

M A R L O W & D I S T R I C T R A I L W A Y S O C I E T Y

Newsletter Number 1.

APRIL 1977

It is very pleasant to be able to write this first letter to members so soon after the idea of forming the Society was mooted. From a conversation in early January to establishment in February and to a membership of twenty-six in March is not bad going. Certainly those who played a part in forming the Society are very gratified, although we know that it is now up to us to see that it grows in a manner and to a size that is readily controllable and in such a way that personal contact among members is not swamped by force of numbers.

All members are by definition railway enthusiasts and it is to be hoped that everyone will in the course of time contribute to the Society's activities in order that our enthusiasm may be maintained at a high level. We aim to make our programme interesting enough to persuade as many members as possible to attend as many meetings as possible, and we rely on your advice and criticism (constructive, we hope) to ensure that our hopes are realised.

Enclosed with this letter you will find your membership card, and list of members (which will periodically be updated), a copy of the Society's rules, and a schedule of our plans for the next few months. In the nature of things we may be obliged to vary our programme and where possible notice of changes will be given to all members in good time. Where we are unable to do so we will still try to put on an alternative item which will, we hope, sugar the pill.

From time to time we may decide to venture out of Marlow either on a visit of our own or in order to support a trip sponsored by another society in the area. Where possible written advice of such visits will be given in future newsletters, but otherwise they will be brought to your notice at one of our monthly meetings at the "Donkey".

If any of our members belong to another Society and wish to publicise its activities among our own membership we hope that they will feel free to do so either by sending the Chairman a note to be included in the next newsletter or by standing up and declaiming in a loud voice before the main item at any one of our meetings.

We look forward to a good attendance at the "Donkey" on April 21st.

CHAIRMAN.

MARLOW & DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY

Aims of the Society

To increase knowledge and to further interest in all aspects of standard and narrow-gauge railways by means of discussion, films, talks by visiting speakers and by visits to centres of railway interest.

Rules of the Society

1) Membership

Membership of the Society shall be open to anyone over the age of sixteen years with an interest in standard or narrow-gauge railways.

2) Officers

The founder-members shall serve as an interim committee and shall call a General Meeting of members within twelve months of the formation of the Society at which an election for committee membership shall be held. The committee shall consist of not less than five and not more than seven members who shall elect the Officers of the Society viz. Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The committee shall have power to co-opt other members as may be found desirable. At each Annual General Meeting the three committee members with longest service on the committee shall stand down and shall be eligible for re-election. At the first General Meeting the three to stand down shall be decided by mutual agreement or by drawing of lots.

3) Subscription

The annual subscription shall be £2.00 payable on joining the Society thereafter on January 1st of each year. Members shall also pay the sum of twenty-five pence each per meeting attended. The funds of the Society shall be used by the committee to defray the cost of accommodation, postage, stationery, telephones, hire of films or slides, payment to visiting speakers, visits by members to railway centres or otherwise in the interests of the Society as the committee shall see fit. An accounting of income and expenditure shall be given by the Treasurer at each Annual General Meeting.

4) The rules of the Society may be changed only at Annual General Meetings by a majority vote of paid-up members present.

Signed.....

[Handwritten signature]
CHAIRMAN. 24.2.77.

THE RAILWAYS OF SOUTHERN GREECE

To many people Greece means ancient ruins and above all the Acropolis. Whilst no one who visits Southern Greece should miss these wonderful sights a railway enthusiast has much else to interest him.

The Greek Railways are entirely State owned and in 1971 consisted of 975 miles of standard gauge line, 600 miles of metre gauge line, 14 miles of 750 m.m. gauge line and 18 miles of 600 m.m. gauge line. Both the standard and metre gauge serve Athens, whilst the whole railway network of the Peloponnese is metre gauge except for the 750 m.m. gauge rack and adhesion line from Diakofto to Kalavrita. In addition to the State Railways the Athens Electric Railway is a standard gauge line 17 miles long from Piraeus, the port of Athens, to Kifissia in its northern suburbs. It is the only electric railway in Greece and uses 3rd rail multiple-unit stock. Most of this was built by M.A.R. in West Germany between 1952-58 but some older wooden bodied stock built in Belgium is also used. The Athens Electric Railway also owns the only tramway in Greece which runs on 7 miles of standard gauge track from Piraeus to Perama. The stock used is bogie cars built by Fiat in Italy in 1938. Ever versatile this operator also has a bus network based in Piraeus using Mercedes and Chausson vehicles.

Returning to the State Railways, all services in Southern Greece now appear to be operated by diesel locomotives and multiple units. The only steam seen in use in January 1977 was a standard gauge 2-8-0 built by Baldwin in the USA in 1947 which was shunting the sheds near Piraeus. However quite a lot of "dead" steam was seen dumped at the Piraeus sheds and on the standard gauge main line north of Athens. This included 2-10-2's built by Ansaldo in Italy in 1953-54; more 2-8-0's of the type seen in steam, an ex British War Dept Austerity 2-10-0, an ex USA class S160 2-8-0 built for the US Transportation Corps in the war of the type used in 1942-43 on the G.W.R. and an 0-6-0T of the US Transportation Corps type purchased by the Southern Railway in England after the war and now preserved on the Kent & East Sussex Railway and Keighley & Worth Railway. Some unidentifiable metre gauge steam was seen dumped west of Athens, whilst a line of "dead" 0-6-2T built by Cail in Paris in 1891-94 were seen on the 750 m.m. gauge at Diakofto.

The present day locomotives on the standard gauge are some large shunters built by Krupp in West Germany, and also an unidentifiable manufacturer in Roumania. Main line locos are some built by General Electric in the USA, by Jung in West Germany, and by M.L.W. Industries in Canada. Diesel multiple units are by Esslingen in West Germany and some very recent deliveries from East Germany. On the metre gauge the only locos identified were built by the American Locomotive Co. and the 750 m.m. gauge line is operated by 2 car rack and adhesion diesel railcars built by Billard of Tours, France, and Decauville, also French.

Rail services are not frequent by West European standards, but, if based in Athens, a number of day trips can be fitted in on both standard gauge and metre gauge, as well as a trip on the 750 m.m. line from Diakofto to Kalavrita. The latter is extremely attractive running through a gorge not unlike the Welsh Highland through the Aberglaslyn Pass in Wales. Despite all its internal political difficulties there appears to be no restrictions on photography of any railway installation, and a permit to visit and photograph in the main shed and works was readily forthcoming from the Railways Head Office. Rail fares are very reasonable

by British standards. The Greek Tourist office in London is very helpful in providing accurate details of fares and times, whilst the official timetable covering all State Railway services is available in Athens at 20 drachmae (approx 35p at current exchange rate).

If anyone is considering a holiday in Greece I can thoroughly recommend them to look at the railways, and even better to travel on them. Steam may have gone but there is still a lot of interest left. Nowhere else in Europe can you travel 240 miles in one metre gauge train as you can from Pireaus to Kalonero via Athens, Corinth, Patras and Pirghos taking 7½ hours in all. Is your appetite whetted?

Further reading

1. European Narrow Gauge Steam Vol. One. by D. Trevor Rowe.
Bradford Barton, 1975.
2. Narrow Gauge Railways of Europe. by P.Allen and P.B. Whitehouse.
Ian Allan, 1959.
3. Steam Locomotives of Eastern Europe. by A.E. Durant.
David and Charles, 1966. new edition 1972

Useful addresses

1. National Tourist Organization of Greece,
195-197 Regent Street,
LONDON. W1R 8DL.
2. Hellenic Railways Organization,
Central Administration,
1 Karolou Street,
ATHENS,
Greece.

R.D. Bowen. 27/3/77

FUTURE PROGRAMME

- 21st April Great Central and Main Line Steam Trust.
Illustrated talk by Steve Lewis.
- 12th May Southern Electric.
Talk illustrated with slides by Mike Halls.
- 23rd June Railway Quiz with Marlow-Maidenhead Railway Passengers Assn.
- 21st July Continental Narrow Gauge.
Talk with slides by Roger Bowen.
- August Break.
- 22nd Sept Pre-grouping films from all 4 major companies.
- 20th Oct Railways of Bedford and Oxford.
Talk by Roy Mee and Bas Woodward.

Other activities which we hope will happen:-

Visit to Swindon Works and Museum

Visit to Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway

Visit to Didcot GWS Museum and Pendon Museum of Miniature Transport.