

TRANS PENNINE
THE MAGAZINE OF THE PENNINE
RAILWAY SOCIETY



No. 101 Autumn 1997

COMMITTEE SHORTS

SOCIAL EVENINGS

The future programme of social evenings at the Corporation Brewery Taps, Doncaster for Autumn 1997 is shown below. Meetings start at 20.00 hrs and all are welcome.

Wednesday 15 October "Rancid" John Law. Slide show.

Wednesday 5 November Graham Wade, from the Lincoln Railway Society, "Railways in Transition - Sights of the 60s".

Wednesday 19 November Pennine Shield quiz competition

Wednesday 5 December Robin Havenhand. Slide show.

Wednesday 17 December Eeevility Night. Fun slides

PENNINE SHIELD - AWAY MATCHES

Our away matches in the Pennine Shield quiz competition are as follows-

Wednesday 12 November at the Commercial Hotel, Carbrook, Sheffield - hosted by the Great Central Railway Society.

Thursday 27 November at the Commercial Hotel, Carbrook, Sheffield - hosted by the Dore Loco Group

Wednesday 5 December at Club I97 - Sheffield, hosted by SYRPS.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Pennine Railway Society AGM will be held on Sunday 11 January 1998 at the Corporation Brewery Taps, Doncaster, commencing at 12 noon.

This gives you, the members, the opportunity to comment on the running of the Society. It also gives members the opportunity to buy a drink for the hard working Committee members, and also for our President, Geoff Bambrough Your attendance at the AGM is appreciated by the Committee.

MEMBERS NEWS

SPORTS SECTION

Magazine Editor David Bladen's son Alex has recently had the dubious distinction of being both a ball-boy and a mascot at Doncaster Rovers.

It is rumoured that as a ball-boy he was positioned inside the Rovers net to prevent wear and tear to the Rovers' keeper's back from having to continually bend down retrieving the ball. (Rovers lost 0-5 incidentally).

FASHION PARADE

Pennine's Fashion Correspondent, Paul Sutton, tells us that the rail company, Connex South Central, has banned its women employees from wearing black bras.

In addition, guards and ticket collectors employed by the French-owned company say they have become the butt of passengers' jokes since being forced to wear new colourful outfits.

They claim their blue hats adorned with striking yellow braid prompt a string of jokes along the lines of "Where's your parrot? or Which one is Long John Silver?"

CASH INDUCEMENTS

South West Trains, which in February had to cancel up to 40 services a day after making 70 drivers redundant has offered staff cash inducements of up to £1500 a week to sacrifice part of their summer holidays. SWT said it was offering the cash to cover "a holiday abnormality over the next few weeks".

TEA-BREAK

Blea Moor signalbox, close to Ribbleshead Viaduct on the scenic Settle-Carlisle route has no running water supply. Water for the signalman is delivered by train.

On one occasion during August water had not been delivered. The signalman wanted a cup of tea, so shut the box as two trains were due and drove 10 miles home for a cuppa.

The 09.47 Leeds-Carlisle, with no refreshments on board, was delayed 75 minutes. The problem was resolved when his relief arrived early for his shift end re-opened the line. The signalman faces disciplinary action from Railtrack.

PASSENGERS TO DOUBLE AS GUARDS

A rail company wants commuters to double as part-time guards on their way to work and back. They would hop off trains at stations, make announcements, check that the doors are closed and give a signal to the driver.

For their trouble, they'd get blue uniforms with peaked caps, free travel and hourly pay of £5.25. Great Eastern Railway is offering rush-hour jobs on slam-door trains between Liverpool Street and the Essex towns of Clacton, Harwich and Walton. Great Eastern's commercial chief, Mike Turner came up with the "work to work" idea after seeing a similar operation in Hong Kong. Seems ideal for spotters.

PARIS SLEEPER LINE SCRAPPED

A plan to run luxury Sleeper trains to Paris from Scotland, Wales, Manchester and the West Country has been dropped as "not viable".

CHEST COMPLAINT

Women have been turned off replica shirts of Sheffield Wednesday. The supporters club secretary says of the shirts sponsored by Sanderson "Having SANDERSON all over your bust is not for me"

Editor's Notes

Welcome to the Autumn 1997 edition of Trans Pennine. Do any members out there speak Klingon? I just wondered, as it seems to be a prerequisite if you want to read the concourse information board at Doncaster station these days. As I write these notes in early September, the board has been in need of repair for about seven weeks. Letters and numerals are missing, or don't show the correct information. At first it was quite amusing - the 07.07 departure went from Loods to St Mineras instead of Leeds to St Pancras, and if the departure times were

showing in the wrong column, the 07.15 arrival from Cleethorpes was 717 minutes late on its onward journey to Manchester Airport.

But the situation has now got past the amusing stage. I'm a railway enthusiast and have a fair idea of what trains go where, and at what time. But other passengers may not be so fortunate. A regular scene at the station nowadays, is passengers, often elderly, looking totally baffled as they try to make sense of the gibberish on the wall in front of them. It can be argued that other means of information, such as announcements, monitors and timetables, are available, but if you are hard of hearing or partially-sighted. these may not be of much use.

No attempt seems to have been made to rectify the situation, in fact, if the conversations I have overheard during my travels are anything to go by, nobody knows whose responsibility it is to have the thing repaired?

And now, the digital clock on platform 4 has joined in the fun! It does nothing for the image of the railways or the town, and needs to be sorted out- and quickly!

David Bladen

A ride on the Central Wales Line

by Paul Slater

I was at Craven Arms in good time to catch the 10.50 Shrewsbury - Swansea on 20 June 1983 for my first ride on the Central Wales line. The station, now only an unstaffed halt, had obviously seen better days, and a weed-grown expanse of waste ground showed where there once had been extensive sidings. A "33" came and went with a Crewe - Cardiff train, then shortly afterwards the splitting signal was down, the signalman announced the Swansea train over the loudspeakers, and a two-car DMU, moderately well filled, came cautiously over the crossover into the platform. I got on. There was a delay while the train crew attended to the ground frame at the end of the platform, then the DMU was away, curving sharply away from the Hereford main line to head westwards towards Wales.

I bought a day-return to Llandoverly from the guard. The smaller stations on the Central Wales line are all request stops. My train passed the first one, Broome, but called at the second and third, Hoptonheath and Bucknell. Hoptonheath still had an old red LMS nameboard, and I was interested to see the old station buildings and massive stone-built goods shed there and at many other Central Wales line stations, still in use, but not for railway purposes.

This stretch of line through the picturesque hills of south Shropshire had originally been double-track, and some of the stations still kept their disused second platform. At Knighton we crossed the Welsh border, then headed up the Teme valley. Soon the line began to climb steeply into the foothills of Radnor Forest giving fine views. We passed Knucklas station, and the village was glimpsed below as we crossed the massive, castellated viaduct. The line twisted and turned into the hills. In the sunshine, with white May blossom visible all around, this upland country was less bleak than I had imagined. We passed the first major summit in a tunnel, stopped at the remote Llangunllo station, then we were off downhill. Soon speed was up to 70mph - I could see the speedometer in the rear driving cab - and on such a curving line such velocity was exhilarating in the extreme. Llanbister Road station hurtled by, then at last we were in more level country and slowing for a stop at Dolau.

The main hills of Radnor Forest were from here easily visible to the south-east. The stretch of line through the hills from Knighton had been built as single track, but now, in a valley, we were on former double-track again. A family party sitting near me got off at the next station, Pen-y-bont. Both platforms here - the derelict one, and the one still in use - had old nameboards in black and yellow. Soon the first signals since Craven Arms appeared, the line doubled to form a passing loop, and we came to a halt just outside Llandridnod Wells, the biggest station on the line. Here, as at other stations on the Central Wales line, I saw warning signs in Welsh and English. At some stations I also saw old notices in Western Region brown.

From Llandridnod Wells the single track led on across the heart of Wales. through undulating green farmland with high hills all around. At Builth Road I looked for the remains of the former engine-shed, a sub-depot of 846 Shrewsbury, and of the ex-Cambrian branch from Moat Lane Junction to Brecon, which once passed underneath the Central Wales line, making a two-level station; but there was not much left to see. We stopped at Llangammarch Wells, there was a passing loop, a London and North Western Railway signalbox, some Western Region lower-quadrant semaphores, and an influx of passengers.

The line now led into more open country, to the second major summit. I had decided to travel this section as far as Llandovery, rather than get off at Llandrindod Wells or Llanwrtyd Wells, although I would have only a short break before catching the 12.27 Swansea - Shrewsbury back to Craven Arms. We passed through the tunnel at the summit, then dropped downhill through spectacular scenery, over an impressive viaduct and into forests to the little halt at Cynghordy, and then into Llandovery, where I got off the train.

I had just forty minutes before the train back to Craven Arms left; the 10.50 from Shrewsbury would meet the 12.27 from Swansea at Llandeilo. The Station Hotel just across the road was conveniently placed for a quick lunch. The 12.27 was just pulling into the far platform as I went onto the station, and after taking a photograph I quickly got into the last carriage of the nearly empty three-car DMU. In a moment we were off, past the derelict- looking signalbox which carried the name Llandovery Ground Frame. The train paused at Cynghordy, then made its way to the summit, while I imagined a steam train labouring upgrade through these hills.

I never saw steam on the Central Wales line, and I have seen few photographs taken on this route. An American lady was photographing the scenery from the DMU, while from the next window I looked ahead and snapped first the viaduct and then the approach to the tunnel, with green hills looming overhead. The train which left Llandovery at 16.10, which I would have had to catch had I missed the one I was travelling on, would meet a westbound train at Llandrindod Wells, but the 12.27 from Swansea was not scheduled to meet any train before Craven Arms, and the loops at Llanwrtyd and Llandrindod were both empty. This train missed some of the stations at which the 10.50 from Shrewsbury had stopped at, but it called at Garth and Knucklas which the westbound train had missed. In this direction, Llanbister Road and Llangunllo Road were passed slowly, on the long climb into the Radnorshire hills, and I had time to admire the masses of May-blossom on the west side of the summit. Then came the rapid descent to Knighton, interrupted by the stop at Knucklas, the village clustered photogenically in the sunshine below the viaduct. Knighton was once the site of another sub-shed of Shrewsbury. Finally, there was an uninterrupted run through the Shropshire hills until I got off at Craven Arms and went to my car. It was the end of an enjoyable journey.

To meet your Waterloo

Malcolm Bell Malcolm wrote this poem some years ago to help his daughter with her homework

They stand immobile, open-eyed
In silent supplication
A mixture of the human race
Each with their own vocation

Their faces raised to Heaven above?
No look of adoration
They seek a sign from Him above
To animate their station

A minute passes minute
They are joined by more and more
Their bodies, ever closer
Obliterate the floor

As close as man and wife abed
Yet no words pass between them
Each one jealous of their space
Their own precious diadem

They stand there without motion
Before them lies the gap
Yet no one dares move forward
Into this toothless trap

This chasm beckons those who wait
Attendants either side
Yet no sign is forthcoming
To bridge this gap so wide

Banker, builder, typist, clerk
From each and every station
They stare aloft, with but one thought
To seek life's destination

The tall, the short, the fat, the thin
Of yellow, black or white
Not caring for their neighbours needs
In the oncoming flight

Then life bursts upwards in their eyes
As shutters roll and tap
And spells out words of knowledge
To send them to the gap

The sign stills on its message
They read along the line
The 18.10 for Uxbridge
Will leave from platform nine

A thousand bodies move as one
As if by magnets drawn
Like homing pigeons taking flight
To reach their own platform

For now there is no chivalry
Just push and pull and barge
The prize at stake, a window seat
For the victor of the charge

No magic potion needed here
Just a daily railway ride
Turns the mildest Doctor Jekyll
To an evil Mister Hyde

There are a few, a saner few
Who use a little brain
Stay put beside the public bar
And take a later train!

And as for those unworldly souls
Who arrive against this tide

They shall receive no mercy here
Washed roughly to one side

For just a fleeting moment now
No faces seek the sky
Then hundreds come to take their place
Each with their heads held high

And yet at home these zombies
Are paragons of good taste
Although you would not think it
To see them in such haste

Take pity on these people
For their whole worlds exists
Just for the coming weekend
When they get plastered, drunk or ?

The Pennine Quiz No.91

Ian Shenton

Lancastrians may have a problem with this quiz, as a lot of the questions are to do with Yorkshire. Never mind!

Many thanks to Ian for setting the quiz. Answers to the editor, please, by November 7th.

- 1) Name 43157
- 2) What was the number of GWR 'Burton Agnes Hall' ?
- 3) What have 61656 and 43053 in common?
- 4) Where is Winterbulee Tunnel ?
- 5) What is Church Fenton station booking hall now used as ?
- 6) Where is Potters Grange Junction ?
- 7) On which branch line was Thongs Bridge station ?
- 8) Between which stations was Newmarket Silkstone Colliery ?
- 9) For what purpose is the former NER roundhouse at Holbeck, Leeds, now used ?
- 10) Which was the last loco fuelled at Holbeck depot ?
- 11) On what date did Holbeck depot (MR) open ?
- 12) Between which stations was Runtlings Lane Junction?
- 13) How many arches has the viaduct south of Wakefield Westgate station ?
- 14) On what date did Nostell station close to goods ?
- 15) How many passenger trains per day, Monday to Friday, served Wakefield Kirkgate in the winter 1994/95 timetable ?
- 16) On what date did 4472 'Flying Scotsman' have its first run in preservation ?
- 17) How many locos did Doncaster Works build ?
- 18) What was the date of the re-naming ceremony of 60532 'Blue Peter', by Val, Peter and John from the TV programme?
- 19) On what date was 47522 named 'Doncaster Enterprise' ?
- 20) What was the job of the present President of the Middleton Railway, before retiring ?
- 21) On what date did the first Stanedge Tunnel open ?
- 22) On what date did Beeston station (South Leeds) close to passengers?
- 23) Which colliery was near to Outwood station ?
- 24) Which Yorkshire town had stations called Court House and Exchange ?
- 25) What is the length in yards of Morley Tunnel ?

Pennine Quiz No.90 the answers!

- 1) 60013 Oliver Cromwell
- 2) 87034/92017 (William) Shakespeare

- 3) 60044 Ailsa Craig
- 4) 7029 Clun Castle
- 5) 4468/60022 Mallard
- 6) 44767/87101 (George) Stephenson
- 7) 86239 L S Lowry
- 8) 86311/411/611 Airey Neave
- 9) 92001 Victor Hugo
- 10) 91004/43155 Red Arrows
- 11) 73123/206 Gatwick Express
- 12) 60068 Charles Darwin
- 13) 5029 Nunney Castle
- 14) 92012 Thomas Hardie
- 15) 91029 Queen Elizabeth II
- 16) 87025 County of Cheshire
- 17) 45596 Bahamas
- 18) 60050 Roseberry Topping
- 19) 70000/87004 Britannia
- 20) 60029 Ben Nevis
- 21) 92015 D H Lawrence
- 22) 34039 Boscastle
- 23) 60026 William Caxton
- 24) 92022 Charles Dickens
- 25) 6000 King George V
- 26) 86259 Peter Pan
- 27) 60532 Blue Peter
- 28) 60080 Kinder Scout
- 29) 92004 Jane Austen
- 30) 60042 Dunkery Beacon

Winner overall was Ken King, with Malcolm Bell, John Dewing, and Ian Shenton gaining joint second place.

Well done, gentlemen and thanks again to Paul Slater for setting the quiz.

What the Papers say!

Another 'Private Eye Special'!

As may be imagined, recent events have meant that there hasn't been a great deal about railways in the press lately. Happily, Private Eye continues to go its own way, so we start with a snippet from the 'Signal Failures' column.

Rail Safety up the Junction

Private rail businesses are sneering at safety regulations introduced after the Clapham Junction accident, which killed 35 people in 1988.

One reason why rail transport is much safer than road is that over many decades there has been a continuous refining of safety procedures. Privatisation interrupted all that. Now some of the companies believe they are immune to accidents.

Last month, it was revealed that Stagecoach-owned South West Trains (which now operates the services involved in the 1988 crash) was pressing its drivers to work for six weeks with only three rest days. Overworking of safety-critical personnel was one of the problems which emerged in the Clapham Junction inquiry, but that does not worry SWT. "This is no different to Marks and Spencer asking staff to do more hours during a busy period," a spokeswoman said. Evidently she does not appreciate that a tired driver can potentially kill and injure members of

the public (especially as the post-Clapham recommendation of automatic train protection has been ignored) whereas the possibility of being overcharged for an M&S prawn sandwich has no such implications. The spokeswoman is not alone. By seriously asking drivers to work 13- day fortnights, senior SWT managers have shown they equate train driving with selling underpants. They are also flouting recommendation 18 of the Clapham Junction report, which states that no individual should work excessive overtime.

Stagecoach bus drivers have no such problems, as their hours are restricted by law. Anyone familiar with Stagecoach's history will know that the company is adept at exploiting any regulatory loopholes it finds. Now it will use the lack of constraints on train-driving hours to cover for the continuing effects of its famous cock-up over redundancies. Such constraints were not needed previously because British Rail was generally a conscientious employer. Perhaps they are needed now that the greed and cynicism on which the Stagecoach empire was built have infiltrated the rail industry. Stagecoach, through SWT and Porterbrook train leasing, owns and operates many old carriages of the same weak design that contributed to the high death toll at Clapham Junction. The report stressed that all carriages of this type must be strengthened or replaced before 1998. Privatisation took precedence over safety. and now the Health and Safety Executive is planning to set an over-generous second deadline of 2007. By then some of these trains will be 50 years old. The HSE has devised and rigidly enforced all kinds of stupid safety rules for the railways, such as banning train services from stations where the platform is shorter than the train or, after dusk stations which have no lighting (forcing travellers to use road transport, where the safety risks are much higher). Now the HSE is jibbing out of a directive which would actually make travel safer.

If the privatised railway was desperately short of cash, the HSE's soft attitude might be tolerable. As it is, public subsidy to the railways has doubled, partly so that Porterbrook and the other train leasing companies can rake in vast profits Yet the number of new trains on order is pathetic compared with quantity of safety- risk carriages in service. Railtrack, too, has forgotten the lessons of Clapham Junction. In June a Virgin Rail express train near Coventry was given a signal to continue straight ahead, but was switched into a siding. Fortunately the siding was empty at the time. Railtrack's investigations indicated that engineering contractors had incorrectly connected the wires to the signal and the point giving access to the siding. Crossed wires were the cause of the Clapham Junction accident and the subsequent report recommended new procedures to ensure this danger would not arise again. Railtrack has forgotten not only BR's experience but also its own; less than two years ago a train crash occurred at Chingford, Essex, because Railtrack contractors had incorrectly wired signalling equipment.

Privatisation has brought to the railways a number of money-focused managers who believe they can cock a snook at a safety culture built on more than a century of running railways. Sadly, it will take another serious accident to teach them the lessons BR had learned the hard way before privatisation.

From the 'Street of Shame' column comes the following snippet:-

Guardian columnist Mark Lawson savaged the rail service offered on the Virgin West Coast line in a recent article. The carriages remained "juddering dust traps" and the catering was "stalely the same".

Virgin boss Richard Branson retaliated with a letter to the editor, pointing out that Virgin had only "been running the service for 15 weeks" and "change does not happen overnight". Furthermore, wrote the tycoon, the Guardian should be sympathetic to his difficulties; after all, they had taken over the Observer two-and-a-half years ago and the public still hadn't seen any improvement!

Unfortunately the paper was forced to cut the last point for reasons of space.

Berks and Wilts

(That refers to the counties visited by the way, not my personal habits!!)

More aeroplanes, I'm afraid!

I had begun to wonder how people might feel about another aviation-biased article in 'Trans Pennine', that was until I opened September's issue of Railway Magazine and found two pictures of aircraft in there! Now, if it's good enough for the RM...!

The occasion, this time, was the Royal International Air Tattoo at Fairford in Gloucestershire, on the weekend of the 19/20th of July. Public transport was again the order of the day, but the distance meant a day-trip was not viable and I would have to spend a night away. Swindon is the nearest mainline station to Fairford, but during the air-show weekend, accommodation in the town is as hard to come by as a magazine article by the Chairman! (Sorry about that Robin, but you promised).

Reading was the next choice, and having stayed in the town a number of times before, I knew there would be something in the way of bed-and breakfast available. The journey to Reading would also give me a chance to travel on stretches of line I had not used for a few years and, of course, re-visit one or two old haunts while I was there!

Friday, the 18th of July, dawned cold and cloudy in Doncaster. The forecast for the weekend was hot and sunny so I had made the decision not to take a coat, but as I sat shivering on the platform, that decision was beginning to look a little hasty. Happily, the shivers did not last too long, as the 08.09 service to Bristol arrived punctually, with 43102 and 43122 in charge. I found a seat and settled down to experience for the first time what Virgin Cross Country had to offer. In terms of new experiences, not a lot! The HST set was unrefurbished, and the only visible difference was the green uniform of the conductor. One thing that was irritatingly apparent, however, was an increase in the number and length of the on-board announcements. The impression I formed is that Virgin Trains have tried to adopt the style of their airline counterparts, but on-aircraft announcements are usually only made once, and usually by someone who knows how to speak into a microphone! The journey itself was uneventful, and arrival in the Stygian gloom of Birmingham New Street, where I would change trains. was four minutes early.

Scott of the Antarctic wrote in his final diary: "Great God! This is an awful place!" I can't help feeling he was thinking about New Street station when he penned those words! If there is a more confusing and gloomy station on the rail system, I have yet to go there.

The next stop on my journey was to be the airport. (Now there's a surprise) Turkmenistan Airlines have recently started a service to Birmingham from Ashgabad and Delhi, and I wanted to photograph the Boeing 757 which would be operating the flight. The train I had planned to catch was running some thirty minutes late, so I made my way to the 'London Shuttle' platform and was very pleasantly surprised to find I would have EWS-liveried 86261 for the 10.15 run to Birmingham International. A bit of a bonus! Once again, I cursed the gloom of New Street, as the loco was parked "in the dark". Oh for a flash-gun in my bag!

The run to International took about ten minutes and, after pausing to photograph 86261 in daylight, I caught the free shuttle-bus which has replaced the Maglev link to the terminal. Readers who are not remotely interested in aviation may like to skip the next few paragraphs! If you are still with me, have an hour to spare at International, and fancy a change from looking at trains, please read on.

There are two dedicated viewing areas at the airport. One is the purpose-built gallery inside the terminal, for which a 50p entry charge is made. The gallery overlooks the main apron and has an exhibition area, shop (I always hide my credit cards before entry!), toilets, and vending machines for drinks and snacks. The floor of the gallery also has sections of raised flooring so that wheelchair users can get a better view. The only drawback with the gallery is that it is behind tinted glass which can pose problems for photographers. I spent half an hour here checking on departure and arrival times and having a snack. The other viewing point, which was the one I went to, to take photographs, is a grassed area adjacent to the long-term car park, about five-minutes walk from the terminal. Entry is free, benches and tables are provided, but the toilets are only open at weekends and catering is limited to a burger van, again only at weekends. The main advantage of the outside area is that it is next to the taxiway and the sun, on the days it deigns to come out, is behind you. Photographers will have to contend with the obligatory chain-link fence, but this can be overcome.

I now had just over an hour to wait before the 757 was due to depart, which would then give me time to make the 13.16 train from International to Reading. The weather was still cold and cloudy and again I wished I'd brought a coat, but I felt I would survive an hour or so. However, (yes, you've guessed it!) things did not go to plan. Over sixty minutes had elapsed, but there was no sign of movement at the parking stand. A fellow enthusiast, who had been monitoring his scanner, told me that the flight had been delayed by forty minutes because of a technical problem. Why me, Lord? As things turned out, the delay turned out to be about twenty minutes, but it still meant I would miss the 13.16.

Having secured my photographs, I decided to treat myself to a pint in the pub in the terminal. I'm usually not wild about pubs in airports, but this one is not too bad. Shakespeare's Bar (pity about the name, though) turned out to be an open-plan, comfortable lounge-bar, serving hand-pulled beers from the Whitbread portfolio. The Boddingtons Bitter was very drinkable, although a touch pricey at £1.69 a pint. Cooked food is also served and a large, hot chip-buttie went down a treat. The only problem with the place is you can't see the aeroplanes!

OK, railway readers can come in again now! I made my way back to the station to await the 14.16 to Reading, and was quite surprised to see a few people on the opposite platform with cameras and camcorders. My curiosity was soon answered as, in the distance, the 14.16 appeared with a class 37 on the front. This turned out to be 37023, resplendent in Mainline-blue livery. Only after snatching a quick picture and dashing to get on the train, did I notice 31420 tucked behind the 37. Now this was most definitely a bonus!

As can be expected, the coaches were wedged with enthusiasts, many talking into mobile phones. Having fought my way to the back of the train, I found there were still a couple of seats available! Even from the rear of the train, the noise from the two locos, both working hard, was extraordinary and the run to Reading can best be described as exhilarating. The route was lined with photographers, doubtless alerted by those mobile phones on the train. At Reading I joined the throng in a dash through the subway to the other platform, to photograph the train before the locos were uncoupled, then made my way to what I thought was the station exit.

If, like me, you haven't been to Reading station for a while, boy, are you in for a surprise! The old booking office has been turned into a pub, and has been replaced by a sizeable shopping mall, which just happens to have a ticket office in there somewhere. I wanted to confirm the time of tomorrow's train to Swindon, but immediately hit one of the infuriating aspects of privatisation - trying to work out who operated the train and where their timetable was. Eventually, I tracked down Great Western's board and the details required, then made my way to the tourist information office, pausing only to snap one of Reading Mainline's Routemasters. Beast! (Sorry, Gerry!) The tourist office operate a bed-booking service - for a £2 charge they will phone various hotels and guest-houses to find a room for you, the fee is then deducted by the hotel. After a couple of calls, I was told a room was available at Dittisham Guest House on Tilehurst Road, just over a mile from the town centre. The weather by now was warm and sunny, so I decided to walk. Big mistake! The map provided by the tourist office did not show

that the route was uphill all the way, and on reaching the guest- house I was very hot and sweaty, and definitely glad I didn't bring a coat! What was really annoying was that as I reached the gates of the house, a Routemaster shot past on a regular service to Tilehurst. Why me, Lord?

An hour later, after a cooling shower and a bite to eat, my good humour had been restored and it was time for a wander around. The walk into the town centre was much more enjoyable, it being a pleasant summer's evening and what's more, downhill! I decided to head for the station and investigate the old booking hall. This has been turned into the Three Guineas, and the place was a major disappointment. I should have realised, from the large gentlemen standing by the door, that this was not going to be the place for a quiet drink. Inside, it was noisy and scruffy and the bank of handpumps which I had glimpsed through the window earlier, turned out to be mostly for show, with only Brakespear's bitter available. The one redeeming feature of the pub is the large collection of old railway photos which adorn the walls. Surprisingly, my half-pint of beer turned out to be quite good but after that it was time to go. If the Government does carry out its plan to crack-down on under-age drinking and alcopops, it could do worse than start here! It was now time to do some proper research!

The next port of call was the Bugle on Friar Street. To reach the pub, cross the road outside the station, walk down Station Road, then turn right into Friar Street. I had visited the Bugle before and remembered it as a slightly down-at-heel, two- roomed place, friendly and popular, and I was relieved to find that not a lot had changed, despite the pub nestling amongst a host of newly-converted cafe bars. Courage Best Bitter and Directors were available and my pint of bitter was definitely drinkable.

To get to the next venue, turn right out of the Bugle, retrace your steps along Friar Street then turn right into Victoria Street. After 100 yards, turn right into Broad Street and you will find the Hobgoblin just on the right. The pub is one of a chain of about 30 similar establishments in the south. This particular place is a beer-spotters paradise, with six beers on hand pump and a wide range of foreign bottled-beers. A blackboard outside the pub proudly proclaims the number of different beers that have been sold - 1615 at the time of my visit. Inside, there is a large wooden-floored bar area and a small back room which is not for the claustrophobic, as the seating consists of a row of "confessionals". The pub was very busy, but the service was good and my pint of Oakham Wheat Beer was excellent. The clientele was also varied - CAMRA T-shirts, beards and beer-bellies (and that was just the women!) jostled with people in suits and evening wear. The GBG describes the Hobgoblin as being popular with "scoopers, gricers, twitchers, fanzines and oglers", though nobody at the pub could tell me what a "scooper" was. Answers to the Editor on a postcard please! Altogether a smashing place!

Our next venue is about ten minutes walk away. Turn right out of the Hobgoblin and continue along Broad Street and onto Oxford Road. After crossing the ring road, turn right into the Eaton Place shopping precinct and once through the precinct, you will find the Butler on Chatham Street. The Butler is one of Fuller's of Chiswick's pubs and used to belong to a wine merchant who also bottled Guinness on the site. Inside, it has undergone some changes since I was last there. The pub now has a U- shaped bar and wooden floorboards, but the beer, Fullers Chiswick Bitter, London Pride and ESB, happily remains of the same high quality. The beer garden does not have a lot to commend it visually, consisting as it does of three tables next to a dual carriageway, with a superb view of the fly-over into the adjacent multi-storey car park, but it was a very pleasant place to be on a warm evening, as I sat drinking beer and watching aeroplanes flying over on their way into Heathrow. It was now time for me to be heading back to the guest -house.

There was one last visit to be made en-route, the Horse and Jockey on Castle Hill. This is quite a way from the station but is worth the journey. If you visit Reading during the day, Reading Mainline Routemasters on service 'E' stop outside the pub, as do several of Reading Buses services. From the Butler, retrace your steps through the precinct, cross Oxford Road, then go down Zinzan Street, continue along into Carey Street, which joins Castle Hill by the pub.

internally, the pub is a bit of a mish-mash, consisting of a large, single room, with a high green-painted ceiling supported by metal columns and a small bar decorated with plastic bricks! The many CAMRA awards on the walls, however, are for the quality of the beer, not the architecture. Four beers were on sale, and the two I tried. Grainstore Gold and Archers Village Bitter (half-pints, I had to be up early in the morning), were both spot on. The regulars in here are racing daft. Copies of the Sporting Life are available and the notice board contains details of regular coach trips to race meetings. Our Treasurer would love it - now, if only we could wean him off lager!

Saturday morning turned out bright and sunny. I'd had a good night's sleep, a decent breakfast and now stood at Reading station waiting for the 07.39 to Swindon. The GW-liveried HST set looked splendid in the sunshine, as it arrived punctually at the platform. I didn't get too much of a chance to appreciate the internal decor as the train was wedged and I stood in the vestibule for the 35-minute journey to Swindon. Once at Swindon, it was a case of follow the crowds to the bus station where Thamesdown Transport had assembled a fleet of buses for the onward journey to Fairford.

Special bus routes had been designated, away from the main roads, through the many picturesque villages in the area, and the top deck of a bus was the ideal vantage point from which to view the beautiful countryside. The villagers of Hannington must not get many double-deck buses passing through, judging by the amazed reaction of a man who opened his upstairs bedroom curtains to be greeted by a load of people waving at him from the top deck of a bus!

The show itself lived up to its reputation as the biggest display in Europe. If you want to see a line up of aircraft, more than a mile in length, then Fairford is the place to go. I had planned to return to Doncaster on the Saturday night, however, some of the aircraft I wanted to see were not scheduled to fly until late in the day and, after a phone call to the guest house to confirm the room was still available, I decided to stay an extra night in Reading. It would also give me an opportunity to have a wander around Swindon on the way back to Reading.

Most of Swindon's GBG-listed pubs are a fair way from the station, in the Old Town area, however, there is one, the Glue Pot in Emlyn Square, a short walk from the station, in the heart of Brunel's Railway Village. To reach it, turn right out of the station and Emlyn Square is about 250 yards on the left, past the site of Swindon Works. As I walked along, I found it hard to imagine that where once stood one of this country's largest railway works, there was now a 'business park and retail outlet opportunity' - How times change! The Glue Pot is a grade 2 listed building and, like most other buildings in the Railway Village, is constructed from Bath stone, which gives a very 'solid' look to the place. Once inside, two things stand out, the very deep plain-glass windows and the high-backed wooden seating. The beer's not bad, either. The pub is the brewery tap for Archer's Brewery and Village Bitter, Best Bitter and Golden Best were on sale.

There are two other pubs in Emlyn Square, the Bakers Arms and the Cricketers. The Bakers Arms, an Arkells' house, was closed at the time of my visit, which was a pity as this pub has passed into Pennine legend. Many years ago, when it was still possible to visit railway establishments, the society had a trip to Swindon Works. After an overnight Deltic to London, a class 50 out to Swindon and a tour of the works and scrap lines, the party retired to the Bakers Arms for lunch.

One dentally-challenged member became a touch tired and emotional (well, who wouldn't after a Deltic and a 50) and began to wave his sausages in Tony Caddick's direction and shouting, "Thothidges, Tony, thothidges!". Our gallant membership secretary, never one to flinch in the face of adversity, silenced the miscreant with that immortal riposte; "Shurrup an' get thee dinner etten." Oh, happy days!

The Cricketers, an Ushers pub, was open but the bright neon lights and loud music dissuaded me from entering. So, it was back to the Glue Pot for another pint or two, before returning to

Reading and a night-cap in the Horse and Jockey. Another good night's sleep and another breakfast that would give your doctor a coronary if he saw you eating it, then it was time to bid farewell to Reading and start the journey home. Sadly for me, that's Airshow season over with until next year. In the meantime, I promise to try not to mention aeroplanes in the next article!

Pennine Observers Notes

Eastern Region

Noted at Barnetby, between 12.30 and 16.00 on the 4th of June were:- 37220/803, 56038/051/054/083/098/106/112, 60008/028/038/052/059/070/090/098. At Moorthorpe on the 7th, 47853 headed the 09.00 Poole - York, 47759 was in charge of the "Royal Scotsman", 47157 passed through on a Freightliner and 56093 was noted at the head of a goods train.

To Lincoln, where on the 10th, 37350+60003 and 60027 were observed passing through the station whilst working oil trains.

Eaton Lane crossing, near Retford, on the 21st, saw 56048 heading a freight train, 89001 worked the 14.30 KX - Leeds and 91011/012 were noted on express duties. On the 24th, 37220 was on a PW train, 47209 hauled a Freightliner and expresses were in the care of 91003/009/017/028/031.

Back to Lincoln, where on the 30th, 56044 and 60003 hauled oil trains and 56006 worked through light-engine. On the 4th of July, 60099 was in charge of an oil train and 60050 worked through light-engine.

Barnetby, again, where on the 9th of July, 56003/021/025/033/036/054/065/066/082/090/098. 60003/023/067/099 were noted between 13.30 and 16.00.

47828 was noted at York on the 13th waiting to work a service to New Street. 47826 was also sighted working a Derby - Newcastle service.

At Eaton Lane on the 15th, 89001 headed the 19.37 Bradford - KX, 86254 was noted on a parcels train, 47152 was on the front of a Freightliner, 56120 headed a goods train and 31308+31554 worked through light-engine, whilst on the 22nd 47209 headed a Freightliner, 60099 hauled a coal train, 86208 was in charge of a parcels train and 89001 was again on the 19.37 Bradford - KX.

37708 and 37194 were noted heading freight trains through Wakefield Kirkgate on the 19th and 47810 was noted at York having worked in on a service from Poole.

More oil trains at Lincoln, on the 25th, when 60003/023/040 were noted on such duties. Looking slightly ahead into August, 60001/002/024 did the honours on the 5th, with 60019/026 in action on the 8th.

A further afternoon session at Barnetby, on the 30th of July, produced 37684, 56022/043/084/114, 60002/003/006/023/027/100. The following day, 47807 was noted at York having worked in from Birmingham, before returning south with a Poole service. 37332 was noted heading a freight working through Huddersfield on the 1st of August.

Later that day, 47849 was noted at York, 59206 was sighted at Ferryhill and 47727 was the standby engine at Newcastle. This loco was later called into action to rescue a freight train which had failed at Ferryhill, leading to delays of up to 1½ hours on services between Newcastle and York. The identity of the loco which had failed is not known.

47276+47313+47810 were noted passing light-engine through Sheffield on the 8th of August. On the 16th of the month, 90022 was observed at Doncaster on the 20.15 Leeds - KX.

Unfortunately, this train was being delayed because of problems with so-called "football supporters", and was still in the station with a strong police presence, when your correspondent left at 21.30.

Midland Region

Ellesmere Port is not a location that features frequently in this column, but on June 15th, 60002 was noted in sidings there. The following day, 37386/686 were noted in Buxton depot and 08915, 37047, 56120 were in the depot at Peak Forest.

Clay Cross on the 5th of July saw 47323 on a Freightliner, 56006 on a goods train and 58046 was in charge of an oil train.

A member visiting Toton on the 19th noted: - 60047 on a stone train, 58017 on a coal train, 56066 on a freight working, 08495 in the yard, 08441/516/528/594/607/723/773/829, 20119/154/177, 31149/165/186/191/271/405/459/461/551/552/558, 37048/111/137/188/241/255/258/343/402/716/905/906, 45015, 47294/341/462, 56013/023/122, 58002/033/049, 60079 in the depot, 31116/135/180/184/205/219/250/268/276/290/294/531/547 on the scrap lines.

Peak Forest on August 2nd saw 37054/222, 56031/047, 60004/058/070/077 in the depot.

Noted at Birmingham operating passenger workings on the 8th were:- 47305 (15.10 Manchester - Poole) 47525/584/763/767/777/806/825/831/840/849, 86206/212/222/240/242/248/255/256, 87005/008/031/032.

The following day, 37678+417 were employed instead of the usual class 47 on the 08.56 New Street - Ramsgate and 13.48 return working.

Locos operating North Wales Coast workings on the 16th of August were:-

37415 09.57 Stockport - Holyhead
37426 10.22 Bangor - Crewe
37425 11.22 Bangor - Crewe
37418 13.24 Holyhead - Stockport
37414 14.54 Holyhead - Crewe
37420 16.17 Crewe - Bangor

47806 was observed heading into Liverpool Lime Street (on time!) on the 12.02 Paignton Liverpool instead of the booked class 86.

Western Region

The "Workshop Devonian" raitour took 58035/037 for a blast and a day at the seaside from Workshop to Paignton and return, on the 26th of July.

West Country holiday trains noted that day were:-

47817 10.33 Paignton – Manchester
47844 12.02 Paignton - Liverpool (ex-works 'Virgin' livery)
47827 09.17 Manchester- Paignton
47851 15.01 Paignton - Glasgow

Southern Region

The 06.54 Ashford - Victoria service came to grief on arrival at its destination on the 25th of June, when EMU 3553 collided with the buffers. 10 passengers were injured. 73114 was noted shortly afterwards, ready to pull the train away.

An observer who braved Wandsworth Road on the 2nd of July, noted the following:-
33019 on a ballast train
33046 on a departmental train
47237+47335+92009+92011+92007 on a Freightliner (our correspondent assumes that the 92s were being worked back to Wembley, to save on light-engine workings)
47060 on 4O86, the 08.16 Crewe - Grain Freightliner
47033 on the 09.52 Dagenham - Dollands Moor Ford 'Blue' train
58037 on the 10.19 Angerstein - Bardon Hill empty 'Bardon' hopper train
37371+37677 on Purley - Salfords Cliffe empty 'Brett' hoppers
60043 on 10.14 Hothfield - Southall Yard empty 'ARC' hoppers
37708 on a freight working
73103/106/117/130/131, 33202 light engines, plus Eurostars 3101/102/201/202/209/210/227/228.

The 12th of July saw the first class 92-hauled passenger train, when 92030 and 92038 took part in the itinerary of the "Dungeness Pebbledasher" railtour. The tour originated at Finsbury Park with 37688 and 37402 'top and tailing' on the freight-only Dungeness branch. 47761 returned the tour from Wembley International to Finsbury Park.

Preserved Railways

The Llangollen Railway had 4806 'Magpie', 76079 'Castell Dinas Bran' and D8142 working trains between Llangollen and Carrog, on the 15th of June.

50002 'Superb' was observed earning its keep on the Paignton and Dartmouth Railway on the 26th of July.

'Diesel Day' on the K&WVR on the 2nd of August, had the following locos working:- D0226 'Vulcan', D5209, D8031, along with "kettle" 75078. An evening "Beerex" train ran with D23 'Merlin' and D2311.

Many thanks to Tony Caddick, John Dewing, Ken King, John Reader and Paul Slater for their contributions.

Notice Board

Pennine Meetings

Forthcoming meetings at the Taps (20.00 start) are as follows:-

Wednesday 1 October 1997 The Annual Pennine Slide Contest
Chris Theaker is Judge Dread - enter or else!

Wednesday 18 October 1997 To be confirmed

Wednesday 5 November 1997 To be confirmed

Wednesday 19 November 1997 Pennine Shield - see below

Wednesday 3 December 1997 To be confirmed

Wednesday 20 December 1997 Eevilities Night

Confirmed dates for the Pennine Shield are as follows:-

Wednesday 12 November 1997, Commercial Hotel, Carbrook - GCRS

Wednesday 19 November 1997, Corporation Brewery Taps, Doncaster - Pennine

Thursday 27 November 1997, Commercial Hotel, Carbrook - DLG

Wednesday 3 December 1997, Club 197. Sheffield - SYPRC

The next edition of Trans Pennine will be produced in December. I would like to get the magazine in good time for Christmas, so please have all contributions to the editor by November 7th.

Thank you!