

100
No 65

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

1977

November 1977, Newsletter

THE FORTH BRIDGE

On March 3rd of 1890 the last rivet was driven into the great structure. It was a special rivet with a gilded head and it may still be seen there by visitors.

The Forth Bridge would have been a very different looking bridge from what it is today if it hadn't been for the Tay Bridge disaster. In 1879 the Tay Bridge of that time collapsed during a terrific storm. The engineer who had built the First Tay Bridge was at the time busy on designs for a Forth Bridge, and he intended to make it a suspension bridge with piers 600 feet high.

The disaster to the Tay Bridge showed what terrific wind force there could be in eastern Scotland, and the new designs were prepared by Sir John Fowler and Benjamin Baker for the present cantilever bridge. They allowed for a wind pressure of 56 pounds per square foot, whereas the greatest pressure of the gale that wrecked the Tay Bridge was only 30 pounds per square foot. The actual building, carried out by the famous bridge - building firm of Arrol of Glasgow, took eight years, and cost three million pounds. The number of rivets used was seven million, and there was 54,000 tons of steel.

Each part of the bridge was erected on the shore, to see that the other parts fitted properly, then taken to pieces and the work of building over the water went ahead. Thus the Forth Bridge was actually built twice.

It was a task of great danger. Fifty seven lives were lost and 518 workmen were injured. Many of these accidents were caused by tools and rivets falling on men below from the upper part of the bridge.

After the building came the testing. Two huge trains, each with three engines and weighing between them 1800 tons, crossed the bridge.

But within a few weeks there came a greater test. A great storm raged in the Firth of Forth, and the wind reached a force of 37 pounds persquare

(continued page 6)

GUARDING NO. 6 K 71

On Monday the 24th October train No. 6K71, known to railwaymen as the " whisky train ", left Perth Yard at 13.25, although its booked time away is 14.00. We had engine No 26 004 on with two vans of whisky from Dewars for shipment from Liverpool and 1 parcels van for Wigan. Total weight was 128 tons, fully - fitted.

Stopping at the station at 13.30 to exchange loco. men, we got Haymarket men who had worked the Waverley to Aberdeen parcels via Stirling. There was a clear run right until Newburgh, where we arrived at 14.04 and crossed the Inverness passenger connection which passed us at 14.05, hauled by a Class 25. We got away at 14.06 and arrived at Ladybank at 14.16. Here there was a wait 'till 14.32 before getting onto the main line, precedence being given to a passenger train from the Waverley direction and to the Millerhill - Aberdeen goods, the latter hauled by loco. No. 40 162. In that train were four of the new air braked POLYBULK wagons bound for Aberdeen. There followed a passenger train from Aberdeen to Waverley hauled by No 47 186. Getting the road after this train had cleared the section, we arrived at Markinch at 14.45. Here we were to pick up two vans of whisky, 22 tons, bound for England. These vans had been put out by No. 06 002, which although from Townhill, is stabled there.

Leaving Markinch at 14.47, Kirkcaldy was reached at 15.05, despite a signal stop from 14.50 to 14.55 at Thornton South box. At Kirkcaldy we had to stop short, because we were picking up four tanks from Cameron Bridge bound for Manchester and they were blow - throughs. Our insignificant ? train was then put into the headshunt because there was a D.M.U. waiting at Dysart and bound for Waverley. When it had cleared the section, we came out and increased our importance by attaching four parcels vans which were setting off for Bristol, King's Cross, Crewe and Peterborough.

The tanks, which contained gas for beer kegs, get tripped from Cameron

Bridge by a Class 20 and the vans with linoleum from Nairn's Kirkcaldy factory were shunted by No 06 008.

We left Kirkcaldy at 15.20 and passing Burntisland signalbox, saw a Class 20 in the yard with a train waiting to follow us to the British Aluminium Works just up the road.

On shed at Haymarket could be seen two Class 47, three Class 40 and two Class 27. A little further on we came upon No 08 711 shunting in the coal yard close to Haymarket station. When we arrived at Waverley, we detached the four parcels vans, weight 115 tons. The reason we had to stop short at Kirkcaldy is because the rule book states that the two back brakes must be working, and the tanks had we left them where at Kirkcaldy would not have been working.

We departed Waverley at 16.10 and as we were going out of the south end of the Carlton Tunnel, No 47. 410 passed us with the new covered in marker lights heading for Waverley. As we sped past Craigentenny, a Waverley bound D.M.U. was coming out of the depot. Also in the depot were a Class 26 shunting some coaches and the carriage shunter No. 08 736. Our train was stopped at Portobello to allow No. 37. 153 to continue setting back its train into the Freightliner Depot. Moving away, I noticed a Class 45, No 45. 057 sitting in the road by the bothy, presumably waiting to take a Freightliner south. The shed at Millerhill, our destination, contained several Class 25, 26 and 40, together with No 46. 022 and 47. 239, all waiting for their next turn of duty. Our train was detached at 16.25, the engine going to the shed and the loco. men, now finished going home. Lucky people, I went and had my piece before preparing my train for home.

The train home left at 20.00, 14 minutes after its booked departure time and was hauled by No. 25 725. We had 16 on, including 3 vans of fruit, 1 of flour, 6 tanks of oil, and 6 end doors of coal plus the brake van. We had a lucky night because we never got a signal. The Millerhill driver goes back passenger on the 23.25 goods from Inverness to Millerhill.

BACK TRACK

(from The Dundee Advertiser, Saturday, 29th October, 1898)

RAILWAY SMASH NEAR MONTROSETWO MEN KILLED

N.B. LINE BLOCKED

"Last night a telephone message was received at the North British Station, Montrose, from Lunan Bay reporting the collision of a light engine with a goods train, and that one man had been killed and two injured."

" Mr Wood, stationmaster, at once despatched a messenger to Dr. Connon, assistant to Dr. Kay, who, on arriving at the station, was conveyed by special train to the scene of the accident."

" It was difficult to get particulars, but, as far as could be gathered in Montrose last night, the following were the circumstances:- The 5.55 p.m. goods train from Aberdeen to Dundee and the South had almost reached Lunan Bay station. The light engine which had assisted the 5.30 p.m. goods express from Aberdeen to the South was returning to Aberdeen, and had run through Lunan Bay station, when it collided with the engine of the goods train between the home and the distant signals. As the officials on duty at the station were proceeding to the spot, they observed the engine driver and the fireman of the light engine lying in the cab, and partially covered by the coal which had been dislodged from the tender through the force of the collision."

" Dr. Connon, on arrival, at once examined the men, and found that one was quite dead, while the other was evidently very seriously injured and unconscious. The latter was placed on an ambulance stretcher which had been taken out from Montrose, and carried to a waggon which had been attached to the special engine. Dr Connon accompanied the injured man back to Montrose. The engine was drawn up close to the back of the

Infirmery, and a staff of men carried the man to that institution, where Dr. Stone was in waiting, and where preparations had been made by the Matron, Miss Mackay. It was at once seen that the poor fellow was in a hopeless condition. He never spoke, and died within 10 minutes after being admitted to the institution. He proved to be the driver of the light engine. His name is John Mitchell, and apparently between 40 and 50 years of age. The man who died at Lunan Bay was the fireman, James Stevenson and aged between 25 and 30. Both men resided in Aberdeen."

" It is supposed that when the collision took place the gauge glasses of the light engine broke, and, the steam escaping, both men were shock - ingly scalded, death in both cases being due to this."

" The driver of the goods train, named Boyd, is slightly injured, and last remained at Lunan Bay station. The bogey of the light engine was derailed, and the frame of the engine was considerably damaged. The goods engine was comparatively uninjured. A number of waggons forming the goods train were derailed, and a considerable portion of the permanent way was torn up, completely blocking the line. The last passenger train to the North was sent via Colliston on to the Caledonian line, and passengers to Montrose were driven in from Dubton. "

The Dundee Advertiser, Monday, October, 1898

" It is stated that the light engine, the driver and fireman of which were killed - the latter being dead when found and the former dying in Montrose Infirmary - had the signals against it. It flashed past the signal box without negotiating the tablet, and between 300 and 400 yards further on, crashed into the engine of the goods train, which was almost stationary. The fireman of the latter locomotive saw the other engine coming rushing up the incline and jumped off; but Boyd, the engine - driver, remained at his post and was slightly hurt. With the weight of the train behind it, the goods engine withstood the shock remarkably well, but the other locomotive has an awful appearance. Its bogie was wrecked,

and the first pair of wheels being off, it droops towards the rails. The coal which fell from the tender on to the unfortunate men broke the look - out glasses in the cab and also the steam gauge glasses. The frame of the engine seems strained, and looks dirty and twisted. Very little of the permanent way was destroyed.

LINDSAY A.C. HORNE

THE FORTH BRIDGE Cont.

foot. This was higher than the great storm in the Tay of eleven years before. It is related that the people of Queensferry, remembering the Tay disaster, were afraid to raise their blinds on the morning after the storm, lest they should look out upon a wreck. But the bridge was intact, and it still is.

The actual measurements are; two spans of 1710 feet long and two smaller spans each 689 feet long. In addition there are approach viaducts with 15 spans of 168 feet each, four arches of 57 feet and three of 25 feet each. In all, the length of the bridge is a mile and a half, though so well is it proportioned that it looks nothing of its length. The railway on it is 150 feet above high water level and the top of the towers 210 feet higher. Rust is the great enemy of the Forth Bridge, and to guard against it, painters are employed all the time.

The Tay Bridge is over two miles long, but as an engineering feat does not rank with the bridge across the Forth.

JEREMY FARQUHARSON.

GUARDING NO 6 K 71 Cont.

Back at Perth, we stopped opposite the loco. bothy again to pick up the Perth men to take the train north. As we passed the headshunt at Glasgow Road I noticed No 08 441 and Class 25 No 25 062, while when we got to the Yard No 08 346 was busy shunting. We were let into No 2 reception at 22.10 and I handed the train over to the next guard.

ALAN MITCHELL

J-37'S AND THE BRECHIN BRANCH

W. Simms

After the closure of the Brechin to Montrose and the Brechin to Forfar branches to passengers in August, 1952, a substantial freight service remained, being handled by Montrose and Forfar locos until, with the running down of Forfar shed (63C) and the abandoning of the Brechin to Careston section on the Brechin to Forfar branch in 1958, freight traffic was passed into the hands of Montrose (ex NBR) drivers.

The freight service to Brechin remained as it had been prior to 1958 in that there were two trains daily, one in the morning arriving 7.30 and returning midday and the other in the afternoon, arriving at 1.0 and returning at 3.30 (these are only approximate times). The afternoon goods also worked the Edzell branch as required and there was also a Saturday morning train as well. It is worth noting that traffic to Brechin has always been substantial; this explains why the branch is still open for freight. With the closure of the Edzell branch in September, 1964 the goods service dropped to one train per day, Mondays to Fridays only, the morning goods being discontinued.

Prior to September, 1964, two J-37's were kept at Montrose. One engine worked the morning goods to Inverbervie and the afternoon goods to Brechin and Edzell. The other engine worked the morning goods to Brechin and shunted Montrose yard and Montrose 'Caley' in the afternoon. Being supplied by Dundee Tay Bridge depot these engines were changed frequently, usually every fortnight. With the closure of the Edzell branch in 1964, only one engine was kept on shed and worked the Inverbervie branch in the morning and the Brechin branch in the afternoon. Montrose also acquired a diesel shunter to work the yard and the 'Caley'. My own regular observations began in 1964 and ended—as far as steam is concerned—in April, 1967. With one exception, I never saw any other loco work the goods. This was in March, 1967 when 'B-1' 61102 worked the branch for one week.

With the lifting of the Dubton to Montrose branch in 1958 and the removal of the branch crossover from the up main line to the Brechin branch at Bridge of Dun the journey was altered to run brakevan first from Montrose to Kinnaber Junction (and back) then normal running to and from Brechin. At Bridge of Dun the train had to proceed beyond the station and reverse from the up main line to the branch bay platform, this movement not being required on the return journey. One other journey during 1966 and 1967 consisted of engine and brakevan going to Bridge of Dun to pick up distillers yeast which used to be collected on route to Brechin.

Goods on the branch provided plenty of work, the well known seasonal seed potato traffic, grain and barrels for the distilleries, coal and for a short while before the end of steam, the first of the lime traffic which used to be handled at Montrose 'Caley'. At the peak of the potato season 15-30 wagon loads were common plus the regular goods. With the closure of the goods shed in 1967, this has now been turned into a private lime store. Lime is also a seasonal commodity which sometimes required Montrose's diesel shunter to help out as needed (including Saturdays), normally making its way up to Brechin in the morning somewhat slowly! Montrose no longer has its shunter due to the decline of traffic there.

As already mentioned, J-37's became solely associated with the branch once the 'Caley Pugs' went, and without going into locomotive details of this class, it will suffice to say that they did their work to Brechin without incident. It can be assumed that all of Dundee's allocation did their turn although between 1964 and 1967 I noted 64547, 64576, 64602, 64608, 64611 and 64620 but 64547, 64576 and 64620 were the most regular. 64611 appeared late on the scene and worked the last steam trip on branch on April 11th. 1967. 64611 went off in style having been half cleaned during the week by enthusiasts who only had time to do the smokebox and the left hand side including the tender and also incorrectly painting J-37, Montrose on the bufferbeam. It is worth noting that this week was a surprise reprieve as the week before had seen Clayton 900, D8608 on the daily goods with Montrose men showing the Dundee drivers the 'road'. Montrose engine shed also finished its job on the same day and this sub depot with its fine wooden two road shed, turntable and coaling plant is also a memory.

In 1977 the Brechin branch still hangs on handling potato, lime and also a new fertiliser consignment probably seasonal. One coal merchant has ceased trading and trains only run as required but at least they still run!