



Newsletter

Issue 68: November 2018 Editor: Allan Trotter
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Editorial.

History repeats itself, again!



Way back in the early 1960's, a fleet of new diesel electric Deltic locomotives were introduced for prestige passenger services on the East Coast main line. As a result of this, many still serviceable steam locomotives were displaced from these duties. Meanwhile in Scotland the new fleet of North British Type 2 Class 21 diesel electric locomotives were proving to be somewhat less than reliable, especially on the Glasgow Aberdeen via Forfar three hour expresses. The solution to this embarrassing predicament was to replace the diesels with some of the displaced A4 Pacific locomotives and employ them on the prestigious three hour expresses hauling consists of around eight Mk.1 carriages including a Griddle Car.



Now after more than half a century later, a similar situation has reoccurred. The usually chronically overcrowded, uncomfortable three car high density seating Class 170 diesel multiple units are being replaced on some services by displaced LNER and GWR HST sets with either four or five refurbished Mk.3 carriages, offering a much superior level of passenger comfort not experienced in Scotland since the transfer away of the Class 47 and Mk.2 and Mk.3 push pull sets of the 1980's. As a welcome bonus, there is now a proper buffet car in the consist, a facility not offered since the days of the Swindon DMU's in the 1960's.

The arrival of the A4 locomotives in the 1960's attracted many railway enthusiasts to Scotland to sample their delights and no doubt was a welcome boost to the Scottish tourist industry as well. The present introduction of ScotRail HST sets will no doubt repeat this scenario some fifty five years later with people wishing to enjoy the comfort of proper passenger carriages again.

Time to put a visit to Scotland on the agenda?

Events Diary.

Thu 1st Nov	Committee meeting. All members welcome to attend.
Wed 7 th Nov	The Night Ferry. St Jerome's Society, Formby. Allan Trotter.
Sat 10 th Nov	SMRS model railway exhibition, All Saints Church Hall.
Wed 14 th Nov	Forty years of Merseyrail, Clubroom. John Ryan.
Sat 1 st Dec	Visit to Manchester exhibition. Only if Northern are operating.
Fri 21 st Dec	SMRS Christmas social, Clubroom.

Chairman's Report.



Well, it is now almost time for our annual Family Model Rail Show at All Saints Parish Church Hall on Saturday 10th November; see attached poster. I hope that as many of you as possible will attend. This is one of our chances to spread the word about our Club and what we do, as well as hopefully helping to defray running cost of the Club and keep our subscriptions at a manageable level. Further details will be available a few days prior to the show but the following help will be required:

Wednesday 7th or Thursday 8th evening to put out road signs, Friday afternoon, pick up various items (exhibition box, electric cables, Clairmont and Shell Cove layouts etc. Note that unless we get a sudden influx of items for sale we will

probably only have a very small sales stand (some books and a few pieces of rolling stock). Friday evening from about 18.00 set up and welcome visiting layouts. Unfortunately I am not available that night due to a prior engagement. Saturday from about 08.00, continue with setting up. The show nominally shuts at 17.00 but we usually finish a little earlier. We do need bodies at this time to tidy up the hall and get stuff back to the clubroom. In the past we have had everything "done and dusted" and a glass of wine in hand by about 18.00.

In the middle of September you may recall we had a small celebration to commemorate 170 years of the Liverpool, Southport and Crosby Railway. This was followed up in October with a talk by Jim Ford on the aforesaid railway, largely concentrating on its formative years. Ten club members and two visitors much enjoyed this informative discourse which was followed up by a number of pertinent questions, ably answered by Jim. We continue our locally themed talks with a slide show about Merseyrail on Wednesday 14th November.

Those who attended the talk will have been able to view the progress that has been made on the so called "racetrack" (must find a better name for this, suggestions please). The base structure has been erected in the north room

and is now awaiting the plywood track base prior to adding some track. This is your chance to do some real modelling. Once Jim has managed to master the tricky problem of the baseboard connecting track on *Fishy Tales* we should be able to continue in the south room. Talking of the *Fishy Tales* baseboard connecting track, there are technical problems in this area. The code 75 track used is quite fragile and really needs to be fixed to a sub-base and even then would not be that strong. This is compounded by the plastic used being not compatible with any adhesives that are available. A compromise may be to use code 100 track (which is much more robust) for these short lengths but will require to be filed down and the compatibility of the fish plates will need to be checked. **Ian Shulver.**

Secretary's Report.

The good news is that it is only ten days until our one day show and the bad news is that the advertising is falling behind schedule. The newspaper adverts have gone in and the newspaper editorial is just about to be submitted. The laminates for schools are about to be produced and will be fastened up at the weekend. Handbills will go to all of the railway stations shortly but we still have a lot of handbills to share. Last May I found that most community supermarkets were more than willing to put up a handbill to confirm their community credentials and takeaways were universally content to welcome a small stash of handbills on the table where the free newspapers normally reside. I'm going to be phoning members up during the next day or two to ask you to accept a segment of the town to cover near to your home!

One matter that your Chairman, myself and others have recently been discussing has been the fall-off in attendance at club nights in recent years, something which started when Hilary moved away and has continued during our period of 'internal exile' whilst Network Rail's contractors were refurbishing our building. We realise that for a while, the clubroom didn't have a lot to offer but now it is secure, sparkling and we have a number of operating layouts available for use with lots more on the way, especially the so-called "race-track", in reality our clubroom track which will go all round the walls upstairs offering unparalleled opportunities for us run trains on a number of gauges together with flexibility to "bud-off" smaller projects which, in themselves can then have an alternative life as exhibit-able projects. So it is definitely worth escaping from the Soaps of an evening and joining your friends at the clubroom. In fact, to counteract the draw of television we are wondering whether any members would be interested in opening on one or more weekday afternoons. If you are interested in an afternoon opening over the winter season, please let myself or another member of the Committee know.

Finally, a word about our clubroom itself. It is no secret that we have enjoyed exceptional terms and conditions from British Rail and more recently Network Rail and its predecessors. However we have now been advised that management of our property has been placed in the hands of a property company. We have been told that "nothing will change" but I for one won't

hold my breath. So the message to members is to use your clubroom or we risk losing it! **Jim Ford.**

Treasurer's Report.

No report submitted.

Exhibition Coordinator's Report.

No report submitted.

Tours & Events Organiser's Report.



Our recent event saw us visiting Austin Moss at his home where oversees his vast but compact Railway Empire. Starting off in the garden area was the early stages of 7¼" track which will ultimately circle the house which led us to the engine shed complete with turntable. Inside was a partially rebuilt steam loco which will one day haul passengers around his railway estate.

From there we were conducted around the workshop then onto sheds containing not one but four working continental HOe/009 layouts, finally entering the shed housing an elaborate Austrian G scale layout with a variety train consists all busily going about their routes and services. As the pictures show for one passenger it was all a bit too

much. Nearby was the Tyrolean bier kellar bar and entertainment from yodelling oompah bands and attractive blonde bar maid in dirndl style costume. Further round could be seen the still under construction Triang layout with a backscene depicting some local landmarks, one of which is now only a memory.



Refreshment time and we then moved to the house where Janet served us a warming bowl of pumpkin soup followed by Chilli Con Carne. The displays didn't stop there for in the Library, not surprisingly, was a floor to ceiling array of railway books, also his other passion in the form of figurines ranging from Stan & Ollie,

Wallace & Gromitt, Betty Boop, Gothic fantasy priestesses, fairies and elves galore.

This is a real treasure trove of railway delights and our thanks go to Austin and Janet for their warm hospitality. **Frank Parkinson.**

Next external visit.

I have been considering a group visit to the Manchester Model Railway Show on 1st or 2nd of December. However this is overshadowed by the prospect of industrial action from Northern Rail which would make travel by public transport a non starter. Merseyrail staff recently suggesting a wait and see policy for an announcement of further action. For the moment then a case of watch this space.

If anyone has other suggestions please let me know. **Frank Parkinson**

Contributions by Members.

The Grand Tour.



As you may be aware Heather and I have recently toured Europe by rail, visiting Bonn, Vienna, Budapest, Prague and Berlin. Overall it was an interesting experience but I am glad that we booked to travel 1st class. All the trains were incredibly busy and I think getting our luggage on and off 2nd class coaches with its four abreast seating arrangement for up to 6 hours might have been a little challenging. Apart from the journey from Berlin back to Cologne, transport arrangements and timing were as stated. This one problem journey saw us dropped off at Dusseldorf and left to make our own way to Cologne for our onward journey to Brussels and the Eurostar connection. There was a distinct lack of train information, and what was available was incorrect. Luckily we made the

connection with a few minutes to spare. I attach a few photographs ranging from the ICE train, to a funicular in Budapest, the Hungarian Children's Railway and some trams. As a matter of interest, pensioner travel in Budapest is free as is travel in Prague for the over 70's.



Ian Shulver.

Visit to the Scottish Railway History Conference and Gleneagles Hotel.

After members of the LMS Society met up in the bar of the Golden Lion Hotel in Stirling, there followed a convivial dinner in the hotel restaurant. The following morning after an early breakfast we took the train to Perth to attend the Scottish Railway History Conference at the Queen's Hotel. This biennial event involved a number of speakers who presented various aspects of historic Scottish railway related themes, with subjects being exceedingly diverse and rather obscure. After the conference and following a well deserved small libation, the conference dinner was enjoyed, after which we returned by train back to our hotel in Stirling.



On the Sunday morning our rented minibus collected us at 10:00 and first on the agenda was a visit to Gleneagles Station to view the refurbished buildings. However there were no trains operating on this day as the line between Larbert and Perth was closed for the subsequent week for electrification work in Stirling

area. As usual the motley fleet of rail replacement buses were being substituted.

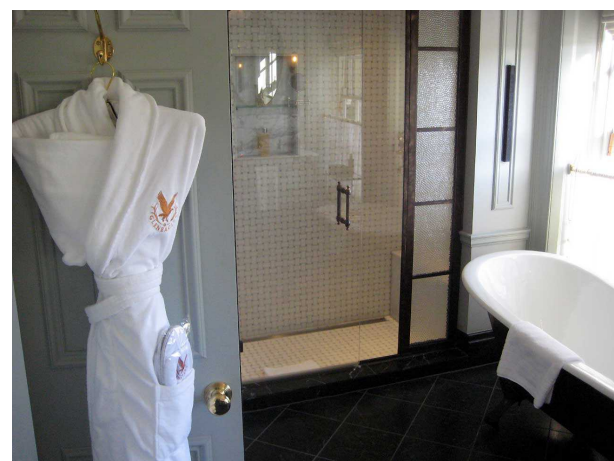
Following our visit to Gleneagles Station we proceeded to the main event of the day. This was when our members had the privilege of a visit and a conducted tour of Gleneagles Hotel by the Guest Relations Manager. First visited were the public rooms such as the ballroom with a sprung dance floor, the main restaurant and lounges. This was followed by a special back of house visit to the housekeeping and catering area. A real surprise came when the chief sommelier asked if we would care for a viewing of their extensive wine cellar. A unanimous chorus replied yes. After unlocking the outer steel door, the inner door and a cage gate we descended to the cellar. Six of us were counted in. The inventory was awe inspiring and a vast range of wines and spirits were viewed, in fact it was stated there was something in excess of £750,000 of refreshments available and ready for consumption. After the viewing the six of us were counted out. The inventory remained undisturbed and intact.



The next item on the agenda and highlight of the tour was the viewing of the hotel's two signature suites. The Tower Suite consisted of two bedrooms, adjacent luxurious bathrooms and up a spiral stairway, a lounge and library. From this lounge an external stairway let to the top of the tower where excellent views were offered of the golf courses and the surrounding landscape.



The Lochnagar Suite consisted of two bedrooms with en suites and a lounge, all with superb views. We were informed that this very room accommodated Tony Blair and entourage when he attended the G8 summit. Fortunately the stench of New Labour and Tory B. Liar has since been eradicated. On inquiring we were informed that the tariff for this suite was £3600 per night but this did included breakfast. Dinner was extra!



After all this it was time to return to reality where we were invited to partake in complimentary tea and Scottish shortbread in the main lounge. At 16:00 our booked taxi arrived to return us to our accommodation at the Golden Lion in Stirling.

We did not avail ourselves of any of the accommodation or dining facilities at Gleneagles Hotel restaurant. The three course Sunday lunch listed starting at £48.00 before any optional supplements did seem quite reasonable though if you wanted a bottle of house wine to accompany your lunch then that was around £50.00 extra. According to the hotel's web site, the tariff for a standard room per night for two people starts at £490.00 for bed and breakfast and £610.00 for dinner, bed and breakfast. This made our rate at the Golden Lion Hotel seem like exceedingly good value.

Once back at our hotel in Stirling dinner was enjoyed whilst we all reflected over the events of the weekend. Once again it was a most worthwhile and enjoyable weekend, especially with the hospitality shown to us at Gleneagles Hotel. **Allan Trotter.**

END.