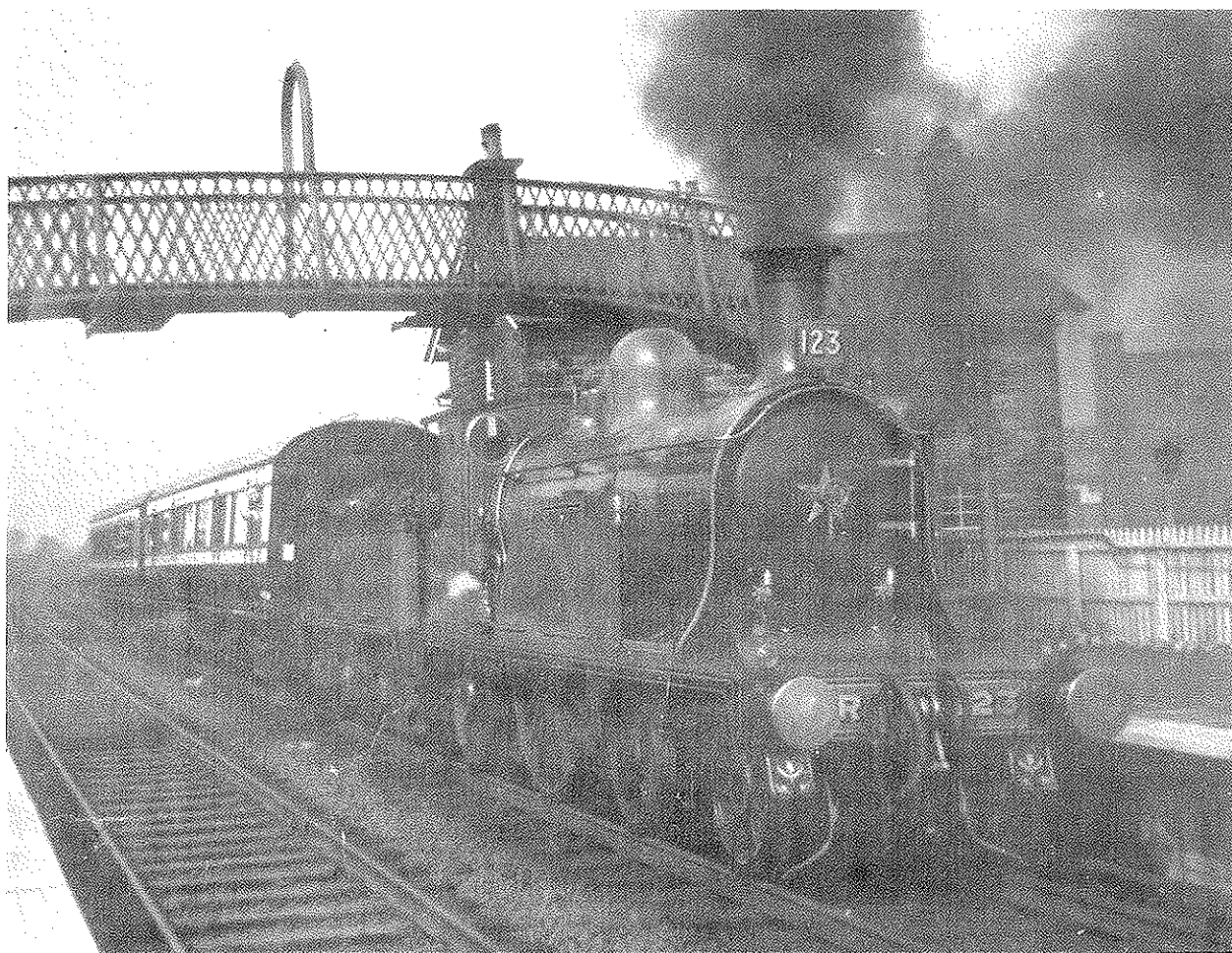


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COCK O' THE NORTH

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

December 1977, Newsletter

BACK TRACK

Railway Collision at Arbroath

Great Destruction of Rolling Stock

Both Lines Blocked

Arbroath, 1a.m.

" Late last night a railway collision, which has been attended with great destruction of rolling stock, occurred between two goods trains at Arbroath. The accident took place about a quarter of a mile north of the railway station, nearly opposite the Caledonian running shed."

" The Montrose to Bothwell goods train, due at Arbroath shortly after ten o'clock, had some shunting operations to perform at the Goods Station. The engine was detached and run down to the goods yard for this purpose, leaving the train standing on the main line at the above-mentioned spot."

" Shortly afterwards, the Forfar and Dundee goods train, due in Arbroath at 10.30 p.m., came up and ran into the rear of the Bothwell train with terrific force, the shock being distinctly heard more than half a mile distant."

" The brake van of the Bothwell train was smashed literally into matchwood, the top of the van being pitched a distance of nearly twenty yards. Nine waggons were thrown off the line and severely damaged, and the engine of the Forfar train also suffered considerably, a buffer being completely smashed and the funnel knocked off. Several of the damaged waggons of the Bothwell train were thrown on their sides, others were tilted upon their end, and one was thrown at right angles on top of another. The goods with which the waggons were laden were scattered about in all directions."

" Fortunately the accident has been unattended with the loss of life, but the fireman of the Forfar engine has suffered some slight injuries."

" The permanent way has been torn up and otherwise damaged for a distance of about 50 yards. Both lines are completely blocked."

" Information of the collision was immediately wired along the line, and telegrams were sent off to Dundee and Forfar for break-down gangs, but these had not arrived at the time of writing. Meanwhile, a staff of railway employees, superintended by Mr. Ramsay, stationmaster; Mr. Kettles, North British goods agent; and Mr. Campbell, Caledonian goods agent, are busily engaged transferring perishable goods with the view of their being forwarded to their destination with as little delay as possible."

" The accident occurred only a few minutes before the fast train to Montrose was due to leave the station. The train was, of course, unable to proceed, and the passengers took lodgings in town for the night."

" All traffic is meanwhile suspended."

(Extracted from " The Dundee Advertiser," March 24th, 1888, by

LINDSAY HORNE

LISTED BUILDINGS

A chance remark by Mr. Summers, after his recent talk to the Group, about Listed Buildings being the bone of the railways existence, caused me to look further into the subject. Broadly speaking, a listed building is one which has been noted by the local authority as being of architectural or historical interest and, in general terms, cannot be altered without the authorisation of that authority. Buildings are classified A. B. C. etc., A being one of outstanding interest.

Within the area of Dundee District, there are three such " buildings ", none of which is likely to cause Mr. Summers any immediate concern:-

1) Balmossie Railway Viaduct. (Category C)

Crosses the Dichty Water on seven semi-circular arches, each 50' 0" span and 75' 0" high at the centre. John Willot was engineer, George Mackay - resident engineer and William Leslie, the contractor. The viaduct was built between 1869 and 1870. (This bridge, known locally as " The Seven Arches " is located between Barnhill and Kingennie Stations on the Forfar Direct line of the Caledonian Railway.)

2) Broughty Ferry former Railway Harbour. (Category B).

A tidal harbour built for the Edinburgh and Northern and Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee Railways. Thomas Bouch and Thomas Grainger were the engineers who supervised construction during the years 1849 - 51. The harbour was specially constructed for the train ferries across the Tay from Ferry - Port - On - Craig (later Tayport). These ferries were the first of their kind in the world and became obsolete subsequent to the opening of the second Tay Bridge. The sloping ramp in the harbour allowed a " floating bridge " to connect the lines on shore with those on the ferry.

3) Old Railway Bridge, Eastfield, on the Dronley - Auchterhouse road. (Category B). This single semi-circular arch over disused railway track is situated between Balbeuchly Top and Auchterhouse across the Dundee - Newtyle Railway. It passed out of use when the Auchterhouse

deviation was opened by the Caledonian Railway on 1st November, 1860.

Other listed buildings in the district, for which I have only scanty details, are:-

a) Newtyle Station, comprising the original terminus of the Dundee and Newtyle Railway, opened on 16th December, 1831, together with the goods shed. On the opening of the Pitnappie - Newtyle Deviation on August 31st, 1868, it became the goods station. The building is presently used as a store.

b) " Guthrie Gate " - a castellated bridge over the entrance to the grounds of Guthrie Castle on the old Caledonian main line between Forfar and Guthrie. Described often as a " folly ", it shows the lengths railways had to go to in order to placate land - owners. In this case it was the Arbroath - Forfar Railway and the land - owner was Mr. Guthrie of Guthrie Castle. The line was opened on 4th December 1838 and survived until 3rd September, 1967. The bridge is located approximately a quarter mile west of the site of Guthrie Junction Station alongside the A 932 road.

c) Friockheim Viaduct. In the news recently when one of the spans collapsed, this bridge was opened on 1st February, 1848, and consists of seven stone arches. At one time, the spur using this bridge was traversed by passenger trains from Dundee (East) to Brechin and Montrose. The bridge was closed to all traffic on 1st February, 1908, and in consequence of the collapse of the span mentioned above, this bridge has been completely demolished and removed.

These represent a few of the listed buildings in the vicinity of Dundee. If members of the Group know of others, I would be delighted to hear from them.

JAMES OSWALD.

As a postscript, it would be extremely useful if a gazetteer of railway relics in the area covered by the Group could be compiled. This might make some small contribution to posterity

NO DRIVER, NO GUARD, NO PASSENGERS

A railway which has never had a train driver , a guard, or even a solitary passenger celebrated 50 years of success last October.

Every single train on the line runs on time for 22 hours a day, stopping at stations every four minutes in the " rush hour ". So it's perhaps surprising that millions of Londoners know little about the railway right under their feet.

For this is the Post Office Railway - the only one of its kind in the world - tunnelling 70 feet below the ground from Paddington to Whitechapel and exclusively used for carrying mail between railway stations and sorting offices all across Central London.

Snow, rain, fog and even the more everyday traffic jams on London's roads cannot stop the railway mail getting through.

And that was exactly the aim of the members of the Bruce Committee who came up with the unique idea of the underground railway in 1911.

RELIABILITY

Automatically controlled throughout their journey, the unmanned electric trains have been covering a $6\frac{1}{2}$ mile route from Paddington via Western District Office (in Rathbone Place), West Central District Office (New Oxford Street), Mount Pleasant, East Central District Office (King Edward Street), Liverpool Street Station to Eastern District Office at Whitechapel since 1927.

Each station has two platforms and the trains run in both directions on east and westbound tracks. The journey from end to end takes just 38 minutes at speeds of up to 35 miles an hour.

The rolling stock of 60 trains, now 46 years old, makes a total of 70,000 journeys each year and with the original 50 - year - old motors has covered 86 million miles.

All along the route bags of letters and parcels are loaded and unloaded and marked for their destination. Something like 35,000 bags of mail are handled every day. But for the railway, such mail would have to

be taken across London by vans - a process which would only serve to clog up and slow down the traffic even more.

Reliability and speed are the proud boasts of the Post Office Railway staff. Trains run at four or five minute intervals depending on the flow of mail and each is checked against a timetable schedule in every station. Delays are rare on the track - so much so that the failure rate is measured in the number of minutes lost in operating time in the course of a year.

The trains each carry four containers loaded with the mail bags along the tracks. They pick up power from a third rail - 440 volt DC in the tunnels but reduced to 150 volt DC in the station area.

Like ghost trains they pick up speed and brake automatically as they enter and leave the stations. But at the platforms they come under the control of the station cab staff - the railway "signalmen".

Although the 27 foot long trains are much smaller than on London's passenger underground, the stations look much the same: great circular walls and the familiar rumble of approaching trains in the distant, dark tunnels.

The cut - off of power to the track brings the trains to a preselected halt at the platform. Then the postmen move in and with the help of coded tags off - load any containers which are marked for their station, before wheeling on other mail containers to be sent further down the line.

Off - loaded mail is then sent by conveyor up to the sorting office or railway station at the surface.

HIGHER VOLTAGE

Once loading is complete the postman presses a signal on the platform and the "signalman" can send the train on its way. Moving into the tunnel the train picks up the higher voltage from the line and with the help of a downward gradient gathers speed as it disappears onwards before arriving at an uphill gradient that marks the approach of the next station.

The accident rate on the line is extremely low. Even without a driver a train is prevented from colliding with another in front by a control

system which automatically cuts off all power to the section of the track behind each train.

Like other railways, the Post Office Railway operates expresses and rush - hour services. Some trains do not stop at all stations, such as those loaded with mail that has to catch a British Rail connection at one of the main line stations. As the mail builds up at the end of the day the interval between trains is shortened to four minutes and two trains can be linked together to run as one.

Maintenance is an important part of work on the railway and one major reason why the stock has lasted so long.

For two hours every day at the slack mail time between 8.00 am and 10.00 am the line shuts down for routine checks and minor work. Then on Sundays, the one day of the week when the line is closed, major overhaul work on the track and electrical equipment can be carried out.

Engineers can go into the tunnel, after the power is switched off, on board a special battery - driven train and there is a large workshop for servicing and repairs to trains at Mount Pleasant.

This two - foot gauge system is the 50 year old answer to moving 300 tons of mail every day. Work began on the railway in 1913 but was interrupted by the First World War. It then cost altogether a little over £1½ million. That amount of money today would buy just one mile of empty tunnel.

(Extracted from a recent article in

" The Sub - Postmaster " and contributed by JOHN ANDERSON)

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