

COCK O' THE NORTH

NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGUS RAILWAY GROUP



CR 123 With the Scottish Rambler Rail Tour at Auchinleck on 20 April 1962.

Lindsay A C Horne

Membership open to all railway enthusiasts

AP 1977

April 1977 Newsletter

E D I T O R I A L

We are pleased to be informed by our Sales Officer that applications for copies of the Angus Railway Group Steam Album Vol. 1 (price £ 1.30 including p & p) continue to reach him regularly. With increased demand expected in the near future, readers who wish a copy are strongly advised not to delay for long. Indeed, so great has been public demand, that serious consideration is now being given to the preparation of Volume 2. If our information is correct, at least one copy has been posted to as far as Australia.

Members are asked to note that Ian Johnstone's telephone number should be ammended from Montrose 2703 to Arbroath 73758.

EXHIBITION DAY AT EASTFIELD

This was held on Sunday, March 6th and possibly on a few subsequent days. Our attention to it was drawn by the Group's Secretary as we passed the Depot en route for the Model Railway Exhibition in Glasgow. The principal exhibit could be readily viewed from the train, which having travelled by way of Cumbernauld and Springburn (for a change), was preparing to stop in order that an engine could be attached at the rear. Even under the cloudy skies, Class 24 Number 24. 008 shone majestically as she stood together with a brake van at the end of a siding. Possibly this was the only exhibit, but it was nevertheless very gratifying to see.

SCOTT BRUCE.

" A LINE FOR ALL SEASONS " - THE WEST HIGHLAND LINE

Looking through the current Time - table for the West Highland Line, I was interested to see that, in addition to the ' through ' trains to and from Mallaig, there was one daily Fort William to Mallaig, and two daily Mallaig to Fort William.

Spending a few days in Oban recently, I decided to visit Fort William , to see the lay - out of the new Station, and to find out the composition of the above - mentioned ' local ' trains.

Not surprisingly, the motive power and coaching stock of the Fort William/ Mallaig trains are drawn from the Glasgow/ Fort William services. For example, the 1300 hours Mallaig to Fort William on 8 March 1977 was made up of Class 27 033 and two coaches. (How many services in Scotland of this sort of mileage - approximately 41 miles - can boast of locomotive power?). This train arrived at Fort William at 1443, at No. 1 Platform. After the passengers had ' de - trained ', the engine ran round, coupled up, and added the two coaches to the four coaches standing at No 2 Platform, to form part of the 1812 Fort William to Glasgow. This latter train includes Sleeping Cars and Through Carriages for London Euston, and it was interesting to observe that the Sleeping Cars, lying all day at No 2 Platform, were connected to a Heating Van. Apparently, with the train locomotives working during the day, this Van was brought up for the Winter months, to ensure that Sleeping Cars were suitably heated prior to departure at 1812.

Incidentally, the above - mentioned engine (27 033) was observed on 10 March at Crianlarich Upper, heading the 0700 Mallaig to Glasgow Queen Street.

RON BEATT

Post - Script: Anybody seeking a contrast in Stations should compare Tyndrum Upper with Tyndrum Lower. The latter is an unstaffed halt, consisting of only a platform and a ram - shackle shelter to protect passengers from the elements. In contrast, Tyndrum Upper is very much as it must have been when opened in 1894, complete with 15 - lever signal box on the island platform.

THE GLASGOW SUBWAY - SOME COMMENTS

The news that the 80 - year old Glasgow subway system is to close for reconstruction in June, prompts me to think of 1970, when I had moved from London to Glasgow and was a daily commuter between Hillhead and Cowcaddens.

When I had secured accomodation in the Byres Road area, an office colleague remarked that my bed - sitter was quite close to the subway station. I must have passed Hillhead Station half a dozen times, before I spotted an unlit " U " sign on a street lamp, outside a dark and uninviting close. Having paid my fare, I went downstairs and was astonished at how small everything seemed; at Hillhead the two coach trains just fitted into the Station. The unique Glasgow Subway smell hit me at once of course and the ancient original rolling stock shook and shuddered fearfully, so much that my sister still refuses to re - use the system. But I was at my destination six minutes later and I decided to travel by subway to work daily.

Having been a daily user of the Victoria Line (then recently opened) in London, I found myself comparing the two systems. In London, the purchase of a season ticket removed the need to queue for tickets daily, but in Glasgow only single tickets, purchased immediately prior to travel were issued. (Thereby eliminating the City Council from any contractual obligations in the event of a complete and utterly irreparable breakdown not, perhaps, to be unexpected at that age. - Ed.) The delay resulting from the queues in the morning could be considerable: if a fast booking clerk was on duty there would be only a small wait, but I could always tell when a particularly slow operative was in command when the queue trailed back into the street.

Once passed the booking office, I had become accustomed at Finsbury Park to join the perhaps seven deep throng on the platform and then rush for the nearest door whenever a train materialised. Yet in Glasgow, at each station (all have a single island platform) two queues were formed, one for each direction, and the trains were boarded in a relatively ordered manner through the centre gates, with only a little queue jumping practised by those near the trains rear gate. In addition, when the subway became crowded, staff would walk along the platform knocking on the train windows to tell any standing passenger not physically

shoulder to shoulder with his neighbours to move up and so allow more passengers on.

Nevertheless, the journey was completed far quicker by subway than was possible by car or 'bus and, indeed, even when one side of the fifteen station circular route was completely closed by train breakdown or engineering work, it was still quicker to go round the wrong way (still at the direct route fare) than to go by surface transport. One pleasant feature, after the very hot atmosphere on the Victoria Line, was that the subway was welcomingly warm in winter and cool in summer, perhaps a feature unique on non - locomotive hauled stock.

Working for a computer manufacturer, I had been inconvenienced by my employer's ruling that one should not take magnetic tapes or discs on the underground, for fear that the strong magnetic fields present erase the data held on the tapes. Possibly because head office were unaware that undergrounds existed north of Cockfosters, this regulation did not seem to apply in Glasgow and I often risked carrying tapes and discs by subway and never had any data erased. I often wonder if, 80 years ago, a perhaps none too prosperous company had used unconventional tunnelling techniques!

ALAN PHILIP.

The article which now follows has been painstakingly extracted by one of Dundee's greatest railway devotees from the utmost depths of the City's newspaper archives. Lunch hour after lunch hour has been devoted to copying the following article from " The Dundee Advertiser " of May 16th 1901 and the subsequent issues. Gentlemen! a hearty thanks for none other than your very indisputably own LINDSAY (BREADALBANE) HORNE!

" GREAT RAILWAY SMASH NEAR DUNDEE "

" GOODS TRAIN GETS AWAY ON FORFAR LINE "

" RUSHES DOWN THE INCLINE "

" COMES TO GRIEF AT BROUGHTY FERRY "

" NARROW ESCAPES OF PASSENGER TRAINS "

Notwithstanding the complicated ramifications of the railway systems which

converge in Dundee, accidents of a serious nature are very rare. In addition to the extensive general traffic, there is the large local trade, and the immunity from disasters which the various lines enjoy, says much for the energy and resource of the staffs, who have to conduct the business within limits which are often thought to be none to ample. This long continued absence of serious mishap was rudely broken yesterday, when something approaching a catastrophe occurred a short distance to the east of Broughty Ferry, and resulted in great damage to rolling stock and plant, but happily neither life nor limb of man or beast was involved. The scene of the smash was the junction of the Caledonian Railway direct line from Dundee to Forfar with the North British line from Dundee to Aberdeen near Broughty Ferry, and the cause of the accident was the running away of a goods train from Kingennie, on the Forfar line, which careered down the incline and came to a standstill and to grief at the runaway points where the two systems meet. The train was, of course, completely wrecked; but three cattle in one of the trucks marvellously escaped uninjured. The scene of the affairs is well known to all who travel to or from Dundee, Arbroath, Aberdeen and Forfar, and just at a place where, unless extraordinary precautions are taken, an accident might happen. The main line from Dundee to Arbroath is under the control of the Joint Railway Company. Just to the east of Broughty Ferry the Forfar Direct Line, which belongs to the Caledonian Company, branches off, crosses the main line from the south by means of a bridge, and with a long and steep incline makes a short cut to Forfar by Barnhill, Kingennie, and Monikie. It is the incline that causes the risk, because if a train coming down gets beyond control, a few minutes would bring it on to the main line at a point where outgoing and incoming trains are almost continuously passing.

" The peculiarity of the accident was that while it originated on the Caledonian system, the finale took place on the Joint Line, and caused most inconvenience to the North British Company. The run - away points carried

the train practically clear of the Forfar line, and landed it right on the main line, where it lay accross the rails and seriously damaged the permanent way. The train which occasioned all the trouble left Dundee West for Forfar at 10.50 am. It consisted of over 20 vehicles loaded with manure, coal, bleaching materials, three cattle, and a variety of other goods, including oilcake, mill dust and boxes of beer. All went well till it reached Kingennie, which is about five miles from Broughty Ferry, and where it arrived about noon. Here several of the waggons had to be left, and when the engine was running them into a siding the others - 20 in number, including the van - remained on the main line. The guard, James Wilson, Forfar, took the usual precautions to prevent it moving, and put on the brake of the van and also spragged the wheels of one of the waggons. When the shunting was being carried on it was observed that the engineless train was in motion, and on its way down the incline Dundee - wards. The seriousness of the situation was at once realised, as, once fairly on its way, there would be no stopping the runaway train. The engine and a waggon set off in pursuit, and the guard was in hopes that he would be able to hook on the runaway to the engine. The waggons, however, which were heavily laden, gathered way every minute, and by the time they got to Barnhill all chance of catching up with them was lost. Meantime word was telegraphed to Barnhill and Broughty of the occurrence, so that there might be an opportunity of preventing harm to other trains, although it was recognised that the runaway waggons were doomed. At Barnhill a train to Forfar had just got into a siding when the score of vehicles dashed past at express speed. They were enveloped in a cloud of dust, and raced with a noise like thunder. The extensive curve near Broughty was not long in being reached, and in a few minutes the waggons were lying at the foot of the incline a heap of indescribable wreckage.

" Fortunately, although trains had passed the spot not long before the accident, and others were almost due, the line was clear and the runaway had an opportunity to go to pieces without involving another train. A glance at

the derailed waggons showed how complete the debacle had been. Some turned on their sides, while others had essayed to run over each other, but had failed in the attempt, and stood up on their buffers. One was smashed into firewood, while wheels, axles, buffers and other metal work were scattered about in all directions. Manure and coal were emptied out of the overturned waggons, and packages were pitched through the roof of a van right into the Archer Park, which abuts the railway at the point where the accident happened. The wheels of several of the waggons were buried deep into the ground, rails were torn from the chairs, sleepers split up, and one length of rail was carried completely away. The truck which contained three cattle was severely smashed, but the animals by some good fortune escaped, and a few minutes after the collapse of the train were peacefully grazing in a neighbouring field, as if their experience was an every day affair. Probably the fact that the truck was in the middle of the train accounted for the luck of its passengers. The four heaviest waggons formed the rear of the train, and crashed on their less weighty brethren with dire results. A signal post at the junction of the lines was carried away by the guard's van and deposited at the place where the van came to a stop. The runaway points served their purpose well, as the train came to a dead halt just where they had been placed to prevent runaway trains going further. Point rods were either broken or hopelessly twisted, and three pair of wheels were almost buried in the ground. The narrow escape of a dreadful catastrophe is shown by the fact that the 12.15 train from Arbroath to Dundee and the 12.25 from Dundee to Arbroath were nearly due at the time, while another goods train from Dundee had just shunted at the Ferry. The Broughty officials at once wired to Dundee and Forfar for assistance, and the stationmasters on the line were warned that delays would take place owing to the accident. Mr Soutar, the Inspector of the Joint Line, was at Monifieth when the accident occurred, and at once came on to Broughty Ferry, and Mr Hamilton, the Manager; Mr Lamb, stationmaster at Broughty Ferry; and Mr Coutts, stationmaster at Barnhill, were also quickly on the spot.

Provost Gray was at the Ferry at the time, and on learning of the occurrence went to the place. All the available railwaymen in the vicinity were sent to help to clear the line, and breakdown gangs from Dundee and Forfar lent assistance. Two lines run from the junction on to the Forfar Direct way for a short distance, and then merge into a single line. One of them was blocked, but the other was quite clear, and with a little care it was found possible to conduct the traffic on the single line. On the main line, however, which had borne the brunt of the smash, matters were in a hopelessly confused condition, and it was at once seen that hours would pass ere traffic could be resumed even on a single line. The debris would take a considerable time to clear away, while even when that was done the permanent way would have to be mended. The only way in which to prevent a complete stoppage of the north and south traffic was to stop the trains at the place, and transfer the passengers and luggage. The trains from Aberdeen and the north were therefore brought to a standstill at the junction, and after discharging their own freights took on board the freights of the trains from the south, and vice versa. This necessarily caused great delay. Many of the passengers were over an hour late in reaching Dundee, and connections for the south were of course lost. A couple of hours after the accident occurred a train from Aberdeen, drawn by two engines, and including three fish vans and a dining saloon arrived, and passengers, mails and fish had to be transferred before the journey could be continued.

" AS VIEWED BY EYE WITNESSES "

" WENT PAST LIKE A FLASH "

" An official at Barnhill states that as soon as they got word of the runaway train they were ready for it. The line was clear, as the train which had just come in was in the siding. The runaway soon appeared, heralded by a roar and a cloud of dust, and rushed past the platform like a flash. The engine and waggon were not far away, but by that time nothing could be done to avert a catastrophe. "

(To be continued)

— — — — —