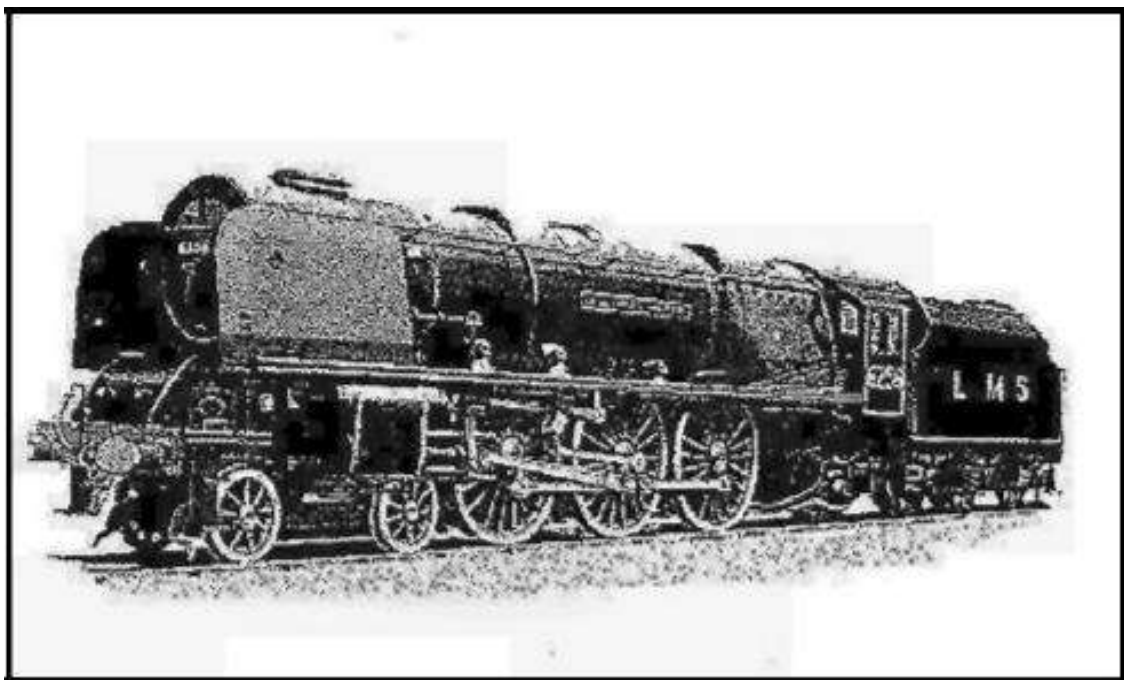


TRANS PENNINE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE PENNINE RAILWAY SOCIETY



No.114 - Winter 2000

Committee Briefs

Seasons Greetings

The Committee of the PENNINE RAILWAY SOCIETY join together to wish all our members and their families a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. We thank you for your support and friendship in 2000.

Membership Fees Unchanged

With this magazine you will find a Renewal of Membership form. We are pleased to announce that, once again, membership fees remain unchanged at £4.50 for a full year.

We hope you will rejoin the Society in 2001 by simply completing the renewal form and returning it with a cheque for £4.50 made payable to the "Pennine Railway Society" to our Membership Secretary, Tony Caddick, at the address shown on the form.

You may also rejoin at our social evenings at the Salutation Hotel or at our AGM.

Annual General Meeting

Please refer to Robin's section at the back of the magazine for details of the Society's AGM.

This is an opportunity for you, the members, to have a say in how you wish the Society to be run. It is also a chance to socialise with friends you may not have seen for some time.

Free 2001 Diaries

All members rejoining for 2001 will receive a free Pennine Railway Society pocket diary. Yet another good reason to renew your membership.

We have recently had:-

The tragic derailment of a Kings Cross/Leeds train at Hatfield and an enormous over reaction resulting in hundreds of speed restrictions affecting services throughout the entire network following a broken rail.

Flooding on a scale not seen since records began, affecting many services, including closure of the ECML north of York.

A 22.00 St. Pancras/Nottingham train taking nine hours (including transfer to a bus at Kettering).

A derailed freight train damaging four miles of track, closing Northampton station for days.

A derailment at Bristol leaking 1,500 gallons of diesel over the track.

Resignation of Railtrack boss Gerald Corbett with the prospect of a hefty "golden sod off" payment.

A mail train hauled by 67002 mounting a coal train at Lawrence Hill Station, Bristol.

Closure of Sheffield/Doncaster line for days due to flooding.

Closure of Tiverton/Exeter St. David's, the Barnstaple branch, Welshpool to Newtown and Leeds/ Shipley routes for days.

Derailed Weybridge/Staines service (Unit 1885) at Virginia Water narrowly missing a Reading/Waterloo train.

Derailment of a Virgin express at Mossend.

Temporary immediate closure of WCML from Gretna to Law Junction, Glasgow.

Going Dutch

First Group has said it will team up with Netherlands Railways to bid for UK rail franchises. It will bid for South West Trains and Thameslink franchises.

Misery Line firm loses big franchise

French owned Connex has been ordered to give up the South Central network to Govia, the company which already runs Thameslink. It will rename the network "New Southern Railways". The firm is a partnership of the Tyneside based GoAhead group and a French consortium part owned by SNCF

Windfall for Railtrack Shareholders

Good news through all the chaos. Railtrack has awarded shareholders increased dividends by an above inflation rise of 5%, to 9.75% per share.

Prescott in the Air

Two Jags Johnny will be pleased to know that our RAF boys will call their VC10 refuelling plane "Prescott". Apparently, it's because the plane can fuel two Jaguars at once. Rumour has it that J2J is to head up a new government to be known as the Ministry of Where Can We Lay The Blame.

Trains getting later

Even before the fallout from Hatfield, more trains were running late. Between June and September the worst performer was Chairman Skinner's beloved GNER with a fall of 9% in services run to time compared to the same period in 1999.

Fat Czar

Committee member Chris Tyas tells us that a "Fat Czar" is to be appointed in Scotland to encourage fitness amongst its overweight population.

Ghost Buses

Our general transport guru, Gerry Collins from Lincoln, tells us that a fleet of 20 buses, hardly ever used, has added a further £2.6m to the dome's huge debt mountain. Some £50,000 a week has been spent keeping the buses on permanent standby in a car park near the Greenwich site in case the Jubilee line extension breaks down; they have been used on average once per week transporting visitors between the Dome and Stratford, Canning Town and Greenwich stations.

Trains to Run on Time by 2020 (the year!!)

Michael Want, Chief Executive of the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority, has told the Public Accounts Committee of the target to have 15 trains out of 16 running punctually within the life of one of the new rail operator franchises, That could be in 20 years!!

Pennine Shield

The annual Pennine Shield quiz competition is again under way, with the final round at The Sal on 20th December. Our team of experts, comprising Tony Caddick, Robin Havenhand and Paul Sutton, came an excellent equal second (out of three) at the first round held at the home of the Dore Loco Group.

Mobile Phone Rage

The recent Hatfield over reaction has varied the familiar dawn chorus of 'I'm on the train' to, in many cases, "I'm still on the bloody train" Incidentally, our mole at GNER tells us that railway inefficiency has reached such heights, or depths, that it now belongs in the language of comparison. "Slower than a Doncaster to London express train" was a simile recently used in the House of Commons.

More Leaves on the Line

The recent adverse/severe weather conditions have caused more leaves on the line delaying trains. Unfortunately, on this occasion, they have been attached to tree trunks!

New Year Eve abolished in London

There will be few New Years Eve celebrations in London this year due to "safety fears". The fireworks display will be brought forward from midnight to 5.00 pm. Victoria, London Bridge and Waterloo stations will close at 6.00 pm. There will be trains but passengers will not be allowed to board them until they reach outlying suburban stations. The Underground will close down up to 60 stations in the central area from 4.00 pm. If the stations were open they would attract too many people! They are supported by the Health and Safety Executive.

It's Leeds to Blame

Northern Spirit is to be summoned to the Strategic Rail Authority to explain the cancellation of 2,788 services in a two month period ending mid September 2000. The company blames the redevelopment of Leeds station for many of the problems.

Junipers Withdrawn

Gatwick Express and South West Trains have taken new Juniper electric trains, built by Alstom, out of passenger service. Only a small number were in service and faults had been discovered during their limited running. In October c2c withdrew Electrostars because of unreliability.

Port wins £15m Grant

A £15m grant has gone to the Bristol Port Company to refurbish a large section of the disused Portishead branch, provide a new rail link into the Royal Portbury Dock and build a new terminal. The nine mile branch leaves the Bristol - Taunton line at Parson Street.

New Scottish Link

Plans to open the six mile route from Alloa to Stirling have been announced, The route was mothballed in the mid 1960's. This will allow ScotRail to run direct services between Alloa and Glasgow. Railtrack has also applied for funding to reopen the Alloa route further to Dunfermline for freight trains. This would enable freight from the south towards Fife and north east Scotland to avoid the Forth Bridge where there are weight restrictions.

Thameslink Logic?

Thameslink explained its emergency timetable with the following statement:- "We are aware that journey times are taking up to 15 minutes longer than our special timetable provides for. However, to insert this extra time into the schedule would further reduce the number of trains we can run and increase overcrowding. We trust that passengers will understand that in order to protect the present level of service, some trains will run up to 15 minutes late." Make of that what you will!!

During the school holidays I sometimes used to go trainspotting for the day at Peterborough. Sometimes I went with my brother, sometimes with other boys, sometimes alone. These visits began in the mid-1950s and continued at irregular intervals until the end of the decade. At the time, the railway line along the Nene valley from Northampton to Peterborough was still open, and my usual way of getting to Peterborough was to catch a bus from near my home in Rushden, alight at the junction of the Raunds road at the bottom of the hill beyond Higham Ferrers, and walk the short distance to Irthlingborough station.

As far as I remember, passenger trains on the Northampton-Peterborough line were, in the second half of the 1950's, hauled by 4F 0-6-0s, 2P 4-4-0s and B1 4-6-0s. The trains stopped at all stations, with the exception of Castor. As far as Thrapston the station signs and nameboards were London Midland Region red, but from Thorpe Waterville onwards they were Eastern Region blue. Two or three trains would be passed during the journey, and there might be a few more engines to be seen at the East station at Peterborough, but the main interest of the day began after the walk through the city centre to the North station.

It was a very different place from the present Peterborough station. At either end of it, there was a sharp curve in the main line, and trains passing through were restricted to 20 mph, it had an overall roof, underneath which the atmosphere seemed permanently dark and smoky. There was a great deal to be seen, and my favourite vantage point was the north end of the big down island platform; from there, the three main platforms could be watched as well as the north end bays, the goods lines outside the station and the line from East station to Stamford and Leicester.

Peterborough was not the only place where I watched trains on the East Coast Main Line, but the North station offered plenty of opportunities for concentrated number collecting, and I have many happy memories of my times there. I remember my parents remarking on the smell of coal-smoke I brought home with me after a day at Peterborough, and I have read since then that the locomotives on the East Coast Main Line did indeed use a type of coal which produced a particularly pungent smoke. I remember my annoyance, when, through being at the wrong end of the station, I missed a change of engines on an express, and I recall the excitement, mixed with fear, the one time I saw a train, a fast goods, come lurching round the curve and through the main platforms at well above the speed limit.

My favourite memories of Peterborough are of the Pacific locomotives on the named expresses, and one particular incident comes to mind. Among the group at the north end of the island platform one morning, a boy said that he had dreamed the night before that 60027 "Merlin" would come through on the "Elizabethan", The A4's were my favourites of the Pacifics, and "Merlin", based at Haymarket shed in Edinburgh, was one I had not yet seen.

The "Elizabethan", which at that time was a non-stop express running in the summer only between Kings Cross and Edinburgh, was due through Peterborough in the southbound direction some time around the middle of the day; there were excited shouts when it duly appeared, and the A4 hauling it proved indeed to be 60027. An amazing coincidence? Not really. I assume the boy was telling the truth and did not have "inside information", and it was not very surprising that a trainspotter should dream about an engine he wanted to see, I am sure I have done it myself. The "Elizabethan", unlike other prestigious named trains such as the "Heart of Midlothian", the "Flying Scotsman", the "Queen of Scots" and the "Northumbrian", was invariably A4 hauled, and it was worked alternately by engines from Kings Cross and Haymarket sheds. Scottish Region engines were rare as far south as Northamptonshire but the "Elizabethan" was guaranteed to produce one frequently. The 34 A4's were at that time about equally shared between Kings Cross, Gateshead and Haymarket sheds, so there could not have been more than about 25 engines in the "pool" from which the locomotive hauling the "Elizabethan" that day had to come. It was certainly intriguing, and enjoyable, for us to see "Merlin" on the working which the dreamer had foretold, and that episode at Peterborough is one which I like to remember; but the odds against it happening, were not very great.

Railways and Canals

by Graeme Wade

Quite often, when you are travelling by train, you see a stretch of water, not necessarily a river, meandering along without, apparently, any rhyme or reason as to why it is there. You may also see a narrow boat on it or a river cruiser, and wonder where the people on it are going, or where they have come from.

The purpose of this short article is not so much to do with the canals themselves, that is a subject of its own, but more to do with the railway bridges over the canals and rivers. The railway traveller rarely if ever, sees the bridges unless they are approached around a sharp bend, but they form an important part of railway history, and are, in many cases, important architectural features in their own right.

This article is going to take a trip from Lincoln to Nottingham by water, rather than by the railway, a trip of around two days, depending upon the tidal section of the River Trent and the timing of the tides at Torksey and Cromwell, and some 90 kilometres or 55 miles, approximately twice the distance by rail, which only takes an hour or so, describing, as we go, the various railway bridges we pass under.

About an hour and a half out of Lincoln the first railway bridge is at Saxilby. This is quite an interesting metal structure, crossing the Roman Fossdyke (the oldest manmade canal excavation in the country, dating back to 120AD) on the skew and giving the rail passenger a fine view down the Fossdyke towards the pedestrian bridge crossing the Fossdyke between the Sun and Ship public houses. This is a former railway bridge, having graced the platforms at Newark, so it is believed.

After entering the tidal section of the River Trent at Torksey, the traveller upstream gets a look at the Torksey viaduct some half a mile downstream, which used to carry the line from Saxilby past Cottam Power Station and oil to Torksey oil terminal. There was a certain amount of publicity recently about its future, but the hoo-ha seems to have died down again.

However, we are going upstream and apart from the Dunham road bridge (no tolls for river traffic) the next crossing of the river is by Fledborough viaduct, which used to carry the Skellingthorpe to Worksop line past High Marnham power station. Not only is this an impressive cast iron structure with substantial columns when viewed from the level of the river, it has a substantial viaduct as well. Alas, trains no longer run over it.

It's all a bit different when one gets to Winthorpe, near Newark, as the ECML crosses the river on a substantial metal girder bridge near the Newark level crossing and just before entering Newark Nether Lock. The noise of trains going over the bridge when you are on the water below gives the suggestion that the GNER expresses are "stealthy". This site has, of course, been the subject of much change recently. The bridge has been removed and replaced over the August Bank Holiday weekend in a mammoth exercise and at a cost of some £8 million. Will this new bridge last as long as the old one?

Passing through Newark Nether Lock we then pass under the Newark Castle to Lincoln line and pass the buttresses of the former connecting line between the Lincoln line and the ECML. The railway then leaves the river for a distance, but returns briefly near Burton Joyce so there is a chance to see something as we are rounding the 180-degree bend here.

The next view of the railway from the River Trent is at Colwick, where the river passes under a substantial single span cast iron bridge carrying the Grantham line from Nottingham; manufactured in Lincoln by Thomas Clayton and Shuttleworth in 1850, so says the builder's plate. Recently restored, this makes a fine sight as you pass underneath, but its originality has been affected by a certain amount of concrete infilling, presumably to give added strength but this does not detract from its appearance. However, at 149 years old it is a fine advertisement to the skill of its builders and has a great local interest. It is also of interest because of the substantial viaducts curving from it to the east, one leg travelling to Grantham via Radcliffe on Trent, the other curving to the south of Nottingham and at some time forming a turning triangle.

We are into urban Nottingham now, apart from a brief interlude past Holmepierre Point and after turning off the river between the Nottingham Forest and Notts County grounds at Meadow Lane Lock, we pass under the Nottingham-Lincoln line adjacent to Nottingham station before turning through a tight right angle to pass under the former Great Central viaduct, which still exists and leads to the former Nottingham Victoria station, alas no more. Amazingly, this 55-mile journey has taken something like 14 hours and has provided us with some interesting sights, not just of interest to railway enthusiasts, but to people of all interests, from archaeologists to ornithologists.

Ambling along at 4 mph (or something like 6.89 kmph as we are now told in the wonderful world of the EC, and as the speed limits on the river now tell us) gives one a different view of the world and lets us look at what we miss when we go by train or car.

Incidentally, a marvellous place to see the ECML diversions, when we get them, is from the Fosdyke between Woodcocks and Saxilby. The "Isabella" is available for hire on these occasions!

Railway Photography in Winter

by Antony Brown

It's that time of year again when railway photographers will have either packed their gear away in hibernation until British Summertime comes around again, or will have dusted off the tripod, located the cable shutter release, donned the thermals and ventured intrepidly off to sample the delights that winter photography can bring. Personally I take the latter course of action and rarely do I regret it for, although it can be hard work, railway photography in the winter months has much to commend it, and is often rewarding.

If one is lucky enough to chance on a sunny day, I believe (contrary to what some photographers claim) that the winter sunlight has an extra special quality that is rarely evident in the summer months, and because the sun is often low in the sky those wonderful golden shots are possible when the light illuminates the side of a loco or train (indeed in high summer landscape photographers usually shoot early in the morning or late in the afternoon to avoid the flatness induced by the harsh, direct, midday sun). It is an interesting juxtaposition that a sharp cold winters day can produce beautifully warm tones that can make the landscape seem to glow.

For some photographers a tripod may be considered an unnecessary encumbrance, however with limited daylight hours it becomes an essential piece of equipment if one is to extract full value from a winter day's photography. Incidentally, when buying a tripod go for one with a quick release platform that can be permanently attached to the base of the camera. There is nothing worse than dashing off a railtour or a rare, unexpected drag and having to fumble around screwing the camera onto a tripod platform under pressure in cold, dark conditions; you will more than likely miss the shot altogether or end up with a cross threaded tripod bush in your camera baseplate or even both.

One advantage of shooting after dark is that there is no need to travel far to get interesting pictures, as even the most mundane of units can look good when illuminated by the local station lighting. I always find it useful to bracket exposures quite liberally when shooting at night. Experimentation is the key, and try to write down the details of each exposure. A few cautionary words however, while I personally have had no interference from station staff, I have read of photographers being refused permission to use tripods, or even take pictures at certain stations, so be wary.

Merry Christmas to everyone.

Shunted on a Branch Line to Nowhere from The Observer - Sunday June 25, 2000

Mike Carter retraces a rail route of his childhood, in search of the magnificence and power he remembers as an awestruck lad.

The first thing I did on arrival at Birmingham's New Street station was pay a visit to W.H. Smith's for a pocket book containing locomotive numbers.

I couldn't find one. "Excuse me, do you still sell those little train spotting books?" I asked the assistant.

"I don't think we sell that type of thing any more," she said, looking at this 35-year-old man as if I'd just asked for the latest copy of Nuns in Rubber. "I'll ask my manager."

"DAVE, DO WE HAVE ANY OF THOSE TRAINSPOTTING BOOKS LEFT?" she shouted from one end of the shop to the other. The bustle stopped and dozens of pairs of eyes bored into me with a mixture of vilification and pity. I looked around for my friend Tom, who had driven me to the station. He had dropped

behind a counter and become engrossed in a magazine for the concrete industry. As a boy, I had been a trainspotter. Now that innocent noun has carved a place for itself as a pejorative and lay somewhere between paedophile and rapist in the nation's collective conscience. I left the shop quickly. Without my book!

A quarter of a century earlier, the station was the focal point of my troubled life. Back then, in the space of 12 months, cancer hollowed out my beloved grandmother, my grandfather died, and my uncle James, who'd had such an influence on me, suffered a fatal stroke. On the way back from James's funeral, father announced he was leaving my mother. Shortly afterwards, my mother was diagnosed with cancer. Not a particularly good time. I was fat, lonely and miserable, and witnessing an ordered life crumble into chaos and dust.

Every Saturday I would buy a platform ticket and just sit, watching. I fell in love - with the noise, the diesel fumes, the possibility of travel, of getting away, putting distance between myself and a life that had become unfamiliar and full of conflict. Somebody else's life. Somebody else's script.

I saved my pocket money and progressed from platform tickets to, tickets - to travel. I would pitch up at the ticket office at New Street, empty my pockets and ask how far my money would take me. Often, it was just to Wolverhampton or Stafford, but sometimes I'd get as far as Crewe or Doncaster, with their bustling locomotive works and engine sheds - spotting paradises.

In the summer, I'd purchase a Railover ticket, which gave me unlimited travel for a week. Sometimes I'd be gone for two or three days at a time. I could nearly always end the evening on a train travelling overnight and get some sleep, but on more than one occasion, I had to get my head down in the warm embrace of a waiting room. I had become obsessed.

My parents worried, but they had other things to occupy them. It felt good to get away. To be sitting on a train. Going somewhere, anywhere, as long as it wasn't home, where people shouted and cried and said wild, dangerous things.

One summer's weekend in 1975, aged 11, I undertook a trainspotter's pilgrimage. I headed north to Crewe, home of Crewe Works, one of the largest locomotive works in the world, occupying 365 acres. From Crewe, across the Pennines to Doncaster, to the fabled 'Donny' Works, where generations of train builders had turned out legendary engines. From Doncaster to Darlington, and then on to Shildon, the location then of one of Europe's biggest wagon-building plants but, more importantly, the venue for The Railway Cavalcade, a celebration of 150 years of railways. Shildon was not chosen lightly for the honour of hosting this festival. It was outside the Mason's Arms pub in the town that the first public passenger train departed in 1825 for Stockton on the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

On that Sunday, I sat and watched a procession of trains go by: Stephenson's Rocket, the Flying Scotsman, Mallard, Great Western Castles and Southern Region Bullied Pacifics; a pantheon of steam locomotives. Also on display were contemporary British-built locos, still setting the standard the world over. It was a sublime day, embracing the past, and looking optimistically to the future.

During the following 25 years, my love of trains never diminished, although when I discovered beer and girls the attraction of sitting on a freezing platform lost its allure. Now, curious to see what had happened in the time I'd been away, I undertook that same journey. From Birmingham, I headed north on a Virgin train, through the tunnel that leads away from New Street. It felt good to be travelling on a train again, not commuting or on business, but just for the sake of it. Ahead was a cartoon mouse hole of bright light, and the infinite possibilities that travel brings.

I found the guard and asked him what working on the modern railways was like. I told him I was writing a piece for The Observer. He stiffened, and told me that he had signed a contract forbidding him from talking to the press. I'd be arrested if Virgin found out what I was doing. He scuttled off, leaving me feeling a little seditious. The approach to Crewe used to be memorable for spotters. The four tracks fanned out into a vast marshalling yard. There was Crewe Diesel Depot, where you were guaranteed to see dozens and dozens of locomotives.

It was raining when I got to Crewe this time. The marshalling yard had shrunk considerably and in it were columns of vandalised and neglected coaches. At the diesel depot, a dozen locos stood idle. Half of them had broken windscreens or had their-side panels ripped off to reveal missing engines - emasculated giants. It was a depressing sight. I stood on the platform in a flurry of wind and water, the overhead cables fizzing and humming. This trip had seemed a good idea at the time, but I was beginning to have regrets. When I used to come to Crewe, I felt part of it. Now, I felt like an outsider. The trains looked like Portakabins on wheels. Each train carried a different livery; a private affair. The staff, in their Virgin Puffa jackets, looked like they'd be more at home serving fries and Whoppers.

The next day I headed for the site of the old British Rail Crewe Works. In 1837 the first station was opened by the Grand Junction Railway Company, but it was not until 1843, when the GJRC decided to site its workshops at Crewe, that the town was born. At its height, the works employed 30,000 people and made some of the finest trains the world has seen. The ubiquitous HST's that ply their trade all over the country were made at Crewe. During the last 20 years, the works has been run down and what little remained was sold to the private sector. Adtranz, the company which took over, employs around 1,000 people, largely engaged in collision repair or refurbishment. No locomotives are made.

Part of the old works is occupied by a huge Safeway store. In the car park there is a steam tank engine, painted in the supermarket's corporate colours and surrounded by rubber matting for children to play on.

Almost hidden behind Safeway is the Railway Age, a small heritage centre to celebrate 150 years of the railways in Crewe. It would be easy to miss. On one of the sidings is the prototype of the Advanced Passenger Train. During the late Eighties, the APT tilting train was developed at Crewe, at enormous cost to the taxpayer, to achieve greater speeds on the twisting line to Glasgow. Early trials were successful, but there were problems with the tilting mechanism and it was abandoned by a government with no vested interest in the future of train building. In 2002, Richard Branson's new Pendolino tilting trains will enter service on the West Coast Main Line and run past the rusting museum piece at the Heritage Centre. Virgin has invested £592 million in these trains. The tilting mechanisms are being built by Fiat in Italy, the bogies in Switzerland, and they are being assembled in the old Metro Cammell Works in Birmingham by Alstom, a French company.

I left Crewe heading for Doncaster in a box painted yellow with green splashes. The seats were made of thin foam and all passengers faced the same way. Just like when you go back to your old school and find the seats and desks ludicrously small, so it is with these local trains. The interior was finished in a dull, utilitarian grey and, with sliding electric doors and no openable windows; the train was like a hermetically sealed tube. It was so quiet and smooth that even the clickety-clack of the wheels on the tracks was annulled.

While changing trains at Sheffield, I talked to one of the men in the uniform of Midland Mainline. He used to work at the vast Tinsley marshalling yard, just outside the Steel City. Now he stands on the station all day "meeting and greeting, smiling at customers and being as helpful as possible". "I am known as a customer services supervisor," he continued, forcing a grin. "I can't even go for a piss without some 23-year-old graduate manager asking me where I've been."

Another customer services operative told me that, when trains ran late, it can quickly descend into chaos. "The different companies' timetables do not connect with each other like they used to," he said. "It just becomes a free-for-all, and we are here to apologise for it all."

At Doncaster, I saw my first trainspotters. I approached, telling them what I was up to. They recoiled, becoming defensive. The media had been brutal towards "railway enthusiasts", they said, correcting my terminology, and they had no desire to provide further ammunition.

One of my abiding memories of spotting was sitting at Doncaster Station, listening for the shrill sound of the twin Napier engines of a Deltic. Silently, more than 100 tons of metal would creep into view and then erupt furiously in a maelstrom of full-open throttles and crashing coaches, the entire station shaking to its foundations. Seconds later, all that was left was the wind and a red tail-light, disappearing bewitchingly into the night. It was magnificent.

Later that night I paid a visit to Doncaster Works. Up until the mid-Eighties, more than 5,000 men were employed there. The last locomotive to be built there, a Class 58, rolled off the production line in 1987. Now there are around 300 men employed there, based in a tiny part of the old site, mostly on contracts to refurbish wagon wheels and respray coaches.

I stood outside the gates that had teemed with life on my last visit. Opposite was The Plant public house, now boarded up. I spoke to one of the security guards, patrolling the desolate site.

"It's such a bloody waste," he said. "I started here as a crane operator in 1985. There were more than 5,000 here then. I was asked; "How old are you?" I told him I was 26. He replied: "You'll still be working here when you're 65." Two years later, the plant was effectively closed down and I've been working as a security guard ever since. I earn £3.60 an hour, working a 75-hour week to survive".

That night, in my B&B, I read an article about the 270 Class 66 locomotives that have been ordered, to be operated on British freight workings, by English, Welsh & Scottish Railways, now the sole mover of freight in Britain. Freightliner excepted. The supplier of this massive order is - General Motors of Ontario. I also read about the fleet of 30 new Class 67 locomotives. The supplier? - Alstom at Valencia, Spain, as sub-contractors for General Motors. It seemed the nation that invented the train was now importing them by the depot load.

From Doncaster to York, the home of The National Railway Museum, and until recently, the site of York Railway Works, closed down in 1995. Finally on to Darlington, where I waited for the train to Shildon, the place where the railways began and my journey would end. I waited.

And waited. And waited.

After 30 minutes, a station official appeared in an ankle-length greatcoat and military cap (Robin Skinner? - Ed).

The train had failed. It wasn't coming. No train was coming. One of the features of train operators having to lease rolling stock is that when they break down there is no replacement. It does not make economic sense.

And so it was that I turned up in Shildon, the birthplace of trains, in a minicab. It was howling a gale and the sky was firing a horizontal salvo of frozen bullets. The last time I was in Shildon, at the great Cavalcade, the works employed 3,000 people. The interim history carried a depressingly familiar leitmotif.

In 1982, BREL, announced that it intended to close the 150-year-old works, then still one of the most profitable in the country.

Despite petitions from Sedgefield Borough Council, the closure went ahead. Unemployment in the town shot up to nearly 50 per cent, and 355 people were chasing every job vacancy in the area. Businesses folded, shops closed and the value of property plummeted. An entire generation moved away to seek work and never returned. Schools closed, crime soared and the social and health implications of such disastrous levels of unemployment began to bite savagely. Today Shildon, where it is possible to buy a house for £6,000, is showing signs of a slow recovery.

But if you popped into The Mason's Arms and asked the locals about The Closure, you would still generate emotions of bitter and visceral intensity. In the unrelenting rain, I went to stand at the spot where I watched the trains go by all those years ago. The sidings had been ripped up, and only weeds flourished. I had seen enough and was regretting coming back. I wanted to go home.

At Doncaster, waiting for the train to London, I saw a lad taking numbers and photographs at the end of the platform. I approached him and said hello, difficult enough when you are 35, grubby from four days of travelling, and the recipient of your attentions is a schoolboy. His name was Michael, he was 14, and he came from Liverpool.

I asked him why he went trainspotting. He replied that he liked the power, the speed and the noise. He asked me if I liked writing. I couldn't answer him. I asked him about his photography. He talked about the dusting of snow on the Pennines that morning, and how marvellously the winter sun reflected off it. A dusting. Reflecting winter sun. He was 14!

We talked about trains. Michael told me he loved the old Class 47s, but hates the new Class 66s. "They're so boring," he said. I told him how I used to love the old Class 40s, and hated the then new 47s. "They were so characterless," I said. We agreed to differ.

After a while, I told Michael how my spotting began when things at home had started to go wrong. He told me he had started spotting three years previously, just about the time his parents had split up.

My train pulled in and I climbed on board. I stood at the door to wave him off. I was tired and jaded and unshaven. His nascent eyes were full of the future; sparkling and beaming. He wished me luck. I said 'Good luck to you, too.'

PENNINE QUIZ No. 103

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL by Ken King

- 1 On what date was Horwich Parkway station opened?
- 2 Between which two stations is Guildford Viaduct?
- 3 On which station would you find a buffet called "Jack the Treacle Eater"?
- 4 Which station on the London Underground system has the most escalators?
- 5 In which year was the line from Exeter St. David's to Exeter Queen Street opened?
- 6 Which line is marketed as the 'Cuckoo Line'?
- 7 What was Sir Herbert Walkers middle name?
- 8 What was the former name of I.O.W. locomotive W4?
- 9 Who succeeded David Mitchell as Minister of State for Transport?
- 10 Which depot symbol was depicted by a hammer and anvil?
- 11 What was the number of the first locomotive through Toton's new paint shop?
- 12 Where exactly is The Bickington Steam Railway?
- 13 Between which two stations did 'The Tyne Trader' run?
- 14 The Docklands Light Railway was officially opened by HM Queen on what date?
- 15 Which unit ran on the first Hull Trains service out of Hull on 23d October 2000?
- 16 Which pre-grouping railway had the initials DN & S.R.?
17. What was the length of Weedley tunnel?
- 18 Which stations are at either end of the 'Borderlands Line'?
- 19 Which current London Underground station was originally to have been called Woodstock?
- 20 No. 76114 was the last steam locomotive built at which works?
- 21 Which locomotive was named 'Audrey Newton' for one day only?
- 22 What was the name of Director' class locomotive No. 6385?
- 23 Terry Waite named which unit on 8th March 1999?
- 24 What was the value of Railtrack shares at 31st December 1999?
- 25 'Red dwarfs sierra' is an anagram of which LNER locomotive?
- 26 What is St. Anne's No.3 tunnel also known as?
- 27 From which station did the 'Fast Belfast depart to Stranraer'?
- 28 On what date did John Prescott open the EWS Customer Delivery Service Centre at Doncaster?
- 29 In the absolute block signalling system what does the code 5-5~5 represent?
- 30 Which was the first Class 153 to be painted in First North Western livery by Wabtec?
- 31 Where is the only remaining signal box on the Redmire branch?
- 32 Which LNER class A2 was named after the 1944 "Oaks" winner?
- 33 Which two "Jubilees" had the same names as winners of the "2000 guineas"?
- 34 Which named train left Euston at 11.50 am and arrived at Manchester London Road at 3,20 pm?
- 35 Between which two stations is Bo-Peep tunnel?
- 36 At precisely what time was a one minute's silence observed at GNER main line stations on October 24th 2000?

- 37 How many tunnels are there between Dawlish and Teignmouth? '
- 38 What is the gauge of the Amberley Chalk Pits Railway?
- 39 Which is the highest station on the London Underground network at 490 feet above sea level?
- 40 What was the cost of the Passenger Timetable covering the period 8th May 1978 to May 13th 1979?
- 41 Where in 1920 were two aspect colour signals first used?
- 42 In which year was the new Exeter signalling centre opened?
- 43 What was the former name of Leicester North station on the Great Central Railway?
- 44 The Marylebone Great Central Hotel used as headquarters of the BRB from 1948 was reinstated in 1992 as a hotel under what name?
- 45 What was the former name of the Mid Norfolk Railway Society?
- 46 In which year was the fire at Vic Berry's Western Boulevard site at Leicester?
- 47 Which class 47 locomotive was named 'WA. Camwell' on one side only for one day only?
- 48 On what date did regular services commence on the Robin Hood line between Nottingham and Newstead?
- 49 What is the name of North Norfolk's Railway Class 37 D6732?
- 50 Which station doubled as Buggleskelly in the 1937 film 'Oh Mr. Porter'?

PENNINE QUIZ No. 102

THE ANSWERS

1. Tuxford
2. 2 feet
3. High Peak Junction
4. Pitsford and Brampton
5. 1977
6. Rushden
8. 1959
9. 1964
10. Grantham
11. Ditchford
12. Midland Main Line on the Northern approach to Sharnbrook Summit, south of Wellingborough
13. Sykes Junction
14. Langwith Whaly Thorns
15. East Holmes
16. Wellingborough
17. Kings Sutton
18. Wrawby Junction
19. Peterborough Spital 20, High Dyke Junction
21. Ais Gill
22. Church Lane Crossing
23. Market Rasen
24. Hopton Incline
25. Ivanhoe Line

The Winners

Joint 1st John Dewing and Ken King

3rd Ian Shenton

The cheques will be sent shortly in plain brown envelopes!

PENNINE OBSERVERS NOTES

Eastern Region

Lincoln Observations

Oct 03 60026 66039 on Oil Trains

Oct 05 60013 60026 60049 on Oil Trains

Oct 06 60036 60039 on Oil Trains

Oct 24 60005 on Oil. 56051 Light Engine

Oct 30 Lincoln was at a standstill following storm damage, except for an empty Central Trains 153 moving on the centre road at the station and over the High Street level crossing.

Three more 153's, 2 Central Trains 158's and a Northern Spirit 142 were stabled in the platforms.

Nov 15 60018 60045 60049 on Oil Trains

Nov 16 60018 60042 on Oil Trains

Nov 17 60005 60042 60087 on Oil Trains

Nov 23 60049 60070 60090 on Oil Trains

Nov 24 60077 60091 on Oil Trains

Noted at Immingham on Nov 04 were 37334 37344 37383 56019 56040 56047 56055 56069 56079 56081 56084 56125 and 60005.

On Oct 04 56087 + 56041 were noted on a freight working at Stow Park. 60093 and 66203 were working freights at Eaton Lane Crossing on Oct 12, 56095 and 56096 were on freight duties on Oct 14 at Appleby (Scunthorpe).

On Nov 06 91015 and 91029 were noted running at reduced speed on northbound GNER expresses and 60002 on cargowaggons.

The Gainsborough - Barnetby line has recently been used as a diversionary route and the following have been noted:

Nov 10 66007 on Freight

Nov 11 60018 and 66 017 on Steel and 60045 on Oil.

The light engine movement before the Saturday passenger service on the Gainsborough - Barnetby line no longer seems to run - it was last noted on Jul 22 (56102).

On 02 Dec the following were noted in the Retford area on the GNER Saturday Emergency Timetable.

91002 14.05 Darlington/Kings Cross

91004 13.00 Kings Cross/Darlington

91012 13.05 Darlington/Kings Cross

91013 12.00 Kings Cross/Darlington

Noted at Peterborough on 10 Oct were 08516 08538 58021 58031 56081 and 56113

On 14 Oct Tyne Yard was host to 66098 66101 66102 66203 67012 and 67022 whilst 47757 was acting as Newcastle Thunderbird.

On 21 Oct 37219/37370 was on a Sandite train through York station and 4472 "Flying Scotsman" passed through on a charter.

47790 was also noted on the Lincoln/Edinburgh "Railtourer"

Midland Region

On 23 Sept 66104 90005 90031 90037 and 92042 were noted at Warrington BQ whilst Saltley was host to 66185 and 66238. on the same day 56018 58046 60051 66037 66195 were at Leicester.

Noted at Crewe on 24 Sept were:

86245 08.30 Manchester/Euston

47845 08.45 Birmingham NS/Preston

47725 08.00 Euston/Liverpool (Fwd from Crewe)

47726 09.15 Preston/Euston (to Crewe)

87033 09.15 Preston/Euston (Fwd from Crewe)
47575 10.52 Birmingham NS/Liverpool
47733 14.42 Liverpool/Euston (to Crewe)
87015 14.42 Liverpool/Euston (Fwd from Crewe)

On Saturday 14 Oct passengers on the Manchester/Chester route could sample three generations of DMU's.
The three diagrams were in the hands of-
12.24 ManPicc/Chester Coradia 175105 (Very Posh)
13.24 ManPicc/Chester Strathclyde 101695 (V Old)
14.24 ManPicc/Chester Pacer 142023 (Very Uncomfortable)

Among the chaos at Manchester Piccadilly station on 28 Oct after the Hatfield derailment and consequent speed restrictions, all services were "up the spout", especially Virgin XC services.
For 5 glorious minutes at 13.40 the station was host to just;
101677/685 Platform 1
101689 Platform 2
101654 Platform 3
"Reliable 1950's traction amongst the chaos"

On Saturday 02 Dec the MetCamm 101's were still hanging on. With more Class 175's being accepted into traffic the rumour machine is in full swing regarding the retirement date for these venerable 40 year old stalwarts.

The end of this year is a possibility but in the meantime they are still the booked traction on the Manchester/Marple/Hope Valley/Sheffield services. Noted on this day were;
101663 (51201/4347/1412) 10.16 Sheffield/ManPicc
101632 (53170/3253) Cal Livery 09.43 ManPicc/Sheff
101676 (51205/1803) 10.43 ManPicc/Sheffield
101653 (53228/1426/4358) 11.34 Marple/ManPicc
101695 (51226/1499) Strathclyde 11.54 Marple/ManPicc

Chaos still ensued on Virgin services, typically Euston/Manchester trains taking over 4 hours to complete the journey. 87003/016 and 90002 were noted on these "pre - war" timings.

Southern Region

On 10 Oct 59201 59205 and 73128 were noted at Hither Green with Dollands Moor being host to 37170 37376 665013 66019 66077 66145 66227 92007 92009 92016 92017 92027 92033 and 92043

Preserved Railways/Festivals/Railtours

Noted at Collingham on Oct 01 was steam loco 35028 "Clan Line" on the "Merchant of Lincoln" special with 47776 attached at the rear.

The following locos were on view at the Barrow Hill Open Day on Sunday 08 Oct-
03066 03094 03170* 07001* 07013 08507 08668 12082* 20056 20094 20096 20135 D8000* 20904*
20906* 25067 26011 D5300 31105 31107 31524 33002 D6508 33023* 33029 33035 33053 33057 37111
37194* 37610* 45060 45105 50002 50023 50050 D1023* D9009 56098* 66250 E3003 82008 E3035
84001 85101.

Locos marked * were being used on brake van rides.

Pathfinder Tours "Calder Revolver" railtour on 23 Sept had a good selection for haulage bashers, namely:
47799 Preston/B'ham/Leicester/Derby
58002 Derby/Chesterfield/Beighton/Deepcar
66008 Deepcar/Tinsley Yard
60097 Tinsley Yard/Bradford Interchange

56120 Bradford/Manchester Vic/Preston
92032 Preston/Birmingham New St.

On 21 Oct the "Railtourer" Excursion from Skegness to Edinburgh was hauled by 47761 outward and 47790 (a Scottish "Bess" engine) return.

28 Oct saw the HRT "The Humber Docker" railtour from London to Hull KGV Dock, Saltend and Monk Bretton. Locos used on the tour were 67017 67026 47635 and 66159, the tour did not call at York due to late running and was 2 hours late at Peterborough.

On 02 Dec the Pathfinders "Grassington Excursion" was hauled by 56058/56127 from Cardiff to Rylestone and return whilst the Nenta Tour's Norwich to York excursion was in the hands of 67006.

The Severn Valley Railway Gala on 30 Sept was host to 31108 37906 50007 56006 57012 D431 D449 D821 D1013 D1023 D1524 D8000, Steam Locos 7714 48773 and 80079 with DMU's 52064 56208. (51935/51941/59250 ran an evening Fish and Chip Special).

At the North Yorkshire Moors Steam Gala on 08 Oct working locos were 828 34101 44767 60007 60532 62005 65894 75029 80135 and No. 29. Furness Rly No. 20 was on the Levisham/Pickering shuttle.

The KWVR Steam Enthusiasts Weekend on 21 Oct was host to No. 85 48431 51218 (on freight) 78022 plus diesels 20189 D8031 and Railbus M79964.

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

Trains hit by rise in thefts and Violence by Ray Massey - Daily Mail - 09 Nov 2000

Trains are getting less reliable and more dangerous, industry watchdogs confirmed yesterday.

Passengers are also facing a steep rise in crime, particularly robberies and sex attacks. The gloomy picture was painted in separate reports from the Strategic Rail Authority and Railtrack's own safety arm.

The crime report showed that 1,084 people were robbed on the railways in the year to September, compared with 744 for the previous 12 months. Some 687 passengers were physically assaulted and 350 sexually assaulted.

A major new problem was a wave of incidents where youths snatched mobile phones, mostly from passengers on commuter lines in London and the South East. Overall robbery and violence offences rose from 1,754 incidents to 2,121.

The report says the increase in sexual offences may be due to changes in the way they are reported, but admits: "Train and station operators must continue working with the British Transport Police to reduce these attacks." The number of passengers seriously hurt as they tried to get on or off also increased dramatically, possibly due to overcrowding. The figure reached 22, compared to 13 the previous year and 11 in 1998-99.

In the first half of this year 44 people died in accidents, up from 36 in 1999. Of those, 29 were hit by trains and eight were electrocuted while trespassing. Four died at level crossings, one was killed leaning from a platform and two fell or jumped from bridges.

Since the period covered by the report, one man has died after falling as he boarded a train, and another was killed after falling from a platform. Four people were also killed in the Hatfield crash last month.

The SRA's punctuality report showed that only three of the 36 franchised lines - Great Western, Gatwick Express and Cardiff Railway - managed an improvement in timekeeping in the three months to mid-October, and that was before the major programme of track repairs - triggered by the Hatfield crash - threw services into chaos. Cardiff Railway was up 4 per cent, Gatwick Express up 2 per cent and Great Western up 1 per cent.

At the foot of the table, GNER showed an 11 per cent drop in punctuality, followed by North Western Trains and Cross Country, down 9 per cent, and Anglia Inter City, West Coast Trains and Northern Spirit, down 8 per cent. Overall performance was worse than in the previous year. Last night the Rail Passengers' Council said the two reports made "grim reading". National director Anthony Smith said: "There needs to be more bobbies on the beat around stations, more visible staff, CCTV on trains and more investment in security to cut crime and make passengers feel more secure." On poor punctuality, he said "It is getting worse, and they can't blame leaves on the line. We need a radical overhaul."

One of the few signs of progress came with a reduction in the number of collisions and derailments, and of instances of trains passing signals at danger, But Railtrack's safety and standards directorate said it accepted those improvements were "cold comfort" in the wake of the Hatfield crash.

The statistics for SPADS (signals passed at danger) are particularly significant as they have been the centre of attention ever since the October 1999 Paddington crash, caused by a train passing a red light. Serious SPAD's were 35 per cent, lower than the average for the last four years, and the number of less serious SPAD's fell for the first time since records began.

Rail regulator Tom Winsor told the Paddington crash inquiry yesterday that Railtrack's contract had been drawn up "in a hurry and imperfectly" in 1995. He said it had also been done "on the basis of imperfect information" and the company had been given little incentive to improve the network.

More Accidents at Bristol and Northampton

Locowatch - November 2000

Delays to passengers increase as repair work for Northampton & Bristol will take 14 days.

Passengers travelling in the Bristol and Northampton areas, already suffering delays through emergency speed restrictions, are destined for more chaos as repair work from yesterday's derailments will take two weeks. Work on reopening the railway through Northampton Station is taking place, after a Freightliner train to Garston Dock in Liverpool derailed damaging four miles of track.

But Railtrack says it will be two weeks at least, before rail services return to normal. Silverlink are currently operating bus shuttles to Milton Keynes and Rugby, from where passenger can catch West Coast services into London.

The wagons from the Freightliner service which derailed were removed from the site by 8.30 pm yesterday evening.

A Railtrack spokeswoman told LocoWatch this morning that we (Railtrack) "are hoping to have one of the southbound lines open between 6.30 am and 8.30 pm tomorrow, to allow Silverlink to run a reduced service." The lines will then close again until 6.30 am on Monday morning to allow permanent way staff to have total possession of the line and repair the track. A limited service will then operate between the same times all next week, with a final all-weekend position taking place between 8.30 pm on Friday 8th December until 6.30 am on Monday 11th December.

Although the official cause of the accident is not yet known, initial indications suggest that the track and ballast had become saturated with the recent flooding, causing uneven rail height.

The derailment of an EWS coal service to Avonmouth in the Bristol area is likely to cause fewer problems to passengers. The line is still blocked this morning as engineers try to recover the locomotive, Class 60 No. 60088. The wagons on the train were re-railed and removed yesterday evening. Provisional estimates are that the line will 'reopen early tomorrow (Friday) morning. Findings of the initial investigations suggest that the driver of the MGR service may have passed a RED signal. The protecting catch points then brought the train to a stand by detailing the locomotive, as they should. Railtrack South West has told LocoWatch that

"single line working was in place further along the route and there is a possibility that the signalling system may have been affected by this." The investigation continues."

Goodbye British Steel Blue - Welcome Corus Silver Locotrack - November

With British Steel no longer being in existence, since the name change to Corus, the two British Steel liveried Class 60 locomotives (Nos. 60006 and 60033) have looked rather out of place.

The livery was unveiled and the locomotives named "Scunthorpe Ironmaster" (60006) and "Tees Steel Express" (60033) in a special ceremony held with the Scunthorpe Steel Complex several years ago. Since then the locomotives have roamed across the country, from the North East to Wales, working a wide variety of services, not just metals traffic.

The change of name to Corus brought with it the opportunity to change the livery and give the two locomotives a new, fresher look.

After a special repainting job was carried out on 60033 at the Toton TMD paint shop, the first locomotive in the colour scheme was unveiled to the visiting press at the Nottinghamshire depot on Friday 24th November 2000. Only time will tell, as to how the livery stands up to the everyday operations on the railway, but 60033 earns itself a place in the record books as being the first UK locomotive to display an Internet address within the livery! The website for the Corus Group is written underneath the Corus logo on the cab sides!

60006 still remains in the British Steel blue livery, although the locomotive should enter Toton paint shops shortly to appear in the new silver livery. Congratulations to EWS for not repainting them into maroon and gold!

Wisconsin Central To Sell EWS as it Fights Ed's Comeback?

by Eddie Bellass - Locotrack Dec 3 2000

Wisconsin Central Transportation Corporation seems to be battling on two fronts as it tries to dispose of its non-USA rail companies English, Welsh & Scottish Railways and Tranz Rail Holdings Limited, New Zealand, and the possibility of the company even selling the Wisconsin Central RR itself.

Former Chief Executive Ed Burkhardt, deposed in a sudden coup in August 1999 but still a major stockholder, appears to be making a comeback attempt. His attempts to rally support and possibly regain some control of WCTC before these major disposals take place prompted the WCTC board to issue the following statement on 29th November, through PR Newswire.

"Wisconsin Central Transportation Corporation today announced it has mailed a letter to its stockholders urging them to support the Company in its program to realize maximum stockholder value and reject the hostile consent solicitation by Edward A. Burkhardt and his group of dissidents.

In the letter, the Company states that its financial advisors have contacted major US railways and other potential purchasers with respect to the sale of its North American operations. The Company also notes that its financial advisors are actively pursuing the disposition of the Company's 23.7% interest in Tranz Rail Holdings Limited and its 42% shareholding in English Welsh & Scottish Railway Limited.

With respect to our North American operations, through Goldman Sachs, we have contacted major US railways and other potential purchasers. We are meeting with and providing information to interested parties and if we are able to obtain fair value, we will promptly recommend a transaction for stockholder approval.

Our 23.7% interest in Tranz Rail Holdings Limited is being presented to potential purchasers in the New Zealand market by Deutsche Bank AG, which we engaged as agent for the sale of this asset. If we can obtain a fair value for our shares, we will promptly sell our interest in Tranz Rail. In the meantime, we strongly support Tranz Rail management's program aimed at disposing of its non-core businesses.

With respect to our 42% shareholding in English Welsh & Scottish Railway Limited ("EWS"), Goldman Sachs, which we engaged as agent for the sale of our interest, has created an offering memorandum for the sale and is presenting it to potential purchasers. If we can obtain a fair value for our shares, we will promptly sell our interest in EWS.

Recently, a dissident group calling itself the "Wisconsin Central Shareholders Committee to Maximize Value" distributed documentation proposing the removal of all the members of your Board. "IN OUR OPINION, ANY CHANGE IN YOUR BOARD OR MANAGEMENT AT THIS TIME WOULD SERIOUSLY INTERRUPT OUR ONGOING STRATEGIES AND WOULD DELAY OR PRECLUDE TRANSACTIONS OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT VALUE TO STOCKHOLDERS..... "

The statement concludes by listing a series of allegations of mismanagement made by the Burkhardt-led hostile, dissident group. WCTC 's response claims that that most of this took place while Ed Burkhardt was still in charge as chairman, president and chief executive officer of the company, and were approved by him. It urges stockholders to support the current Board and reject the Burkhardt bid to return. This saga looks set to continue over the next few weeks.

Heavy Haul dedicates locomotive to company and traffic Locotrack - Dec 03 2000

For the first time on the privatised railway a specific loco, identified by number has been allocated to one customer's flow.

The mould of general use locos was broken by Freightliner on November 29th, when the first of the brand new Freightliner Heavy Haul Class 66/6s, No. 66601 was dedicated to the Blue Circle Industries traffic from Earles (near Hope in the Peak District) to discharge sites at Weaste, near Manchester and Dewsbury.

The event was marked by the naming of No. 66601 "The Hope Valley" in a ceremony at the BCI Dewsbury terminal on Wednesday November 29th. The cast plate with the 'o' of Hope finished in Blue Circle blue, was unveiled by Gareth Ward, works manager at the Hope base. Freightliner, with the aid of three drivers now based at Hope, Glen Book, Gary Morse and Andy Croft and travelling engineering team Turners, plan to keep No. 66601 on the BCI traffic unless the loco is required for major programmed maintenance or requires unscheduled attention following failure, in which case another of the Heavy Haul locos will deputise.

At present the Freightliner/BCI contract covers the operation of 11 trains each week, seven to Weaste and four to Dewsbury. However, one of the strengths of this dedicated operation is flexibility, if BCI wish to amend the weekly schedule providing resources permit this will be done. Services from Hope are formed of PCA wagons in BCI livery. For the Dewsbury flow they operate in block consists of 36 wagons which are split on arrival.

They are then unloaded side by side, directly into silos for road shipment to local customers.

RAIL ALE

Due to Dave Bladen's change in job responsibilities and ensuing pressure of work this article is held over until the next issue.

ROBIN's REVIEW

No 11 RAIL

"Rail" is published by EMAP Active - Ltd and retails at £2.30 per issue. Subscriptions are currently £57.20 for 26 issues per year, as Rail is published every two weeks. Rail is currently at issue no 397.

In becoming fortnightly Rail took a bold step never taken before as all the other established periodicals were monthly, and indeed some at different periods in their history had been every two months.

Nobody has yet decided to follow Rail and that I believe is a toss up between the attitude of the publisher and the space on the market. At the time it was a bold move but it appears to have paid off, only time will tell.

At 72 pages it is without doubt a Modern Image publication looking purely at today's railway news. Generally divided into two parts.

Regulars and Features. Regulars covers news aimed at today's railway enthusiast and indeed today's railway professional. Covering- Comment - Editor Nigel Harris commenting on Today's railway to the slogan "Putting Britain's Railway First". Network News sixteen pages of bang up to date news. Infrastructure News two pages of news on re-engineering, signalling, buildings and other railway structures. This section, I believe, will expand post Hatfield.

Regional news covers what you would think are the areas of the different Railtrack Zones except there is one for purely London and the fact that they have Shireoaks in the Midland Zone when it is in the London North East Zone! Christian Woolmar the former Independent transport correspondent. This column is headed by the slogan "No nonsense informal opinion about the Railway- from policy to platform". "Open Access" Four excellent pages of letters in the middle of the magazine not tucked away at the end. Industry Insider is one page. Eight pages of Fleet News compiled by Pip Dunn gives up to date coverage of the stock situation. Inter City Crossword covers half a page and appears to be sponsored by the Inter City TOC's. Heritage News is two pages of bang up to date news. Arrivals and /Departures looks at people and appointments on the railway. (My one and only appearance in Rail was when I left Central trains in 1997 to work for GNER).

This is followed by eight pages of adverts of which four are professional recruitment ads for the railway industry. And finally Stop and Examine the back page which looks (or laughs) at the general media portrayal of the railway and other ditties like weed watch.

There are also four excellent feature articles. In the current edition "Transport is the spine of the country" an interview with Lord Macdonald Transport minister." Ribblehead - The rebirth of a remote station" (A good community spirit article. I always find this sort of thing works very well at some stations and not at others. It depends on who you get staff wise and the attitude of the local community. When I worked in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire on The Robin Hood Line it ranged from excellent to bloody awful. Also there's "Weaver to Wavertree Resignalling" and Teesside Class 56's at work.

Verdict: If I was writing this column ten years ago I would have said that Rail was an out and out Gricers Magazine. Now ten years is along time in the life of a railway periodical and wow! how Rail has grown up! There has been a complete change to the Editorial staff and rail is completely into the current railway scene both operationally and politically. Its coverage of Hatfield was second to none, but then it is published every two weeks so the news should always be red hot!. It is now a very different magazine to nearly every other publication on the market except Modern Railways but even Modern Railways is more technical and highbrow. Rail has in many ways matured into an excellent publication due in no small part I am sure to the backing of its publisher EMAP Active Ltd. As a railway magazine it dares to be more political and controversial than its contemporaries to the extent that there is more political comment and indeed interviews with politicians and railway industry leaders than anyone else. Therefore it has managed to corner a big section of the market that no other section of railway media has yet achieved. So be warned, only read RAIL if you are interested in the politics of Railways. The Romance is to be found in other publications! CIRCULATION. The latest figures I have for Rail are from 1999 33,368 copies fortnightly.

ROBIN'S RAMBLE

In thinking what I was going to write for the Christmas 2000 edition of TransPennine, my mind was diverted by the fact that also at this time of year I am preparing my questions for our home round of this year's Pennine Shield. Won again by the Pennine Railway Society in 1999 our aim is of course to win it again this year! If you get this in time the final is again this year at the Salutation Inn, South Parade, Doncaster at 2000 on Wednesday 20th December 2000.

Come along we encourage the audience to have a go on some of the questions. The quiz has now been going for over 20 years.

The teams currently taking part are The Pennine Railway Society, South Yorkshire Railway Photographic Circle, and The Dore Loco Society. Other teams that have taken part in the past are The Doncaster Railway Circle, The Sheffield Transport Group, and Great Central Society Sheffield Branch.

The current Pennine team is Tony Caddick Captain, Robin Havenhand and Paul Sutton. So come along on the 20th and cheer on your team.

PENNINE SLIDE COMPETITION

Thanks to Gerry Collins for stepping in at short notice to judge the competition due to Chris Nicholson's illness. The results were: 1st. Glen Williamson - Royal 44798 at Bessacarr Lane on a diverted East Coast drag. MetCamm DMU 101683 at Blaneau Festiniog. 2nd Tony Brown and 3rd Derek Porter Brand new 58001 at Doncaster Works.

PENNINE MEETINGS

All meetings are held at The Salutation Inn, South Parade, Doncaster at 2000 on the first and third Wednesday of each month.

3rd January 2001	Derek Porter.
Sunday 7th January 2001	Annual General Meeting.
17th January 2001	Morris Ockleford
7th February 2001	Neil Taylor.
21st February 2001	Trefor Evans.
7th March 2001	Members Slide Competition.
21st March 2001	Steve Hall Diesels Late 70s Early 80s.
4th April 2001	Tony Smith (Crowland).
18th April 2001	Ian Waller.
2nd May 2001	Pennine Slide Quiz.
16th May 2001	Chris Nicholson.

I would like to thank all those who have come forward to do a show this year an excellent programme. The programme for the second half of the year is coming along well however there are still vacancies so if you are interested please get in touch with Robin Skinner.

Happy Christmas and a successful New year to you all.

BROWSER'S CORNER

For members with access to the web the following sites may be of interest: www.locowatch.co.uk for up to date news of the rail scene in a "newspaper" type format. www.clique.co.uk for anyone looking for old or out of print books. www.bookbrain.co.uk for anyone buying books over the net - searches for cheapest source of any title. www.abrail.co.uk. Look at the Webring links on the index page of my site. They will

lead you to 100's of sites with a rail based interest throughout the UK and rest of the world, including model rail. Happy Surfing!!

EDITOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following for their generous contributions: Antony Brown, Tony Caddick, John Dewing, Ken King, John Sanderson, Robin Skinner, Paul Slater, Graeme Wade.

EDITOR'S APOLOGY

Some time ago a member kindly sent me a quiz which I intend to use in a future edition. Unfortunately, when I transferred the details to my hard disk, I omitted to include the name of the compiler. I do not like to publish a quiz without giving due credit to the compiler and I would be pleased if the compiler would reveal himself to me (literally of course!).

The first question of the relevant quiz is:- 1. In which year was the "Speller" amendment introduced.

I must also apologise to Andy Barclay and Peter Hall for not including their excellent summary of GNER Dragged Trains in this issue. It will certainly be published in the Spring 2001 edition of TRANS PENNINE.

SOCIAL EVENING - 20 DECEMBER

Please note that the above social evening will now be held at the Railway Hotel, adjacent to Doncaster BR station. The meeting will form the final round of the Pennine Shield Quiz and will start at 19.45hrs. The change of venue is due to a "double booking" at the Salutation. All other meetings will continue to be held at the Salutation. We apologise for any inconvenience caused by the change of venue on the 20th.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 7 JANUARY 2001

Please note that the above AGM will be held at the Salutation at 12 noon. We look forward to seeing you there.