

Marlow & District
Railway Society

Please reply to:

NEWSLETTER NO 2

JUNE 1977

Editorial

By the time this newsletter reaches you the Society will have met on three occasions since its inception on 24 February 1977 and the attendance at our monthly meetings remains steady at around 23. This is encouraging and seems to indicate that the initial efforts to provide programmes to suit all members have not been unsuccessful. It is hoped that future meetings will be at least as attractive and soon become more adventurous. Your committee is at present discussing the future programme with a view to enlarging our catchment area for speakers and announcements will be made to all members in good time.

All members are invited to contribute to the affairs of the Society either by giving forth even for ten or fifteen minutes at one of the meetings or by writing an article for inclusion in a future newsletter. Any railway subject will do from Gooch and Stirling to Saints and Stars from conjugated valve gear to ATC from cleaning to top link - anything you like. Please have a go - we all want to hear from you. And remember this even if your contribution lasts for only a quarter of an hour or less it is bound to provoke a discussion that will go on for half the evening and that is what the MRDS is all about.

New Members

Since newsletter No. 1 we have enrolled two new members to whom we extend a warm welcome. Please update your list of members by the following:

| | | |
|-------------|--|---------|
| M.E. Halls | 80 Ampthill Road Bedford MK42 9HP | B 45045 |
| A.K. Palmer | Cirrus Glebe Road Maidenhead Berks SL6 1UH | 33884 |

Previous Meetings

On 21 April 1977 Steve Lewis gave us the latest news about the good work that the Main Line Steam Trust is doing at Loughborough.

Many of our hardened GWR members were at least half convinced that the Southern had some good points when Mike Halls gave his entertaining talk on 12 May 1977.

Our thanks to both Steve and Mike. Also to Tom Freeborn who provided an epidiascope and Bas Woodward for obtaining the film projector and sound equipment.

Thursday Night Programme at 20.00

- 23 June 1977 Great Western Society - Alan Wheeler
This replaces the proposed quiz.
- 21 July 1977 Continental Narrow Gauge - Roger Bowen
- August 1977 Holiday Break
- 22 Sept 1977 Pre-nationalisation films from all four
companies
- 20 Oct 1977 Railways of Bedford and Oxford - Roy Mee
and Bas Woodward
- 17 Nov 1977 Isle of Man Railway - David Cotterill
- 15 Dec 1977 It is hoped to show the well known
documentary 'Night Mail' made in 1936
which features "Silver Jubilee" no 5552.
The director of the film Harry Watt will
describe the making of it.
- 19 Jan 1977 Annual General Meeting. It is hoped to
follow this by an evening of members
slides so please be prepared.
- 16 Feb 1977 Signalling - Mike Hanscomb
- 16 Mar 1977 It is hoped to have a talk about the
Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway.

Society Nameplate

A pleasant surprise is always something to be enjoyed and our thanks go to Ted Gregory for making the plaque which he presented to the Society at the May meeting. It is beautifully executed in traditional railway style and will always be present at our meetings wherever they may be held.

Special Events

Even before the successful run to Swindon Weymouth and Cranmore your committee had given thought to other outings.

The first will be a visit to the Romney Hythe and Dymchurch Railway on 17 July 1977 and the trip will be by private bus. The cost will be about £2.50 a head. Bas Woodward who is doing the organisation for the trip will be glad to have the names of those who intend going at the June meeting, alternatively please telephone him.

As most members will already know the trip to Swindon on 20 August 1977 is ~~already~~ ^{already} fully subscribed. It is again proposed to use the private bus - it was thought a special train was a little bit ambitious though in time to come who knows?

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Special Events - cont'd

The previously proposed trip to Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge is still on when a suitable date can be arranged. We are also unanimous that in the not too distant future a rail trip to York is a must. We are indeed fortunate in this country that there are so many centres of railway interest that we are not likely to run out of possibilities for long while to come.

Other Societies Events

The WEA Marlow Branch is no longer in existence and therefore there will be no future railway lectures. However the WEA at Amersham are catering for railway needs. There will be a series of 10 meetings on the History of Railways given by Roger Bowen to be held at the College of Further Education and Arts Stanley Hill Amersham commencing on Monday 26 September 1977 at 19.45. Enrolment will take place at the first meeting.

The Marlow - Maidenhead Railway Passengers Association is putting on a rail trip from Marlow to Newquay on 31 July 1977.

Mike Hanscomb (and helpers) is presenting "Signalling Simplified" with films and practical demonstrations at Watford Technical College Hampstead Road at 18.30 on Thursday 16 June 1977. This is mainly for model and miniature railway enthusiasts.

Silver Jubilee Special Rail Tour - Contributed by Les Spicer

On May 14 1977 ten members made their way to Reading Station to board a charter train hauled by two class 31s and bound for Swindon Works Weymouth and Cranmore. Whilst waiting on the down platform our intrepid travellers were not in the least deterred by the sight of an up HST arriving just ahead of a cloud of black smoke which together with an impressive amount of flame was seen to be emerging from the rear motor unit. A few minutes later the HST pulled out on the front unit only which seemed to be quite adequate for the final stage to Paddington. It is reported incidentally that more than one HST has put up a very solid performance on one unit though not to HST schedules.

The two 31s duly arrived with the special and made light of the journey to Swindon. In the works most of our members elected to wander through the scrapyards which to any railway enthusiast was a pretty depressing sight. Most of the Westerns there are due to be cut up and even the two which are being held for possible preservation looked somewhat sad. The rows of condemned stock standing quietly in the sunshine might have cheered a scrap merchant and no one else but imagine how much worse the place would have looked had the sidings been full of condemned steam locomotives!

Silver Jubilee Special Rail Tour - cont'd

There was plenty of life left however in the form of the preserved Warship and Hymek and the WLAs "Western Courier" in immaculate maroon livery looked and sounded superb. In the old A shed a number of diesel shunters and wagons were under repair and it was interesting to see that the transversers were still doing a sterling job albeit with less exotic loads than in the past. Swindon works is still a fascinating place and the Society's visit planned for 20 August 1977 should still be tremendously interesting.

From Swindon the special took the long way round to Weymouth via Bristol Parkway Castle Cary (due to a landslip on the ~~Cheltenham~~ ^{Avon} line) and very pleasant photographic stop at Maiden Newton which surely represents most enthusiast's idea of a typical country station. It also contains a notable relic which forms the background of one of our respected treasurer's stories (ask him about it at your peril!). Several members stood in respectful silence in the spotlessly clean waiting room on the up platform as he revived old memories.

Weymouth was a somewhat brief interlude unfortunately. Forty minutes is little enough for a pleasant seaside town but time was pressing and we were looking forward to a lengthy stay at David Shepherd's East Somerset Railway. Cranmore is about six miles along the Shepton Mallet branch and has as much track squeezed into the yard as it will take. The shed contains among other locos the Schools class "Stowe" looking much happier than it did when it was on display at Beaulieu. At last it is back in its own environment and with luck will one day be in steam again.

The enormous "Black Prince" quietly worked its way up and down the three or four hundred yards of track laid in the yard its train consisting of two brake wagons filled to overflowing with enthusiasts. It was perhaps unfortunate that the two brakes were coupled ahead of "Black Prince" which did not please the photographers but it was very pleasant to hear and smell a real locomotive in action again. We wish David Shepherd and his helpers all good fortune in their efforts to re-open the line to Shepton Mallet.

So far the weather had been unexpectedly kind to us but the rains came shortly before our scheduled time of departure at Cranmore and probably helped us towards leaving on time. A slow trip down the hill to the main line and then we were away again onto the Berks and Hants for Reading which we reached on schedule.

It had been a long and thoroughly interesting day and will we are sure be but the first of many. At least there is no shortage of enthusiasts trips to many places of interest and we intend to take advantage of them as and when members desire. We must not forget to thank Mike Morris for demonstrating that should the Society ever need a Quartermaster he would be an ideal choice.