



# Newsletter

**Issue 56: November 2017 Editor: Allan Trotter**  
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## **Editorial.**

No doubt many have been watching the Great British Railway Journeys over the past years as presented by Michael Portillo. You may have noticed that in most instances he either manages to get a carriage all to himself or there are very few other passengers in the background. How does he get away with it?

Even on a single unit two car Pacer departing Manchester, the Portillo Train scenario seems to apply. We all know from bitter experience that on most trains in Northern England, almost all seem to be a single two car diesel multiple unit. The hint is in the word multiple though this facility is seldom if ever used. This situation is completely inadequate as these trains usually are loaded up to twice their seating capacity with people standing in the isles and squashed in the vestibules against the doors. Typically, after departing Manchester Piccadilly, on arrival at Oxford Road and when the doors open, people have to fall out before anyone can board.

On a recent visit to Scarborough and just before our scheduled return departure time, a Scarborough to Liverpool Lime Street service departed. It was only a single Trans-Pennine Class 185 three car DMU and it was wedged solid. How anyone would be able to board at York is a mystery. If you had booked on the Trans Pennine service from Liverpool Lime Street to Scarborough, the first class return fare would have cost you £162.20.

Fortunately we had the luxury of travelling in a West Coast Railways charter train MK.1 Open First 3106 where a chilled bottle of Prosecco, dinner and wine awaited. Meanwhile up front, Galatea did all the hard work to York where motive power was exchanged and heritage Class 40, 40145 diesel electric locomotive named "East Lancashire Railway" completed the journey to Preston.

The West Coast Railways charter train excursion cost just £36.80 more than the Trans Pennine fare but that included the luxury of a Mk.1 first class locomotive hauled carriage, no noisy vibrating diesel engine under the floor, a full English breakfast on the way out and a four course silver service dinner and coffee on the return. Now then, which mode of transportation would you consider to be the superior option?

It would be an ideal scenario if Portillo could invite Grayling to forgo his private limousine and instead to accompany him as an ordinary fare paying passenger on any normal regular service train to sample the severely overcrowded and expensive endurances of rail travel in Northern England. It would then confirm to him and all that in reality, "It's grim up North".

## Diary of forthcoming events.

18 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2017	Family Model Railway Exhibition, All Saints Church Hall
1 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2017	Committee meeting, open to all members
23-24-25 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2018	Monsal Dale exhibiting at Modelrail Scotland, Glasgow
24 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2018	Canadian Pacific, Southport Lecture Society, Jim Ford
10 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2018	Night Ferry, Southport Lecture Society, Allan Trotter
28 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2018	Spring Model Railway Exhibition, All Saints Church Hall

## Chairman's report.

This month's Chairman's comments will of necessity be quite short. I think that I have only visited the clubrooms on a couple of occasions because of visits to East Anglia, Northumberland, Surrey, Sheffield and Cardiff. Regrettably none of the travelling has been done by train although on one journey down the M6 I glimpsed a Virgin Pendolino or Voyager at every bridge we passed over or under. This was quite remarkable since normally we see none.



Earlier this month we had a committee meeting which was mainly to ensure that all committee members were up to date with details about the Autumn Family show. At this point I will make a further plug for this event which will be held on Saturday 18th November at All Saints Parish Hall. Since this is one of our main fundraising and publicity events for the year, your assistance will be greatly appreciated on both the Friday night and on the Saturday. Progress with renovating the clubrooms is very slow. There are quite a significant number of areas of work to be completed and Network Rail has been made aware of them. We believe that there may be some action at the next track occupancy on the 4th of November. A start has been made on cleaning up the clubrooms with progress having been made in tidying under the stairs. The kitchen is the next area to tackle

and then the garden. We welcome help to make the premise more habitable and inviting. There is also plenty of wood to cut up.

In terms of layouts, there is slow progress with *Clairmont Old Quay* wiring. We (Allan and myself) have decided on how the layout will be operated, which defines the actual wiring, section breaks and controllers and a start has been made on preparing some of the wiring looms. With *Fishy Tales*, I understand from Jim that all the modifications and re-alignment of the track have been completed and that now the layout needs to be erected in its entirety to check levels. **Ian Shulver.**

## **Secretary's report.**

Just a short report this month from your secretary aboard the slightly swaying deck of MS Boudicca 11 days out of Liverpool and in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea off Port Said and about to enter the Suez Canal. Firstly I must pass on the grateful thanks from Tony for those of you who were able to attend his 70th birthday celebrations. He is very pleased with his present and we are all looking forward to seeing it in action.

You will all be aware that the building repairs have slowed to a virtual stop recently and Network Rail have advised that the remaining work (including the trackside down pipes) requires a possession and this work is scheduled for early November.

Later in November we have of course our family train show and your help and assistance is required in order to make this a success so please put the time from 17:00 on Friday 17th November to 19:00 on Saturday 18th in your diaries as your presence at All Saints is needed. Following the show, the Committee are intending to press on with the internal renewal of the Club to match the external work from Network Rail and your views and ideas on this are very much wanted. It looks as though we will have to expend some of our hard-earned cash updating the electricity system to meet modern certification requirements.

Please attend the Open Committee meeting provisionally scheduled for the first Friday in December (1st December) or phone a committee member with your suggestions. I was feeling a bit train deprived until we reached Majorca where a ride on the Sóller Railway relieved the cold turkey. Manx Electric with mountains - superb! **Jim Ford.**

## **Treasurer's report.**

No report received.

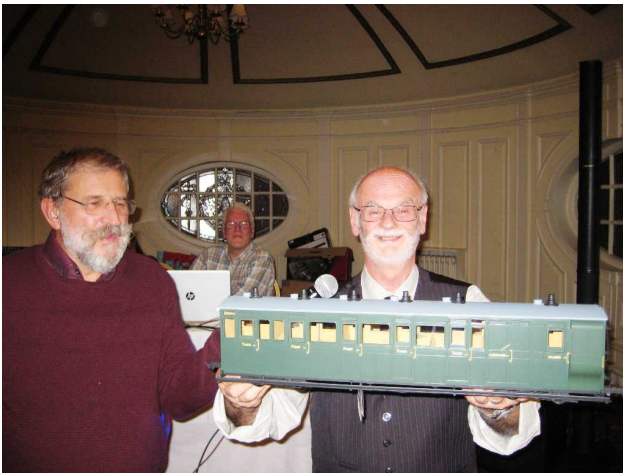
## **Exhibition Coordinator's report.**

No report received.

## **Members' contributions.**

### **Tony Kuivala. The 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations.**

As the pictures show, yet another of our number steps up to become a member of that steadily growing rank of Septuagenarian. In recognition of this achievement, a presentation was made to mark the occasion. This took the form of a 16 mm Lynton & Barnstaple Railway coach with the ceremony conducted on our behalf by Jim Ford.



In his opening remarks Jim observed that Tony had recently ordered himself not one but **two** 16 mm locomotives. He reminded us that according to Pratt Rules a member could award himself a new loco on the occasion of and as result of taking retirement but wondered how two simultaneous purchases might be made possible. No explanation was forthcoming; could this be a precedent for us all? We nevertheless look forward to the inaugural run of this splendid

model and eventually to the run of those locomotives, possibly as a double header. **Frank Parkinson.**

### **Fourteen of the world's scariest but most beautiful train journeys.**

Some advertising blurb recently e-mailed to us by the Daily Telegraph included this series of stunning photographs and captions. There were originally 15, chosen by Telegraph rail expert Anthony Lambert but I have abridged it down to 14. I suppose that it depend on your definition of scary but to my mind not all fall into that category. However, there is no doubt that they can be classed as beautiful. Nevertheless, I could add more than a few more to the list as I am sure, you the reader can.

Perhaps our intrepid "sleeper crew" may in future consider one or more of these journeys for future escapades. I make no apology for the captions which have been reproduced verbatim. Perhaps one of these photographs might inspire a model or two. **Ian Shulver.**

## 1. Tren a las Nubes, Argentina.



Completed in 1932, the *Train to the Clouds* is one of South America's great railway journeys. It's a 16 hour, 270 mile round trip that departs once a week from the Argentinean city of Salta. Initially built for economic reasons, it now operates solely for the benefit of tourists. The line passes through tobacco field and lowland ranches, 29 bridges, 21 tunnels and 13 viaducts, before climbing to 4220m at

la Polvorilla, making it the sixth highest railway in the world. Note that large parts of the journey are now done by bus.

## 2. White Pass and Yukon, Canada and United States.



This 67 mile route connects the Alaska port of Skagway, now a popular stop for cruise ships, with Carcross for an onward coach link to Whitehorse, the capital of the Canadian territory of Yukon. The narrow gauge railroad was completed in 1900 at the tail end of the Gold Rush, and features steep gradients, dozens of bridges and a number of cliffhanging turns, all with a glorious backdrop of glaciers,

mountains and waterfalls.

## 3. Nariz del Diablo, Ecuador.



The *Devil's Nose* train travels between Alausi, close to the Andean city of Riobamba, and Palmira, around 50 miles to the south. The train chugs along at a very leisurely pace giving passengers plenty of time to enjoy the sights of Ecuador's "Avenue of the Volcanoes". Unfortunately travellers are no longer allowed onto the roof of the train but there is an open observation car. The "Devils Nose" is

just a small part of the route between Guayaquil and Quito, consisting of a steep climb up a nerve shredding series of switchbacks.

#### 4. Georgetown Loop Railroad, United States.



Just 3.1 miles long, the Georgetown Loop has nevertheless been a popular tourist attraction for more than a century with its two corkscrew loops. It takes passengers from Georgetown, Colorado to the neighbouring town of Silver Plume, gaining 640ft in elevation and passing through spectacular mountain terrain.

#### 5. Flamsbana, Norway.



This 13 mile line that drops down 2833ft from Myrdal on the Oslo-Bergen railway in Norway to the port of Flam is so steep that some locomotives built for it had five braking systems. It has 20 tunnels, one of them a spiral, and is one of the steepest non-rack railways in the world with gradients of 1in 18. Spray from a waterfall sometimes washes over the train.

#### 6. The Death Railway, Thailand.



More than 90,000 labourers and 16,000 Allied prisoners of war died during the construction of this 259 mile railway between Bangkok and Myanmar (*formerly Burma*), a horrific episode that forms the backdrop for David Lean's 'The Bridge on the River Kwai' and 'The Railway Man' starring Colin Firth. A ride on the surviving section of the route is now a popular activity for visitors to Kanchanaburi, to

the northwest of the Thai capital, and travellers on Belmont's *Eastern and Oriental Express*. The train hugs the sides of sheer cliffs and passes over a number of rickety bridges.

## 7. The Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, United States.



Found in the southern Rocky Mountains, this route operates throughout the summer months and takes passengers from Chama in New Mexico over the Cumbres Pass, the highest rail pass in the United States at 10,015ft. Numerous loops, trestles and tunnels are negotiated before the train passes through the Toltec Gorge and reaches its destination at Antonito in Colorado.

## 8. Kuranda Scenic Railway, Australia.



Completed in 1891, this railway runs from Cairns to the town of Kuranda, a one hour and 45 minute journey. Crossing a great lattice viaduct with spectacular views over the Barron Falls and the Coral Sea, the track cuts a path through the Barron Gorge National Park, past tropical forests and through 15 tunnels.

## 9. Pamban Bridge, India.



The town of Rameswaram, on Pamban Island, is connected to the Indian mainland by a one and a half mile bridge with 143 piers opened in 1914, which makes for a breathtaking home straight for travellers arriving here from the Indian city of Chennai. Rameswaram itself is a holy Hindu site and a popular pilgrimage.

## 10. The Far North of Scotland.



Spare a thought for those who have been snowed up for many hours and even days in the wild Flow Country of Sutherland and Caithness on the Inverness-Thurso/Wick railway. On occasions a helicopter drop of supplies has been required. It traverses the largest expanse of blanket bog in Europe and the lonliest lanscape in Britain, home to deer, dunlin, golden plover and merlin.

## 11. The mountain railways of India.



The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, the Kalka-Shimla Railway and the Nilgiri Mountain Railway were all built to serve hill stations during the British Raj and are still considered engineering marvels. Each line passes through rugged foothills – the first two in the Himalayas – and climb around the mountain contours. The trains are not the height of comfort and are painfully slow, but they have great character.

## 12. The bamboo trains of Cambodia.



In an effort to deal with the country's notoriously primitive and unreliable rail network. Cambodians took matters into their own hands by creating their own service, using "trains" built from bamboo and abandoned parts. The spartan contraptions travel up to 25 miles an hour, generating power from tiny engines and can carry dozens of passengers at a time. Cushioned trolleys for tourists now run from

Battambang to a village an hour away. The only issue is when two "trains" meet on the single line – whichever has the fewer trolleys is manhandled off the track so the other can pass.



### 13. Funiculars.



These steep cable railways were not built for vertigo sufferers. Some of the most famous examples can be found in Switzerland, Austria, Germany, England and Japan. This example is in the colourful Chilean town of Valparaiso. The water-balanced Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway in North Devon is one of Britain's best known examples.

### 14. The world's highest railways.



While it might not be especially scary, altitude sickness will be a concern for those riding the Qinghai-Tibet Railway. It reaches a staggering height of 5,068m at Tanggula, making it the loftiest train journey on Earth.

The Ferrovias Central railway in Peru, which reaches 4,829m at the Ticlio Pass, is the second highest, followed by Bolivia's Rio Mulatos-Potosi line, which soars to 4,786m at Condor.

**END**