

12

COCK O' THE NORTH

Newsletter of the Angus Railway Group



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SEP 76

ANGUS RAILWAY GROUP
COCK O' THE NORTH

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BACK NUMBERS 10p EACH FROM THE SECRETARY

September, 1976 Newsletter

E D I T O R I A L.

Now that our short summer is almost over and the dark, bitterly cold, evenings with their snow and slush are approaching like an express train, the time has come to recommence our indoor meetings for another season. Yes, it makes one feel a year older! However, there is the anticipation of meeting once again familiar faces and hopefully some that we cannot immediately place.

Readers, who are not members of the Group, might like to come along to one of our meetings and see who we are and just what happens before committing themselves. It is, however, necessary that they should attend as a member's guest. If you are keen to come, drop any Committee Member a line and arrangements will be made. You may be assured of a most cordial welcome.

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PROGRAMMING

The Committee feel that it will be helpful to everybody if a list can be prepared with the names of those members able to put on a programme at forthcoming indoor meetings. If you would like to do so, please drop the Secretary a note, giving a possible date, an indication of your subject and whether your home is suitable. Possibly you might prefer to suggest a guest speaker. If so, an early response will enable a prompt invitation and a better chance of an affirmative reply. Either way, we would like to hear from you soon.

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SUMMER VISITORS

During the past few weeks, many visitors from all over Europe have been seen to be wandering through the busy thoroughfares of our historic city of Perth.

So, it seemed to be only proper that those engines which have behaved themselves during the winter should also be given a holiday. This made it necessary for strangers to temporarily take their place. But to be taken ill or have an accident just before your departure is a terrible thing. As it is said, it is better not to go on holiday, suffering aches and pains, which even the best medicines cannot reach and wait until you are better.

The following notes on the above have been contributed and compiled by John Cumming from a reliable railway source:-

The 25th of May saw engine No. 40 064 take loaded ballast hoppers to Dalwhinnie, from where, after unloading, it returned back through Perth to Ladybank.

On the 9th June, presumably ex - works, shunter No. 08 378 returned to Inverness dead in the 11.12 Perth - Inverness train formation, which was hauled by No. 40 035.

On the same day, a Wednesday, the weed - killing train travelled from Perth up the Forfar branch hauled by No. 24.104. It was stabled overnight at Perth North, returning to Polmadie the next morning.

Early in June, the 13.30 Inverness - Perth was unusually double - headed by No. 40 166 and an unidentified Class 25. The Class 40 was taken off at Perth, leaving the Class 25 to power the goods train on to Cadder Yard.

Dead diesel shunter No. 08 851 arrived in Perth on the 22nd of June in the formation of the Grangemouth - Perth train, hauled by No. 40 064. This loco would be worked up to Inverness the next day on the 11.12. For some unknown reason, this engine was returned south again on the 6th July in the 9.35 Inverness - Perth train formation.

SUMMER VISITORS Cont.

On the 2nd of July, No. 37 147 arrived light - engine in Perth from Mossend in order to work a freight to Sighthill and Mossend. Included in the train formation was dead diesel No 26 018, which would be taken off at Sighthill and tripped up to Glasgow Works.

The 8th July saw another unusual double - headed goods arrive in Perth Yard with the evening Thornton - Perth. This was hauled by Nos. 20 179 and 24 094. No. 24 094 took the goods north to Inverness at 20.02 and No. 20 179 returned to Thornton via Ladybank with empties.

On the 19th July, the 13.30 Inverness - Cadder arrived in Perth hauled by No. 47 268. Included in the train formation was dead engine No. 47 208 destined either for Glasgow Works or Eastfield Repair Depot.

The following day saw No 37 154 appear on the Kenningston - Perth Motorail train. This loco would work the return working again back to Mossend, for changeover to electric traction.

The Scottish Region's Gloucester single unit parcel - car, which comes daily from Stirling to Perth has been extended to Dalwhinnie. It stops at Perth Yard to pick up trainee guards for route learning at 10.05 and returns in the afternoons through Perth for Stirling, except at weekends.

Later, on the 29th of July, the Invergordon to Stanlow tank train arrived in Perth hauled by locos Nos 20 055 and 20 019. At Perth Yard, No. 20 019 was found to be defective and as no replacement locomotive was available locally, No. 20 085 was despatched from Grangemouth and duly arrived in Perth to assist No. 20 055. With dead diesel No 20 019 still coupled and tank wagons, the triple - headed train set off south.

On the 6th August, the 9.35 Inverness - Perth goods had super - power in the form of two Class 40's, Nos 40 009 and 40 184.

The Stanlow - Port Elphinstone goods tank train arrived in Perth on August 10th headed by locos Nos. 20 125 and 20 011. On arrival at Perth, No 20 011

SUMMER VISITORS Cont.

became defective, so the two Class 20's put their train off at the loop opposite Perth Power Box, and went to the fuelling point where the fault was rectified. They later returned to take their train northwards.

The evening Oxwellmains - Inverness cement train arrived at Perth Yard on the 12th of August hauled by No. 25 064. This engine became a failure in the Yard, having run out of oil because of the loosening of a defective bolt. No. 08 725 was called upon to take the loco down to the fuelling point in order for it to be replenished. The Class 25 later returned to the Yard to collect its return working - the evening Perth to Millerhill goods.

During the past few weeks, three car cross - country d.m.u. units have been arriving at Perth Carriage Sidings on Monday evenings for a Special Cleaning, which lasts three days. Just what a 'special cleaning' involves has not been established, but apparently there are no suitable facilities (i.e. manpower shortage) up north. These units, we were told, normally operate between Aberdeen and Inverness and in the areas all round about. This can be confirmed by destination blinds exhibiting termini such as Lossiemouth and Ballater.

JOHN CUMMING.

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PROGRESS REPORT

We are very pleased to report that progress on our book - " The Angus Railway Group Album. Volume One " is now reaching an advanced stage. Unless any unforeseen snags should arise, copies will we anticipate be available during October. Watch the next Newsletter for further particulars.

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THE CALEDONIAN RAILWAY - GLASGOW TO ABERDEEN

So we come to the year 1865, when the first big amalgamation took place in Scotland; this, though not affecting the Caledonian as a Company, was of immense importance for the future. The absorption of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway by the North British changed the whole railway position in Scotland. In a report to the shareholders, it was stated that " the whole character of the North British Railway had been regenerated by the incorporation of the Edinburgh and Glasgow and Monkland Railways within its system." It had indeed! From being no more than a 57 mile link in the chain of communication between London and Edinburgh, that link was now extended right across Caledonian territory to the heart of Glasgow, and provided a springboard for the launching of a whole series of highly competitive projects. The 45 years " war " between the North British and the Caledonian was on.

The very terms of the North British and Edinburgh and Glasgow Railways' Amalgamation Act of 1865 included the seeds of trouble between the enlarged Company and the Caledonian. The latter Company and its northern associates had naturally opposed the Bill and they succeeded in having inserted a provision that gave the Scottish Central Railway running powers between Larbert and Edinburgh. In that same year of 1865, the Caledonian absorbed the Scottish Central and inheriting these running powers immediately began to work its traffic from Edinburgh to the North over this line. Until then, the purely Caledonian service had been very roundabout, via Carstairs and Coatbridge. Moreover, for a period of nearly ten years they had to use the North British stations in Edinburgh. Waverley Bridge, as it was then known, was the scene of the most regular and chaotic unpunctuality to be found anywhere in Britain and the pressure of the Caledonian trains no doubt added to the congestion. It was not until 1874 that the short connecting line from Haymarket West Junction to Dalry Road was authorised and Caledonian trains could use their own terminus.

THE CALEDONIAN RAILWAY - GLASGOW TO ABERDEEN. cont.

The absorption of the Scottish Central by the Caledonian now took the latter Company on its own metals to Perth, Dundee and Newtyle, with branches to Denny, Alloa, Callander and Crieff. At Perth, traffic for the North was handed over to the Scottish North Eastern Railway, which was an amalgamation, dating from 1856, of all the local lines north of Perth including the Scottish Midland Junction and the Aberdeen Railways.

The amalgamation of the Scottish North Eastern with the Caledonian was authorised under an Act of 10th August 1866, and together with the previous absorption of the Scottish Central, gave the Caledonian a very snug and safe monopoly in Angus and the Mearns. Between the Firth of Tay and Aberdeen there was no railway that was not owned by the Caledonian. There was one fly in the ointment. As might be imagined, North British interests were not blind to the effects of the Caledonian and Scottish North Eastern merger, and they worked upon the susceptibilities of Parliament to anything that looked like a monopoly. As a result, they secured an inclusion in the Act of 1866 giving them the right to run over and use the Scottish North Eastern lines, including the stations, watering places, works and conveniences connected therewith.

At this time this might have seemed to have little value, since the Scottish North Eastern lines of the Caledonian were completely isolated from any part of the North British system. But the enterprise of the latter Company knew no bounds, and they were determined to obtain a route of their own to Aberdeen that should be as independent of running powers over the Caledonian as possible. When, by absorbing the Edinburgh, Perth and Dundee Railway, the North British Railway reached the south bank of the Tay and secured authorisation for construction of the first Tay Bridge in 1870, the threat was obvious. The strategy of the North British became plainer still in 1871, when Parliamentary sanction was obtained for building a line northward from Arbroath to Montrose and connecting with the Aberdeen main line at Kinnaber Junction.

THE CALEDONIAN RAILWAY - GLASGOW TO ABERDEEN cont.

This was an astute move on the part of the North British, for it not only cut out the westward detour that would have been necessary, if the Arbroath and Forfar line had been followed to its junction with the Aberdeen Railway, but it put Montrose on the East Coast Main Line of the future.

The final amalgamation which affected the Caledonian Railway to Aberdeen was in Aberdeen itself, between the Aberdeen Railway and the Great North of Scotland Railway. At the time of the amalgamations, there was a separate terminus for each railway. The Aberdeen Railway had built its Northern terminus in Guild Street near to the western end of the Upper Dock, whereas the Great North of Scotland, using the track of an old canal, had made their terminus at the junction of the Regent and Waterloo Quays, beside the Victoria Dock. The two stations were about half a mile apart, with no connecting services at all for passengers and only a line of rails along the quayside for the interchange of traffic. Connections between Scottish North Eastern and Great North of Scotland trains were positively discouraged from the Great North side. True, there were margins of time between arrivals from the south and departures for the north, but they were impracticably tight, and there was no question of holding the Great North trains in cases of late arrival. Ahrons, indeed, tells dark stories of the officials at Waterloo holding their trains until the hurrying passengers from Guild Street hove in sight, and then slamming the gates and giving the right away to the driver.

All this makes good reading, but it was thoroughly bad railway business, and even before the amalgamation whereby the Caledonian took over the Scottish North Eastern Railway an important measure was undertaken to improve things in Aberdeen. From the Scottish North Eastern Railway point of view, there was everything to be gained by first class facilities for interchange with the Great North of Scotland. In 1864 the S.N.E.R. made application to build a line from the G.N.S.R. at Kittybrewster through the Denburn Valley to join

THE CALEDONIAN RAILWAY - GLASGOW TO ABERDEEN cont.

their own main line at a point immediately north of the Dee viaduct. The Act was obtained in the summer of 1864 and included authority to build a new Joint Station. Although the Act was obtained by the S.N.E.R., it laid down details of the ownership of the Joint Station and the lines leading to it. The station, through the provisions of the Act, became jointly and equally the property of the S.N.E.R. and G.N.S.R. The line from immediately north of the station to the junction near Kittybrewster became a part of the G.N.S.R. and the southern approach lines were correspondingly S.N.E.R. The North British were no party to this agreement, and when they did eventually come to Aberdeen, they paid tolls for the use of the station. The new line and the Joint Station were opened on 4th November 1867.

In 1899 Aberdeen Joint Station was enlarged and the Caledonian lines to Ferryhill Junction were duplicated to ease the problem of trains entering and leaving the station more than one at a time. Very little change took place thereafter until the year 1923, when, on 1st July, the Caledonian Railway became part of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway Company.

Seven years after nationalisation in 1948, British Railways laid out their plans for long term modernisation. The early 1960's brought about the Beeching "axe " on many lines and the Glasgow to Aberdeen line did not escape the cuts. Buchanan Street station was closed and all northbound traffic diverted to Queen Street station after it had been modernised and re-signalled to cope with the extra trains. Further north, the line from Perth to Aberdeen was closed to passenger trains between Perth and Kinnaber Junction, all trains being re - routed through Dundee Tay Bridge and Arbroath. Dundee West was closed and its traffic transferred to the Tay Bridge station.

(To be continued)

LESLIE MORRISON.
