

NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER



March 2024 – NUMBER **151**

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Firstly, thank you to the 324 members who have renewed their subscription for the year. At the time of going to print, 27 members have still to renew and will be deemed to have lapsed should they fail to pay.

This year's ModelRail was the first time the NBRSG has not been represented. If you wish to see the NBRSG stand at any exhibition, please consider volunteering.

October sees the 2024 FSLs Conference at Perth and the booking form can be found on the Group's website.

There are still examples of both ballast wagon kits available through Sales. Again, details are on the Group's website.

Consideration had been given to an informal Group Summer Outing on the reopened Leven branch but the proposed date of 8 June is felt too close to the official opening on the 2 June. It is thought prudent to wait until the novelty of a functioning railway to the local community is over, and numbers travelling settle down to normal levels.

Should an alternative date be proposed, details will be sent to members who have agreed to notification by email.

Robin Boog

Scottish Railway History

Conference October 2024

After successful conferences held in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020, the holding of the next conference has been booked for Saturday 5 October 2024.

AK Bell Library,
2 - 8 York Place, Perth, PH2 8EP

The format will be similar to those used in previous years, with slots of about 40 minutes for each speaker, and the conference will again be held under the aegis of the Forum of the Scottish Line Societies (FSLs), the NBRSG being one of the five member societies of the Forum.

This year's theme will be "The Grouping". Registration, tea and coffee are from 1000 with close by 1700.

Details of the event can be found on the NBRSG website, along with a PDF booking form.

Bookings are to be received by 13 September.

The cost for attendance is £27.50, to include morning and afternoon refreshments and buffet lunch.

There will be an informal dinner in the evening at a nearby hotel at additional cost.

SUBSCRIPTION TIME

The proportion of members paying their subscription within two months of the renewal form going out showed a decline to that seen over recent years and, as a result, 98 renewal reminders had to be sent by email and post.

These reminders were at least successful in that, 3 months after being first asked, the proportion of members remaining unpaid was 1 in 9, down from 1 in 5 at the same point last year.

A few statistics may be of interest :

After 1 month, 56% had renewed (2022/23 64%)

After 2 months, 70% had renewed (2022/23 76%)

By 1st March, 89% had renewed (2022/23 79%)

If our records show you have still to renew, your mailing includes a reminder.

Renewing online using the online form (from the members area of the website) is the quick and easy way to pay and was used by nearly two-thirds of those members who have renewed so far; but renewal by post and cheque is still very welcome too. We again cannot stress enough how important to renew promptly; it takes considerable time and energy to chase and remind those who haven't paid.

We wish to extend our appreciation and thanks to those overseas members who included a donation towards the additional postage charges incurred when mailing their journal to them.

Andrew Jones

MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITIONS

The next exhibition we will be attending with the group's stand is the Perth Model Railway Group (part of the Scottish Model Engineering Trust) exhibition.

Any member who is able to assist with manning our display stand, even for an hour or two, please contact :

exhibitions@nbrstudygroup.co.uk

PERTH

29 & 30 June 2024,
The Dewars Centre,
Glover Street, Perth, PH2 0TH

www.smet.org.uk

FALKIRK

16 & 17 November 2024,
Grangemouth Athletic Stadium,
Kersiebank Avenue, Grangemouth FK3 0EE

www.falkirkmrc.com

FUTURE EVENTS

Although the NBRSG will not be represented at the following shows being organised by the Pentland MRC and Edinburgh and Lothians Miniature Railway Club, they are included for a greater awareness to Members.

DALMAHOY

6 & 7 April 2024,
St Mary's Church Hall, Dalmahoy,
Edinburgh, EH27 8EB

www.lothianmodelrail.co.uk

EDINBURGH

1 & 2 June 2024,
George Watsons College, Colinton Road,
Edinburgh, EH10 5EG

www.elmrc.org.uk

ARCHIVING

Ian Currie and Keith Crombie visited the Museum of Scottish Railways (MSR) storage facilities at Links Court, Bo'ness on 13 February and were met by Vicky Kerrigan, Jim Summers, and Andrew Boyd. Discussions included the desirability of formalising a link between the NBRSG and the MSR.

The Committee will soon have to decide where best to deposit the Groups archive for future safe keeping.

ON AND ABOUT THE (exNBR) LINE

West Highland Line

Helensburgh Upper, Ardlui, Roy Bridge, Garelochhead, Arrochar and Tarbet, Crianlarich, Bridge of Orchy and Tulloch stations will benefit from £1.7m investment on the route, funded by the Scottish Government. The project got underway at Arrochar & Tarbet on January 27, with plans to deliver the improvements at all of the stations by the summer.

Proposals will see either a single extension of up to 15m at one end of the platform or extensions of up to 7.5m at each end, depending on land availability or physical constraints. This will allow the introduction of longer trains. Additional work includes the erection of safety gates, barriers and access stairs where required.

Passenger demand on the West Highland Line saw almost 500,000 journeys in the April to December 2023 period – growth of approximately 29% when compared to the same period in 2022

Bo'ness

The trainshed originally at Edinburgh Haymarket station, was the initial terminus of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway, which opened in February 1842.

Two similar trainsheds once stood side by side and abutted the two-storey station offices building, which still stands today.

Alterations to the station in the 1980s required the removal of the surviving north shed, and as the building was listed, it was carefully removed for re-erection at Bo'ness.

Unveiled on the 28 November 2023 at Bo'ness, the National Transport Trusts plaque marks the history of this structure.

PUBLICATIONS



**The
L&NER
Delivers
the Goods
Volume 2**

By
Peter Tatlow
Price £30.00

There is a review of the book to be found in Journal 151.

Available from :

**Lightmoor Press, Unit 144B,
Harbour Road Industrial Estate,
Lydney, Gloucestershire, GL15 4EJ
01993 773927 / 01594 840641
info@lightmoor.co.uk**

East Linton

The new railway station in the East Lothian town of East Linton welcomed its first passengers on Wednesday 13 December as the town re-joined the rail network, after the original station closed fifty-nine years ago in 1964

Transport Minister Fiona Hyslop travelled on the first train to East Linton from Edinburgh, along with a range of campaigners and workers who had brought the station into being. A piper greeted the first train, and East Linton Primary school pupils joined the celebration the return of passenger services to the town. The Minister unveiled a plaque to mark the opening of the new station.

Network Rail expects around 130,000 journeys to be made to and from East Linton over the next year.

Passengers can now travel from East Linton to Edinburgh Waverley (journey time: twenty minutes), and via the East Coast Main Line to Dunbar and Newcastle. Trains operated by ScotRail and TransPennine Express (which named its first train to stop there 'Hailes Castle') will serve the station, with a total of twenty-two services per day.

Forth Bridge

An old book listing all the accidents that took place during the early construction of the Forth Bridge, has been published online by Museums & Galleries Edinburgh.

www.capitalcollections.org.uk

Dunfermline City

Two signs from Dunfermline Town have been added to the National Museum of Scotlands collection.

Renamed Dunfermline City in 2022 to reflect its change in status from a town to city, as part of the late Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The station was previously Dunfermline Lower and before that, Dunfermline.

Westfield Viaduct

At the National Railway Heritage Awards in December 2023, the Translink Structures Award was won by the former Monklands Railway viaduct.

Standing 60 feet tall and consisting of 16 arches, a £2 million programme of repair by National Highways was started in 2021 and completed by December 2022.

Thanks to Alan Simpson and John Yellowlees for their contributions with additional material from The Courier & Advertiser, East Fife Mail, The Glasgow Times, Network Rail, railadvent.co.uk & ScotRail.

Levenmouth

On Friday 23 February, with 100 days to go until the return of rail services to Levenmouth, Cabinet Secretary for Transport Fiona Hyslop switched on an official countdown clock at Edinburgh Waverley to mark the milestone.

Countdown clocks were also unveiled at the new stations in Leven and Cameron Bridge, ahead of ScotRail services starting on June 2.

Scotrail driver and conductor route learning training commenced in January and engineers are continuing to work across the six-mile rail corridor that runs from the existing railway at Thornton Junction to Leven, reconnecting the town to the mainline network for the first time since 1969.

The two new stations will be fully accessible with car parking, electric vehicle charging points and links to the local bus network.

Singer

The vacant unit at Singer Station was reopened on 8 January as the "Hatch Cafe" by Kerry Durnan, a former home care worker for 21 years.

The eatery will offer a variety of hot and cold food.

MODELLING NEWS Scottish Wagon Works

This is a new company offering a growing range of 3D printed 4mm & 7mm private trader wagon kits, parts and fittings.

The range will launch with two vehicles, this being the RY Pickering 15' 6-Plank, fixed end wagon (shown above) and the 16' 5-Plank end door wagon. These will be followed with further variations of the private trader theme, hopefully taking account of many of the subtle variations that existed. Given the wide variation of body styles amongst the smaller 4 plank wagons, these are currently at the early drawing stage and will follow at a later date.

NBRSG members will receive an automatic discount by using code :

SLSNBRSG10

www.scottishwagonworks.com

PopUp Designs

Iain Ross has just completed the design of a kit for a North British Signal Box, based on the prototype at Dunbar East for PopUp Designs.

It is available for 4mm scale and by request, in 2mm and 7mm.

THE NBRSG ONLINE ARCHIVE

In this issue of the Newsletter, Ian Currie gives details of the Hennigan Collection that has been added to the Online Archive. I thought it might be helpful to say a few words about the Online Archive generally, as members may not all be aware of it.

For some time, the Group has held various items as paper documents, and some years back when the number of these had increased beyond what could readily be stored, donated many of them to National Records of Scotland. Members wanting to consult documents needed either to contact the Group's Archivist to arrange to see the documents or to visit the NRS depending on where the documents were. It seemed a better idea to put as many items as possible online so that members could access them whenever they wished, and to link the documents to the index of items in the archive so that they could easily be accessed.

Significant progress has been made with this. Many of our archive items have now been uploaded onto a secure server, as PDF documents. To access the archive, click the 'Members' button at the top right of the website home page, then enter your membership number (it's on the label of the envelope that this Newsletter came in), your name and the first part of your postcode. Read the conditions and if you agree click 'I agree'. Then select 'Online Archive' from the menu – it's the second option. You can now start exploring. There are three ways into the archive – a hierarchical selection by category and sub-category, a facility to search on a word or phrase, and a complete listing of everything in the archive.

If your search finds any matching items, you will now be shown a list of them. In the left-hand column the list shows the location, which is either 'NBRSG' for items that we have retained or 'NRS' for items that are at the NRS. In the right-hand column, the word 'None' will be shown if there is no item available online, or a button 'Open PDF' will show if there is a document available online. Clicking that button will open the PDF in the default PDF software on your PDF computer or other device. To return to the Group website, exit that software, typically with the left arrow button.

At present, 838 of the 1605 items that are in the Group's possession are online (the rest of the 2371 items listed are with the NRS). In addition to the notes from the Hennigan Collection, recent additions have been material from the late AA (Sandy) Maclean's collection and items from the late W Marshall Shaw. The latter two add greatly to the available material on carriages and wagons. For the future, the intention is to scan and add items at present held only on paper. One of my colleagues on the Committee is reviewing our collection of paper documents at present.

Please take time to explore the archive, which is available to Group members only. Already there is a wealth of information there! Although the publicly accessible parts of the website contain an archive listing, the only access to the documents is via the Members' Area as described above. I would be delighted if you could let me have any comments, good or bad, as suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

David King

THE HENNIGAN COLLECTION

'Willie' Hennigan had a deep interest in the locomotive history of the NBR. Over his lifetime he created a collection of photograph albums covering all the locomotive types of the NBR supplemented by extensive notes drawn from his own knowledge and his contacts within the railway industry. In his latter years, Willie gifted his collection to R. W. (Bill) Lynn who looked after it until his own death in 2023 whereupon the entire collection was gifted to the NBRSG. The committee had the collection brought to Edinburgh where it could be properly assessed and the photographs checked against the Groups' photographic archive with any omissions scanned and recorded.

Comprising 97 albums containing around 9,000 photographs and several hundred pages of notes. Many albums needed 'tidying up' and several loose pages identified and returned to the correct album. We then checked each individual photograph against our database with any found to be missing scanned and recorded. Additionally, a great many photographs were annotated with little 'snippets' of information, such as the names of staff and often a comment or little tale related to the scene or characters which is duly recorded in the data accompanying each photograph.

As well as the photographs, Willie had included extensive and well researched information on each class, which indeed, formed the basis of the information now contained in the SLS 'green books' covering the ex NBR types. These notes, all handwritten, include several original specifications, numbers and re-numbering data, livery notes, shed allocations, boiler types fitted and dates, brakes and brake failures, and personal anecdotes from various railway staff which are well worth reading. And if you want to know how many rivets were on a C11 Atlantic smoke box – well that's there too!

It was early decided that we would scan all the notes but deciding on the best way to manage them gave rise to a bit of head scratching. The album pages are held in place by a spring-steel spine. A few of them were obviously starting to fail and others were showing their age. Additionally, it was found that the spine obscured part of the notes so that any future researcher would need to remove them from the album to read them clearly. To add to the problem, the notes were written on different types and sizes of paper, including recycled invoices and other scraps of paper from Willie's employer!

To aid future conservation it was felt that removing the main sets of notes from the albums was probably the best option. This would allow them to be more conveniently read, thus avoiding repeatedly disturbing the albums and minimise deterioration. The notes were, therefore, placed in separate folders for each class after being scanned.

As well as the main class notes, a few 'odd' items, such as a shopping proposal or a fitters report relating to a particular locomotive, were scattered throughout the albums next to the locomotive concerned. These were also scanned, but, as these were individual references, they were treated as part of the photograph sequence and replaced in position after scanning.

On completion of the scanning, the notes alone amounted to 100 individual files with a total file size of 275MB. The notes are now available to members and complement the photographs that are already available in the Photo Archive. They can be viewed by using the 'Online Archive' option in the Members' Area of the website. Much of it is categorized as 'L1: Locomotives, L113: Lists and Notes'. I found the search term 'Hennigan' brings up the complete list of notes.

Ian Currie