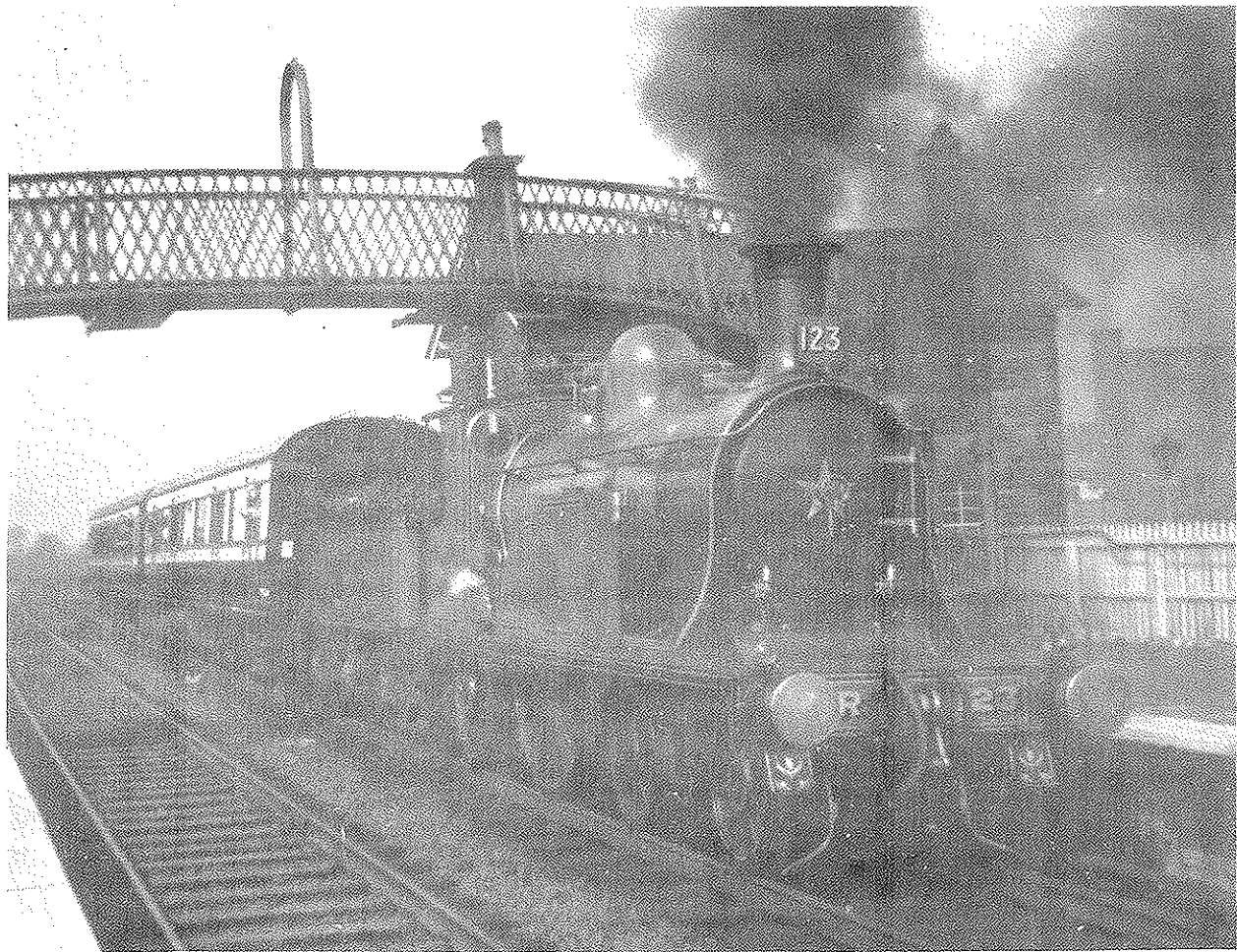


No 52

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

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

August, 1977, Newsletter

While preparing my recent article describing long - distance excursion trains, I recollected the following narrative, which I hope may be worthy of inclusion here:-

THE CHEAP TRIPPER

(A Sketch from Eliza Cook's Journal)

This is a new character that has sprung up within the last few years in the manufacturing districts. The Tripper is the growth of railways and monster trains. Before they were, he was not. Tens of thousands of operatives formerly grew old and grey who had never seen the sea (far less Dundee - Ed.), and who knew of wide - spread green fields, and country villages, and far - off abbeys and castles, only by name. There were no such things as monster omnibuses to convey them fifty miles off at the rate of a farthing a mile, landing them on the shores of the booming sea, or on the grassy banks of inland lakes, or under the walls of old castellated towns far into the heart of the country. The operative and his family were then restricted to the dingy localities where they lived, and rarely escaped from beyond the sound of spindles and power - looms, save occasionally on Sundays and holidays when they might stroll out into the neighbouring fields to hear the birds sing, and see the clear sky and the green grass. Now, they collect into monster trains of from one to two thousand passengers, and away they go at thirty miles an hour - sometimes to cathedral towns - sometimes to old abbeys - sometimes to gentlemen's grounds and gardens - sometimes to remote cities - and often to London itself.

During this summer, the Tripper has been in all his glory. From some towns there have been numerous trips in all districts, and as many as four thousand people, nearly all operatives, have set out from one station in a single day. Monday is the Trippers favourite day. It is his saint's day. For it he saves his last week's earnings - gives up his weekly paper on Saturdays, and perhaps sundry odd glasses of beer, that he may have more fun and jollity reserved for

his trip. You see him emerging from his cottage dwelling in the early morning, accompanied by his wife; or if, as is often the case, he be a single man, he calls at a neighbour's house for his "lass" and away they go towards the station full of glee. He is attired in his best and she in her's. He has a bright blue kerchief round his neck (such being fashionable he says) and he sporteth a thorn stick surmounted by a dog's head elaborately carved by himself in his leisure hours, which he admiringly contemplates at intervals, throwing also an occasional look down his spotted vest and his new Californian trowsers, seeing that they "sit" well. She is no less artistically ornamented - her bonnet with red ribbands, her person with a new black silk dress, over which a shawl of brilliant device becomingly sits. She carries a boa over her arm, and a heavy reticule basket in her hand. He too, has a basket well packed, out of one corner of which the neck of a black bottle rather prominently protrudes. Under his arm (for he is a cautious youth) he carries a rather fat umbrella. True it is rather heavy work to bear all this luggage about, and he had long contended with himself whether he should relinquish the umbrella or the stick. But he cannot give up his stick; and for the umbrella - is there not his new hat! And so he determines finally to carry both.

Thus accoutred, he has scarcely an arm to spare, but he calls on "Bessie" to hook in; and she blithely clings to what remnant of him she can appropriate, and thus holding on, they march forward, in not very equal tramp to the railway station. At the corner of each street they pass, other Trippers join them, and as they near the station, the throng thickens, until at the great doorway there is a perfect crowd. Tickets have, however, been secured beforehand, and there is nothing to do but to wait in patience for the opening of the doors. But list! what a terrific scream, fiendish and unearthly, rings from over the adjoining wall, Bessy clings to Tummus's arm, and the fat umbrella is in danger of dropping.

"What can that be?" says Bessy. "Why what beest thou afeard on?" says Tummus "it's nobbut a whistle". So doth Bessie and Tummus laugh; then some one standing behind them, who knows Tummus's voice, taps him on the hat with a stick; so Tummus turns round, but sees nobody he knows; then he is tapped on the

hat again, and remembering that it is his new one, he is disposed to wax wroth, but detecting the twinkle of a merry eye among the heads behind him, he exclaims, "What, Jossy, is that thee?" "Ey, for sure," is the reply. And Tummus turns to Bessy and tells her that Joseph, her brother, is behind, and they must look out for a seat together. But while they are talking, the great doors open, and there is a sudden heave in the crowd, and a rush; and the Trippers press in towards a focus, through which they squeeze themselves, to the damage to some of the ladies' bonnets, and the derangement of their baskets and boas. But never mind! one is disposed to take everything merrily at these cheap trips.

They pass on through the outer office in quick haste, and reach the platform, where the porters are calling out "ladies and gentlemen, take your seats," and a great monster of an engine is blowing off clouds of steam, and is growling and grumbling with the loud boiling of its inner kettle. Bessie is in a terrible state of confusion and alarm, and is quite bewildered by the crowd and the noise; but she is hustled up into a seat, where, in a trice, she finds herself with Jossy and Thomas on either side of her, and the remainder of the compartment filled by other Trippers, all in a state of perspiration and shortness of breath with their crush and rush for their third class seats. Late Trippers are observed running to and fro past the open doors looking for friends and companions; at last they all get seated, doors are locked, and lo! another tremendous howl, at which Bessie is again alarmed. "Never mind," says Tummus, "she's only about to start." The heads of the Trippers are now turned towards the windows on either side, and they pass rapidly by great engine - sheds, coke - stands, and long lines of carriages, trucks and waggons - ends of cottage tenements, laid bare by the navvie and the engineer - across streets of houses; then along a lofty viaduct, from which great open spaces of bare clay, in some parts dug out, in others cast up into huge mounds, are visible; past great chapels and parish churches, a penitentiary, ironworks, brickgarths, breweries, more cottage dwellings, now becoming thinner spread, with here and there patches of gardens and green grass.

(To be continued)

SCOTT BRUCE

HOLIDAY REPORTS No. 1 - SPEYSIDE

Whilst spending a weeks holiday at Boat of Garten in early July, the chance was taken for some photography on the Highland line.

Equipt with a copy of the 1977/78 Working Timetable, I had discovered that the 10.35 Clansman, ex Inverness, crossed the 8.10 Motorail from Glasgow at Aviemore at 11.28. This, I decided, was to be the time and venue for meeting my first ' subjects '.

I arrived at Aviemore station before time and positioned myself at the southern end of the Up platform, from where the sun could not have been in a better position for taking photographs. But I had forgotten one thing. The Clansman is a long train and entering the station cautiously, it stopped with the loco - a Class 47 - and half of the first carriage past the end of the platform, thereby bolcking out any view of the northbound Motorail. Crossing back by the footbridge, I walked to the southern end of the northbound platform, from where any photographs taken of the impending arrival would have been looking directly into the sun. So no film was wasted here.

The Motorail arrived from Perth on time with no cars on any of the three Carflats attached to the rear of the train.

Several days later I arrived back at Aviemore intent on some good photography, but this time I by - passed the station and parked my car on Dalfaber Road, which is the same road that gives access to the Strathspey Railway Company's locomotive depot.

Here, I opened one of the gates leading to the rear of the station and walked up the embankment to the railway. This would have been the entrance to the old goods shed in days gone by. I was now about 150 yards south of the station and in a perfect spot for photographing the same two trains crossing, or so I thought. When 11,28 duly arrived no train appeared and a further 20 minutes followed before the southbound Clansman entered. With still no sign of the Motorail, the Clansman was duly photographed leaving for the south.

A quick calculation followed and after consulting the Working Timetable,

I ascertained that the next passing loop for the train going south would be Kingussie; so this gave me time to head north to Carrbridge, where I eventually photographed the train rumbling through about 50 minutes late.

During all this time there was no sign of the 11.12 Inverness - Perth goods which was meant to wait at Aviemore from 13.05 until 13.20, where it crossed the 10.05 from Glasgow. Being at Carrbridge at 12.50 and knowing that there would not be a path for the goods train after the late running of the Clansman and the Motorail, I travelled further north to the Slochd, in hope of arriving at a good spot I had previously found at the viaduct before the goods train arrived. After a 30 minute wait, the 12.10 Inverness - Edinburgh was photographed passing about an hour late.

I then made for Tomatin in search of the 11.12 goods, but nothing was in the loop at the signal box. The signalman at Tomatin duly informed me that the whole Highland timetable was completely hay - wire that day, following the failure of the overnight Euston - Inverness at Tomatin in the early morning and of the relief engine despatched from Inverness on its arriving. It is the same crew that return with the southbound Clansman, so I had discovered the reason for my wait at Aviemore that morning.

On enquiring further about the 11.12 goods, I was told that its engine had been required to assist a failed train from Ballinluig to Perth that morning, so my goods train had been cancelled.

Just as we entered into a conversation over the merits of re - doubling the Highland line - the signalman was more in favour of newer and more reliable locos being used - a light Class 25 arrived from the south. This was the loco sent south that morning to assist from Ballinluig to Perth and now returning to Inverness. It stopped at the signalbox, into which the crew disappeared for over half an hour.

On a walk around the goods yard at Tomatin, I discovered a chair marked C. R. 1903, of all things on the Highland line, amongst a siding full of L.M.S. chairs.

At the northern end of the old Down platform at Tomatin a line leads into the Tomatin Distillery, but the signalman had informed me that nothing had come

out of the siding for over three years and he reckoned that the track would be lifted quite soon.

Wanting to see the extent of the siding inside the distillery, I returned to the car and journeyed the short distance to the distillery gates. There was nobody about, but just across the way I could see a four - wheel Simplex loco in a very rusty and delapidated condition at the end of the siding. This engine has, I understand, recently been presented to the Strathspey Railway Company. The only remaining track was from the loco round the corner to the gate with British Rail at Tomatin, a distance of 150 yards. The first 10 yards of rusty track past the gate had the original Highland Railway chairs, having H.R. stamped upon them, and the rest of the track up to the distillery was merely spiked straight on to its sleepers, just as on the old American railways.

I must be a bad omen for the Highland area, for the following day saw us at Elgin and having deposited my wife at the shops, I arrived back at the station to witness the arrival of the 11.50 Aberdeen - Inverness on time, at 13.27. This train was composed of a Met - Cammell driving trailer, a centre power car and a Gloucester single - unit railcar, attached to the first of the refurbished Swindon built Cross - country triple sets normally used on this line.

The train is due to cross the 13.30 Elgin - Aberdeen, but this train is worked Eincar from Inverness and it did not arrive for a further 25 minutes, making both trains very late for their respective destinations.

JOHN CUMMING.

THE STRATHSPEY RAILWAY ASSOCIATION - DUNDEE SECTION

Our Secretary has recently received the following account of a meeting held in Dundee and details of forthcoming events:-

A second meeting of the Dundee Area Group was held in Dundee University on Thursday, 9th June. 16 members and friends were present, and Jim Hood presided.

The main purpose of the meeting was to adopt a constitution. An opportunity was given to comment on, or question any of the wording of the draft constitution, which had been circulated to all members and other interested persons. No changes were put forward, and as the only written comment had been in total agreement, Bob Kennedy proposed the Constitution be adopted as printed. This was seconded By Ian Holway and agreed by all.

A little time was spent discussing working parties. Members were asked to contact the Hoods when they planned to go North, so that transport might be co-ordinated. The cost of petrol for an average car would be between £5 and £6, making it quite an economical journey if shared by two or three, driver and passengers paying equal shares.

From the results of the questionnaire, sent out with the draft constitution, it was clear that our membership locally will need to be increased considerably if a regular working party is to be arranged from Dundee.

Our aim for the winter meetings will therefore be to widen the existing interest by an attractive programme, which will be well publicised. The meetings are to be held in a comfortable home through the good offices of Messrs. W. Halley & Sons, in their renovated works canteen. For full directions please contact the Hoods, tel. number Auchterhouse 258. The syllabus, as detailed below, will be handed to everyone attending the meetings for the first time. We also aim to leave a few copies for the picking up in works and public places. If you can help with this, either at work, a social centre or perhaps a friendly shop, then please let me know and we can supply you with the needful. The syllabus will be printed on plain green card, with a picture of our 'Black Five' on the front; the size is 5" by 3" when folded, ideal for the pocket.

The showing of Ron Miller's film of the first three years of our railway had an enthusiastic reception, and our thanks go to Dr. Bethel for arranging the use of the projector and showing the film. Thanks also to Keith Jones for 'carrying the can' from Aberdeen and back.

We may not have been too popular with the students of the University. We emptied the vending machine, first of coffee and then of cocoa, having been assured on good authority that the quality of the tea left a little to be desired. However, the hot drinks did help to round off what had been a most pleasant evening.

WINTER PROGRAMME - please turn over:

Meetings will be held on Thursdays at 1930 hrs. (prompt) at Halley's premises. The entrance is at the east end of Constable Street and can be reached from Blackcroft either by going up Wallace Street and turning left, or up Middle Street and turning right.

DATES:

- 22nd Sept. 1977 John Paterson: "Coal - Water - Steam", the internal workings of a steam locomotive. Arrangements will be made at this meeting for a works party to Perth.
- 17th Nov., 1977 Eric Cooper, Chairman of the Strathspey Railway Co: "Running the Railway in 1978", the responsibilities and duties involved, and the problems to overcome.
- 19th Jan., 1978 Jim Rodger, Assistant Area Manager, B.R. Dundee: "Guards' and Signalmen's Duties".
- 16th March 1978 1977 on the Strathspey Line - films and slides taken throughout the year.
- 18th May 1978 Annual General Meeting, and ..watch this space!

The idea is to have a sales table at the A.G.M., selling relics, old timetables, magazines, etc., as well as articles on sale at the shop in Boat of Garten. Have you any relics, etc., you could donate for this purpose? These would be gratefully received at any time by the Secretary.

My apologies for the (lack of) quality of the typing if not up to the usual Strathspey standards, but bear with me and I might improve with practice.

On behalf of the committee I wish you all a happy and refreshing holiday, and look forward to the pleasure of the company of you and your friends at our winter meetings.

Elly Hood, Secretary.