

TRANS PENNINE

The Magazine of the Pennine Railway Society



No.154 - Winter 2010

Photos

Front Cover

The photo, taken by Glen Williamson, came first in the Pennine Shield Competition held on 3rd November 2010. It shows Peckett 0-4-0 and 'Arnold Machin", the Eccles Slag Company diesel, on a AFRPS Railtour at the Corus Steel Works in Scunthorpe.

Calendar

The photo, also taken by Glen, came third in the Pennine Shield Competition. It shows 66301 at Hatfield & Stainforth on the 12.00 Hatfield Main - Ratcliffe Power Station coal train

Committee Briefs

Season's Greetings

The Committee of the Pennine Railway Society join together in wishing all our members, their families and their friends a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year. We thank you for your support and friendship during 2010.

Membership Fee

With this magazine you will find a renewal of membership form and we are pleased to announce that we are able to maintain the annual membership fee at £6 for yet another year. We hope you feel this continues to be excellent value for money and look forward to you rejoining your society in 2011.

Pocket Diaries / Calendar

Unfortunately, because our diary provider has ceased trading, we are unable to provide pocket diaries this year, instead a 2011 calendar is included with this magazine which we hope you will welcome. The calendar shows the dates of the AGM and social evenings in red. The following special dates have been underlined: Sunday 9 January - Annual General Meeting Wednesday 4 May - The Andy Dalby Memorial Slide Competition Wednesday 2 November - Pennine Slide Competition Wednesday 7 December - Pennine Shield Round 2

Annual General Meeting

You are invited to attend the society's Annual General Meeting which will be held on Sunday 9 January 2011 at 12.00 noon at our usual venue of the Salutation in Doncaster. This is the opportunity for you, the members, to have a say in how you wish the society to be run and to form a plan of events for 2011. It will also provide an opportunity to socialise with friends you may not have seen for some time. Any member who wishes to raise an issue is welcome to advise this to our Chairman, Robin Skinner, or to any other committee member, in advance of the meeting. We hope for better weather this year in view of the fact that we twice had to postpone and eventually cancel the 2010 AGM due to the severe winter weather conditions.

Social Evenings

Members are reminded of our social evenings, arranged by Robin, which are held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month. The early 2011 programme is shown elsewhere in this organ. Entertainment begins at 20.00 in our private, well-appointed function room. Non-members are also welcome to attend.

Metrolink Expansion

Tony the Tram reports on proposed expansion of Manchester's Metrolink to the centres of Oldham and Rochdale and to also provide a new line to Manchester Airport via Wythenshawe, branching from Chorlton, currently under construction, 14 new trams will be ordered and to serve expansion, the original Queens Road depot will be extended and a new depot built at Old Trafford. When completed the system length will total almost 100km.

Coventry Dilemma

News that Coventry's Ricoh Arena has been selected as a soccer venue for the 2012 Olympics and to host pool matches for the 2015 Rugby World Cup renews pressure on Network Rail to improve services and stations between Nuneaton, Coventry and Leamington Spa. The present service is operated by single Class 153s.

Blackpool Tram on F-Line

Tony the Tram tells us of San Francisco's F-line, the city's only conventional tram route, travelling along Fisherman's Wharf. The line utilises a fleet of historic trams from all over the world, including Blackpool Boat 603 (in original style green and cream livery and carrying original fleet number 228). In 1933, Walter Luff, director of Blackpool's tramway, was looking to replace Toastrack trams with an open topped car. These were introduced in 1934, built by English Electric and known as Boats. Twelve were built (225-236) and remained in service until the North Station route closed in 1963. Nos. 229/231/232/234 were withdrawn and scrapped in 1968 with the remainder re-numbered 600-607. Nos. 600/602/604/605 remained in service; 606 given to Trolleyville Museum, Ohio and 607 withdrawn and carries adverts for Blackpool travel cards. The 4 remaining Boats were withdrawn at the end of 2004 but returned to service in 2005 following public outcry.

Workington North Closes

Workington North, constructed by Network Rail in November 2009 when floods damaged or destroyed several road bridges in the area closed on 8 October 2010. Passenger numbers have fallen from 2200 per day to one or two as road routes reopened. Network Rail has promised a £500,000 upgrade of Workington's main station.

Highland Trains Saved

A proposal by East Coast that trains from England should go no further north than Edinburgh has been rejected by the Dept for Transport.

European News

- * Eurostar has placed an order for 10 e320 trains which will travel at 200mph, carry 900 passengers and cut journey times to Paris by 15 minutes and Brussels by 11 minutes. They are to be built by German company Siemens, to the disappointment of French company Alstom which was hopeful of being awarded the contract. There were not thought to be any technical reasons why the new trains should not run at top speed on HS1 where top speed is currently 186mph.
- * These trains will not have dedicated power cars at either end but have power units spread out with smaller motors positioned by the wheels along the train.
- * The current Eurostar fleet is to be overhauled and refurbished.
- * DB has run a test train between Frankfurt and London which could herald daily uber-fast ICE trains starting in late 2013 with services to other German cities starting soon after. The train was displayed at St Pancras International on 19 October. The ICE-3 set was towed into London by Eurotunnel locomotives. No date has been set for a run under power in the UK.
- * Three services will run daily, serving Brussels, Cologne and Rotterdam. Two ICE coupled trains would run to Brussels before dividing, with one set going on to Amsterdam via Rotterdam and the other travelling to Frankfurt via Cologne. DB will need to demonstrate that passengers can get to escape tunnels in the Channel Tunnel safely as they cannot walk through carriages from one end of the train to the other.
- * Eurotunnel says that overall there is still around 50% spare capacity. Two heavyweight Canadian investors, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan and Borealis, the infrastructure investment arm of Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System have paid £2.1bn for the 30 year concession for the Channel Tunnel rail link (HS1), put up for sale by the Coalition government.
- * The volcanic ash cloud chaos helped Eurotunnel's takings soar 15% in the 3 months to the end of September. The tunnel had its busiest ever day on 14 August when it carried almost 15,000 cars, motorbikes and coaches.

Welsh Valley Success

Our Welsh correspondent, Rhys Jones, reports of booming passenger numbers on the branch between Ebbw Vale Parkway and Cardiff, reopened in 2008. Annual passenger numbers at Ebbw Vale Parkway already total 243,000. It is predicted the line could carry 2.7m passengers annually by 2025. The hourly service could be increased to 4 per hour to meet this demand. A 2 mile spur from Aberbeeg to Abertillery is also recommended.

Liverpool News

Our Liverpool Correspondent, Gerrard Collins tells us of rumours that the new American owners of Liverpool FC may rename the team "Hubcap Steelers" and the ground name changed from Anfield to the San Giro Stadium. These are yet to be confirmed.

Transport Plans Get Green Light

Following the announcement by the Coalition Government of its Comprehensive Spending Review, it appears the following projects have got the green light;

- * London's Crossrail link
- * Overhaul of Birmingham New Street
- * Electrification of Manchester-Liverpool
- * Upgrades to Midland Metro and Tyne&Wear Metro
- * Mersey Gateway Suspension Bridge

Taxi from Newhaven Marine?

Newhaven Marine is one of the stations not mentioned in any timetable and serves no passengers but is kept technically "open" to save the cost of formal closure. It is unused and inaccessible behind a locked gate. Theoretically there is a taxi service for passengers "in possession of a valid ticket", but of course there are no valid tickets available! In the past the station was sometimes referred to as Newhaven Harbour Platform 3.

Bathgate Problems

ScotRail has refused to accept new Class 380s due to software faults which have dogged testing. These were essential to the new Airdrie-Bathgate service in December, replacing Class 344s on the Inverclyde, Ayrshire Coast and Renfrewshire routes, allowing cascading of 344s to the restored Airdrie-Bathgate line. It is unlikely the full timetable will begin in December.

Last Orders for Main Line Rolling Stock

The first of a fleet of 30 new Class 379 Electrostars for National Express East Anglia, built in Derby by Bombardier, are being unveiled. This is the last remaining order outstanding for passenger coaches on the national network.

Lord's Former Centre Up for Sale

Derby's RTC Business Park has been put up for sale by the Government for £16m. Once the workplace of "The Lord", Platform 5's own Peter Fox, the former BR Research Centre has no protection in the sale for rail-connected facilities.

Return of GNWR and GNER

A company, Alliance Rail Holdings, formed by Grand Central founder Ian Yeoward, has unveiled plans to run intercity services on a number of routes from London to the north of England and a regional route from Liverpool to Hull. DB is helping with funding and rolling stock is expected to be bi-modal and built in China. Trains would run under the brands GNWR and GNER

Crowds Gather for 37's

Crowds gathered at York's NRM on 16 October 2010 to celebrate 50 years of BR dieselisation. Highlight for everyone were six Class 37s on display in the South Yard, including D6700 and 37025.

Pennine Slide Competition

The Pennine Slide Competition, held at The Salutation on 3 November, was this year judged by Chris Nicholson (last year's winner). A total of 55 high quality slides were entered and the result was as follows.

1st Glen Williamson Peckett 0-4-0 and "Arnold Machin", the Eccles Slag Company diesel, on a AFRPS Railtour at the Corus Steel Works in Scunthorpe

2nd Chris Theaker 142001 at Dawlish Warren on an Exmouth - Paignton service in June 20 10

3rd Glen Williamson 66301 at Hatfield & Stainforth on the 12.00 Hatfield Main - Ratcliffe Power Station coal train

Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all who entered and to Chris for judging.

Blackpool 125

The week of events to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Blackpool Tramway culminated in a procession of trams on anniversary day Wednesday 29th September. The line up of 8 trams representing the development of the classic Blackpool Tram started at 2pm and ran from Pleasure Beach to Bispham and return and consisted of

- * Blackpool & Fleetwood tramroad co. Rack 2 - 1898, National tramway museum
- * Blackpool & Fleetwood tramroad co. Box 40 - 1914, National tramway museum
- * Blackpool Marton Box 31 - 1919, Beamish
- * Blackpool Standard 147 - 1924
- * Blackpool Boat 600 - 1934
- * Blackpool open top Balloon 706 - 1934
- * Blackpool Coronation car 660 - 1953
- * Blackpool OMO car 8 - rebuilt 1974 from EE railcoach 612 of 1935, Lancastrian Transport Trust.

Thankfully the morning's heavy rain had cleared by the afternoon and the procession departed from Pleasure Beach on time in grey overcast conditions and still attracted much attention from both enthusiasts and holidaymakers throughout its journey. After the procession cars 600, 706 and 660 stayed out as promenade specials. The tramway closed after the last trams on Sunday 7th November for major improvement works and is due to reopen next Easter. The major work will be concentrated on the North Pier/Gynn Square section, including the Metropole street track, which will be completely re-laid. Trams in service on the last day were:

- * Pleasure Beach/Fleetwood Fisherman's Walk service - 707, 709, 711, 717, 723
- * Pleasure Beach/Thornton Gate service - 632, 642, 643, 685/675, 719
- * Promenade Specials - 600, 631, 644, 645, 647, 646, 660
- * Illuminated Cars - 733/734, 736, 737

The last tram in service therefore was Balloon 711 working routecard number 4 - 23.03 PB/F WALK then 00.07 F WALK/MANCHESTER SQUARE into Rigby Road depot at 00.57.

Sheffield Corporation Supertram

To commemorate 50 years since the closure of the original Sheffield Tramway system on 5th October 1960 STAGECOACH SUPERTRAM on 4th October unveiled tram no.120 at Nunnery Depot in the Blue/Cream livery of the old Sheffield Corporation Transport department. Although the blue seems a bit lighter than the original shade STAGECOACH should be congratulated for taking the time and effort on what is a full repaint on a modern vehicle.

The tram should run in the historic livery for the rest of the year. For those of us who just about remember the sad events of that very rainy Saturday 50 years ago the sight of a Blue/ Cream tram on the streets of the city again is wonderful. On that dreadful day the closing procession of 15 trams made its sad way to the

town hall. The trams involved in order in the procession were - 349, 46, 189, 503, 504, 507, 518, 521, 523, 527, 529, 530, 534, 513, 510. In that list it should be noted that the last 12 "Roberts" cars were only built 1950/52 - What a Waste!!!. At least 510 survives as "Sheffield's last tram" at the National Tramway Museum at Crich and 513 is presently on loan from the Beamish Museum to Blackpool Transport and saw a fair bit of use during the recent 125th anniversary events.

Sheffield Railwayana Auctions

At the Sheffield Railwayana Auction held at the Derbyshire County Cricket Club's Gateway Centre on 11 September 2010 the following locomotive nameplates all sold for £5,500 or more:

* LOCOMOTIVE NAMEPLATE: "LYTHAM ST ANNES" as carried by Type 4 1Co-Co1 Class 45 "Peak" loco D60, later 45022. New to 17A Derby in February 1962, a product of Crewe Works, it was named without ceremony on 1st May 1964, its claim to fame being the only Class 45 Peak not to be named after a Regiment. The highlight of its career was that it had the distinction of hauling the final IM82 Edinburgh - St Pancras over the Waverley route. This final train was heavily delayed by locals protesting at the closure of the route and made the national news media. 45022 was withdrawn in July 1987, but was renumbered into departmental stock as 97409, for use on the northern end of the ECML electrification scheme. It was finally withdrawn in 1991 and taken to MC Metals Glasgow for cutting in October of that year -£7,200

* LOCOMOTIVE NAMEPLATE: "BUCKINGHAM." In keeping with standard LNWR practice, the legend "L&NWR. - Crewe Works and the build date "Augt. 1917" are also shown. The plate was carried by Bowen Cooke design LNWR "Claughton" Class 4-6-0 No. 986, LMS No. 5390 and then later No. 5953. Built at Crewe and taken into stock in September 1917. Named in March 1922 and carried until withdrawn on 26 September 1936. The name owes itself to Richard Grenville who was Chairman of the LNWR between 1853 and 1861 and who was also Marquis of Buckingham. This was the third time the name had been used by the LNWR as it was also applied to "Newton" Class 2-4-0 No. 1289 and "Renewed Precedent" Class 2-4-0 No. 3070 - £10,800

* LOCOMOTIVE NAMEPLATE: "THORPE HALL" as carried by Gresley LNER Class B 17/1 4-6-0 designed for the Great Eastern section and fitted with GE type tender. Built at Darlington in March 1933 and named after the home of Viscount Byng near Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex. Originally numbered 2837 and then 1637 in 1946 becoming 61637 in BR days. In the 1950s it could be found at Ipswich and was withdrawn from there in September 1959 being scrapped almost immediately at Doncaster Works - £6,000

* LOCOMOTIVE NAMEPLATE: "WESTERN HARRIER" as carried by a Type 4 C-C Class 52 diesel hydraulic. Built at Swindon works in 1962, it was delivered new to 83D Laira in September. It was withdrawn from there in October 1974 and cut up at Swindon works in October 1975. Complete with matching CABSIDE NUMBERPLATE: D1008 from the same locomotive. Sadly the letter "D" and one of the "0s" are missing from an otherwise ex-loco condition plate - £8,000

* NAMEPLATE: "COEUR-DE-LION" from the BR "Britannia" class 7P 4-6-2 Pacific loco 70007 built at Crewe to order No. E479/220 designed by R. A. Riddles. Entered service in April 1951 at Stratford and named from new. Allocated to Norwich, the loco worked the new regular interval Liverpool Street Norwich trains helping to set vastly improved standards for these services until replaced by the English Electric type 4 (later Class 40) locos, and then re-allocated to March. Transferred to the LMR at Carlisle Kingmoor in December 1963 and withdrawn from there in June 1965, the first of the class to be treated thus. Scrapped at Crewe Works - £14,500

* GWR LOCOMOTIVE NAMEPLATE: "CROSBY HALL" as carried by Collett GWR "Hall" Class 4-6-0 No. 4992 built at Swindon in February 1931. Its first shed allocation was Penzance, but by August 1950 it was to be found at Plymouth Laira and in March 1959 at Exeter. Its last shed allocation was Bristol Barrow Road. Withdrawn in April 1965 and scrapped at Birds, Risca, the following August - £5,600

Derbyshire Wayfarer by Paul Slater

"Derbyshire Wayfarer" was the name of a runabout ticket which I used during a day out in September 2004; it was sold to me at Sheffield station when I asked for a day return to Burton-on-Trent, and it meant that my excursion cost me several pounds less than I had expected. The ticket would have enabled me to use any number of trains and buses in Derbyshire during the day, and perhaps go walking in the countryside; this might well have been enjoyable in the fine early autumn weather, but it was not what I had planned for the day.

The train which I caught at Sheffield was bound for Bristol. It was fairly full, but a number of people alighted at the first stop, Chesterfield, and I was able to change seats and get one by a window. The train was "Cornish Voyager"; a few of the Voyagers had bilingual nameplates, but this was the only one - in fact, the only train or locomotive I had ever seen - which had a nameplate partly in the Cornish language.

Through the windows of "Cornish Voyager" I had a good view of the attractive countryside on the eastern fringes of the Peak District. Beyond Derby the country was flatter, but there were low hills to be seen on the far side of the Trent valley; nearer at hand were the cooling towers of a disused power station, the brim-full River Dove winding and flowing under the railway, and colourful narrow-boats moored on the Trent and Mersey Canal which runs parallel to the line.

Industrial buildings appeared, and the train slowed for Burton-on-Trent, where I alighted. I had travelled there on a Voyager once already that year, but my journey had been disrupted by weekend engineering work on the railway as well as by heavy showers of rain, and it had been a very quick visit; today, I had more time. I admired the nicely restored Midland Railway grain warehouse near the station, then walked out along a main road and found a footbridge which I had seen from the train and which proved to be a good photographic vantage point.

Back at the station, I bought a return to Tamworth, the next stop to the south. I travelled there by Central Trains. I passed the new depot for the Voyagers, and in the distance saw Rugeley power station and the hills of Cannock Chase. Tamworth is well-known among railway enthusiasts as two main lines cross there. I had originally intended to travel on to Birmingham, but the sun was shining from a cloudless sky and there were plenty of trains to photograph at Tamworth - Voyagers, locals and goods trains on the high level, fast container trains and brand-new Virgin Pendolino tilting trains on the low level - so I decided to go no further.

I travelled back to Burton-on-Trent on "Clyde Voyager". This was my first ride on a Voyager on this stretch of line, but I was glad to alight at Burton, as the train was packed, and I had to stand. I walked into the town centre to find a shop where I could buy more film, which also gave me a chance to look at the brewery buildings, old and new, that are the main feature of Burton. An explanatory plaque at the side of the road gave me some interesting information. Burton is not a town I know well, but I have twice been to the brewing museum, with which I had official dealings when I was librarian at Gainsborough, and I have a vague memory of coming here as a boy, one day when my parents were visiting relatives in Derby, and being fascinated by engines on the brewery railways steaming across the streets. A highlight of evening train spotting on our local main line when I was a little older was what we called the "beer train" - and that is exactly what it was, consisting of vans and oven trucks loaded with barrels, and usually hauled by a locomotive from Burton-on-Trent depot. Now, the tall silvery vats of the breweries shone in the sunlight. Back at the station, there was time for more photography before the next Voyager arrived to take me back to Sheffield; the beer goes by lorry these days, but the four tracks of the railway through Burton-on-Trent are still busy.

I rode north on a Super Voyager named "Ferdinand Magellan", using my wayfarer ticket again. The first few miles of my journey were in Staffordshire, the last few were in South Yorkshire, but most of it was through Derbyshire. The train was not too full, and I got a seat by a window, so I could enjoy the view as the sun sank low and golden over the hills. It was dusk when I arrived back at Sheffield, and there was time for a meal before the connection for Retford departed and my day of wayfaring on Voyagers through Derbyshire was over.

Tosca's Travels (Beer and Bashing Abroad)

Part 15

For our summer holidays this year my girlfriend and I decided to visit my parents in Spain for a week and then have a leisurely week in Belgium. We started by sampling Eurostar for the first time.

Saturday 3rd June 1995

DMU 1533 15 Elsecar - Sheffield

43060 & 43046 Sheffield - St Pancras Tube to Waterloo

Eurostar 320913210 Waterloo - Paris Nord

Once in Paris we took our huge bags over to Austerlitz station where we left them in the left luggage office. We then spent the afternoon and early evening looking around the sights including the cathedral of Notre Dame, The Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe. We used the following EMU's to get around.

SNCF EMU Z8430 Gare de Lyon - Charles de Gaulle Etoile

SNCF EMU Z5442 Champs de Mars - Invalides

SNCF EMU Z8884 Invalides - Pont de L'ama

SNCF EMU Z8881 Champs de Mars - St Michael de Notre Dame

SNCF EMU Z8893 St Michael de Notre Dame - Gare d'Austerlitz

We found a nice brasserie near the station and had a nice meal and a couple of bottles of Kronenburg French lager. Then having got some water and some snacks for the journey we caught the train for the long run south.

SNCF 9340 Paris Austerlitz - Port Bou (969 km)

Sunday 4th June 1995

Having had a good night's sleep, in a compartment we got to ourselves, we arrived in Port Bou just after 8am. The next loco hauled train south wasn't for 2 hours and when I enquired all seats were booked. This meant that if we were to wait for it we would probably have to stand for the 2 hour journey to Barcelona. Colleen didn't fancy that so we jumped on an EMU which left at 08.35.

RENFE EMU Port Bou - Barcelona Sants

We then tried to book on a train to Alicante but found that again the trains were booked solid. So we changed our plans and caught the Barcelona - Irun train out to Tarragona.

RENFE 269214 Barcelona Sants - Tarragona

We found a hotel and then spent the afternoon looking around Tarragona, which is a lovely town. We also saw one of the strangest things I have ever witnessed. We were in a park and an old lady was feeding the ducks. A sparrow decided it would come down and have some of the bread. One of the ducks wasn't happy with this and attempted to swallow the sparrow. The problem was that a whole sparrow is a bit big for a duck's throat and so after about a minute of nearly choking to death the duck finally spat the sparrow out. The sparrow seemed none the worse for its ordeal and flew off. The duck however was a little shell shocked and just sat there shaking its head.

Monday 5th June 1995

This time there was no problem booking on the train. However I was gutted when the thing turned up as a DMU.

RENFE DMU 448012 Tarragona - Alicante Termino

Before we left the station at Alicante I booked our seats for the train back on the following Monday. We then spent a pleasant week at my parents at Torrevieja.

Saturday 10th June 1995

On the Saturday my parents were driving up to see friends near Benidorm. As it was somewhere different to go we got a lift up there and spent the rest of the morning and the afternoon having a look around and catching the sun. We then caught the narrow gauge local line back to Alicante and a bus back to my parents place.

FGV DMU 230712308 Benidorm. - Alicante Bus Alicante - Torrevieja

Monday 12th June 1995

My parents dropped us back at Alicante and we caught the Talgo train to Port Bou

RENFE 354006 Alicante Termino - Valencia Termino

RENFE 252025 Valencia Termino - Port Bou

Gutted that having had only a couple of 252s I end up with one that I had already had. We got to Port Bou about 19.00 and although we could have gone to Cerbere in France on the train we decided that Port Bou was a better place to stay for the night. It was a beautiful evening and we found a fantastic restaurant in the cove by the beach. We had a great meal and a lot of wine.

Tuesday 13th June 1995

Of course getting up early was out of the question, so having had a nice breakfast we caught an EMU across the border, or should I say through the tunnel, and then connected onto the 10.27 Cerbere - Paris train.

RENFE EMU Port Bou - Cerbere

SNCF 7262 Cerbere - Narbonne

SNCF 9603 Narbonne - Avignon

Having got on the Paris train we realized that by the time it got to Paris we would probably end up having to spend the night there. We therefore decided to go to look around somewhere else and found that at

Narbonne there was a connection to Avignon and an overnight train to Paris. We found Avignon to be a great place and I decided it would be a place I would visit again. As it turns out I have not been back yet.
SNCF 7327 Avignon - Paris Lyon

Wednesday 14th June 1995

The overnight was rancid. The train was pretty busy and the only seats we could find were the French recliners in an open coach. We didn't get much sleep. Got to Paris at 7am and rushed via the Metro to Paris Nord: just made the 07.52 Amsterdam service. Got a compartment and fell asleep. Woke up a few hours later in darkness! Took a few seconds to gather my bearings but then realized we were in the Bruxelles tunnels. Luckily we had planned to go to Antwerpen but it's a good job I woke up when I did otherwise we would have ended up in the Netherlands.

SNCB 1501 Paris Nord - Bruxelles Midi

SNCB 2558 Bruxelles Midi - Berchem.

SNCB EMU 938 Berchem. - Antwerpen Central

We checked into the Hotel Monico, the Florida was being refurbished, and Colleen wasn't feeling too good. She said she would rest so I went out on the bash.

SNCB EMU 811 Antwerpen - Berchem.

Viewed a few loco turns but nothing was needed so went to view the St Niklaas - Letuven turns. Rewarded with 2512 at St Nik but the other turns viewed were dud.

SNCB EMU 835 Berchem - St Niklaas

SNCB 2512 St Niklaas - Mechelen

Dropped down to Bruxelles to view some 22 turns. Again there were no winning oldies around so I picked up 3 cans.

SNCB 2732 Mechelen - Bruxelles Nord

SNCB 2126 Bruxelles Nord - Bruxelles Central

SNCB 2744 Bruxelles Central - Bruxelles Nord

SNCB 2008 Bruxelles Nord - Bruxelles Schumann

I then had a touch of rover brain. 2218 arrived on the Etterbeek - Gent. I knew this train ran via the Schumann Jette line and avoided Bruxelles Central, I also knew I didn't need it but I jumped on anyway. Still it got the track in.

SNCB 2218 Bruxelles Schumann - Denderleeuw via Jette

SNCB EMU 3 71 Denderleeuw - Bruxelles Midi

SNCB 2732 Bruxelles Midi - Antwerpen Central

I went back to Antwerpen and found Colleen was feeling much better. So much so that we went out to eat and for a few drinks. From the beer guide we found that the Stamineeke did food so we had a meal there and a couple of beers. We also did the following beer guide bars:- Were Jacob, Negan Vaten, Vagant & De cluyse. I was pretty trashed and there was no way I was going to be up to cover the morning commuters into Antwerpen.

Thursday 15th June 1995

It was gone 9 by the time I woke up. I did manage breakfast but didn't feel that good. I had planned on going down to Charleroi to cover the Couvain trains but didn't really feel up to it. Colleen though had other ideas and persuaded me to stick with the plan. So we went out for the 11.19 to Charleroi.

SNCB 2729 Antwerpen Central - Charleroi-sud

At Charleroi we had a look around - there isn't a lot to see really. We also decided on a hair of the dog and found a nice bar - the Beau Lieu. I had a St Benoit blonde and it did the trick, I started to liven up. Got back to the station to find winner 6248 on the 15.11 Phillipeville.

SNCB 6248 Charleroi-Sud - Walcourt

SNCB 6249 Walcourt - Jamioulx

SNCB 6284 Jamioulx - Yves Gomezee

SNCB 6288 Yves Gomezee - Walcourt

SNCB 5149 Walcourt - Charleroi-sud

Chuffed to bits with 5149 and then again when I saw 2357 on the 18.14 to Liers.

SNCB 2357 Charleroi-sud - Namur

SNCB EMU 371 Namur - Bruxelles Nord

SNCB 2137 Bruxelles Nord - Berchem

SNCB 6317 Berchem - Antwerpen Central

We ate in the hotel and had a few beers before turning in for an early night as we had to be up early to get to

Oostende for the ferry.

Friday 16th June 1995

SNCB EMU 752 Antwerpen Central - Oostende

Ferry Prinz Filip Oostende - Ramsgate

EMU 1617 Ramsgate - Victoria

Tube Victoria - Kings Cross/St Pancras

43048 & 43074 St Pancras - Sheffield

We had to come back on the Friday as a friend was getting on the Saturday.

It had been a good holiday and although I only had 14 new locos for haulage it had been very enjoyable.

Pennine Observer Notes

Eastern Region

Recent sightings at Doncaster have been:

Aug 26

67006 Thunderbird

66230, 66175, 66720 Intermodal

66151, 66187, 66520, 66554, 66595, 66704, 66711, 66721, 66732, 66727 Coal

66137 Rails

66608, 66108 Light engines

60054 Carflat for Wabtec

66714 Gypsum

66575, 66567 Freightliners

66047, 66602 Limestone

Sep 2

66113, 66077, 66722 Intermodal

66057, 66515, 66065, 66076, 66708, 66952, 66522, 66204, 66509 Light engines

67029 Thunderbird

92003 Route learning

Sep 8 66121, 66717, 66722 coal

Sep 9 7024 Thunderbird

66068, 66713, 66141 Intermodal

66109 Rails

66607, 66509, 66522, 37685, 60084, 66725 Light engines

66016 Gypsum

66534, 66503, 66575 Freightliners

60039 Stone

66602 Limestone

66096 Sand

66701 Biomass

66197, 66165, 66527, 66704, 66706, 66711, 66717, 66722 Coal

Sep 16

67024 Thunderbird

66084, 66078, 66702 Intermodal

66558, 66523, 66118, 66539, 66065 Light engines

66075/66077 Rails

66726/66711 Gypsum

66570, 66540 Freightliners

66187 Stone

66096 Sand

66051, 66560, 66513, 66524, 66528, 66704, 66708, 66713, 66717, 66729 Coal

Sep 23

67023 Thunderbird

66401 with two barrier vehicles

66200, 66161, 66712 Intermodal

66078 Rails

66601, 66128 Light engines

66594, 66575 Freightliners

66051, 66197, 66137, 66522, 66559, 66526, 66513, 66703, 66707, 66717, 66721, 66729, 66402 Coal

66181 Gypsum

66132 Sand

Sep 30

67025 Thunderbird

66230, 66238, 66730 Intermodal

66589, 66540, 66594 Freightliners

66152 Rails

66844 Fly ash Drax - Tilbury

66619 Limestone

66074 Engineers

66721, 66134 Gypsum

66014 Sand

60054 Stone

60073, 66142 Light engines

47802/47804 rake of Pullman coaches

66545, 66197, 66713, 66556, 66597, 66720, 66522, 66702, 66173, 66200, 66619 Coal

60019 "Bittern" Kings Cross - York

60163 "Tornado" en route to NYMR.

Oct 14

67029 Thunderbird

66168, 66094, 66715 Intermodal

66164 Rails

60049 Steel

66609, 66557, 66597, 66598, 67024 Light engines

66035, 66051 Engineers

66091 Gypsum

66570, 66533, 66532 Freightliners

66162 Sand

66172 Stone

66089, 66506, 66065, 66595, 66545, 66702, 66703, 66713 Coal

Oct 20

60071 on mineral train

66094 and 66565 on container h-dins

66162+66199 on ballast h-din

66178 on p.w. train

66704 on empty stock

66545, 66560, 66605, 66708 and 66709 on coal trains

66250 on light engine

66107 in yards

08495 and 08669 shunting

Oct 21

67003 Thunderbird

66609, 66560, 66556, 66597 Light engines

66528, 66714, 66717, 66057, 66403 Coal

66003 Rails

66094, 66248, 66721 Intermodal

66083, 66199, 66178 Engineers
66413 Route learning
66152 Stone
66503, 66543 Freightliners

Oct 23

67003 Thunderbird
66098, 66413, 66421, 66433 Engineers
67016/67022 Charter Kings Cross - York
66057, 66058, 66707 Intermodal
66598 Fly Ash
66535, 66588 Freightliners
66085 Coal
66528, 66074, 66717, 60015, 66068, 66088, 66178 Light engines

Oct 30

66127, 66164, 66731 Intermodal
66501, 66532 Freightliners
67003 Thunderbird
66196 Rails
66057 Sand
66040 Gypsum
66116 Scrap
66096, 66109 Engineers
66527 Light engine
31459 Track recording
66528, 66711, 66716, 66559, 66707, 66197, 66732, 66545, 66550, 66522 Coal
Two Tyne & Wear trams visible in Wabtec
4046 and 4072
Jarvis's Yard at Marshgate full of track machines numbered as follows
73101/309/314/431/432/435/802, 78211/212/215/227/230/235/426/427, 80209, 81521/527/528/529

Nov 4

67023 Thunderbird
66125, 66012, 66705 Intermodal
47749 Collected two barrier vehicles from Wabtec
66957, 66599, 66621, 66531, 66518 Light engines
66713, 66715, 66716, 66524, 66522, 66596, 66617, 66527 Coal
66538, 66956 Freightliners
66561 Fly Ash Aberthaw - Drax
67008 with 91122/131
66238 Engineers
60039 Stone
66128 Rails 313203/212 at Wabtec
321418 in West Yard

Nov 11 67021/23 Thunderbirds

66005 Rails
60011 RHTT
66147, 66039, 66727 Intermodal.
66591, 66567 Freightliners
66716, 66529, 66526, 66525, 66545, 66520, 66707 Coal
66213 Stone
66531, 66518, 66612, 66620 Light engines
321339 was at the back of the station on its way into Wabtec

Recent sightings on the Gainsborough - Barnetby line have been:
Sep 1 66086, 66729 and 66732 on coal trains

Sep 2 66014 on oil trains 66086 and 66729 on coal trains
Sep 3 66709 on goods train 66729 and 66732 on coal train
Sep 7 66159, 66704 and 66711 on coal trains
Sep 9 66197, 66701 and 66704 on coal trains
Sep 10 66119 and 66704 on coal trains 66703 on goods train
Sep 13 66121, 66704 and 66717 on coal trains
Sep 14 66142, 66704, 66713, 66717 and 66718 on coal trains
Sep 17 66707 on goods train 66704, 66713 and 66717 on coal trains
Sep 20 66050, 66703, 66717 and 66726 on coal trains
Sep 21 66172, 66726 and 66729 on coal trains
Sep 24 66172, 66729 and 66730 on coal trains
Sep 29 66136, 66702 and 66713 on coal trains
Oct 4 66136 and 66712 on coal trains
Oct 6 66712 on coal train 66714 on goods train
Oct 7 66707 on coal train
Oct 11 66184 on coal train
Oct 13 66113, 66248, 66702 and 66732 on coal trains
Oct 19 66232 and 66711 on coal trains
Oct 22 66008, 66232 and 66714 on coal trains, 66708 on goods train
Oct 26 66021, 66711 and 66716 on coal trains
Oct 28 66009, 66100, 66711 and 66716 on coal trains
Oct 29 66089 and 66711 on coal trains
Nov 1 66047 on coal train 66727 light engine
Nov 4 66047 on coal train 66708 on goods train
Nov 5 66047 and 66713 on coal trains
Nov 8 66086 and 66724 on coal trains
Nov 9 66200 on coal train

Other recent sightings have been:

Sep 4 66068 on Plasmor train and 66100 on goods train Temple Hirst Junction
Sep 8 66558 and 66701 on coal trains at Hatfield and Stainforth
Sep 15 66084 on container train at Eaton Lane Crossing
Sep 20 66013 light engine at Cottingham.
Sep 25 66089, 66035, 66066, 66055, 66084 light engines at Sheffield
Oct 2 92003 on goods train at Eaton Lane Crossing 66174, 66402, 66706-709, 66711, 66720, 66721, 66725 and 66730 at Peterborough
Oct 5 66072, 66081, 66161, 66559, 66703, 66711, 66722 and 66732 at Peterborough
Oct 6 66129, 66709 and 66731 at Doncaster RMT 37109, 37518, 66072, 66082, 66161, 66174, 66711, 66723, 66727, 66729 and 66732 at Peterborough
Oct 7 60019, 60073, 66076 on oil trains, 60040, 60091 on iron ore trains, 66068, 66133, 66188, 66528, 66559, 66712 on coal trains and 66197 light engine at Melton Ross
Oct 16 66094+66250 on ballast train and 66703 light engine at Fenwick
Oct 20 66109 on mineral train at Retford
Oct 27 66164 on container train 66023+66125 on track-cleaning train
Nov 4 66102 on Scunthorpe - Redcar empty scrap at Hatfield and Stainforth
Nov 6 66182+66138 light engines at Eaton Lane Crossing
Nov 10 66535 and 66956 on container trains at Retford 66076+66125 on track-cleaning train at Sheffield

On Saturdays 9 and 16 October the East Coast Main Line was closed because of engineering works in the Grantham area and services were diverted via the Joint Line. 6 diesel locos were required each week to work the diverted electric services. The locos used were:

Oct 9 67003/019/020/022/023/029
Oct 16 67003/019/022/023/024/029

Western Region

Locos seen at Cardiff 18 September were 66414, 57005 and 50044. Also seen were 66080 at Newport and 47237 at Gloucester.

Midland Region

Locos noted at Washwood Heath on 19 September were 66543, 66588 and 66565. Also noted was 67012 on a Wrexham & Shropshire service.

Scottish Region

Locos seen in Scotland on 22 September were 37676 at Craigentenny, 90035 and 67024 at Edinburgh Waverley, 67021 on 17.08 Fife Circle service and 67004 on 17.21 Edinburgh to Cardenden.

Railtours and Charter Trains

Locos seen on railtours and charters have been:

Sep 18 ('The Western Wales Explorer') 55022 and 66015

Oct 9 ('The Route 66 Railtour') 66023 and 66066

Oct 10 ('The Ribble Lune Railtour') 55055 and 66066

Oct 23 ('The Cracoe Jack') 67002 and 67016

Oct 30 ('The Wandering Willow') 66712 and 73141

Oct 30 ('The Saltburn Smuggler') 37038, 37601 and 47500

Nov 13 ('The Scarcely Remembered Tracks Railtour') 66018 and 66065

Nov 13 ('The Coatbridge and Bathgate Phoenix') 66183 and 66185

Nov 13 ('The White Rose') 60019 "Bittern"

Locos used on the Scarborough Flyer and Spa Express services this year were 46201, 46233, 46115, 45407, 5690, 44932, 44871 and Thunderbird 47760.

Preserved Railways

Locos working at the Middleton Railway, Autumn Gala on 18 September were 4002 and steam locomotives 32 "Gothenburg", 67, "Matthew Murray" and "Sir Berkeley".

Locos used at the Battlefield Line Diesel Gala on 18 September were 56086, 31130, 33019, D6586, 33021, 25067, 47640, 73114, 08528, D2867 and D2310 (04110).

Locos working at the Barrow Hill Model Rail Live event on 26 September were 61994, 2000, 55019, 30777 and Sentinel No. 20 on brake van rides.

Locos used at the Nene Valley Diesel Gala on 2 October were D1062, 40106, 50135, 47375, 08995, 66722, 33108, 20096, 37906, 37275, 31108 and D9523

Locos working at the North Yorkshire Moors Steam Gala on 3 October were 63395, 34070, 825, 60163, 53809, 76079 and 45428

Locos used at the Great Central Railway Steam Gala on 9 October were 246 "Morayshire", 1744, 45305, 61994 "The Great Marquess", 63601, 69023 "Joem", 71000 "Duke of Gloucester" and 78054 (78019).

Locos working at the North Yorkshire Moors "War-time Weekend" were 825, 45428, 60007, 45212 and 63395.

Locos used at the Great Central (Northern) Railway Diesel Gala were 47765, 66730, E6016 (73110), D7629, 20007, 56097, 47292, 20154 and 46010 (08220 failed).

Locos working at the National Railway Museum Class 37 50th Anniversary Weekend on 16/17 October were D6700, 37025, 37275, 37907 and 37685.

Trip to London

The following were seen on a trip to London on 7th October 2010:

Doncaster Station: 66603/67024

Doncaster Yards: 60045/66714/728

Peterborough: 66082/161/168/174/248/708/729

London area: 313038/043/046/063, 365507/517/518/520/528/529

Kings Cross: 67008

St. Pancras Thameslink: 319380/435/436, 377503/507/516/522

Kentish Town: 319376/379

West Hampstead (N.L.L.): 378021
Willesden Depot: 150 131/136, 172004/007/008, 378208/226/231, 960014
Euston - Watford service: 378006/202/225/228/229/230
Stratford - Richmond service: 378003/004/007/009/012/013/015/017/018/020/021/023/024
Willesden H.L.: 66954 (Grain - Leeds FLT)
Willesden. L.L.: 66002/034/501/590, 86605/632, 90044/045,
350110/116/117/119/123/124/126/129/234/239/251/257/258, 377209/214, 390004
Euston: 350245/247/264, 378201
Camden Carriage Sidings: 350103/123/238/249/255/260/261/263, 321412/417
Kilburn High Road: 57301 (Light engine), 66720 (Felixstowe - Hams Hall)
Gospel Oak: 172001, 66131 (Acton - Dagenham)
Harringay Green Lanes: 150121
Leyton Midland Road: 172005
East Ham Depot: 150123, 357019/023/203/205
Barking: 357011/016/046, 66039 (Dagenham - Didcot)
Limehouse: 357227
Canary Wharf (D.L.R-): 25/26/37/61/93/106/115/121/122/126/127/131/132/147/150/154
Poplar Depot: 01/11/14/38/43/57/73/76/97/98
All Saints: 33/75/88/90
Poplar: 02/04/08/09/13/15/16/23/26/28/30/32/34/36/39/40/44/47/48/49/53-56/63/65-69/71/74/81-
84/8687/93/
94/99/102/107/108/110/111/113/114/117/118/123/124/128/129/134-136/138-140/142/144/148/149/151-
153/155
Shadwell: 357001/002/003/008/012/017/019/026/028/033/036/042/043/044/045,
357205/210/213/215/218/219/221/222/223/224/22/228
Shadwell (E.L.L.): 378138/146
New Cross Gate: 378136/137/139/140/141/142/144/147/150/154, 171803/806, 377204/211/131/135/136/
148/303/307/315/318/319/414/414/5/416/449/512/517
London Bridge: 377122/145/450/501/508, 375304/601/627/806/925, 465007/014/018/023/038/039/042/
048/151/156/157/161/171/181/185/188/195/237, 465902/908/915/917, 466008/010
Blackfriars: 319219
City Thameslink: 319458
Farringdon: 319446
St. Pancras International: 395010/011/017/023/029, 373005/006/015/016/021/022

Pennine Quiz No. 142

Station Anagrams

First solve, all the anagrams which are station names and then put them in journey sequence, starting in the southwest and finishing in the north-west. Spaces are included but not necessarily in the right places.

- 1 aaaccehhllns
- 2 aabcdhns
- 3 aabdi kmnoprwy
- 4 aabhi llort
- 5 aacce deehiillmnrsty
- 6 aacdd ikoprtwy
- 7 aachh ikoprrwwy
- 8 aadch ibmww
- 9 aaei lmnopst
- 10 abcdegirrr
- 11 abdilnrstu
- 12 abeee ghiim mnnrrsttw
- 13 abegiknosst
- 14 abilrssuy
- 15 acede eflnomst
- 16 acdee ehiik llmnoorsttx

- 17 aceelnstw
- 18 aceennpz
- 19 acelh hklll oosy
- 20 aceillrs
- 21 addee eirss ttvx
- 22 adeeg inrstw
- 23 aeekh ikhm oprrst
- 24 aehhnooprtvw
- 25 aennoprsst
- 26 bcdee eikno prtuvw
- 27 bdeghinru
- 28 ccij Innotuvy
- 29 eegbiiknrtv
- 30 eenrsv

Pennine Quiz No. 141

The Answers

1. Annesley
2. Toton
3. Yarmouth Vauxhall
4. Penzance
5. Consett
6. Nuneaton
7. Bath
8. Portmadoc
9. Bangor
10. Parkhead
11. Southall
12. Evesham
13. Hellifield
14. Tebay
15. Nine Elms
16. Carlisle Canal
17. Brunswick
18. Gorton
19. Cardigan
20. Darnall.
21. Mansfield
22. Three Bridges
23. Melton Constable
24. Burton (- on Trent)
25. Darlington

Pennine Quiz No. 141

The Winners

- 1st= Ken King
1st= Paul Slater
1st= Malcolm Bell

Congratulations to all the winners.

Pennine Meetings 2011

Meetings are held at The Salutation Inn, South Parade, Doncaster starting at 20.00 on 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Wednesday 5th January 2011	Joe Wray	
Sunday 9th January 2011	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	12noon SALUTATION INN
Wednesday 19th January 2011	Geoff Griffiths	'A Digital Show'
Wednesday 2nd February 2011	Pete Sargison	A 1970s Dieselectric Adventure
Wednesday 16th February 2011	Barry Plues	'Modern Traction 1980s'
Wednesday 2nd March 2011	Glynn Gossan	
Wednesday 16th March 2011	Glen Williamson	
Wednesday 6th April 2011	Ken Horan	'Those Black and White Days'

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Next Issue

The Spring 2011 Issue of Trans Pennine is due for publication on 16th March would contributors please let the coordinator have their information by no later than Wednesday 16th February - THANK YOU. Remember you can email your contributions to david@whitlam145.freeservaco.uk.

Miniature Delights

David Bigwood shares his longstanding affection for the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway

The sun was sinking slowly behind the St Bee's headland on a still, calm evening after a glorious day on the Cumbrian coast. The sky was almost red so, on the off chance that it would prove a shepherds' delight, I mentally pencilled in a trip to the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway for the next day.

Steam railways have always been something of an obsession with me, bringing back memories of childhood and thundering through the countryside on my way to a seaside holiday behind the powerful beat of a Royal Scot engine.

And then meandering from Bangor to Afon Wen behind a much smaller but nevertheless hard working tank engine, with its puffing echoing back from the hills along the line. The Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is not the London Midland and Scottish. You can step over the line in one pace and you can look down on the engine's boiler, but it is as professional an operation as its bigger brothers and has to follow the same safety regulations.

The track was not always so small. It began as a three-foot gauge railway to carry iron ore from the Eskdale valley to connect with the main line at Ravenglass. That was in 1875, but within 22 years it was bankrupt. Later it was converted to a 15inch gauge line and in this guise it was more successful in carrying granite from a quarry at Becksfoot, and passengers. Then, in 1953, the granite ran out and the quarry closed. The line's future looked grim until donations from benefactors enabled a preservation society to be formed, the railway reprieved, and I could once more enjoy a whiff of steam and oil.

The next day dawned clear. I drove through narrow lanes into Eskdale and parked in the station car park at Dalegarth, the terminus near the village of Boot.

The view from the platform across meadows with grazing milk cows to the towering Scafell Pike, crowned with a mass of cumulus clouds, was everything one could ask of a Lake District scene in high summer.

Those shepherds knew a thing or two.

A steam whistle announced the arrival of the train for the seven-mile trip to Ravenglass - hauled by 2-8-2 locomotive River Esk, built in 1923, resplendent in all-black livery, shining in the sun. The carriages disgorged their occupants as the engine was uncoupled and moved onto the turntable at the end of the platform.

With a cheery toot the train moved off and we were soon picking up more passengers at Fisherground, the stop that services the nearby camping sites. Then it was on to Eskdale Green at the bottom of the steepest section of the line, Hollinghow Bank. With a gradient of 1 in 36, it's a stiff climb for any train and sometimes engines have to try several times before making it to the top.

Next stop, Irton Road, where we sat until the train to Dalegarth had passed us - Irton Road is the main passing place for trains on this single track railway. We trundled into Mitedale, home to red squirrels, and on to Miteside Halt, which has an unusual passenger shelter in the shape of an upturned boat. Then it was on to Muncaster Mill and across the Barrow Marsh, with its plentiful birdlife, and into the headquarters of the railway at Ravenglass.

This has the air of a major terminus: three platforms, a turntable, a signal box, engine sheds, workshops, and connection to the main line, as well as a railway museum and shop.

When the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway was founded the main line was run by the Furness Railway and the connection between the two railways is continued by the cast iron columns on Platform 1, relocated from the down platform of Millom main line station, complete with their FR logo. The red squirrel that appears on the seat ends on the platform is also connected with the Furness Railway.

I held my breath as we approached Hollinghow Bank, but the engine took it in its stride. I sat back to enjoy the magnificence of the scenery - its fells, becks, and Herdwick sheep - accompanied by the comforting sound of a steam engine. When I was young I used to rush to the head of the train after disembarking to see the magnificent beast that had got us to our destination. Now I approached in a more sedate manner. I looked down on the engine and marvelled at the feat of engineering that had produced it, still performing its duty day in and day out. And wondered what the sky would tell shepherds that night.

For fare details and timetables, check the website at www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk or call 01229 717171.

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Royal Train Boss Makes Final Trip

Man responsible for the Queen's travel retires by Kate Mason

RUBBING shoulders with the Royal family may seem like a daunting experience but for Geoff Griffiths it's all in a day's work.

But after seven years planning rail journeys for leading royals from the Queen to Camilla, the Royal Train manager is retiring.

Mr Griffiths, 54, said. "It will be bitter sweet to retire, it is a job that only comes around every ten years or so and I feel privileged to have been able to experience it.

"There have been so many highlights over the years, I've met most members of the Royal family, been invited to the Queen's Christmas Ball at Windsor Castle and visited Buckingham Palace 32 times.

"The first time visiting Buckingham Palace was so surreal and nerve-racking, just walking past the guards and straight up to the front door."

After 35 years working for the railways Mr Griffiths, of St Augustine's Road, Bessacarr, has decided to call it a day but will continue to work part-time for DB Schenker, the UK's main rail freight operating company, as well as concentrating on his hobbies, including photography.

Mr Griffiths has been responsible for organising the last 104 Royal Train journeys for passengers including Prince Charles, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

"The Royal family sometimes get bad press but I would say 'don't believe everything you read'.

"The Queen is a very quiet lady, but she has such a presence, in fact, all members of the Royal Family seem to have that, but in my experience they are all lovely people.

"If I had to say who was my favourite member of the Royal Family I'd met I'd say Prince Charles. He just works so hard and tries to do what he thinks is right for people. From the minute he gets on the train he's hard at work"

One of the many highlights during his post was a visit to the Queen's Christmas Ball at Windsor in 2005 with wife Pamela, 53, with who he has two sons Gareth, 29 and Thomas, 25.

He said: "It was like being on a film set surrounded by people in ball gowns and the biggest Christmas tree I have ever seen.

"When the Queen arrived she walked straight up to us and said how nice it was to meet us, I nearly had to scoop my wife off the floor she was so shocked. "

But the job has not been with out its share of stress including a nerve-racking moment en route to Princess Diana's memorial service in London in August 2007 when there was a power failure.

"The train was stood for over an hour and we didn't know when the power was going to come back on. The Royal family were obviously concerned but knew we were doing everything we could.

"The power came on and we were scheduled to arrive 53 minutes late, but I made a call to request that we could travel 100mph rather than the usual 70mph, The Queen was happy to travel at that speed and we arrived only seven minutes late."

This article first appeared in the 21 October 2010 issue of the Doncaster Free Press, a weekly newspaper published in Doncaster. It is reproduced here with the kind permission of Kate Mason, who works on the Doncaster Free Press. Information is also available on their website www.doncasterfreepress.co.uk. Photo supplied by Geoff Griffiths.

