. All have one thing in common in that locomotives on the hire agreement, steam or diesel, have usually been readily available for traffic when required, provide welcome variety for the public and enable N.Y.M.R. staff to catch up on their own maintenance. Over the past 13 years the Group, and the other locomotive owners, have made an invaluable and essential contribution to the successful operation of the N.Y.M.R. at considerable expense and latterly with a financial return that is popularly accepted as going only part way towards the true cost of maintenance. In effect, therefore, the owners subsidise the running of their engines. Nevertheless despite the shortcomings of the hire agreements this important role must continue and the N.Y.M.R. has an obligation to recognise the private owners' contribution that should not now be sacrificed for the sake of financial expediency.

P3 NO.2392

The P3 week from 1st to 7th August went ahead as planned and all those who helped deserve special thanks. Jobs tackled included annealing both ends of the remaining boiler tubes, then polishing the area of expansion. Preparation of the firebox copper tubeplate continued and to date it is 50% complete. In the latter half of the week work was concentrated on the axlebox overhaul. Unlike the T2 overhaul where all the liners were renewed due to unparallelness of the boxes and guides, in the case of the P3 the liners were shimmed out to take up excessive clearance. With all the wheels removed and the axleboxes refitted into the frames the measured clearances were mysteriously excessive considering that only 8,000 miles had been covered since the B.R. overhaul in 1971. The right driving box was in the worst condition having over 1/16" clearance between box and horn, and the slip brass was loose by 1/8" in the same direction. Without delving into further technical detail it can be reported that all the axleboxes are now refurbished with minimum clearance. In addition, two new underkeeps, which contain the lubrication pad and bearing oil, have been renewed to replace those cracked; the left driving brass has been remetalled. All the engine springs have been reconditioned at a cost of £700 and these will be refitted when the engine is lowered onto the wheels, hopefully before the end of October.

T2 NO..2238

On exhibition inside Deviation shed.

K1 NO.2005

The intensive blitz of work described in the last issue and carried out prior to the departure of LEANDER, proved its worth. The K1 entered traffic on 31st July and worked until 17th August when it was stopped for the mandatory boiler washout. This, together with running repairs, was completed in the minimum of three days (to allow for cooling down of the boiler) and 2005 re-entered traffic on 21st August running continuously until 7th September. In these two periods the engine was in steam 33 days and covered 2,376 miles, bringing its 1983 total to 5,000.

Such intensive use on the heaviest trains in August naturally caused a backlog of repairs and when what was originally just a pipe dream, the Middlesbrough to Shildon trains, planned for 2005 on 24th September were confirmed at very short notice, it necessitated an emergency work programme to bring 2005 up to B.R. running condition. The ritual phone round produced a volunteer availability chart to plan work to a man! With effectively only two weekends to do a vast amount of work, including welding the ashpan, replacing firebars, fitting new steam brake piston rings, boiler washout and a multitude of other jobs, it was once again a question of working under pressure.

The B.R. and insurance company visual examinations were passed on Friday 16th September and the engine hastily prepared for a steam test on Sunday 18th. There were the usual crop of problems, notably blocked sand pipes, and the front steam sands working when the cab control said 'back', but most were cured prior to the B.R. steam test on Monday 19th. During the course of this examination the B.R. inspector discovered the K1's blastpipe to be cracked and beyond repair. With no spare - or a pattern available - there appeared to be no quick solution. Although sympathetic the inspector quite rightly had to fail the locomotive and advise B.R.E.L., the organisers of the Shildon event, of the predicament. With only three days before 2005's proposed departure

from Grosmont, prospects of a new blastpipe being produced in time were remote indeed...or so it seemed! There was just one possibility; to phone up a local foundry, explain the urgent situation and pray: So, within minutes of the discovery, this was done and the result was that Stockton Castings Ltd. agreed to have a replacement cast within 48 hours! This was on condition that the original blastpipe was removed from the K1, which was still in steam, and delivered to the foundry by 8 a.m. the next morning. This was accomplished and the photograph of the pattern maker reproduced on page 4 was taken that lunch time. By Tuesday night the pattern was complete and Wednesday morning saw the mould ready for the metal which was poured at 4.30 p.m. On Thursday morning at 8 a.m. the new casting was removed from the sand and fettled' before being handed over to N.E.L.P.G. members at 10 a.m. By Thursday night 2005 was ready and B.R. was advised that all was in order. Friday morning saw B.R. do a final check of the blastpipe, and the other jobs which had been outstanding, and by lunch time the engine was 'authorised to run over B.R. lines'. It was a close shave

The above summary does not really do justice to the volunteer effort, the minute by minute organisation and the pressure under which volunteers worked. All those who responded to the S.O.S. deserve the Group's thanks, in particular Mike Oliver, who took time off work to form the backbone of the mid-week working parties, together with Alan Ramsey, Les Slather, John Tarn and Dave Donegan. One has to have some sympathy for Les Slather who, working in the Merchant Navy, was called away to sea just before the K1 went on the main line.

The day itself went without a hitch. The K1 was cleaned at Thornaby shed on the Friday evening and it looked a fine sight with its quartered buffers, freshly painted lamps and 'The North Eastern' headboard, in the early morning sunshine on the Saturday. 2005 performed well throughout the day on its 8 coach train and all the crews, inspectors and B.R. officials seemed happy with the locomotive's performance. After the return of the last train, the K1 went to Tees yard to collect a restored Gresley buffet car bound from Didcot to Grosmont, and a goods brake van, and headed for home, eventually arriving at the end of its 260 mile jaunt at just three minutes to closing time! That, however, was not quite the end of the saga since with both METEOR and ANTWERP out of traffic, the K1 was required to work the N.Y.M.R. service the following Sunday and the rest of the week, clocking up 576 miles in the process.

All this running earns the E1 income, which is just as well. The recent B.R. examination has indicated that costly repairs are necessary to replace the firebox crown stays. These are vertical and run from the roof of the inner copper firebox to the outer steel shell. This difficult repair will be assessed to see whether it can be undertaken by the Group's own volunteers or whether it will be necessary to employ outside contractors such as the S.V.R. boiler team.

Q7 NO.63460

work is continuing on chipping off the old paintwork and removing the old boiler tubes. New L.N.E.R. brass worksplates have been cast with the appropriate number 901. These plates will eventually be fitted to each side of the frames beneath the smokebox, and on the back of the tender.

J72 NO.69023

As a special attraction for the August bank holiday weekend the J72 was rostered to pilot all trains hauled by METEOR and ANTWERP between Grosmont and Goathland. This proved to be extremely popular with the public and with its 'new' firehole door, made by Dave Burnet of Grimsby, the engine steamed



A pattern maker at Stockton Castings Ltd works on the new pattern for the K1's blastpipe, using an L.N.E.R. drawing and the original blastpipe as guidance, on 20th September, 24 hours after the defect was found. (Maurice Burns)



At 10 p.m. on 24th September, 2005 passes Nunthorpe with its freight train for Grosmont; fireman Chris Cubitt collects the single line token. (Maurice Burns)



2005 heads the 08.45 Middlesbrough -.Shildon train past truncated remains of Tees marshalling yard on 24th September; in the background is Newport bridge over the River Tees. (John Hunt)



6009 UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA about to restart from Perth station with the return working of The Aberdonian on 1st October. (John Hunt)

excellently - for those who had mastered the firing technique! At least one N.E.L.P.G. fireman arrived at Goathland with a red face after running short of steam! The failure of ANTWERP on the Monday saw the diminutive J72 on an 8 coach train, but it was going downhill!

They say every engine has its day; well Saturday 24th September 1983 will be a day of note in the history of 69023. With 2005 shuttling between Shildon and Middlesbrough, and both ANTWERP and METEOR out of traffic, the J72 was called upon to work the full advertised N.Y.M.R. steam service. With a three coach train it successfully worked the full length of the line twice during the day. Although the engine deputised well under the circumstances and kept fairly good time, the crew thought that such an operation was taxing the locomotive's capabilities to the full.

On Saturday 29th October, however, an easier task befalls the engine when it heads the G.W.R. inspection saloon on the Group's V.I.P. special. On Sunday 30th October the J72 will be in action again primarily to pilot the ~~K1~~ on the members' special; this will depart Grosmont at 13.55 and 69023 will be attached to the train between Goathland and Pickering in both directions. The engine may pilot an earlier train up to Goathland, provided one of the other tank engines is back in traffic. This may not be the J72's last steaming of the year as it may be called upon to help work Santa specials in December.

SMT NO.44767 GEORGE STEPHENSON

The engine's major overhaul is now all but complete. All outstanding pipe-work and fittings have been refitted and the only major work now outstanding is the fitting of the copper lacings and stay nuts in the firebox. In readiness for the latter some caulking has been carried out. All tubes have now been re-expanded in the firebox tubeplate. Externally the locomotive is now resplendent in B.R. mixed traffic livery of lined out black as 44767; the nameplates are retained but now have a black rather than red background.

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WORKING PARTIES

By the time the next N.E.L.P.G. NEWS appears the N.Y.M.R. season will be over and winter maintenance will be well under way, as will the continuing restoration of the P3 and Q7. The continuing support of members is therefore requested at Grosmont and working parties will take place every Sunday. If you can help in any way or want to know more about what is going on either in general or on any particular day, please contact either Maurice Burns or Mike Oliver. For those turning up 'on spec' a blackboard inside Deviation shed details the responsible officer in charge on the day (to whom you should make yourself known) and the jobs to hand.

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SALES REPORT

Sales income has been given a tremendous boost recently with very healthy income from just three events; firstly, the August bank holiday weekend saw the sales stall in action at Grosmont where £213 was taken in total. Secondly, the Shildon event promised much with a sales stall in the works and on-train sales as well; this promise was fulfilled when £303 was grossed during the

day. Finally, The Aberdonian grossed £410 from sales on the train, on top of which the subsequent production of lineside photographs realised a record £300. All in all a total of nearly £1,250 had been taken in just one month and though only about half this amount will be profit, it is nevertheless a tremendous boost to the Group's funds. Thanks are due to all who assisted in running the various sales stalls, but in particular to Peter Robinson and his wife from Teesside. As a result of these events there has been quite a turnover of stock and the opportunity has been taken to reappraise the sales operation. Consequently it is likely that there will be a 'sale' of old and soiled stock - at absolutely bargain prices! - at the Christmas meeting in Durham.

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RAILTOUR REPORT

Dave Pennock

Middlesbrough - Shildon

History repeated itself somewhat on 24th September when the Group was invited by B.R. to participate in the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Shildon works. Eight years after S. & D. 150 the K1 was to be given an opportunity to retrace its steps by hauling four return trips from Middlesbrough over the 24½ miles to Darlington and Shildon to enable visitors to travel to and from the works open day. With over 1,000 passenger journeys during the day, it proved to be both a financial and operational success for B.R. and the Group. 2005 ran and steamed well throughout the day and its reliability reflected the thorough preparation by the locomotive maintenance team. Speeds of 60 m.p.h. were achieved on some journeys, even tender first, proving that the engine is quite capable of steaming well given the right conditions and handling.

At the works the main event was the naming of an Inter City 125 power car 'Shildon County Durham' shortly after arrival of the first train from Middlesbrough. Other exhibits included SANS PAREIL and locally named diesels BLYTH POWER and WILTON ENDEAVOUR. Visitors were also allowed to inspect the works and witness crafts old and new which make up the art of wagon building and repair. Of particular interest was the drop forge thumping out parts for merry-go-round coal wagons. One can only hope that the works are reprieved and that events such as this can be repeated.

Thanks are due to B.R. for their help and in particular the acting Area Manager at Newcastle, Mr. Taylor, and to the Group's loco team, train stewards and sales volunteers who carried out their various tasks most professionally whilst helping to make it a most successful day for all concerned.

The Aberdonian

Just one week later and those stalwart helpers were at it again! On 1st October the Group finally achieved one of its long standing ambitions to run a steam hauled railtour to Aberdeen. After two years of patient negotiation permission was eventually obtained from B.R. early in the summer to run a tour from Middlesbrough to Aberdeen and back. Such was the interest in the embryonic railtour, the Group's thirteenth, that over 150 enquiries were on file awaiting the announcement and confidence in the success of the tour was assured.

Thirteen, however, nearly proved to be unlucky for less than four weeks before the tour was due to run, B.R. pronounced that the train could not go to

Aberdeen because the A4 was not permitted on the Tay bridge nor beneath an overbridge near Aberdeen. Not surprisingly this came as rather bombshell, particularly as the train was virtually full! After urgent but delicate discussions at the very highest level special dispensation was given to allow the tour to proceed subject to certain restrictions on the A4, most notably a 5 m.p.h. speed limit over the entire length of the Tay bridge and the need to stop and proceed at walking pace under Br.388! The consequences meant a revised schedule and a diversion via Perth on the return journey but at least the tour was going to proceed more or less as advertised which was a great relief particularly as at one stage cancellation of the tour had been contemplated.

Saturday 1st October dawned dull but with expectation in the air! Soon passengers would be able to recall the Indian summer of steam when the A4s spent their last years working the three hour expresses between Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh in the mid-1960s. However nostalgia took a back seat at Middlesbrough when, due to B.R.'s operating problems, passengers had to catch a D.M.U. to Eaglescliffe and catch the special there! Unfortunately this resulted in a 20 minute delay which was never made up all the way to Aberdeen, even though the 47 class diesel whisked the train along at a cracking pace, so much so that the sales team had their work cut out preventing the stall from swaying around the brake van!

On arrival in Edinburgh all eyes were directed towards 60009 UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA which was waiting impatiently in the adjacent excursion platform of Waverley station, allowing passengers a quick inspection before coupling the engine onto the train. A genuine 'Aberdonian' headboard, kindly loaned for the occasion, was put in place, that impressive chime whistle blew, and the train was off! Beset at first by signal checks, having lost its original path, the A4 was slow off the mark, but once given the road No.9 accelerated towards the Forth bridge, emitting the familiar Gresley beat and the occasional chimes from its whistle. At Thornton the train was looped to allow a Dundee train to pass and then set off through the beautifully named Coaltown of Balgonie and up the 1 in 106 of Lochmuirs bank and down through Ladybank and Cupar to Leuchars where water was taken. In double quick time the R.A.F. crews with their water tender, hoses, pumps and tanks had replenished the A4, while passengers who braved the elements took photographs. By now the skies had got darker and the rain was teeming down and little was to be seen of the fine Scottish scenery. Eager to make up time the train was away towards Dundee as soon as the tender was full, but was soon slowing for the Tay bridge. The sedate progress over the bridge gave passengers a solemn view of grey water and grey sky with no discernable horizon, and a chance to gaze at the stumps of Bouch's ill fated bridge of 1869. Dundee soon appeared through the mist and after a brief stop to change crews, and now with no need to be looped again, the A4 set off to regain some lost time. Despite some signal checks brisk progress was made through Arbroath, Montrose and Stonehaven and a speed of 67 m.p.h. was recorded. Passing Cove Bay speed was reduced as the suburbs of the Granite City came into sight and No.9 drew to a stop at Br.388; the clearance was 11"! The regulator was opened for the last time and the train drew to a stop in Aberdeen station, just 30 minutes late. The engine uncoupled and ran to Ferryhill shed for turning and servicing, while passengers alighted to view the grey sights of the city.

The return at 17.20 down the coast in the gathering gloom evoked memories of yesteryear as the express sped south, attracting householders to their windows, scattering livestock in lineside fields, whilst giving the passengers the satisfaction of a long distance run on what could well have been the last steam hauled train from Aberdeen. At Dundee, as darkness fell, No.9 was watered but lost time on the ten minute allowance. Departure from the claustrophobic depths of Dundee station was dramatic as the A4 slipped up the 1 in 60 towards

Buckingham Junction, but soon the engine was racing along the shore of the Firth of Tay at a steady 60 m.p.h. Perth was another watering point since the A4's tender capacity was insufficient for the extra mileage incurred by the diversion. To take water the engine detached and crossed to another platform giving passengers the timeless sight of a B.R. liveried A4 chuffing through the station as if it were 1966 again! Again departure was behind schedule but the A4 was keen to get home and set about the climbs through Newburgh, up to Falkland Road and up to the Forth Bridge with fireworks coming out of the chimney! Arrival back at Waverley was nevertheless still behind time but by now many passengers had clearly found the long day very tiring and almost the whole train snoozed, dreaming perhaps of steam of yesteryear? Arrival back in the North East was, despite all attempts to regain time, about 90 minutes late. However, after such an exhilarating day the thought on most peoples' minds was the achievement of steam to Aberdeen - and bed!

Thanks for the running of the train are due to many, but particularly to B.R., Scotland, the No.9 team, and especially the Group's railtour officials and those who worked so hard as stewards, on the sales or dispensing refreshments. Perhaps, one day, we might return!

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J72 LIVERY BALLOT

As a result of the recent members' ballot the chosen livery will be B.R. station pilot green as 69023 with the number on the side tanks flanked by the N.E.R. and B.R. crests, but without the JOEM nameplate. A full report on the ballot will appear in the next NEWS.

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AUTUMN MEMBERS' SPECIAL

It can be confirmed that accommodation has been reserved for members on the 13.55 Grosmont - Pickering train on Sunday 30th October. The train will be headed by 2005 which will be piloted by 69023 between Goathland and Pickering. The train returns from Pickering at 15.20, arriving back in Grosmont at 16.25. Members may travel free on this train on production of their valid membership cards. 69023 may pilot the 11.55 from Grosmont to Goathland.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Friday 21st October 1983 at 7.30 p.m. in The Bridge Hotel, North Road, Durham. SOUTH AFRICAN STEAM, an illustrated lecture by Dave Whitfield.

Sunday 30th October 1983 at 13.55 from Grosmont to Pickering and back. MEMBERS' SPECIAL behind 2005 and 69023.

Friday 18th November 1983 at 7.30 p.m. in The Ladle, Ladgate Lane, Middlesbrough. BEAMISH MUSEUM; PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE by Mr. R. Clark. An illustrated lecture by the Keeper of the Industry and Technology Department.

Friday 16th December 1983 at 7.30 p.m. in The Bridge Hotel, North Road, Durham. CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA - food, drink, bargain sale, audio visual spectacular and of course - the slide auction and raffle!!!

