



# Newsletter

Issue 53: August 2017 Editor: Allan Trotter  
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## Editorial.

No doubt many of you have been out and about and probably travelling by train. For those of us of an age to remember and experience, there were once two distinct types of passenger trains, commuter trains with fairly high density seating suitable only for short journeys and for long distance Inter-City journeys, these trains were always locomotive hauled passenger cars with adequate comfortable seating and legroom even in standard class. Even after the introduction of HST services this quality of accommodation was maintained. On secondary inter city routes there was usually a buffet car and for premier routes, a restaurant car offering formal silver service meals was the norm.

Now look at just how things have changed and definitely not for the better. All trains now have commuter style high density seating and proper buffet and restaurant cars have become virtually extinct. Even the Mk.3 standard class carriage in the HST which was designed with a capacity of 72 seats now has 84 seats in unidirectional format. Yet the carriages have not become any larger!

It is somewhat ironic that as people in general have become larger, the space allocated for them on all forms of public transport, especially trains and aeroplanes, has become more and more constricted. **Allan Trotter.**

## Chairman's report.

### Diary of forthcoming events.

4th Aug 2017	Committee meeting (open to all)
1st Sep 2017	Committee meeting (open to all)
30 <sup>th</sup> Sep-1 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2017	Binns exhibiting at Wigan exhibition
18th Nov 2017	Family Model Railway Exhibition, All Saints
23-25th Feb 2018	Monsal Dale exhibiting at Modelrail Scotland
28th Apr 2018	Spring Model Railway Exhibition, All Saints

**Ian Shulver.**

## Secretary' report.

It is that season of the year when nothing much is happening and when the newspapers used to publish wacky stories, only nowadays fake news appears at every time of the year! At the clubrooms, the restoration work by Network Rail continues at a steady rate and it seems as though the pointing work is mostly done and the re-tiling of the roof seems to be mostly finished. The

builder has last week been doing some work to repair the windows and it appears as though they are not going to need to be completely replaced. Progress continues with Fishy Tales with the adjustments to the track on the fiddle yard boards having been completed recently. Clairmont Old Quay had a successful airing at Ainsdale Show and work is currently being undertaken on the track at the front which appears to harbour a gremlin which has damaged the shuttle unit. So far, despite a small dissection, the cause of the fault has not been found and the assistance of a professional is being sought.

### **Society excursion.**

A suggestion has been made that we should have a Society visit to Pendon Model Railway Museum. This is an amazing exhibit which I have visited twice before <https://www.pendonmuseum.com> The museum is located in deepest Oxfordshire and ideally would require an overnight stay before returning home. If you are interested in taking part in such a visit, please contact myself or another committee member.

The next open Committee meeting will take place at the clubrooms on Friday 4th August from 19:00. Finally if you are taking a holiday, enjoy yourself and do drive carefully.

### **Birthday BBQ event.**

#### **Birthday Train BBQ.**

Herewith a formal invite to my annual summer BBQ which follows 2 days after my third 21st birthday. The festivities will commence at 15:00 on Saturday 29th July. The BBQ will follow around 17:00.

Confirmation or not of attendance would be appreciated. See the attached invitation document. **Jim Ford.**

### **Treasurers' report.**

No report submitted.

### **Exhibition Coordinator's report.**

No report submitted.

### **2017 Sleeper Trip.**

#### **Or Midnight sun (almost) by train, ship and plane.**

What follows is a snapshot of some of the historic dwellings and buildings we happened upon in the course of our visit. The first leg of our journey via the

Caledonian Sleeper and an overnight Shetland ferry service landed us in Lerwick.

### **Clickimin Broch**



This drystone tower was probably built between 2,400 and 2,100 years ago for a powerful local ruler. Access originally was only by a causeway. Scholars still debate whether this was a prestigious home or a fortified strong hold or both. After a few centuries the Broch was reduced in height. The later buildings residents were important figures who enjoyed imported luxuries, fragments from a decorated Roman glass bowl were found there. The

Broch may have had a turf covered, willow grid shell roof. This is conjecture based on local domestic architecture; it is possible that it never had a roof.

### **Mount Stuart House, Isle of Bute**



The house is a flamboyant example of 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic Revival architecture built, on the back of Welsh coal money, under the direction of its creator the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquis of Bute and his architect Sir Robert Rowland Anderson.

The imposing marble hall has a stunning vaulted ceiling displaying the stars in their courses while the stained glass windows depict the signs of the zodiac.

The chapel is of all white marble with stained glass windows which, at certain times of the day, bathes the interior in attractive pink hues making it an ideal setting for wedding parties. It is particularly popular for celebrity weddings, for example that of Stella Mc Cartney, her father Paul Mc Cartney and Heather Mills stayed in the Blue Room.

### **Rothesay Castle, Isle of Bute**



For much of the past, the sea was the highway for people travelling between places. The Firth of Clyde was like a modern motorway and Bute was the island that guarded that route. It was therefore very important. Whoever occupied Bute controlled access far inland via the river Clyde the river Leven and Loch Lomond.

In the mid to late twelfth century Rothesay Castle was built and the focal point of the island moved from Dunagoil in the west to Rothesay. It is known from Norse sagas that local Gaels and Vikings squabbled over it for a time. By the fourteenth century however the castle was firmly in Scottish hands and became one of the prominent residences of the Stewart kings. Robert the Bruce is said to have visited to celebrate with the local knights, shortly after his victory at Bannockburn. **Frank Parkinson.**

## Glorious Devon.



During July on a tour excursion to Paignton in Devon we stayed at the Redcliffe Hotel. The usual day excursions were included in the tour such as a cruise on the River Dart from Totness to Dartmouth and a heritage train excursion from Kingswear to Paignton. Unfortunately a day of wine tasting at Buckfast Abbey was not on the agenda. The hotel was excellent in every way but it did have one curious feature, located in the bar. There was

an inconspicuous door marked "To the Beach". On entering, steps led down to a tunnel which exited half way down the cliff, from where a set of steps led to the beach. Whether this tunnel was intended to allow the clandestine importation of contraband kegs of brandy or as an escape route for unscrupulous imbibers attempting to escape to the high seas to avoid settling their bar bill was not specified.



Also included were a day visit and city tour of Plymouth and a visit to the Tamar Bridges viewing area. This area is in the process of rebuilding and the view is obstructed by building work. Being able to view the trains is almost impossible anyway due to the inability of Network Rail to cut back the jungle that has encroached onto the railway line. **Allan Trotter.**

## Finale of the A4, the Bittern end.

It may seem difficult to comprehend but it is now more than half a century since the last A4 locomotive worked a public service for British Railways. This final excursion took place on the 3rd of September 1966 from Glasgow Buchanan Street Station, via Stirling, Perth, Forfar and Bridge of Dun, to Aberdeen and back hauled by Bittern. The day started in typical Scottish weather, overcast and damp or to sum it up precisely in the Scottish colloquium, dreech. Buchanan Street Station, which always seemed the poorer and more neglected of the four main Glasgow termini, was in its final months of operation and would be closed at the end of services on Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1966, the last departure being the 23:35 service to Inverness. That service was of course diesel hauled.

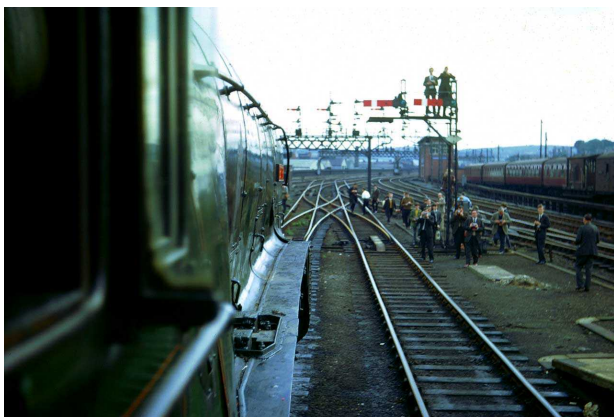
Before departure a large crowd had congregated at the platform end as Bittern was prepared for departure. No problem was experienced by people wishing to cross the tracks for a better view as in those days common sense was actually quite common and people looked out for themselves for any hazards. Remember, this was in the days before the infestation of no win no fee shyster lawyers that were perched waiting to swoop on their unsuspecting victims. Departure time came and everyone boarded. The train consisted of about eight or so BR Mk.1 main line gangwayed passenger carriages generally of the open stock variety. The journey was very pleasant with ample opportunity for photography so long as you ignored the "Do not lean out of the window" notices.



On arrival at Aberdeen the passengers were invited to an open day at Ferryhill Engine Shed. On arrival at Ferryhill, it was discovered that Bittern had got there first. The loco had already received a fill of water and coal and had been turned on the turntable and was being reversed back to the shed. There was ample time for everyone to inspect this locomotive being prepared for the return journey to Glasgow. Other A4 locos present but not in steam were 60024 Kingfisher and 60034 Lord Farringdon although this loco was missing its tender. The shed staff were most amenable, even arranging for a North British Type 2 diesel to be specially fired up so that Kingfisher could be drawn out of the shed and into the open air.

After a most enjoyable visit to Ferryhill, it was time to return to Aberdeen Station for our return journey back to Glasgow. On returning to Aberdeen, passengers were invited onto the footplate of Bittern for a closer inspection. As an added bonus we were also invited to cross over two tracks to afford a better location for photography. Even better, we were actively encouraged to climb the signal post to gain a more panoramic view. There was no requirement for you to have completed a formal training course in being line side or for ascending and descending signal posts and then presenting a certificate of

competence on this nor the requirement to correctly complete a risk assessment form before ascending. Naturally the idea of being compelled to wear a high visibility tabard and a plastic hat was completely alien.



The view from the top of the signal post was truly superb. In days past, we were indeed fortunate as there were no hoards of superfluous minions in hi-vis tabards spoiling the ambience of the scene and as for climbing signal posts, well the Elf & Softy zealots of today had not even been born then.

The journey back to Glasgow passed without incident and on disembarkation at Buchanan Street Station it became apparent to all that an era on British Railways had come to an end.

Of course today it is still possible to travel by train on a service between Glasgow and Aberdeen but due to the closure of Buchanan Street they now depart from Glasgow Queen Street and go via Dundee as the route between Stanley Junction and Kinnaber Junction has since been closed. Journey times are now less than the three hours of the 1960's despite the greater mileage but services are now operated by only a single three car diesel multiple unit fitted with commuter type high density seating. Catering which was once provided by Mk.1 Griddle Cars or Restaurant Buffet cars is now diminished to only an at seat trolley service, that is if the steward is able to get the trolley past all the standing passengers! **Allan Trotter.**

**END**