

COCK O' THE NORTH

Newsletter of the Angus Railway Group



Ex. C.R. 0-4-4 at Killin (C.R. Line)

ANGUS RAILWAY GROUP
COCK O' THE NORTH

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BACK NUMBERS 10p EACH FROM THE SECRETARY

March 1976 Newsletter

E D I T O R I A L

At our last meeting, held at " Breadalbane" - our Secretary's Dundee residence, we were presented by Bill Leahy with a particularly interesting collection of 4 - 4 - 0 locomotive photographs. We should like to record our thanks to Bill and also to our host for organising the appetising supper which followed.

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to three new members who have just recently joined the Group. They are:-

Mr. J. A. McDonell

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We are hoping that we shall be able to add further names in the near future.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAPTERS

I was able to spend a couple of days in Oban recently, and took the opportunity to have a look around the railway scene, past and present.

Standing at a head - shunt, adjacent to the site of the old engine shed, is an old snow plough. This is a converted (6 - wheel) British Railways - built tender; the lion rampant crest can be discerned beneath the over - paint and rust. The Foreman at Oban Station told me that the plough had not been used for many years and was awaiting cutting up.

Within Oban Station can be seen a wagon carrying a Shell - Mex fuel tank : Although locomotives do not normally refuel at Oban, they can do so from this tank when necessary. The interesting thing about this wagon is its age - it carries a plate indicating that it was registered by the Caledonian Railway Co. in 1912 to carry 12 tons. (Caledonian cognoscenti may care to know that the C.R. number plate reads 25437K). The wagon also bears a plate showing that it is owned by Shell - Mex.

A drive up to Glencruitten was rewarded only by a fine view up the Glen, and the passing of the 12.25 ex Oban (hauled by the inevitable Class 27). A careful search of the long grass adjoining the line here revealed only an L.M.S. chair of 1923 vintage! Can someone tell me when Glencruitten crossing was removed, and the Box closed ?

Connel Ferry, which once could boast two boxes, is now an unstaffed halt. The weather continuing clement, I crossed Connel Ferry bridge, and followed the path of the Ballachulish line as far as the bridge which carried the line across the narrows of Loch Creran. Although it is 10 years this month (March) since the last train trundled across, the bridge appears to be in good condition. Walking across the bridge, I found it hard to remember that I had last crossed in 1959, by train from Ballachulish Ferry to Oban. " Collectors " may be interested to know that 2 of the 4 builders' nameplates are still affixed to the bridge - " Arrols Bridge and Roof Co. 1903 ".

Ron Beatt.

HIGHLAND RAILWAY BRANCH LINESThe Dornoch Light Railway

The Dornoch Light Railway was authorised on 13th August 1898 and was aided by a grant of £ 14,000 from the Treasury.

The line was opened on 2nd June 1902 and retained its independence until the Grouping, although it was always worked by the Highland Railway

Laid almost entirely over the surface of the land, except for the embankment across the Fleet (to minimise cost), the line extended for $7\frac{3}{4}$ miles from The Mound, built in 1877, on the former Sutherland Railway, to Dornoch, the county town of Sutherland. Flat bottom rails were originally laid, but as relaying was required second hand bull - head track was used.

The Mound consisted of a V shaped platform, one face of which accommodated main line trains in both directions and the other the branch train. A crossing loop was provided for goods trains and a run round loop also adjoined the branch platform.

Leaving the junction, the Dornoch branch curved away sharply to the south, and immediately crossed the Fleet by the embankment, alongside the Mound, which carries the main road.

For the remaining distance, the line ran inland among the sandhills, with intermediate single platforms at Cambusavie, Skelbo and Embo. The station at Dornoch was also a single platform and there was a small engine shed to house the branch engine.

There were six level crossings on the line which had frequent stretches of 1 in 50 gradients. It was worked by ordinary train staff on the " one engine in steam " principle, and there were no crossing places or intermediate signals, except where necessary for protection at level crossings or for halting the train at Cambusavie platform.

Dornoch possesses splendid golf links and adjacent to them the Highland Railway erected a fine hotel which opened in 1904. For a short time the town enjoyed an excellent train service; in 1905 a Pullman car was worked direct to Dornoch on the 12.50 pm down train and in the following year the " Further North

Express " was inaugurated on the 1st of June of the summer season. This ran non-stop to the Mound and on to Dornoch. However, this evidently proved unsuccessful as in the autumn the destination was changed to Wick.

Timetable for Summer 1925

| | Dep | 10.00 am | 11.55 | 1.28 pm | <u>Fri. Exc.</u> 6.45 pm | <u>Fri. Only</u> 7.10 pm |
|-----------------------|-----|----------|----------|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The Mound | Dep | 10.00 am | 11.55 | 1.28 pm | | |
| Cambusavie (see note) | " | | | | | |
| Skelbo | " | 10.13 | 12.06 pm | 1.39 | 6.56 | 7.21 |
| Embo | " | 10.23 | 12.13 | 1.46 | 7.03 | 7.28 |
| Dornoch | Arr | 10.30 | 12.20 | 1.53 | 7.10 | 7.35 |

| | | | | | |
|------------|------|---------|----------|----------|---------|
| Dornoch | Dep. | 9.10 am | 11.05 am | 12.50 pm | 5.35 pm |
| Embo | " | 9.20 | 11.12 | 12.57 | 5.42 |
| Skelbo | " | 9.30 | 11.19 | 1.04 | 5.49 |
| Cambusavie | | | | | |
| The Mound | Arr. | 9.44 | 11.30 | 1.15 | 6.00 |

Note Cambusavie Platform. Trains will stop when a request is made by passengers at the Mound or Skelbo stations or when passengers are upon the platform to be taken up,

The first engine to work the line was by coincidence the first locomotive constructed at Lochgorm Works. One of a class of three 0 - 6 - 0 saddle tanks (formerly Highland Railway " No. 56 " class), she was designed by W. Stroudly and built in 1869, numbered 56 and named BAINAIN. This class was of historic interest as being the prototype of the famous " Terriers " of the I.B. & S.C.R. She was rebuilt in 1896 by D. Jones and renamed " Dornoch " in 1902 for the opening of the line.

In view of the Highland Railways propensity for renaming locomotives to suit their locality as occasion demanded, it cannot definitely be stated that this engine worked the line continuously. The Highland Railway renumbered her 56 B in 1921, the L.M.S.R. 16118 and she was withdrawn in 1928. Ex - Caledonian Railway 0 - 4 - 4

tanks and ex - N.B.R. J 83 0 - 6 - 0's were allowed on the branch after June 1952.

In more modern times, P. Drummond's 0 - 4 - 4 tank locomotives (formerly Highland Railway " No. 25 " class locomotives built 1905/06) frequently worked the branch. One train was mixed, thus providing the goods service. B.R. numbered the remaining two locomotives of this class 55051 and 55053. No. 55051 was withdrawn in the summer of 1956. Soon afterwards 55053 was overhauled, repainted and appeared to have been granted a new lease of life. However her end came suddenly and ingloriously when, earlier in the following year, the axle of her leading driving wheels broke, while hauling a mixed train. One of the wheels became detached and careered along the track until it came into violent contact with a lineside gatepost! Fortunately the train was not derailed and nobody was injured.

The restricted axle weights allowed on the branch made a replacement somewhat difficult and her place was eventually taken by (if all things) a Western Region pannier tank No. 1646. This replacement was transferred from CROES NEWYDD in Wales on February 7th 1957 marshalled in a goods train and reached Helmsdale four days later. No. 1649, a similar locomotive, was sent from Swindon in July the following year. B.R. steam was brought up to date when standard No. 78052 was working the branch in 1957.

With the introduction of the summer timetable on 13th June 1960, the Mound along with 19 other stations (out of the 40 open between Inverness and Wick) was closed to passengers. The branch line to Lornoch closed completely at the same time .

LINDSAY HORNE

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MOVEMENTS AT PERTH

During conversation recently with a B.R. employee, a very funny incident was recalled. There is a tank - train from the south to Inverness, which works out of turn from Grangemouth to Perth - i.e. there is no southbound working for the Perth crew. The Perth men - Driver, Second - Man and Guard - travel on the cushions on a morning passenger train from Perth to Stirling, where they change into

a d.m.u. for Falkirk (Grahamston), and then wait for an Alexander's (Highland) bus to take them to a stop nearby the Grangemouth Freight Terminal, where they pick up their train and take it as far as Perth Yard.

On the 16th of January, an unusual working took place when engine No. 40 101 was in charge of a permanent way train from Perth to Laurencekirk. The engine returned to Perth in the afternoon.

After Brush No. 47 211 arrived at Perth with a freight train from Millerhill, it was used to take over the northbound " Clansman " when the Brush, which took over from the electric locomotive at Mossend became defective at Perth. The return Perth to Millerhill working was taken over by No. 40 072.

On the 26th January 08.736 came of the road at the south end of Perth Yard in the early morning, but was rerailed by 08.00 and removed to the old ash - pit lye next to the turntable at the Yard to await further inspection. This loco was still at Perth stabling point on February 19th.

A rare sight on the Highland Line on 30th January were 12 blue bulk grain wagons which formed part of the night Inverness - Millerhill train. This train, hauled by No. 27.107 left Perth for Millerhill at 02.30. There it would be remarshalled into a Doncaster train . These wagons are normally from Elgin to Doncaster via the Aberdeen - Dundee line.

On the 12th and 13th of February, two specials worked through Perth destined for Tomatin with long beams for the new A 9 bridges in the district. These specials came from Chepstow and motive power used in the Scottish Region was Nos. 25.086 and 25.003 on the first day and 25. 229 on the second day.

The 13th February saw No. 40.099 arrive in Perth with a special from Millerhill carrying lime. This traffic, which comes from the south of England, is divided up at Perth, with wagons shunted to Oswalds Siding at St. Catherine's Road, Gillons Private Siding opposite the old sheds at Friarton and the remainder worked up to Eassie by the next mornings Perth - Forfar goods.

Another chapter in the railway history of Perth closed during January with the demolition of Perth L.M.S. sheds (63A). The sheds were partly knocked down and partly burned in one week. The site of the coaling tower and turntable is now under the foundations for a new " Tesco " superstore and the old coal storage siding

and ashpits are now a service station and garage and finally the Railway Hostel has been completely gutted and transformed into a Transportel.

The locomotive which ran into a tractor at Waterybutts Farm unmanned level crossing, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Errol Station, on Monday 16th February was still at Perth stabling point on the 19th. The locomotive was No 27.022 and has the drivers front and side windows smashed. It was apparently still serviceable.

On February 24th, the Ballast Pilot at Perth had super power in the form of No. 40.140, deputising for a failed O8 shunter

During the afternoon of the 27th, there was a special freight to Forfar composed of 22 lime wagons for Eassie and 8 Vanfits for Forfar. This special was hauled by No. 25.034 and returned to Perth hauling 11 Vanfits with potatoes for the south.

An unusual combination on the Highland Line again took place on the 5th March, when the 21.15 goods from Inverness was hauled by Nos. 26. 021 and 20. 083. The Class 26 uncoupled at Perth and the Class 20 took the train on to Sighthill.

Monday 8th March saw the arrival in Perth of a special train of lime from Millerhill and destined for Eassie. The lime would be worked up to Eassie by the next mornings Forfar goods. The engine of the special, No. 40.012, returned south with a rake of empty mineral wagons.

On the same day, No. 26.031 with an engineers crane in tow left Perth at 10.30 bound for Alyth Junction and was held up at Coupar Angus until 12.00 to allow the morning Forfar - Perth through. Rumour has it that all traffic handled at Alyth Junction is to be transferred to Eassie and all sidings removed from Alyth.

The first week of March saw two minor derailments at Perth involving O8 shunters :-

1) While shunting what is known as "Cappies" siding (a local coal and lime merchant by the name of Oswald) at the North Goods Yard, incorrectly set points caused a derailment with empty vans. Fortunately the use of jacks was all that was required for rerailing purposes. (The Editor would strongly recommend the carriage of jacks, a view very probably held by one of our members and his guest).

2) Due to insufficient space at the south end of Perth Yard, the head shunt can only accomodate one van and a locomotive. Shunting movements take place using the Inverness main line as a headshunt. The 10.59 Perth to Inverness passenger train

was due to pass at the same time as shunting movements normally occupying this main line take place, so the shunting engine driver was signalled to use the small headshunt, but failed to see the appropriate colour light and increased speed to gain, what the driver thought, was the main line. The engine and wagons demolished the buffer stops and to quote a railman on the scene " The headshunt can now be a loco. and seven wagons.

The driver was very lucky as his loco. stopped inches short of a 15 foot drop into the town's lade, this being the reason for the short headshunt in the first place.

JOHN CUMMING.
