

THE CIRCULAR

Bradford Railway Circle

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Contents

Page

1	Editorial	
2	Dennis Whitfield 1938-2010	Keith Preston
5	Benelux 2010 (Part 1)	Peter Holden
9	Railway Picture Websites Galore	Victor Lee
11	Special Traffic Notices	
11	Photographic Competition 20 th October 2010	Tom Ickringill
12	Letter To The Editor	Victor Lee
14	Meeting Reports	Philip Lockwood
19	Secretary's Page	Peter Holden
20	Circle Diary 2010	
20	Small Ads	

Editorial

Unfortunately, another obituary appears in this issue – that of member Dennis Whitfield, whose passing was briefly reported in the last issue. Thanks to Keith Preston for doing the research (little was known about Dennis) and for his photos. In this issue, we have a letter from Victor Lee about Votes of Thanks. No doubt this will prove somewhat controversial, and I expect a member or two might want to reply with an opposing view. But thank you Victor, for trying to stir us out of our somnolence and giving us something to think about. And Victor has also contributed an article listing some interesting railway-related web-sites.

As always, I am very short of copy and photos for forthcoming issues, so if you want *The Circular* to continue please let me have some more articles & photos.

Lastly, the Editor's apologies for repeating another Outer Circle article (Low Moor Shed visit, 1946) in the last issue. This was not Frank Robertshaw's fault at all, but mine for not checking properly and realising that the same article had appeared last year!

Dennis Whitfield 1938-2010

Keith Preston

Dennis was born in Shipley on 6th November 1938, and whenever he was asked for his date of birth, he used to give the questioner a grin. He was born a few days premature and used to mention that the previous day was Bonfire Night, and his mother hated fireworks.

The family of three lived in Springcliffe Street, off Green Lane, Baildon. His father worked for Crofts Engineering in Thornbury, Bradford. Dennis was educated at Woodbottom Primary School, and according to a lady still living in Baildon, he often had his head in a book or a comic and was a bit of a loner, not making friends easily. He passed his 11+, attending Salts Grammar School.

Having done well, he started an engineering degree at Bradford University. Around 1958 the family had moved to a new 2-bedroomed council property at 8 Milner Road, Baildon, as their former home had been compulsorily purchased to make way for a new road. This proposed road was never built, and the site in 2010 is a patch of grass opposite Woodbottom Cricket Club in Green Lane.

During a holiday break from university in 1958, Dennis took a temporary job in engineering at Low Moor Steel Works. He decided to stay on, and did further studies in draughtsmanship and engineering drawing at Bradford College. He had interests in transport from his early teens, joining several societies, including the Stephenson Locomotive Society (SLS). He began to take photos in the late 1950's and early 1960's.

I first met Dennis about 1963, when we both attended Bingley Zion Methodist Church. Although nearly ten years older than most of the youth club members, he tagged on to us. I discovered Dennis' interest in railways and maps. In 1965 there was a church holiday to St Ives in Cornwall, but Dennis and I could only take one week instead of two, so we decided to go for the second week, travelling overnight by train, diesel-hauled to Exeter St David's. Early in the morning we changed, hoping to get steam on the former LSWR line via Okehampton to Plymouth, but unfortunately it was diesel - a D800 Warship class. Another Warship diesel took us to St Erth, and then a dmu to St Ives.

During that holiday Dennis and I took a day away from the beach, for a trip to Bodmin Road – again a D800 Warship. A dmu to Bodmin General, then a railbus to Boscarne platform and a second railbus through Wadebridge to Padstow and return. We caught an express on to Par, and then walked down to the harbour to see the two 0-4-0 steam locomotives *Alfred* and *Judy*, with cut-down cabs to enable them to negotiate a low bridge under the main lines. (Both of these locos are preserved on the Bodmin & Wenford Steam Railway.) At the end of our week we returned direct from Penzance to Shipley.

This was the first of many trips over the next 20 years that I made with Dennis, who was a very good map reader. We visited many colliery systems in the UK. Dennis had changed employment in 1967, to become a draughtsman engineer at Hunslet Engine Co, Leeds. Whilst there he helped design several flameproof diesels



Dennis Whitfield, Polkemmet Colliery, 1972

Keith Preston



Dennis Whitfield, Comrie Colliery, 1972

Keith Preston



0-8-2 steam loco, ZillertalBahn, Austria

Peter Holden



DB ICE at Frankfurt

Peter Holden

for petrochemical plants, and the large “tugs” used at Heathrow Airport to move Boeing 747 aircraft. Dennis was interested in any locos we found built by Hunslet. After both his parents died in the early 1980’s, Dennis’ life began to change for the worse. He never really managed to look after himself properly following redundancy from Hunslet in 1985. He continued to live in the same 2-bedroomed council house, and although he attended many courses he didn’t seem too bothered about further employment, living off his redundancy money, then state benefits.

At one stage, Dennis was the organiser for the West Yorkshire area meetings of the SLS, using Saltaire Methodist Church Hall. However, these meetings were on Saturday afternoons, so attendances were always low. He had stopped coming to church by 1990, and rejected help from former church members. Unfortunately, his health deteriorated and he was due to go into hospital for a hip operation, and following that there was a proposal for a move to Cliffe Avenue into a refurbished bungalow.

Dennis’ visit to the Circle for David Lowe’s talk about his signalling career on 19th May proved to be his last before his untimely death around 8th June. Sadly, Dennis didn’t make any arrangements regarding his vast collection of transport items. There was no will, no executors, and no living relatives.

Dennis’ collection is being removed and put into secure storage, with a view to its being sold by a specialist railway auction house. Because Dennis died intestate any funds will be returned to Bradford Social Services and the government.

[Editor’s note – and let’s also mention Dennis’ encyclopaedic knowledge of many aspects of railways; neither can we forget his truly unbridled enthusiasm for completeness and correctness in all matters of railway information.]

Benelux Beer and Bus Replacement Trip 2010

Peter Holden

Well, first of all, it is just Bene as we did not visit Luxembourg at all!

I decided to visit Belgium once more along with fellow Circle member Andy Roberts. We chose to base ourselves in Antwerp this year for one week commencing Friday 13th August. This would enable us to traverse many of the Belgian lines I had not previously travelled over, and also we would be nearer to Holland.

Thursday 12th August.

Having spent 30 minutes packing, I was on my way down to the Interchange to catch the 10:04 service to Leeds, here changing onto the 10:37 Northern so called “Express Service” to Sheffield. I am not too sure about using the word “express” for a service which takes 1 hour to travel between two cities which also have a Cross Country

service taking only 43 minutes ...? At Sheffield I boarded an East Midlands Liverpool-Norwich service as far as Nottingham, this being formed of a 158 and a 156 unit. The train was greeted at Chesterfield by torrential rain, fortunately this shower passed. However as I walked the short distance from Nottingham Station to the Vat & Fiddle to meet up with two work colleagues for a spot of lunch, the rain caught up with me. The Vat & Fiddle is run by Castle Rock Brewery; apparently they have just won this year's Supreme best beer in Britain award! Hence stocks were low! When the rain abated we progressed to the Canal House - this is a very interesting pub indeed. It is in a converted old canal warehouse, the pub still has the canal inside and also there is a narrow boat moored up. Good place to visit for lunch. We then moved on the short distance to the Newhouse, both of which are further Castle Rock pubs. Back to railways! Having studied the timetable to make certain, I caught an HST and not one of those Meridian things - I boarded the 15:28 Nottingham to St.Pancras, 43 043 & 43 054 being the power cars on duty. East Midlands are just getting to the end of a refurbishment of the HST carriages; they certainly look a lot smarter outside and inside now.

On arrival in London, I made my way to the Northern Line. I was getting used to travelling with a suitcase in the rush hour – good fun. I have always struggled when going away, by taking a large bag with me. This suitcase on wheels was vast improvement.

At the Royal Oak, Borough I met Andy for a few drinks and an evening meal. Having sampled a few pints of Harvey's Best Bitter, we were joined by John, the landlord, who informed us that he may well be leaving the pub the following Monday, as the brewery were making life very difficult for their tenants by forcing prices up. He went on to say that someone had offered Harvey's a lot of money and wanted to modernise the place! Very sad news as this is without doubt the best pub in London.

Friday 13th

We make our way via the Piccadilly line from Oakwood to St.Pancras International in good time to board the 08:27 to Brussels. I had purchased our Eurostar tickets from Rail Staff Travel, but unusually they made a hash of the seat reservations, positioning us at either end of a carriage. This needed a visit to the booking office at St.Pancras a few weeks prior to the trip, to sort out. The booking clerk at the Eurostar desk put things right in minutes, but went on to say that we could no longer go through the automatic barrier. So we checked in at a desk over on one side and were issued with boarding passes. Having negotiated customs we made our way across to a small bar to have a bacon sandwich and a coffee before boarding.

Our train departed a few minutes early. Having stopped at Ebbsfleet to pick up and then Lille to drop off we arrive in Bruxelles on time. An easy connection was made onto the 11:55 Bruxelles Midi to Antwerpen Centraal. The train was loco hauled by class 27 electric No. 2727.

As mentioned in previous articles, Eurostar tickets to Belgium are valid to any Belgium station, Andy decided that we would check in at our hotel, which was adjacent to the station, and then continue our journey to Turnhout. The weather was

very pleasant. As we were unsure of the location of the “Spytighen Duvel” we dropped into a very smart small hotel which had built in the old Turnhout goods shed. Having acquired a local map we made our way to the bar, which was indeed worthy of a visit, once more Andy’s Belgium Good Beer Guide came up trumps. We enjoyed several beers, before retracing our steps to Antwerpen. A five day “Dagpass” for €15, was purchased for the Flanders area trams and busses, very good value. Due to a misunderstanding as to which direction the trams were actually running in, we managed to be heading in the wrong direction for our intended destination. This problem was soon solved, although I suggested that we wait until leaving the underground section so as to walk across to the other side of the track to make sure we board the correct tram! This action proved successful and we find ourselves onboard the No.2 tram from Charlottalei to Groenplaats. This stop is in a square adjacent to the cathedral area, indeed a most interesting old part of the city. A few drinks were enjoyed before we decided to call it a day. We made our way back to the tram stop. I talked Andy into continuing on the No.15 tram to its terminus at Mostel. A pleasant little run despite it being dark!

Saturday 14th

We were joined for breakfast each day by a group of around ten Chinese workers, all dressed in their uniforms and all apparently very hungry. Leaving our hotel, we make our way over to the station to catch the 07:52 Gent service as far as Lokeren. From here we boarded a very interesting regional service at 08:34, this train firstly traversed the line to Dendermonde, here reversing to continue down through Bruxelles and out to Kortrijk via Denderleeuw. Andy pointed out the first of my itinerary mistakes at this stage. There is nothing wrong with negative connections, they keep you on your toes! Anyway, Andy came up with a very good alternative: we can carry on and cover the intended lines, just in a different order. So it passed that we see ourselves boarding a cross-border service to Lille Flanders for an early lunch.

A very pleasant few hours were spent in “La 3 Brassies” sampling all five of their wonderful beers on offer. The last being their “froth of the month” a cherry beer. Returning to the station we catch the 15:05 to Mons, this being a through intercity train to Liège. From Mons we now catch a succession of local trains. Firstly the 16:24 Mons to Ath via Jurbise, and then the 17:07 Ath to Geraadsbergen, continuing forwards on the 17:57 to Gent St.Pieters. On arrival at Gent we decided to carry on back to Antwerpen, catching the 18:49 intercity train. This, our last train of the day, was formed of the same loco hauled set we travelled on the previous day. A further sortie to the old town area of Antwerpen proves fruitful as we find a further couple of very good bars.

We made our way to firstly the Paters’ Vaeje where we enjoyed several beers. Continuing our walk around this area we eventually finding the “Groote Wiite Arend” Now this is a smashing pub with a large open courtyard, the pub buildings being around two of the sides. There seemed to be a function on and the place was very busy, people were coming to the bar and exchanging small slips of paper for drinks! Unfortunately we had arrived too late to eat as the kitchen had closed, but they

managed to rustle up some cheese and mustard and various small cooked nibbles. Excellent! One of the beers sampled at this stage was “Achar Trappistes”, very nice indeed. Apparently the monks had stopped producing beer for a while, but fortunately they have now re-started. Having enjoyed a very good day we wobbled back to the tram stop, returning to our hotel via a different route.

Sunday 15th

We made the first of two journeys into Holland. There is a fairly good Sunday service in the Netherlands so we took advantage of this by leaving Antwerpen on the 08:00 “international train” headed by one of the new electric class 28 locomotives No. 2834. These Bombardier built locos can operate on four different voltages 1500 or 3000 V DC and 15KV or 25KV AC. We stayed on this service only as far as Roosendaal. Here we boarded the 08:45 service to travel east as far as the terminus at Vissingen. Retracing our steps back to Roosendaal, there catching the 10:51 to Arnhem. A most pleasant cross country journey being enjoyed, the scenery was as good as it gets in this very flat area. Of note on the journey was a shed adjacent to Tilburg station. The place was full of class 66 type locos in various liveries. They looked to have an air-conditioning unit fastened to the cab roof, this did nothing for their already not too pleasing look. Some were evidently brand new, I would say there were in excess of 30 locos stabled there. Our train pulled into Arnhem Zuid station, and we noticed that there were some trolley bus cables that just ended past the station, there were no trolley buses evident, however. We saw various diesel powered buses come and go. After a while I decided to have a quick look outside to see why we were waiting so long in the station. “Did you not hear the announcement? No you would not as it was not in English, It is a bus service from here into Arnhem” So we walked over to the bus stop 20 minutes after everyone else and had our own bus into Arnhem. I have now been to this city three times and not seen the bridge!

Our little bus adventure did not hamper the day’s itinerary, what did however, was the virtual demolition of Arnhem Station. There was nowhere to get a bite to eat or a drink. We eventually found a small kiosk on the platform and purchased some hot cheesy snacks.

Continuing on, boarding the 13:34 dmu service to Winterswijk. The Netherlands railway system must be partially privatised, this service being operated by “Syntus”. At Winterswijk we continued “Ormskirk style” by walking along to the other end of the platform to continue our journey on the 14:51, this being a further Syntus dmu to Zuphen. Further changes see us boarding the 14:54 Zuphen to Apeldoorn and then the 15:57 to Hilversum. By this time we were beginning to feel the strain, although we were keeping to our planned route, we had not stopped for long anywhere. This was an international train originating in Germany, it was packed out with passengers, but it had a proper buffet car. The beer was most welcome on this warm day. One more change and we find ourselves in Amsterdam Centraal just after 18:00. We made our way to the Wildman Bar, but it was shut – Boo! With this disappointing event we make our way dejectedly back to the station, only partially cheered up by a bag of

chips with mayonnaise on. Locomotive 2801 is the motive power for our last train of the day back down to Antwerpen. Having freshened ourselves back at the hotel, we embarked on a mission to find some food, as we were by now feeling a tad peckish. Andy marched us of around the back streets where we found an Argentinean restaurant, not too sure of the name, it may have been “The Leopoldo Galtieri” I ordered an Argentinean kebab type thing, which involved huge chunks of steak on a skewer, I would not call it well done, I presume it had just been shown a photograph of the cooker! It was very nice meat indeed, especially when washed down with a glass of Belgrano beer. A very good way to end a long day.

[to be continued]

Railway Picture Websites Galore Victor Lee

- www.davidheyscollection.com – numerous sections including pioneer mainline diesels, dmsu, the Aire Valley line in the 60’s, second-generation diesels, 1960’s memories, the I S Carr collection, the M Mitchell collection (also 1950’s TV, radio, toys & comics)
- www.derbysulzers.com – colour slides of 24’s, 25’s and Peaks from all over
- www.scienceandsociety.co.uk – vast collection of pictures in numerous categories (e.g. railways, canals, ships, road transport, cranes, the 1950’s, the 1930’s aircraft/aviation, Leeds, Word War II, coastal resorts). I found over 2400 railway posters from various periods, 29 Cuneo paintings, and lithographs of early railways by J C Bourne. Also over 100 diesel loco pictures 1948-94.
- www.train-photos.com – you can search for a specific manufacturer (being interested in Belgian diesels, I looked for Cockerills).
- www.railphotoprints.co.uk and www.transporttreasury.co.uk – both steam and diesel. “Very good” according to my notes.
- www.railwayregister.co.uk – index of many railway websites
- www.germansteam.co.uk – According to this website, German 4-6-4 05.002 deserves the accolade of “world’s fastest steam loco”, having achieved 125mph on level track. Mallard’s maximum, they say, was really only 124.5mph (or even slightly less). This figure was dubiously rounded up to 125mph by Gresley’s team. Then, very naughtily, it was further bumped up to an unjustified “126” by the LNER Publicity Dept so as to beat the German figure. The website points out the unfair advantage of downhill assistance (i.e. Stoke Bank) for Mallard. Performance details are also given for the superfast American streamliners from the 1930’s (4-4-2’s and 4-6-4’s); the website covers more than just steam in Germany. [NB – The German 4-6-4 05.002 was, incredibly, scrapped! In the same year (1959) the unique British high-speed 4-6-4, 60700, met the same undeserved fate.
- www.brsince78.co.uk – Numerous sections. For signal-box pictures, see www.brsince1978.co.uk/signalling.htm. For the DN&S (Didcot, Newbury & Southampton) line, closed 1960-62, see www.brsince78.co.uk/dnsr.htm.

- www.mulehouse.demon.co.uk/stations/links.htm - vast numbers of station pictures
- www.myrailwaystation.com/FORMER%20locations/index.htm - Numerous station pictures, many by Peter Howie. Pictures expandable to full screen, and easily advanced direct to the next one.
- Lincolnshirerailwaysfromthepast.fotopic.net - Superb collection of Adam Cartright's colour slides, 1970's to recently. Both closed lines and "live" ones. Several hundred pictures. These are expandable to full screen and easily advanced direct to the next one
- www.davesrailpics.co.uk – Dave Enefer's large collection, mainly Lincolnshire. Trains and stations, 1950's to recently.
- Bernard-mills.fotopic.net – My notes say "very good", but they don't record his specialities.
- www.cumbria-railways.co.uk – trains and stations. Also cra.photos.gb.net
- www.flickr.com/groups/disused_railways (NB Underscore between "disused" & "railways") – Has over 5600 pictures of disused lines. Includes West Yorkshire/Leeds.
- www.leytransport.i12.com – "ley" is Lincolnshire and East Yorkshire. Plenty of closed stations. Road vehicles as well.
- www.disused-stations.org.uk – Perhaps the "market leader" of closed station websites. Aims to cover all of Britain; coverage is already extensive and steadily growing. You can take trips along your favourite closed lines. Pictures are from all periods, including pre-closure. The website is also accessible via www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/stations (as seen in *Circular* No.347 & BRC website).
- www.beechingsghosts.co.uk – Disused railway stations in Leicestershire
- www.forgevalleyrailway.co.uk – the Pickering-Seamer line, closed to passengers in June 1950. Includes photos of crossing houses that even I didn't know about!
- www.ukhrail.uel.ac.uk – UK Heritage Railways. My notes just say it includes pictures of the Grimsby-Louth line (and much more, presumably).
- The Railcar Association has a website which my notes say is good for dmu's, but I've not recorded the exact web address [www.railcar.co.uk, according to Google – Ed.]
- www.swindonsotherrailway.co.uk – The Midland and South Western Junction Railway, Cheltenham-Andover, closed 1961. Lots of pre-closure photos; remote and rural.
- www.meltonmowbray.steamrailways.com – Includes the GNR/LNWR joint line, through the back of beyond, from Nottingham (London Road) to Northampton (closed 1953).

That should be enough websites for a while. I have found that you often don't need to key in the [www.](#) of website addresses, or their suffixes such as ".co.uk". I would think that this shortening only works with a very distinctive main part such as "lincolnshiresrailwaysfromthepast". It won't be any use with www.tesco.co.uk!

Special Traffic Notices

Will members please take note of the following points :-

- **Fire Precautions.** Please familiarise yourselves with the positions of fire exits and extinguishers at Heaton Baptist Church.
- **Members' Discounts.** In return for free advertising in *The Circular* members receive 10% discount on cash purchases at Frizinghall Model Railway and at Buffers – in both cases on production of a valid Circle membership card.
- **Contributions to *The Circular*.** Original material, preferably in electronic format (almost any PC word-processor, preferably Microsoft Word or MS-DOS format, but not Microsoft Works, please), or by email to ianbutton1@btinternet.com) or typescript – the Editor can scan & OCR (optical character recognition) typed pages.
- **Radiators.** Please do not adjust the radiator settings in the meeting room. The valves easily become jammed, necessitating drainage of the system, dismantling and repairs – very expensive.
- **Railway Magazine bound volumes.** The volumes of RM have been removed from the library due to lack of space. Any member wishing to read any volumes (we have c.1929-present day) should contact the Hon. Librarian, Gary Hayhurst, and he will bring them to the next meeting.
- **Pictures for *The Circular*.** Photographic material submitted for consideration for reproduction in *The Circular* is accepted at the owner's risk. Landscape format is preferred for half-page reproduction, obviously, although if the photo is spectacular a vertical format full-page layout may be possible.
- **Disclaimer 1.** The opinions expressed in *The Circular* are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee.
- **Disclaimer 2.** The Bradford Railway Circle cannot accept any responsibility if DVDs or video tapes borrowed from the library cause damage to a member's possessions.

The Photographic Competition – 20th October 2010

Tom Ickringill

A further reminder, as you may or may not be aware, as previously mentioned in the first issue of the Circular for 2010, we are holding our bi-annual photographic competition on **20 October 2010**. Our last one held on 4 June 2008 which was, I felt, a bit disappointing (not the quality, but the number of entries) compared to the momentous occasion of 2006, with a record number of entries. Let's see if we can beat the record this year, as I am fully aware there are certain members who are excellent photographers, but don't make the effort. I've also noticed that there have been 'new'

contributors in the photos section in the Circular so far this year – Why don't they (you) enter something in the competition to swell the entries? Peter and I have already organised a judge - John Tickner, who will be making his judging debut at our competition evening.

The categories as before are :-

- 35mm slide - Steam
- 35mm slide – electric or diesel
- B/w print – Steam or diesel (max 10 x 8)
- Colour print – Steam or diesel (max 10 x8)
- Humorous – slide and/or print (+ caption)

In each category, there will be a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, and there will also be an outright winner.

Basic Rules

- Entries should not have been entered in a competition before
- Maximum number of entries per person per section – 4
- Print sizes will be strictly adhered to
- No momentous digital manipulation allowed (i.e. East Coast Electrification evidence removed)

A final point – comments were made last time that the judge had already commenced looking at the prints section, but some members were late in arriving, then, having to submit their entries and slightly disturb the proceedings. If this is going to happen this year, then entrants can always submit these earlier by giving them to me (especially if you're going to be away) or Peter. Otherwise, I think we'll have to draw the line somewhere !!

See you all there and let's make the effort to outdo 2008 !

Letter to the Editor

Victor Lee

Let's Ditch VOTs, along with preambles — begone needless rituals!

Not long ago (*The Circular* 2009, No.347, pp.9-10) I was enjoying myself pouring scorn on preambles. You know – those tiresome and pointless initiation rituals whereby a presenter, who's supposed to be entertaining us by *giving* his show, instead makes us bored and impatient by *talking* about it (and himself) beforehand. I've now put my iconoclast's hat on again! It's surely time we examined another hallowed ritual: the Vote of Thanks..... or should we call it the POSTAMBLE? Just as preambles are tiresomely unnecessary (why give another introductory speech when the president has *just given one?*), so VOTs are similarly superfluous. VOT-givers who trot out the seemingly-inevitable cliché about "... expressing our appreciation in the usual way" appear to have forgotten that the audience have, er, *just done exactly*

that, not two minutes before! Moreover, the VOT-giver's contrived paean of praise is often little more than an exercise in stating the obvious, reiterating a list of what we've just seen.

But it's more than just the practical matter of precious time being wasted by needlessly doing things twice: there are questions of principle. VOTs are *praise produced to order*, an idea dubious to say the least! And which certainly conflicts with my personal guidelines. I've always believed in "credit only where it is due" and in the line of the famous poem "Desiderata" (by Max somebody-or-other) "Be yourself; especially do not feign affection". Whilst politeness and diplomacy are generally fine, it is surely a mistake to stretch these into sycophancy-to-order and parrot-like sincerity.

Hence, I've always been uneasy and sceptical about the whole idea of VOTs: there's something contrived, artificial, presumptuous and potentially insincere/hypocritical about them. Let's face it, shows vary from brilliant to bloody awful, with most being somewhere on the right side of middling. Many are curates' eggs with some good parts (and some bad ones, such as interminable preliminaries before we see any decent slides: see my previous letter!) Though VOT-givers are invariably well-intentioned, being motivated by diplomacy, no good can ultimately come from pretending that poor stuff isn't poor. Automatic heaping of praise on undeserving and mediocre shows does nothing to improve standards of either content or presentation: quite the reverse! Pity the hapless VOT-giver at a show that turns out to be a bore or disappointment to him: as if that's not bad enough, he further has the unenviable chore, throughout the show, of desperately scrabbling around for something positive to say. And then is forced into fibs of polite hypocrisy. In one extreme case, a poorly-edited, murky-and-jerky video show was hailed as "really professional quality" in tones quite devoid of sarcasm or irony. What pleased me were the several half-amused gasps and groans of dissent in the audience on hearing this.

Against my gut feeling, I recently allowed myself to be press-ganged (or at least persuaded) by Philip into giving the VOTs for two shows because, as he said, they had strong links to mine: bicycles and architecture. Fortunately, I did enjoy both shows, and so the question of hypocrisy did not arise. However, *my enjoyment was significantly lowered in both cases* by the stress of having to write a speech not only at zero notice and without pen or paper, but also while trying to do something else: watch the show! In the first case, Colin Boocock's "Thousand Eggs on a Bicycle", I was relieved that my maiden speech seemed to go surprisingly well for one unaccustomed to VOT-giving. It flowed quite nicely to just the right length, and neatly publicised my long-expressed wish to see far more slides from the good old days (50's - 80's). But that must have been beginner's luck. What a total *hash* I made of my second VOT, for Robert Clarke's station architecture show! Stumbling over my words, repeating myself and going on too long, as comments from the audience about "breaking records for length" rightly indicated. A real case of "blithering and dithering", to use my own phrase from my previous letter. However, there was an upside: it's what got me into thinking about *why the hell do we saddle ourselves with the VOT tradition at all?* Several societies I've attended don't bother,

correctly maintaining that there already exists a method of thanking the presenter, that needs no organising: *the natural applause when he finishes*. The strength and duration of this are a good indication of the true views of the audience. As, indeed, is the number of them present in the first place: a capacity audience is, of course, a considerable genuine compliment to a presenter for previous efforts. While it's true that another such compliment is the eagerness of some chaps in actually volunteering to give VOTs rather than needing persuasion, I bet the majority of members see VOTs as a somewhat burdensome occasional duty (like giving speeches at weddings!) that they would be happier without, preferring to just relax and watch the show. The fact that there are some volunteer VOT-givers is *not* a valid reason for retaining the VOT custom, since there is an easy alternative way for such enthusiasts to give a presenter especial praise: see him afterwards! All the better for being a personal 1:1 instead of a formal VOT. Another, subtler, compliment is the asking of intelligent questions, either during the show, or when the president invites them, or 1:1 afterwards. Clearly, there are enough (and better) channels of compliment besides VOTs. So let's consign such superfluity to the dustbin of history! I want *everyone* in my audiences to enjoy my shows to the full, and nobody lumbered with speech-writing duties. Here's hoping that other presenters follow my lead and politely inform the president that they'll be quite happy with just the natural applause for their efforts. No need for a forced repeat!

Just think: the total time saved by ditching the average preamble AND the average VOT postamble (and any other perennial excesses such as mapslide-dwelling) might allow enhancement of a show by maybe a DOZEN extra slides. Or more. I'm sure members would be overwhelmingly in favour of that. One thing that prompted my previous rant on preambles was the sad case of a quite famous photographer who brought us lots of super slides all the way from the south (no doubt at considerable expense to BRC) – but we missed seeing perhaps 12-15% of them! No wonder he had to stop short – he'd preambled almost interminably, for what seemed like approaching TEN minutes. Then our indulgence in a postamble (alias VOT) made things even worse.

Let's all remember – we come to Circle meetings to *enjoy watching shows*. Not to sit through speeches about shows, or to cobble together speeches while watching!

Meeting Reports

Philip Lockwood

2nd June – Long & Short Line USA, by Chris Taylor

A return visit by Chris this evening with a talk with slides of his travels in the USA. A large area was covered, including San Francisco with its cable car system as well as the local rail system. What was good to see was the many liveries adopted by the various rail companies, some looking back to the older liveries such as the Santa Fé "War Bonnet" paint scheme whilst others adopting a much plainer livery? For the steam enthusiast we did have a glimpse of the Southern Pacific "Daylight" locomotive as well as the Union Pacific "Big Boy", unfortunately not working. An unusual aspect

of the American scene is the occurrence of street running with full length trains in the middle of a street - not much doubt about who has priority!

Interesting also to see the ex Cunard liner Queen Mary in use as a hotel on the waterfront at Los Angeles.

Thanks Chris for another interesting evening. Vote of thanks by Ian McDougal.

16th June - The Spectator Sees most of the Game, by Stanley Hall MBE

An ambiguous title, leaving the members present wondering what to expect. What we got was as usual a most interesting evening of thoughts, ideas, observations and suggestions of how the rail system was run, is run now and how it could be improved in the future! As is usual Stanley spoke with enthusiasm, knowledge and flair without the need for pictures and with the minimum of notes.

We started on the subject of station judging, Stanley mentioning that one of his favourites being Inverness with, in the past, the engine shed close by. The railways of the Wirral and the stations also came in for much praise. The station refurbishment of Liverpool Lime St with its overall roof brought mention of the Turbomotive on the Merseyside Express.

Unusually for Stanley, railway accidents didn't figure strongly in tonight's talk, the rail system at the moment enjoying an excellent safety record. Two areas that did concern were the accidents occurring at level crossings and the high occurrence of suicides on the railways.

As always a most enjoyable evening which was over all too soon – let's hope that it will not be to long before Stanley makes a return visit. The vote of thanks was given by Malcolm Riley.

30th June - "A Tale of Two Depots" by Ivan Stevenson.

Looking back through the records it was a surprise to learn that it 1979, thirty one years ago that Ivan last gave a talk to the Circle. I couldn't remember it, which is not surprising, as it was three years before I became a member! The talk then was Holbeck Shed 1958-1978. Tonight's talk A Tale of Two Depots covered the period when Ivan started at Holbeck, this of course was in steam days. Jubilees, Rebuilt Scots and Class 5s were much in evidence. Ivan remarked that to the staff at Holbeck the Jubilees were always referred to as 5Xs.

A new coal hopper had been installed in 1936 to replace the old Midland coaling stage. This proved to be a very dusty operation, and together with the smoke from the locomotives often caused irate housewives to arrive at the Shedmaster's office with smutty washing! One nicely prepared engine was the Fowler 2-6-4 tank specially painted to work the last passenger train on the Pateley Bridge branch, Ivan explaining that two attempts were needed to get a good finish.

Many interesting engines passed through the shed including the NER J72 which became *Joem*, also a visitor - Capt Smith's GNR tank locomotive whilst on a larger scale there was *Clun Castle*.

Although Ivan only brought about 150 slides it was the interesting tales that kept the meeting going until well past our normal finishing time.

Thank you Ivan let's see you back sooner than 2041! The vote of thanks was given by Eddie Lumb

28th July - The Other West Coast Route, Part 2, by Tony Newnham

Part one ended at Lancing Carriage Works and for the first image tonight we saw an interesting shunter, very much in the "Colonel Stephens style", this one unusually fitted with wing mirrors! Push-pull working used to be quite common but the next picture featured a four carriage set-up, with the locomotive in the middle. We moved along to Worthing Central where passengers had to walk across the tracks as there was no footbridge or subway. Just like Brienz in Switzerland! Moving on to Durrington-on-Sea where a younger Tony alighted to go to school, and a bridge designed by Henry Greenly, who is better known as a designer of miniature steam locomotives. Angmering, one of the few Southern stations used by me when travelling to London, where, not understanding the headcode at the time saw me arriving at Brighton by mistake! A nice picture of a Brighton Atlantic hauling a special the "Hoover Express". What came as a surprise was that although now silted up, Littlehampton had been a port for cross-channel steamers to Dieppe and Honfleur in France. Tony once again gave a very professional presentation using digital projection. Hopefully with still enough material for a further show for us. Vote of thanks by Ian Button.

11th August - Leeds Locomotives Ran around the World, by Ron Redman

A return by Ron and his navigator Eric Cope, the subject this time being the locomotive builders of Leeds. Ron is an expert in this field, having worked in the drawing office at Hudswell Clarke and also having written the history of this company's locomotive building. We started with the earliest, Matthew Murray, who built what was the earliest commercial locomotives to run on what is now the Middleton railway using a rack system which was the first example of this type. Ron regaled us with many stores such as the salesman at Kitsons who after a liquid lunch with a prospective customer gave a very competitive price for a batch of new locomotives which was accepted, only to realise that he had forgotten to price for the tenders!

A very elaborate Kitson loco was tested on the Leeds to Harrogate line and one is left to speculate on the surprise on the signalman's face as this appeared out of Bramhope Tunnel at Arthington! Kitsons were also well known as a manufacturer of steam tram engines, many of which worked in Leeds. Probably Kitsons' most remarkable locos were the rack locos of the Trans-Andine railway. Our next manufacturer Manning Wardle built some very attractive NG locomotives for the Lynton and Barnstaple line in Devon as well as some less attractive ones for the Garstang and Knott End railway in Lancashire! With so many builders in Leeds it is impossible in this review to mention them all, sufficient to say that although the meeting over ran by half an hour we could have gone on much longer listening to Ron with his encyclopaedic knowledge and amusing tales. Perhaps a return visit soon? The vote of thanks was given by Paul Hatton.



50 046 at Teignmouth, 9th August 1991

Peter Holden



HST 43113 at Dawlish, 7th August 1991

Peter Holden



46247, Hirst Woods, 9/7/61, with 44055 in siding



61274 leaving Bradford Exchange with The White Rose, c.1962

Secretary's Page

Peter Holden

Again not too much to report at present. Your Committee decided to keep the membership fee at the same level for 2011.

If any member wishes to give a talk next year please contact me ASAP.

At present we have nothing arranged for this year's Annual Dinner. What I can tell you is that it will be a more informal event, where we just turn up on the night without a set menu or a guest speaker. This has been brought about by the apathy towards the dinner shown by the majority of our members over the previous few years.

Forthcoming meetings

We are finishing off the year with some hopefully interesting talks.

Wednesday **6th October** sees Dave Scriven present "Some Further Snapshots" Dave always presents a more relaxed approach to giving talks. We are normally treated to a varied collection of railway interest, seeing Dave's railway travels and also hearing one or two of his jokes!

Wednesday **20th October**, Tom Ickringill has kindly volunteered to organise a Photographic Competition this year. I have not heard anything about the competition, so I can only presume it will run to the same format as last time? I can inform you however that John Tickner has kindly agreed to be judge this year. So do endeavour to come along and make it as successful as it has been in previous years.

Wednesday **November 3rd**, sees the welcome return of Dr. Les Nixon.

Les will hopefully be presenting "Grand Railway Tour of South America" Sounds good to me! We will no doubt be treated to some first rate photography, as Les is amongst the top railway photographers we have been most fortunate to have visit our society over the years.

Our final guest speaker this year will be Tom Heavyside, on **November 17th**. "Steam Revived is his chosen title this year. Always a crowd puller a title like this, so we can expect a full house to see Tom re-light the boiler on an ever popular subject.

Wednesday **1st December** sees a film blockbuster, live at Heaton Baptist Church.

When we will be treated to "A Collection of Robertshaw" Frank will be treating us to a preview of this no doubt future Hollywood best selling movie!

December 15th. Oh dear it's the AGM! Nominations for Secretary will be gleefully accepted...form a queue.

I am not sure if, or who will be giving a short talk afterwards - watch this space.

Last meeting of the year will be Members Night on Wednesday **29th December**.

Please bring along five minutes of railway entertainment to amuse your fellow members.

Circle Diary 2010

P Sep. 22 nd	Moscow Underground & Overground	Ian Button
Oct. 6 th	Some Further Snapshots	Dave Scriven
Oct 20 th	Photography Competition.	Tom Ickringill
Nov. 3 rd	Grand Railway Tour of South America	Les Nixon
C Nov. 17 th	Steam Revived	Tom Heavyside
Dec 1 st	A Collection of Robertshaw	Frank Robertshaw
Dec 15 th	65 th AGM	
P Dec 29 th	Members Night	Members
C	- Copy date for <i>The Circular</i> – three meetings prior to ...	
P	- Publication date, ditto – last meetings of March, June, September & December.	

Small Ads

BRC member John Tickner is now offering a digital imaging service. For scanning from print, negative or slide (including medium format), photoshop retouching, photo restoration, and printing up to size A2, contact John on 01535 601050, mobile 07967 604074, or email john@johntickner.co.uk.

Wanted – Rollei circular slide magazine for P37 projector. As always, good home still offered to broken/surplus cameras & photo equipment. Please don't throw dead cameras away, they can sometimes be mended (or used for spares) - donations invited for "camera sanctuary" – please contact Ian Button. Very many thanks to donors thus far, for their great kindness and generosity.

Ben's Bits

One railway you may not know of is the Alderney Railway in the Channel Islands. It was built in the 1840's to transport stone for the breakwater. Queen Victoris was its first official passenger. It was horse-worked. Since the 1970's it has become a public railway, using two London Underground coaches and a diesel locomotive named *Elizabeth*.

Ben Burrows