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70013 *Oliver Cromwell* on display at Railfest, York this summer. See inside for Roger Darsley's article, and more photographs taken during this event.

Photo: Roger Darsley

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Editorial
By Bob Stapley

In the last newsletter, I remarked how quickly that edition had followed on from the previous one. This time we have the opposite; I had hoped to complete this edition by the end of July, but a shortage of articles and my holidays caused the inevitable delay.

Thanks to a number of regular contributors, we have a variety of articles in this issue. Firstly, I am sure that all of us at the Railway were saddened by the death of Jack Brown in July. Jack was a very popular member of the team, with a sharp sense of humour and a wonderful south east Northumberland accent. Our chairman, Malcolm Dunlavey has written an obituary to Jack which appears on page 4.

Two major railway events in this region have taken place this summer, and are covered in this newsletter. Roger Darsley gives his account of his involvement in Railfest at York, which includes a photo of our E4 on display. The other event is the reopening of the Weardale Railway, of which I have written in previous newsletters. Keith McNally and I have become members of the Weardale Railway Trust and have worked several shifts there (I emphasise this is not at the expense of North Tyneside), and have found it a most enjoyable experience. Keith and I have included an article on Weardale, along with some photos.

David Kirkhouse has often come up with something out of the ordinary. Here, he describes a visit to a railway and museum in Germany. In addition, David has drawn attention to NE Electric loco no. 1, complementing his article in the last newsletter.

Another reliable contributor is, of course, Ken Hedley. Ken continues his fascinating history of his experiences on the railways in the Blyth area.

Enjoy your reading.

Jack Brown

Sadly, Jack Brown died of cancer in July this year, He had been receiving treatment over the past two years.

Jack was a member of the Association for over 15 years and worked with the the "Black Gang" in the locomotive shop as well as being a qualified driver.

Jack was a very skilled fitter and turner having learned his trade in the coal mines. He particularly enjoyed working on "his" lathe in the workshop and he always produced work of exceptionally high quality.

We will all miss Jack's sense of humour and his no nonsense approach to his work colleagues - if you were doing something that Jack thought was wrong, he told you in his forthright manner! It usually went something like this, "Get oot the Way and let a proper fitter have a go" Another favourite was "Look at him e's got a face like a bulldog chewin' a wasp" and he had many more expressions which will be remembered by his colleagues, both in the workshop and in the other areas of operation.

I think everyone of us got a Jack Brown scolding at some stage!!!

Jacks contribution to our work at the railway will be missed, as will the man himself be missed by his railway colleagues.

Our condolences go out to Jack's wife and family.

Malcolm Dunlavey
Chairman

Weardale Railway

In recent editions of this newsletter, news has been given of the re-opening of part of the Weardale line. On 17th July this became a reality, and four return journeys per day now operate along the 51/4 mile section between Wolsingham and Stanhope stations.

Within this stretch there are several points of interest, which keep loco crews and guards busy. For loco crews, the full stretch of line is about an extra 1/2 mile longer, as the journey begins and ends in the depot, to the east of Wolsingham station. The original station building at Wolsingham is privately owned, and the owner has on display some railway signs, including one informing the public that parcels can be handled at the station, and that all railway enquiries are welcome. This obviously dates from the time after the closure of the passenger service in 1953, but during the time the line was still handling goods. The owner also shows great interest in the railway, and is often outside to observe the arrival and departure of trains (a bit of a contrast from Percy Main!!!).

The line crosses the River Wear between the depot and Wolsingham station, then another three times before arriving at Stanhope. On leaving Wolsingham station an overbridge carries traffic across the moors to Hamsterley Forest, or out of Weardale and into Teesdale. A number of public or private footpaths cross the line in the early part of the journey, and a level crossing just 11/4 miles out needs special attention from drivers, as users do not always close the gates behind them. There is one manned level crossing, shortly before the train crosses the river for the second time and pulls into Frosterley station. Like the other two stations, Frosterley has recently been rebuilt. The original station building is now occupied by a nursery, and train crews and passengers alike are greeted by the young children each time a train passes.

Frosterley is approximately half way between the two terminal stations. Just beyond the station another footpath crosses the line,

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then the line goes under the second overbridge, which again carries traffic across to neighbouring Teesdale. Half a mile beyond Frosterley the line crosses the river again, then after 2 more foot-path crossings, and another river crossing, the train pulls into Stanhope Station.

At Stanhope the loco runs around, however at Wolsingham the story is different. There is no run-round loop at this location, and so a different, but nonetheless most interesting operation is put into practice.

A train arriving from Stanhope discharges passengers at Wolsingham station, then proceeds the extra 1/2 mile to a left hand point just short of the depot. As there is no run around loop at this location, a diesel loco will have already entered the main line from this point, and is waiting further up the line, i.e. further eastwards. The steam loco is disconnected, runs forward of the point, then reverses past the point and into the siding. The point is then set for main line running, and the diesel then backs onto the rake is attached, and pulls it forward of the point. The steam loco then runs forward. The steamer is attached to the opposite end of the rake, and the diesel is detached, the point is again set for main line running and the train is ready to pull forward to Wolsingham station for its next run. The diesel then awaits the next arrival of the train. Having worked on this line for a short time has brought about new experiences. As expected, there is a lot of interest from the public, although it must be said that a minority are unsupportive. Passing houses close to the line, and the large caravan park between Wolsingham and Frosterley gets plenty of friendly waves, and the farm animals seem to be getting used to the train passing, although one crew was confronted with a cow on the line that probably did not appreciate the contribution the line will make to the community. The scenery is beautiful and restful with the river Wear meandering to and fro alongside the line. Rich green trees and bushes liven up the close proximity and darker grasslands on the

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perimeter hills, with some stone outcrops, add to the passenger experience. Rabbits and herons are a frequent sight.

Work is now going on to extend operations to the westerly terminal at Eastgate. The old station is privately owned, and on a site unsuitable for car parking, and so a new station is being built slightly westwards, on the site of the former cement works which dominated this village for so long. We can look forward to the opening of this extension in 2005.

Keith McNally and Bob Stapley

Below: NCB loco no. 22 heading the train at Frosterley. Photo: Keith McNally



Stanhope Station—photos by Keith McNally.



Glenfinnan

2 photos of the station and signal box at Glenfinnan, on the West Highland line, by *Malcolm Dunlavey*



A Volunteer's Day

On Saturday, 5th June, I had the pleasure of being the steward on our E4 at the National Railway Museum. I arrived at the Trade Entrance at 8.30a.m. with the John Clayson letter as my identification. Everywhere people were stacking up with supplies for the day. The Museum's 08 class shunter was moving locomotives around, for 4-4-0 'City of Truro' was back in steam following a failure earlier in the week. Furness Railway 0-4-0 20 had taken over the rides until today. After a quick look at 'Flying Scotsman' and 70013 'Oliver Cromwell', the other stars of the show, I made my way to E4. We were alongside the mainline electrics 27000 and 84001, in a corner by the end of the Penydarren locomotive replica's demonstration run. The replica broke an axle on Wednesday and the team had managed to replace it by early Saturday morning. They were just starting to get up steam as I arrived at E4. While they were out of action, we had received fewer visitors at our corner of the show.

I opened up the cab and checked that all was in order, and put all the literature to hand and started the day's logbook. It was now time for a quick look around before going at 9.30a.m. to the day's briefing meeting. This was a big perk for volunteers: as wearing their Network Rail high visibility vests, they had an opportunity to photograph the exhibits before the public were let in at 10.00a.m. Already the queues at the gate were several hundred strong!

The most important thing after the briefing meeting was to collect the luncheon voucher! Then back to E4 and time to give the brass work a final polish, ['but don't clean the paintwork, you will only scratch it!!'], before the visitors made their way through the museum to the outside displays. Apart from the steam engines, which were all in steam, and the heritage diesels, there was a fine display of new stock, the Pendolino, the Eurostar, Class 171 for the Southern Railway and a prototype Class 185 for the new Trans-Pennine franchise. The first folk to visit E4 were photogra-

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phers trying to keep ahead of family groups and they did not stop to chat. I had thought the day from 8.30a.m. to 5.30p.m. might be long, but soon the time was flying, as people stopped to admire E4 and come aboard. Over the day about 150 people came into E4's cab and many more stopped to read the information board. Some were knowledgeable and when my technical explanations failed, I gave them copies of E4's wiring diagram and left them to get on with it! Some were rather like the Ancient Mariner and I had to be polite but move them on, as the queue got rather long.

The children were the best and once they were encouraged, they loved the gong. The klaxon had already packed up twice during the week and was definitely out of bounds today! One 6 year old girl told me 'I'm well off Thomas', thank you! I like real engines and if this is a goods train, why have you only got one wagon?" But the most frequent question was 'Why is the writing on the control column upside down?'

During a lull I was able to take some time to shut up E4 and go for lunch. The voucher paid for an excellent beef sandwich and a drink - time for a talk with other volunteers before opening up again for the afternoon.

It was a good opportunity to give publicity about the Stephenson Museum, which was new to many of the families, and I hope we see some of these people visit in the future. We will see people from the EM2 Society who own 27000. They want to come and see E4 working. I tried to sell them our technology but we calculated they would need 21/2 carriages full of batteries to get 27000 moving! The York 'White Rose' group came and took photographs of E4 with their headboard on - an express locomotive? Perhaps not!

I had a cab full of people when 2 large men in NRM uniforms and Hi-Vis jackets appeared at the steps. I had a moment of panic in case something was wrong, but they had just come to present us

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with a brass plate for E4 to record that the locomotive was present at the celebration to mark 400 years of railways and 200 years of steam traction.

As the crowds finally thinned out, it was time to close up the cab, write up the log, hang the notice on the door and say farewell to E4, both of us rather grubbier than when the day began. [These mucky steam locomotives!!]

We were well complimented on the quality of the restoration of E4 and the ingenuity of the battery wagon and hopefully many more people know of the museum and will come to see us.

Roger Darsley



York Railfest Photos, by Roger Darsley



A familiar sight in unfamiliar surroundings. Our E4 bearing a very Yorkshire—sounding name



What visit to York would not be complete without sight of 4472 *The Flying Scotsman*?



City of Truro with Ffestiniog Railway's 2 foot gauge *Prince* alongside.

A visit to Nurnberg

Photos by David Kirkhouse (see article on the following pages)



Der Adler (the Eagle)



Class 38 4 - 6 - 0
mixed traffic locomotive



Russian royal
coaches

A visit to Nurnberg

In May 2000 I arranged a long weekend visit to Nurnberg in Germany, which would take in a pre-arranged visit to Nurnberg marshalling yard, and a chance to look around the DB (Deutsche Bundesbahn - German Federal Railway) museum in the same city.

On arrival in Frankfurt airport I transferred to the railway station (next to the airport), and after a short time the train departed for the 3 - hour journey to Nurnberg Hbf (Main station).

On the following day with a group of others, I joined a bus for an official visit to the marshalling yard. On arrival at the yard, we were met by a DB official who led us through the stabling point and past the loco shed. As this was a Saturday there was quite a large number of locos standing idle in the sidings. I gave up counting at 50, and still there were more housed in the half round house which formed part of the depot.

On arrival at the half round house we were informed about the depot's work and loco allocation which, from what I had seen was quite considerable. Then, before our guide had finished, another official asked us to make way for new loco which had just been delivered from the builders, and was due to arrive shortly. Thus turned out to be class 150, no. 150 120-2.

On its arrival, the loco moved onto the turntable. It was turned before being stabled on one of the roads just in front of the round house (not the sort of thing we see in this country these days). After a chance for photographs, we were escorted to the control tower where the operators oversee all movements within the yard.

Space does not permit me to give a detailed account of operations within the yard. Briefly, a train arrives in the yard and after uncoupling and removal of the loco the yard shunters arrive and move the train towards the hump. After uncoupling the wagons the train is

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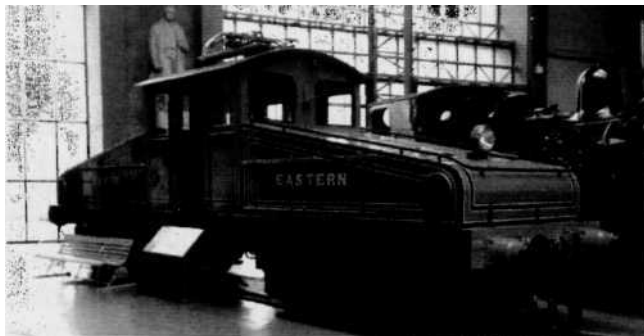
first steam engine delivered to Germany. This was *Der Adler* (The Eagle), and had been built in Stephenson's Forth Banks locomotive works, and delivered along with a local engine driver who travelled to Germany with Robert Stephenson. This driver stayed in Germany and married a local girl. He is now buried in a German cemetery, and is regarded as a local hero, being the first engine driver in the country.

I highly recommend a visit to this museum, to anyone who happens to visit this part of Germany.

David Kirkhouse

NER Electric loco no. 1.

In the last issue of the Newsletter, three photographs of Westoe Colliery locos, which I took back in the early 1980s, were published. I thought it would be interesting this time to submit a photo which I took a couple of years ago, of the North Eastern Railway electric loco no. 1, which is now in the National Railway Museum in York.



In comparing the photos, it can be seen that the lower cabs on the NCB locos are slightly different from that on the No. 1. No. 1 was built and delivered in 1903, whereas the NCB locos came over 50 years later. *(Compare this with the photo of E4 on page 13 - Ed.)*

David Kirkhouse

IN THE BEGINNING (Continued), by Ken Hedley

When I started working on the railway in November 1945 the war had not been long over and the railways were in a very run down state, so a "make do and mend" policy existed. None of us new entrants had any knowledge of the pre-war glory days, but some of the older drivers spoke of what things were like in their days, discipline - wise etc., and several still treated us like boys. These were relics from the old North Eastern Railway days who were a law unto themselves. However, standards had slipped during the war years, and their days would never return. Some of these men were well beyond retirement age, but they had been kept on due to driver shortage during the wartime, which cause friction among the younger element, as they were holding up promotion.

Promotion on the railways, and on the footplate in particular, was strictly on a seniority basis. There were no job interviews and the senior man was promoted regardless of ability etc. But a strict medical exam was carried out. The process for promotion was carried out on an area basis, with our area being Percy Main, North and South Blyth. Therefore if a driving or firing vacancy occurred at one of these sheds the senior man from that area got it and was given the first chance to move back to his home shed when a vacancy occurred. Later in BR days the areas were changed to a regional basis which took the whole of the old North Eastern Region from York to Berwick and westwards towards Leeds. When the old NE Region was abolished in 1968 and merged with the Eastern Region the southern boundary became London. This change brought about so many "foreigners" arriving at Blyth.

However this is a far cry from my early days as an engine cleaner. When I started there were 25 of us. I was no. 24. No. 25 started the same day, but as I was older than him, I was the senior man. Again seniority was a consideration when firing vacancies arose.

There was a shift pattern rota system on a weekly basis - 6 days

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per week (no 5 day working week then!!) 4 men worked 0001 to 0800 on cleaning duties, 2 worked 1400 to 2200 on steam raising and 2 worked 1600 to 2400 on advising. The rest worked 0730 to 1630 (1 hour off for lunch) and were allocated various tasks around the shed, as most engines were out during the day. The only ones which could be cleaned were those under repair or those that had just been lit up after boiler wash etc. A problem here was the lack of cleaning cloths! Other tasks were to assist the shed man loading ashes into wagons and shed cleaning etc., shovelling wet sand onto the sand drier and pumping lubricating oil into tanks. The most junior was given mess room duties which was the plum job in cold weather, and consisted of seeking coal for the stove, removing ashes, sweeping the floor, washing tables and keeping cans of tea warm on the stove.

The 0001 to 0800 shift were given the G5 passenger engines which were all on shed overnight, this again being hampered by the lack of materials and consisted of cleaning one boiler and side tanks of one engine per night, the wheels, gear and footplate every night. One perk of this was being able to get our heads down for a couple of hours, once we had finished. Actually the whole shed - fitters, storemen and even the foreman all rested during the hours 0300 - 0500. The office and storehouse were cleaned for 0800 and the cleaners on the 1400 steam raising duties assisted the steam raiser in gaining experience of boiler workings and injectors.

On 1600 advising duties the office, storehouse and mess room fires were attended to and ashes removed. Then later when the next day's roster had been compiled, drivers has to be advised by hand (no mobile phones in those days!) with a small card giving the commencement time the next day, if it had been changed. North Blyth drivers were also informed by the adviser at South Blyth. Two essentials of this were a good street knowledge of Blyth and a cycle, as there could be as many as 25 - 30 tickets to deliver.

This brings us to the end of 1945. In the next issue. I will deal with the happenings of 1946 - 47.

**Some welcome photographs
by Keith McNally**

After a delayed start, we finally operated our first train on Sunday 1st August, with a rare, but welcome appearance of A No.5, which is pictured right, awaiting departure from Percy Main.

Below: Progress on 401.

