

THE CIRCULAR

Bradford Railway Circle

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Editorial

Happy New Year! to all our readers, and thanks to Tom Ickringill for supplying this year’s cover photo. More excellent articles in this issue – in GB, we join Jim and Gary on the Watercress Line (Mid-Hants Railway); and abroad we enjoy Dave Peel’s fascinating visit to Ecuador (Part1). Second part next issue, and a sequel covering Peru is promised. Dave also sends a “mystery photo” of a coat of arms on the side of the frontage of Bradford Forster Square Station (see colour photo on p.20) – can anyone help Dave by identifying the owner of the arms in question, please?

All the above and a good selection of supporting pieces from various contributors help us to produce another 24-page issue this time. Please keep the articles coming – you can see how much healthier *The Circular* looks now.

We were very sorry to lose long-standing member Brian Whitaker in October – an appreciation of him by Keith Preston appears in this issue, together with a sales list of books from Brian’s collection.

The Watercress Line

Gary Hayhurst

Another steam gala bash by Jim & Gary

The following is about a visit to a heritage railway called the Watercress Line. The idea to visit this line came from my friend Jim Bennett. He said that this year it was his turn to pick the railway steam gala and I gladly agreed with his choice even though the date in late October could mean poor weather. The steam gala at Mid Hants was from Friday 24th October to Sunday 26th October 2014. Plans were put into place. I bought the 3 day rover tickets for Jim and myself. Jim and I scoured the internet one morning for a suitable place to stay and finally settled on The Swan in Alton. This was a good choice as The Swan had a large car park and it was only a brisk 5 minute walk to Alton station. The Swan did a lovely breakfast every morning and had a good selection of evening meals. I cannot comment on the beer, as October was my alcohol free month.

We travelled to Alton by car, but you can get there by rail if you go via London and then go to Waterloo station with trains every 30 minutes the journey time listed as 1 hour 10 minutes in fairly new 4-car, 8-car and 12-car EMUs in what I would call Jaffa-cake livery. The Watercress Line runs from Alton to Alresford in Hampshire. It is also known as the Mid Hants Railway. The railway is just over 10 miles long, starting at Alton followed by Medstead, Ropley and Alresford. The line is single track with passing loops. At Alton the station is shared with the Network rail line of South Western Trains. The Mid Hants Railway has one side of an island platform; it has its own footbridge to get on to the South Western railway part of the station and then by another footbridge to get to the main railway buildings of South Western Trains which is where the general public gain access to both the services of South Western Trains and also the Mid Hants Railway.

We travelled down in Jim's car on the Thursday so that we were ready to catch the first train Friday morning. A time table was handed to us at the ticket office when we presented our 3 day rover tickets. Along with the timetable we were given a 16 page booklet with a colour picture and description of each loco and a welcome address. The locos running in the steam gala were to be 1450 Auto-tank, 4270, 5029 *Nunney Castle*, 6960 *Raveningham Hall*, 850 *Lord Nelson*, 45379 Black 5 and 92212 9F. In reserve but not used was 925 *Cheltenham*. This was kept in light steam at Ropley.

The weather forecast for the Friday was rain until mid afternoon so it looked like we would be riding the trains most of the day. The first train out of Alton was 6960 *Raveningham Hall* which was well turned out. The train was fairly full, and filled up further with people off a South Western emu which made a tightly timed connection when it pulled into Alton but luckily those wanting to board our train just made it. The Mid Hants Railway is also known as the Alpine route as the climb out of Alton is quite steep and our engine had to contend with wet track and leaves on the line, so one or two slips and plenty of noise from the front of the train. However the

Hall soon got to grips with our train and climbed the bank and soon we were at our first station Medstead and Four Marks which is a passing loop on the railway. Leaving Medstead we were soon into open country and the Hall soon got into its stride taking 10 minutes to get to Ropley station which I would consider is the mid-point of the railway.

Ropley is also a passing loop but is also where the locos are shedded, also it is a major engineering centre for the railway and where there was a large car park in an adjoining field for visitors on this gala weekend. We took on another engine at this point with Lord Nelson put on the back. This was not to give us super power but to save a light engine movement. We then continued onto Alresford where the Hall was taken off and *Lord Nelson* then became the train engine for the return working. This practice was followed most of the time. To add further interest an Auto train consisting of an 0-4-2 tank number 1450 and auto coach called *Chaffinch* was doing a shuttle service between Ropley and Alresford. I had not seen this type of train before except in books and I found this little engine and coach quite fascinating and felt that I must have a ride in it at some point. After a good look around the Alresford station area and taking both digital photos and video film we caught the next train to Ropley.

Ropley is the hub of the railway with a fine through station maintained to a high degree of authenticity with appropriate colours for the paintwork. Whilst we were there several volunteers were finishing off the building of a large waiting shelter on the London bound side of the line. We were fortunate on Friday as we expected heavy rain but it kept dry although many dark clouds passed over. Ropley station area was a good place to look round, this included the sheds and workshop area which surprising were not off limits. However there were plenty of staff and volunteers keeping an eye on you, but ready to show or explain the various engineering that was taking place. The workshops had some good machinery, and were equipped with a large overhead crane. It was obvious that the sheds and workshops had been extended with a fair bit of new build done with lottery money. In the sheds and workshops were several locos at various stages of repair or rebuild. As usual Jim made a note of the numbers of the locos on site (see end of article for full list). Linking both sides of Ropley at the London end is a large green latticed footbridge. This footbridge used to be at Kings Cross station in London and ran from platform 1 to 8. This footbridge was called Handyside bridge. This was named after the firm of A Handyside and Co Ltd of Derby and London. It was made in 1892 and erected 1893. It was removed in 2008. It had been dismantled at Kings Cross and then re-erected at Ropley. This footbridge made a fine view point for watching and photographing trains entering and leaving Ropley.

As it was our desire to support the Mid Hants railway on our visit we felt we must find a suitable eating place at one of the stations. This was at Alresford and so we boarded the auto-coach at Ropley to take us to Alresford. What an amazing little train! The front of the coach was facing towards Alresford and we managed to get a comfortable seat half way down the coach. It seemed strange for the driver to enter the driving compartment at the end of the coach. He then used a regulator in the driving compartment to get us underway and soon we were away on a falling gradient. The regulator in the coach was mechanically linked under the floor to the 0-4-2 tank, as

was the whistle, braking was done via a vacuum brake handle in the coach. All communication between the driver in the coach and the fireman on the engine was done via the whistle. On arrival at Alresford we made our way to the main station building, a good part of which had been turned into a cafe. Both hot and cold food was available. I can tell you the bacon sandwiches and large slices of cake washed down with tea really hit the spot.

The only problem we found with this line is being able to do photography from the lineside, between Alton and Medstead the line is well treed in. There are some open fields between Medstead and Ropley but access to them was limited and would need good OS maps to find your way in from the road. However between Ropley and Alresford we did spot a foot crossing from the train which appeared suitable. To reach this we needed information from local photographers who kindly told us of a likely spot near this crossing. Leaving Ropley we headed along a grass path towards Alresford and went into a large field which after about 200-300 yards gave us a good view of trains climbing a gradient from Alresford and going towards Ropley. The field dipped at this point and gave us a good view of the track on a small embankment. Other photographers were also present and discussions ensued as to where to stand so that nobody got into each other's shots and this worked out quite well. We did not go to the foot crossing as this was crowded out by many photographers. We were able to take pictures and video in this field with the engines having to work hard against the gradient. At one point 5029 *Nunney Castle* was stopped by a signal and had to make a rather steamy and smoky start from this dead stand.

On our final day on the Sunday morning Jim wanted to be pulled by 9F number 92212 which he remembers from his youth in York. We therefore caught the 10.20 am from Alton. The noise from the 9F as we climbed the gradient out of Alton was tremendous. Jim was leaning out of a window of the coach door and so captured the event on his video camera, noise and all. At Ropley we managed another trip on the auto coach managing this time to sit directly behind the driver and see the simple controls he had to use.

So we had a good two and a half days. Weather was dry but a lot of cloud with a few sunny breaks but good for the last week in October. I think we were fortunate in getting a hotel in Alton that was within walking distance of Alton station so no need to use the car every day.

My thanks go to Jim Bennett for suggesting this railway and for doing the driving.

For you people who want to know the whereabouts of locos here is Jim's list which he wrote down with his trusty pencil and piece of paper. 50027, 70000, 41312, D3358, 08032, 08377, 76017 boiler and frames, 34105 boiler, 37901 *Mirlees Pioneer*, 37324 *Clydebridge*, 73096, tender for 30828, 30506, 34051 *Winston Churchill*, D6836, 75079 with double chimney, 12049. Used in the gala all in steam: Autocoach *Chaffinch* + 1450, 4270, 5029 *Nunney Castle*, 6960 *Raveningham Hall*, 30850 *Lord Nelson*, 45379, 9F 92212 and in steam at Ropley as a reserve engine 925 *Cheltenham*.



6960 Raveningham Hall at Ropley



Ropley shed



925 Cheltenham at Ropley



GWR 0-4-2T 1450 and autocoach Chaffinch at Ropley

Notes from Fenay Bridge

Chris Taylor

MANCHESTER

The automatic ticket barriers are now in operation at Victoria station inside their own plastic tent due to the ongoing roof works. The remains of Exchange station are being demolished down to ground level.

TODMORDEN

The new west curve should be available for trains in both directions from 9th February 2015; previously only trains going towards Burnley could use the curve

YORK

The Scarborough River Bridge over the River Ouse will be closed 14th February to 22nd February for strengthening and refurbishment.

MANCHESTER AIRPORT

The railway station will be closed 17th January to 8th February, 2015 as Network Rail finish construction of the fourth platform. Metrolink services will continue to operate.

MANCHESTER VICTORIA

This station will be closed to all rail traffic during Easter (not sure what is happening to Metrolink tram services). No Metrolink services will operate through Manchester Victoria February 14th - 17th, from February 18th the Bury and Rochdale trams will terminate at Manchester Victoria and will not run through to Shudehill due to trackwork in Balloon Street. From February 21st, 2015 trams will again run through and stop at Manchester Victoria as normal. Work has started on the second cross Manchester link with the building of the tracks to Exchange Square from Manchester Victoria. This short intermediate extension will allow an increase in the Oldham line services with the additional services terminating in Exchange Square.

GRAND CENTRAL

On both 27th & 28th December a GC HST visited Bradford Interchange. The HST had started at Sunderland and was terminating at Doncaster with passengers transferring to a Bradford to London service. The HST then ran ECS to Bradford to form the 1021 Saturday 1205 (Sunday) Bradford to Finsbury Park - there was a reduced service at King's Cross due to track work. Unfortunately on the Saturday the HST ran late due to signalling problems between Halifax & Bradford as well as a trespass incident.

AIRE/WHARFE VALLEY

All 24 of the EMU's operating these lines are now fitted with wifi.

Work has started building the new approach road to the new Apperley Bridge station. Vegetation clearance has started on the site of the new Kirkstall Forge station.

Brian Whitaker 1936-25/10/2014 Keith Preston

I know very little about Brian's early life, so these are personal memories from my knowledge of Brian.

After leaving school, Brian tried his hand at being a bricklayer. Although he was quite a good apprentice and he liked the outdoor work, his thoughts were of a career in transport. He had a liking for buses, being a member of West Riding Transport Society, and also the Samuel Ledgard Appreciation Society, attending many of their meetings and going on trips. He joined British Railways in the early 1950's, initially as a goods clerk at Valley Road Goods, Bradford – I think the idea of having to catch two buses to reach his job as apprentice bricklayer, as well as a longish walk, made up his mind to change employment. In the railways he found his niche. It meant the privilege of free travel tickets once he had been employed for the appropriate length of time, so he could travel anywhere he wanted for holidays and weekend trips.

Brian liked a good pint of beer, joining CAMRA and at one time became Secretary of the Bradford area branch. He became a regular real ale drinker, often consuming considerable amounts, but he never became violent. His naturally loud voice would become louder, and woe betide anyone who began a "discussion" about politics or religion, as Brian had his own agenda. Stubborn opinionated, but likeable and great company with all the humorous tales he could tell.

It was 1964 when I met him when he was living at Charlestown in Otley Road, Shipley. I had joined RCTS in 1964 and saw this well-built "jolly" character with longish hair, long sideburns, black-rimmed glasses at the indoor meetings, then held on alternate months in Leeds and Bradford. RCTS West Riding branch organised many railtours from the Leeds area. Up to my leaving Bradford Grammar School in July 1964 I had some lessons on Saturdays. I'm sure I met and perhaps sat with Brian on the tours and occasional bus/coach shed-bashing trips. We became good friends, though I could never keep up with his beer-drinking. He was generous, and over the years he gave me many magazines, books, maps etc. When he moved from Charlestown to 50 Thorp Garth, Idle, and from that 1st-floor flat to the ground-floor flat at 9 Emmeline Close, Idle, VCT at Ingrow gained a lot of his collection. I was Brian's "taxi" to many railtours we'd booked, as he was never interested in learning to drive a car, though he did drive a fork-lift truck at work, having passed his employers' test for that.

His railway career started as goods porter at Valley Road – agents for Pickfords Removals, so Brian had lots of experience in carrying loads up and down staircases when he went out delivering items of furniture brought by rail and sent on to customers by road. There were changes in his railway employment, too numerous to mention, but he retained his contract and pension rights, thus ensuring he could use the free travel not only in the UK but also abroad. He did a few foreign trips with ADL (Along Different Lines) arranged by Richard Pegler an ex-BR timetable-planner. Brian cursed Richard sometimes for the way certain timetabled trains didn't connect with branch trains (was this a deliberate ploy in the Beeching era? – Brian always

thought this, but he just made a jocular remark to Richard and they both got on fine. Richard liked him a lot.

Brian survived a heart attack in his 40's, probably brought on by his poor diet and excessive drinking. However, after recovery he heeded his doctor's advice and reduced his intake of fatty foods and cut down his drinking. He took early retirement in his mid-50's.

Brian did a lot for the late Stanley Ackroyd MBE, of Idle, after he met him at the Idle Baptist Centre. When IBC had a minibus, Brian became Stanley's voluntary escort, donning a yellow hi-vis jacket. Stanley was in a wheelchair, and Brian would accompany him to the doctor and to hospitals.

Sadly a fall on an escalator at Bradford Interchange in July 2014 led to a spell in A&E at Bradford Royal Infirmary. In typical fashion, Brian never told his sister Irene or brother John until he'd been discharged. He went back home to Idle on the bus! He used to telephone Irene every week on a Monday, letting her know he was OK, and telling her family where he had travelled over the weekend. One Monday in late October 2014, Irene didn't receive the regular phone call, nor any message. She went to his Idle flat in Emmeline Close and found him slumped on the floor. She rang 999, but sadly Brian had died. The inquest later reported furring of the arteries, resulting in a heart attack.

Brian was a good-hearted, blunt-speaking Yorkshireman; I and many others are missing him and his humour. Our thoughts and condolences go to Brian's family and friends.



List of books from Brian Whitaker's collection

Please get in touch with Gary Hayhurst if you wish to acquire any of the following.

ECW Buses and Coaches
Bradford Corporation Motor buses 1926-1974
Buses Restored 2000
Buses Restored 2006
Buses and Trolleybuses 1919 to 1945
Buses and Trolleybuses Since 1945
London Bus and Tram Fleetbook 2006
Preserved Buses
The Heyday of the Trolleybus
London Trams
City of York Tramways
Blackpool Century of Trams
The Golden Years of British Trams
Bradford City Tramways 1882-1950
The Tramways of West Yorkshire
West Yorkshire Trams on Old Picture Postcards
British Trams - a Pictorial Survey
Great British Tramway Networks
British Tramways and Preserved Tramcars
Bradford City Transport 1973 Timetables
Collection of postcards showing buses, trams & trolleybuses
Encyclopedia of British Railway Companies
The Lost Lines of Britain
Rail Guide 2011
Bradshaws Guide July 1922 (reprint)
Irish Railways Handbook No. 7
Irish Railways Traction and Travel
BR Passenger Services NER 1964
5 NREA Spotter's Companion - various dates & ICRS 2012
Rail Atlas GB & Ireland 10th edition
Rail Atlas GB & Ireland 11th edition
Rail Atlas GB & Ireland 12th edition
Sectional Maps of British Railways 1947
Sectional Maps of British Railways 1982
Sectional Maps of British Railways 2002
Rail Atlas of Britain No 3
British Railways pre-grouping Atlas 5th edition
Rail Atlas GB 1890
Track maps Western 5th edition
Track maps Western 5th edition

Track maps Western 4th edition
 Track maps Midlands & North West 2nd edition
 Track maps Midlands & North West 2nd edition
 Track maps Midlands & North West 3rd edition
 Track maps Southern & Tfl 3rd edition
 Track maps Ireland 2nd edition
 Track maps Scotland & Isle of Man 5th edition
 Track maps Eastern 3rd edition
 Track maps Eastern 3rd edition
 Track maps Eastern 3rd edition
 British Rail Main line Gradient Profiles
 The Railway Magazine Gradients of British Main-Line Railways
 Track Atlas of Mainland Britain 2nd edition
 Track Maps of Mainland Britain
 European Railway Atlas 1997 & BR Atlas x2

Accidents.....

M. T. Leahy

Rummaging through my collection of local area railway accident reports I decided that it is time to share some details with you.

Saturday, 2nd Dec. 1950

Wortley West Junction @ 9.16pm

The 8.42pm Low Moor to Leeds, formed by Class 4P 2-6-4 tank loco running bunker first plus 6 non corridor coaches, was struck in the rear whilst stationary by the 8.50pm Bfd Exchange to Leeds. This latter train was formed by Class N1 0-6-2 tank loco plus 3 non corridor coaches & was travelling at approximately 30 mph. There were 5 passengers on the 8.42 train & 3 on the 8.50. 6 of these were taken to hospital & only 2 were detained.

Traffic was diverted until 11.0pm when 2 goods lines were reopened. Normal working resumed at 12pm the following day, 3rd Dec..

Of note, Wortley West traffic averages 48 passenger & 8 freights on the Up, 46 passenger & 6 freights on the Down. In addition 40 (!) engines are turned daily round the triangle formed by the three Wortley Junctions. (from Copley Hill ?)

The signalman at W.W. s/box was working under difficulties owing to the failure of the points & signals. He failed to send "obstruction danger" when the 8.42 arrived.

The signalman at Armley Junction s/box broke the rules by sending the 8.42 into section without first receiving "line clear" from W.W. s/box. He then misunderstood the phone conversation with W.W. s/box & he falsified his Train Register. Another phone conversation was also misunderstood, resulting in him letting the 8.50 into section without querying the situation at Wortley West S/Box.

The Armley Junc signalman was 28 years old, of 3 years service. He resigned.

20th May 1953

Bradford Forster Square

The 7.15am Skipton to Forster Square (via Ilkley), tender loco (?) plus 4 coaches, on entering Pfm 5 under clear signals was hit sidelong by shunting tank loco 2-6-2 type plus 6 empty coaches. These were off the 7.20am Skn – Bfd (via Keighley). The combined speed of the accident was about 25mph.

The shunt loco hit the leading & 2nd coaches, tearing out their sides & destroying the interiors. The 3rd coach was also hit destroying 3 compartments.

1 passenger was killed, 2 seriously injured plus 12 others with injuries.

The driver of the shunt loco, 57 years old, qualified for 30 years, moved his train down the platform (a normal move), but failed to observe & stop at the signal at the end of the platform. The fireman whilst doing his normal duties also failed to look out and advise his driver about the signals.

The shunter when he realised that the empties weren't going to stop, shouted, gave the Stop signal & tried to board the moving train to apply the brakes.

Human Error, the driver was thinking about his holiday in Switzerland in 2 days time. The report does not say if he actually got to go on holiday.

20th Jan. 1954

Thirsk

The 2pm Heart of Midlothian, KX to Edinburgh, formed by an A1 Pacific & 13 coaches was travelling towards Thirsk under clear signals at 75mph.

The signal the train was approaching turned from green to yellow & the next one changed to red. The driver immediately applied the brakes but the train now travelling at about 20mph derailed on an open set of points. It remained upright & there were no casualties. The loco & first four coaches derailed, the rear of the 2nd & the front of the 3rd coaches blocked the Down Slow line & the opposite ends the Up Main.

The signalling at Thirsk was installed in Nov. 1933 & is one of the first route relay interlocking systems in the country.

Linesmen attended a number of faults that day & were working at the time of the accident. The s/man reported that there was no detection on 223 points, D/Fast to D/Slow but the linesman did not have time to react to this new problem before the train derailed.

The facing points had moved when the s/man had set up a route for a Goods Train on the D/Slow line. This was caused by a false feed owing to 2 short circuits & several other circumstances, including heavy rain.

21st Feb 1955

Luddendenfoot

At 4.28am the 3.25am Leeds to Manchester, formed by a class 6P loco 4-6-0 & 3 coaches & a luggage van (40 passengers) collided with a goods brake van & a loaded coal wagon.

The guard of the goods train was badly injured & died 8 days later .

The goods train was class 8 2-8-0 tender loco & 38 unfitted loose coupled loaded wagons & a brake van, train weight 745 tons.

The goods train was signalled into the Up Loop & had drifted to the Home signal which cleared, so the driver continued to drift before receiving a green hand signal to go into the loop behind a train already there.

The s/man did not watch the whole train into the loop, assuming that the goods train was complete. The goods train crew were unaware of any snatch that would have caused a broken coupling leaving the wagons behind.

The Guards brake van must have been stationary for at least 15seconds without the guard taking any action. (asleep?)

In 1954 there were 1,541 reported failures of coupling apparatus of which 489 were broken coupling links.

25 Years Saved and Successful

Peter Mann

Last year saw the 25th anniversary of the reprieve of the Settle-Carlisle railway. The reprieve in 1989 was the culmination of an 8-year campaign which attracted 22,000 objections, including a dog. Dogs were fare-paying passengers in the 1980's! The campaign to save the line was spearheaded by the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line Association, and also by the Friends of Dalesrail. Both organisations still exist, supporting the line in different ways, either as volunteers or by providing financial assistance for projects along the line, or simply leading passengers on guided walks. FOSCL has 3300 members and always welcomes new members. Unfortunately, members are lost each year mainly due to death. If you are not already a member, the subscription is only £10 per annum, which entitles you to 4 magazines a year valued at £2.50 each.

There are other campaigning groups worthy of your support. These promote reopening of the Skipton-Colne, Penrith-Keswick and Waverley routes. The last-named continues the section from Galashiels to Carlisle. The Edinburgh-Tweedbank (near Galashiels) section is reopening in September 2015.

Details of all these campaigning groups can be found on the internet.

Skipton-Colne - <http://www.selrap.org.uk/>

Penrith-Keswick - <http://www.keswickrailway.com/>

Waverley Route - <http://www.campaignforbordersrail.org/>

Friends of Dalesrail - <http://www.friendsofdalesrail.org/>

Friends of the Settle Carlisle Railway - <http://www.foscl.org.uk/>

Let us hope that these campaigns are as successful as the one to save the S and C.

Ben's Bits

Samuel Morton Peto was the contractor for the London & Birmingham Railway. He built Curzon St Station in Birmingham (which still exists, unwanted!). Also the Palace of Westminster.

But he contracted to build the Grand Trunk Railway in America – 1000 miles at £3,000 per mile – half the price of comparable jobs in Britain, and everything had to be shipped across the Atlantic. He employed Robert Stephenson to build the Victoria Bridge over the St Lawrence River – it is still in use, and was dubbed “the eighth wonder of the world”. Peto was knighted, and as Sir Samuel Morton Peto he lived at Somerleyton Hall as the richest man in the world. *[In 1863 this noble pile was sold on to Sir Francis Crossley, the carpet-manufacturer of Halifax – Ed.]* Peto also built the first railway swing bridge at Reedham, Norfolk.

The locomotive *Scots Guardsman*, LMS-built 46115 of 1927, appeared in the film “Night Mail”, the GPO documentary about the Travelling Post Office from London to Scotland. The film included the famous poem by W.H. Auden, and music by Benjamin Britten, and was done on a shoestring.

Mauritania has the longest trains in the world – up to 3km long ($1\frac{7}{8}$ miles).

San Sebastian has the steepest funicular, rising 160 metres in 312 m (32-58% gradients). The original rolling-stock is still in use.

The France/Spain gauge-change at Irun/Hendaye can now be done on variable-gauge axled bogies – shades of Bradford/Leeds trams.

Bilbao – the station has a vast stained-glass window. The city’s transporter bridge was the first in the world – the Puente Viscaya, built in 1893. *[Apropos of which, the Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge is now open again, and offers free rides until early April – Ed.]* Bilbao has a “scenic railway” – a roller-coaster on which brakemen ride the cars to ensure speeds are safe on bends.

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 Sedbergh Community Centre.
- **Members’ Discounts.** In return for free advertising in *The Circular* members receive 10% discount on cash purchases at Frizinghall Model Railways and at Buffers – in both cases on production of a valid Circle membership card. See inside rear cover of *The Circular* for details.
- **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.

- **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 Eddy Lumb, 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, or the picture might be used for our *Circular* cover picture.
- **Disclaimer.** The opinions expressed in *The Circular* are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee.

‘Tren Crucero’ and the Devil’s Nose: Ecuador 2014 (Part 1) Dave Peel

You’ve got to start somewhere. Having never been to South America before – though long desirous of so doing – Ecuador seemed as good a place as any to visit first. Especially so, as this particular trip also included four days on the Galapagos Islands, though these of course have no railways. These Islands would be warm and sunny (since the equator runs right through them) and would counterbalance the several days spent in the Ecuadorian Andes, where despite the latitude, the altitude would dictate cooler conditions. The interest for a railway enthusiast was therefore confined to travelling over the entire length of the Guayaquil & Quito line, in our case, southbound.

Historically this famous route began on the coast at Guayaquil and headed, with great difficulty, towards the capital Quito some 277 miles distant, and notably, 9350 ft higher! Except of course that no trains ever ran from/to Guayaquil itself. The station serving this port city was at Duran, on the other side of the Guayas River, and a ferry connected the two. The Duran /Yaguachi /Milagro line was opened in 1873 and Bucay (54 miles) was reached by 1888. This section is largely flat, but beyond Bucay the climbing begins in earnest, with long steep grades through narrow canyons before reaching the Devil’s Nose at Sibambe, having gained 5,925 ft in altitude in the 27 miles from Bucay. The line then surmounts a rocky promontory, the ‘Devil’s Nose’, via two reversals on the outcrop itself, gaining roughly 650 ft in height in less than two miles of track. The climbing still continues however, and a further gain of 4,700 ft is made in the 22 miles north of Sibambe with maximum grades of 1 in 18 (5.5%). Having now achieved enough altitude to reach the ‘valley’ between parallel ranges of the Andes, the line then proceeded rapidly northwards reaching a maximum elevation at Urbina (11,840ft), finally arriving at Quito (2,490ft lower) in 1908.

Beyond Quito a northern extension of 230 miles to the port of San Lorenzo was completed in 1957 and a 90 mile branch to Cuenca from Sibambe (at the foot of the Devil’s Nose) was constructed between 1915 and 1965. Both of these routes are now almost totally defunct. The ‘main line’ itself suffered considerable damage in the

El Nino events of 1997 and 1998, and the political will to restore the railway link between capital and coast was only announced in 2008. Since then, this 277 mile route has been completely rehabilitated to a high standard, and it is now possible to cover the entire route by tourist train (the 'Tren Crucero' in the title).

To cover this line southbound from Quito to Guayaquil was therefore the main purpose of the 'Great Rail Journeys' holiday undertaken this year between 27 June and 13 July.

Getting to Quito in the first place is of course easy nowadays, but you do lose some sleep! As we were booked on the 06.30 flight out of Heathrow, catching the last train from Wareham to Poole followed by the 00.10 National Express coach arriving at Terminal 4 at 03.00 in front of the 04.30 check-in time, seemed the obvious option. As it was, KLM 1002 to Amsterdam (first flight of day!) was ½ hour late taking off, which left us a bit tight at Schipol for the onward departure of KLM 755 direct to Quito. (Quito's airport is a recent out-of-town replacement for a very central, but cramped original. It is also deliberately lower at 8,000ft, since planes can now take off safely with 85% capacity, rather than only 65% of full load when leaving from 9,300ft – a strong commercial consideration). This 11½ hour daytime flight landed in the Ecuadorian capital at 14.45, from where a further coach ride brought us to our accommodation 2 hours north of Quito, after a very long day!

As we were not to depart from Quito on the Tren Crucero until day 5, both our first two nights were spent at the splendid hacienda (dating from 1608) at San Pablo del Largo, just south of Otavalo. This hacienda came with its own Monastery – where two llamas were busy munching the lawn – and extensive grounds boasting mature exotic plants and flowers of every colour. The vegetable garden was an astonishing sight, with all varieties of 'seasonal' vegetables available – constantly – throughout the year. Being so close to the equator, individual seasons don't exist and plants take full advantage of this. During the day we were introduced to the local life and culture by visiting the Saturday market at Otavalo, which serves as both a social and economic focus. The market is an immense, colourful and noisy outdoor location where indigenous people can buy and sell just about anything & everything, all in the shadow of the Imbabura volcano. Many of the transactions taking place are however on the 'bartering' principle, cash (and banks!) being rarely used amongst the indigenous population in a successful agricultural economy still largely based on subsistence farming

On the third day we returned south by road – a spectacular journey in itself. It began with a visit to a crater lake (at 10,300ft) with a beautiful panorama of the snow-capped Cayambe volcano – another of the 47 volcanoes that Ecuador boasts! As Sunday 29 June was St Peter & St Paul day hereabouts, tradition has it that local 'gangs' – suitably costumed in sombreros and chaps – gather in the squares of their local towns for a ritual 'fight' in celebration! These gangs, walking in procession on the roads, delayed our progress, but the sight was both interesting and photographically rewarding. (We couldn't stay for the fight!).

On reaching the outskirts of Quito much time was spent at the impressive Equator Monument. This is a large edifice, the public roof of which gives a

magnificent oversight of the mountains and snow-capped volcanoes that surround Quito itself, including distant Cotopaxi.

Two further nights were spent in the capital, and sandwiched between these was an informative city tour. This took in, notably, the basilica where the gargoyles had been changed – many years ago – from religious images to depict instead wildlife commonly found in the locality, the populace being more ‘comfortable’ with these! Following this we were taken to the highest point in the south of the city where the huge monument to the Virgin of the city of Quito overlooks the entire capital (and several volcanoes besides!), from which position many photos were possible. As this was the last day of the month (30 June), changing of the Palace Guard took place at noon in Independence Square. This turned out to be quite a ceremony; bands, choirs, troops marching in traditional uniforms, horse guards on parade – even speeches from the Palace balcony, where the VIPs included Ecuador’s Vice President. The old Jesuit University (now restored) was then visited, and a look at the nearby St Francis’s Square and Convent concluded the short tour of this large and sprawling metropolis. Lunch was then taken, the afternoon being easily filled by watching live World Cup football on TV, and as ‘rise & shine’ was to be at 5am next day, early to bed seemed the sensible option!

The following day was to see the start of the 4-day journey south to Guayaquil, transport being via Ecuador’s modern, almost new, tourist train – the Tren Crucero. This only began operating in 2013 and runs (on selected days) between Quito & Guayaquil (and vice versa), thus descending the Devil’s Nose on the way south, in order to drop down to the coast. This famous short stretch of descent is extreme, clinging precipitously to a bare mountain side, curving all the while, with vicious grades of 1 in 18 (uncompensated) most of the way, plus two reversals on the slope itself. This, to me, was to be the highlight of the entire trip. But as the journey had not yet begun I must return to Quito!

The main station of the old 3’ 6” gauge Guayaquil & Quito Railroad is in the south of the city, and our coach deposited us at the terminus in plenty of time for the 8 o’clock departure. This, it transpired, was a 3-coach set of lower specification (we picked up the ‘Cruise Train’ itself later in the day) behind a tidy Alstom Bo-Bo diesel of 1992 vintage, though a smart non-operational Baldwin 2-8-0 (‘Andes’ type) was on display in a prominent position in the yard.

Having been only recently reintroduced here, trains are still an infrequent event – not something the public are used to seeing crossing major road junctions on the flat. As these are often busy, and are unguarded by any form of warning lights or gates, our train was accompanied – every day – by a pair of police motorcycle outriders who roared ahead of us to reach the next road crossing to warn, or stop, any traffic prior to our arrival. In urban areas there was usually a dirt track alongside the line, but otherwise local roads/lanes had to be used to overtake the train and I have to say, it seemed that the police involved thoroughly enjoyed these chases! (At the end of each day the police also guarded the stabled train overnight, and gave way to a new pair in the morning).

Between 2008 and 2013 the single-track main line had been almost completely relaid and/or replaced to a very high standard and a newly built high-specification 4-car train set (constructed in Spain) introduced to encourage the tourist trade over the entire 445 km route from capital to coast. Although this is the only long-distance train, its progress is leisurely, as lunch is taken off the train at local restaurants, and breakfasts and evening meals are consumed at the three well-chosen overnight haciendas en route. Daily progress is also slowed by the one, or usually two, off-train visits to local places of interest, by coach if necessary. Not to mention the fearsome grades and curves that abound, plus the overall speed limit of 40 mph!

At no stage throughout the subsequent journey was I to see evidence of any sort of signalling system, all control being vested in cab radios, though who was on the other end, and where they were, was never clear. Neither did we see, nor pass, any other moving train, passenger or freight, at any time. However, several short out-and-back excursions do run on demand over particular stretches of the main line, and stock for these was seen parked up at a couple of locations, though these movements are well separated and do not clash either with each other, or the Tren Crucero.

Having departed on time at 8 o'clock, we made our way slowly through the southern suburbs of Quito and out into the hinterland, known generally as 'volcano valley'. A short pause was made at Tambillo for photos and to use the station toilets, after which mid-morning refreshments were served in a brown paper bag! We left our 3-coach train at Boliche station, where two road coaches were waiting to take us into Cotopaxi National Park for a walk around a lake (at 13,000ft) accompanied by a Park Ranger to point out the local flora & fauna. This was in the immediate shadow of the volcano itself, though the snow-capped summit was by now enveloped in cloud, whereas from the train magnificently clear views had been obtained. From here we progressed by coach to our lunch stop, which was to be within a large tent erected for the purpose in the courtyard of an ancient hacienda. This still boasted two original Inca-built rooms, and after the meal a dozen or so (tame) alpacas paraded themselves outside the tent for our fascination and attention! To regain Boliche station, where the new 2013 Tren Crucero was now waiting our arrival, the coaches utilised part of the Trans-America Highway which to our surprise was a 6-lane motorway – at 11,000ft!

On boarding the Tren Crucero it was soon apparent that here was something special. Although this train set has four coaches, only two of these have designated, allocated, numbered seats. In these two coaches, seating is 1+1, with individual chairs, fixed tables and a wide central aisle, giving a maximum capacity of a mere 60-65 tourists. Décor is bright and airy with good lighting and fixtures & fittings of quality local woods. Snacks of tasty local delicacies are served at your table mid-morning and mid-afternoon, usually on returning from the off-train excursion, and staff are both abundant and attentive. The rear two coaches are, respectively, a cafe/lounge car serving free drinks and a variety of nibbles throughout the day, and a lounge/observation car, featuring longitudinal seating in the lounge area (the windows are impressively large throughout) and, at the rear, a covered but open-sided observation deck occupying about a quarter of the entire car. Attractive toilets (!) were of course also available throughout the train. (A fifth vehicle – a converted boxcar –



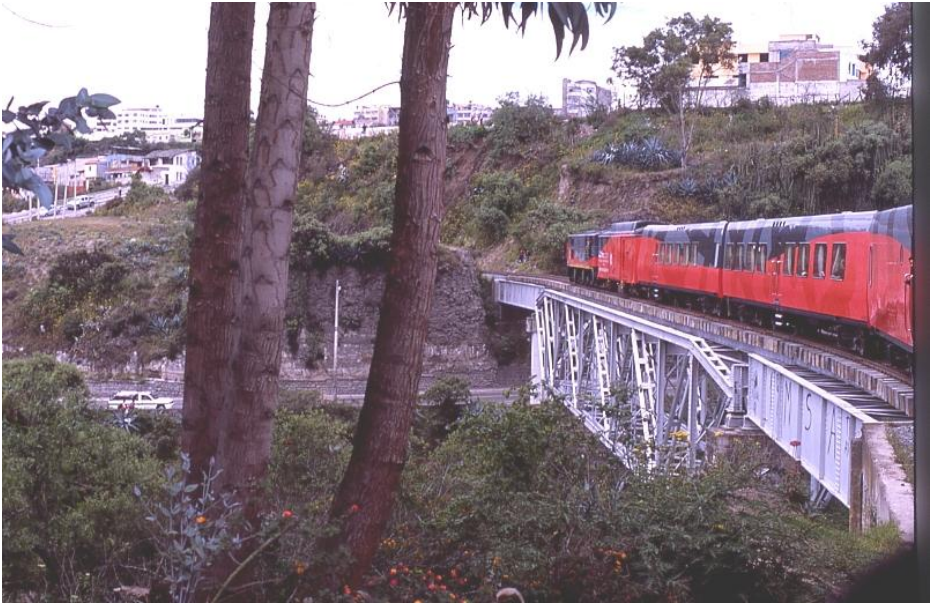
29/6/14 – Equator Monument on the northern outskirts of Quito, altitude 8,200 ft. Cotopaxi in the distance, bottom right.

Dave Peel



Quito station 1/7/2014 – Baldwin 2-8-0 No.17 on display, with Co-Co Alco hood unit 169 in the yard behind.

Dave Peel



Tren Crucero 2/7/14 – train crossing road bridge on way into Ambato

Dave Peel



Mystery coat-of-arms, Bfd Forster Square Stn

immediately behind the engine, serves as a storage car for all food & drink. The leading passenger coach also contains individually numbered lockers that matched your personal seat allocation – effectively ‘safes’ for your own possessions). This is luxury on 3’ 6” gauge track! As an exercise in tourist-promotion, this train takes some beating. Together with the off-train excursions and lunches, plus the distinctive, quality overnight accommodation provided – not to mention the superb scenery – as a package, Ecuador does itself proud.

All too soon our afternoon ride terminated at the small town of Lasso, where the train parked itself on the street alongside the single-platform station, where the police escort were already relaxing astride their machines. Tonight’s hacienda was close by, old and interesting, Alexander von Humboldt having been a guest here whilst on his South American ‘Mapping Crusade’ back in the 1790s.

[to be continued]

Meeting Reports

Philip Lockwood

7th January 2015 - Big 4 Steam to BR Steam, by John Whiteley

A large audience for this presentation by John. This consisted of pictures in the possession of John but taken by a selection of photographers. It was explained that although some were from high quality glass negatives, the vast majority were scanned from postcard size prints. It says a lot for John’s skill with the computer that the quality of the on screen images was excellent. The first selection from Arthur Cawston, one time school teacher and member of the Clergy, were mostly tightly cropped three quarter views of GWR and LNER trains. The next selection of shots was from the camera of Frank Carrier who worked for the LMS at Derby. He was obviously tipped off when interesting subjects were about; pictures included a Hughes 4-6-0 and the Turbomotive. Next in line: Fergus Johnson sometime organiser of special trains and visits for the Manchester Locomotive Society. A large collection of his negatives were saved at the last minute from the skip and passed on to John. Of particular interest to your reviewer was a picture of Cowes station on the IOW showing the footbridge that I also photographed in 1966, just after closure. A special on the Easingwold Railway in open wagons, and a LNER 4 wheel Pigeon van. Time prevented showing the complete collection including John’s own work, so a return visit should be on the cards for next year. The show was accompanied by helpful (!) suggestions from the more knowledgeable members of the audience, and suitable replies from John! VOT by Eddy Lumb.

21st January - Meeting cancelled due to snow.

4th February - European Travels, by John Holroyd

This was in place of the original show to be given by Dorothy Burrows. John entertained us with European Travels. This involved travels in Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. A start was made in Belgium, his first slide depicting a very nice carving of a steam locomotive in the station stonework. Much “Track Bashing” over

the extensive tramway system. A journey by diesel powered tram to visit an extensive cave system. We then revisited canal lifts, old and new. Moving to our next country, Denmark to visit railway museums with an extensive collection of steam locomotives. Also pictured was an unusual type of pump trolley. Paddle steamer enthusiasts were catered for with pictures of the oldest surviving steam paddle vessel, the *Hjejlem*. John explained that he has since built a model of this. A glimpse of the Rendsburg transporter bridge spanning the Kiel canal before moving into Norway. Here John travelled over lines quite familiar to your reviewer, although at a different time of year. We arrived at a very snowy Bergen where the usual motor buses were now using trolley pick up as diesel would freeze. Travelling from Bergen to Voss to join the mountain railway to Murdal. Although steep a line worked by adhesion only. A journey was also made on the Floibanen, a cable funicular which gives a splendid panoramic view of Bergen. Finally it was Sweden. John was able to travel on a tram which had a cafe trailer attached. Even more exciting was the journey on the Islandsbanan, a single track railway where refreshments were provided at remote passing places. An opportunity to ride a cycle rail vehicle, and crossing the Arctic Circle and being sustained by reindeer sandwiches. To complete the visit to Sweden a visit to the extensive ore mines at Narvik. Thank you, John, for a most entertaining show. Vote of thanks by Eddy Lumb.

18th February - North America Revisited, by Chris Davis

Having seen Chris's talk with the same name last week at the Huddersfield Railway Circle, I was expecting a re-run. In fact Chris has such a collection of pictures taken on visits to the USA that hardly any were part of last week's talk. The first selection called "Out West" commenced in Arizona with the Verde Canyon Railroad. Next moving on to the Apache Railroad, this Chris stating is currently experiencing hard times. Next to the Grand Canyon Railway. Note Railway, not Railroad. And finally before moving east, the Copper Basin Railway. Chris seems to have a preference for Short lines, these often sporting colourful liveries. Moving eastwards to visit the Georgia North Eastern where apart from railroads, Chris photographed a barber's shop where the barber restores old barbers' chairs. In North Carolina an old VW Beetle car converted into an oversize flower pot! In Augusta Georgia, the classic American town with the railroad running down the main street. The final selection of pictures were back west following Route 66 where as well as long consists hauled by multiple motive power in spectacular scenery, Chris photographed Roy's Motel, a classic Edsel car, and a DC3 Aircraft. Excellent photography covering a large chunk of the USA. Thank you Chris for putting together an excellent show. Vote of thanks by Eddy Lumb.

4th March - Modern Traction, by Steve Batty

It is quite some time since Steve last gave a talk to the Circle; tonight brought the photographers out in force. The subject of the show was Modern Traction, Steve choosing the period 2002 to 2012, 2012 being when his change over to digital photography began. In actual fact we didn't quite manage to reach 2012 tonight, so

possibly material for a future talk. It was said by a well known photographer, possibly Les Nixon, that the best photographs are taken in the area local to the photographer. In the case of Steve he seems to be able to find interesting locations around Selby quite unknown to your reviewer. So I might have to dig out the OS maps to try and find some of the locations! To select any one topic will be difficult although freight and class 60's seemed to dominate. Steve showed an industrial scene at Cargo Fleet with a coking plant in the back ground. This emitted at regular intervals much steam and smoke, after many attempts to include this in a picture of a freight train, Steve had to content himself with a two car Pacer! Further afield some nice shots in the Colne valley, and the classic shot of Stalybridge viaduct, by now well treed up. It is surprising just how much has changed over the years, in fact Steve noticed a change at Sheriff Brow on the S&C between visits, a large tree framing his picture had, within a short space of time, disappeared on his second visit [*Photters' gardening?* - Ed]. An enjoyable evening of pre-digital images for which we must thank Steve. Not forgetting Chris Taylor for acting as projectionist. Vote of thanks by Eddy Lumb.

Secretary's Page

Peter Holden

I have just returned from travelling around the country on a seven day rover. It is always of interest to see the ever-changing railway scene as one looks out of a train window. As ever, plenty of late trains and cancellations to keep you on your toes! The down side is that I unfortunately missed our meeting on February 4th.

A few changes that came about at last year's AGM:-

- We no longer have a Librarian, as we no longer have a library.
- We have two new positions on the Committee, a Publicity Officer and a Website officer.
- Also we are looking to appoint an Auditor /Examiner to look at this year's books. If you feel you could do this task please have a word with Bill or myself.

Forthcoming meetings

Wednesday 15th April will see a visit from Ken Granger when he will be presenting a talk on "The Route of the Master Cutler" This once prestigious service has nowadays been reduced to one of those truly awful Meridian trains - what a shame. It still runs, however, so I suppose that's something.

Eddie Lumb will be presenting another selection of slides from Michael Wade's collection on **Wednesday 29th April**, so come and enjoy more of "Wadey's Wanderings".

Wednesday 13th May will see a presentation by our local train operator, Northern Rail. Pete Myers will hopefully be coming along to tell us about how the operator's services are running and any plans for the future in our area.

Noel Coates has given many excellent presentation over the years about the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway. I presume we have exhausted Noel's L&Y talks, so he has agreed to come along and entertain us with "German & Austrian Steam 1969" Please come along on **Wednesday 27th May** and see what was happening in 1969. Ben Collier will be making another visit to present a further selection of "UK Mainline Steam" on **Wednesday 10th June**. Ben will this time be featuring his collection of digital images.

"The Grassington Branch" is the title of Peter Huff's presentation on **Wednesday 24th June**. Surprisingly I can actually remember Grassington Station. We had a caravan nearby when I was growing up in the mid-sixties. I recall having a look inside a new class 24 at Grassington Station one day. Should be a most interesting evening.

Circle Diary 2015

P	Mar. 18 th	More Ramblings from an Ex Signaller	Dave Scriven
	Apr. 1 st	1990s Part 3	Peter Holden
	Apr. 15 th	The Route of the Master Cutler	Ken Granger
	Apr. 29 th	Wadey's Wanderings.	Eddie Lumb
C	May. 13 th	Northern Rail	Pete Myers
	May 27 th	German and Austrian Steam 1969	Noel Coates
	Jun 10 th	UK mainline Steam (digital)	Ben Collier
P	Jun 24 th	The Grassington Branch	Peter Huff
	Jul 8 th	Grand Central Railways	Sean English
	Jul. 22 nd	Tramways of Leeds	Ian Dougill
	Aug. 5 th	Outside Visit	
C	Aug. 19 th	Lost Lines to Nottingham	Simon Swain
	Sep. 2 nd	Steam In and Around York	Chris Nettleton.
	Sep. 16 th	Ravensthorpe The Story of a Station	Mike Swift
P	Sep. 30 th	The Robert Whitfield Show, UK steam 1948-1958	Peter Berry
	Oct 14 th	First Five Years of Digital Photography	Alan Ward
	Oct. 28 th	40 Years Back	John Holroyd
C	Nov. 11 th	Steam and Diesel in the West Riding	Jim Livesey
	Nov. 25 th	Still On Film, Another 200 to View	Paul Corrie
	Dec 9 th	70 th AGM, followed by Member's Night.	
P	Dec. 23 rd	Monsoon Tours - Faces & Places	Philip Lockwood

C - Copy date for *The Circular* – three meetings prior to ...

P – Publication date, ditto – last meetings of **March, June, September & December**.