

DECEMBER 2000

Mr Ron White, from Buckinghamshire, presented an interesting slide show depicting historical railway images. The show comprised a well-narrated illustrative rendering of the latest additions to the renowned Colour Rail Collection.

The 150 colour transparencies mainly comprised steam-powered locomotives at various locations in England, Scotland and Wales. However, there were also representatives from some types of now withdrawn diesel and electric motive power. Locomotive variants included representatives from each of the former regions of the railway network; these incorporated scheduled passenger, freight and special workings. Consequently, classic shots of steam-hauled trains that once typified the scene at numerous locations in the United Kingdom during the three decades preceding the cessation of steam working, were screened. Complementing the scenes were examples at less well-known places as well as locations where the railway is a thing of the past and no longer a feature of the landscape. Understandably, diesel-hauled trains did appear in places where steam operation had ended.

The Colour Rail Collection is a compilation of photographs taken by numerous railway photographers who have kindly allowed copying of their original pictures. This has given the opportunity for other enthusiasts to possess these images. Although the presenter did extremely well to narrate each slide with dedicated information, there was the odd occasion when this was not possible. Whenever the occasion arose, he appealed to the audience in the hope someone could assist in the process of further identification.

Mr White explained that enhancement and restoration had been necessary to eliminate imperfections appearing on some transparencies. He said this process has been made much easier since the advent of computer-based technology making the removal of minute defects on photographic images less time-consuming in order to obtain a satisfactory result. However, conventional methods of restoration are still used in some cases.

Society members find consistent interest in historical railway photographs; this show was by no means an exception. Well-known for his controversial remarks towards the Great Western Railway, Mr White directed several unfavourable comments at locomotives of that origin. However, this did not detract from the overall presentation, as the attentive audience showed more interest in the pictorial content than his personal opinion. They did nevertheless relish the wit and humour brought about by his style of delivery.

John Tuffs

November 2000

'A Narrow Gauge Spectacular' was the theme of a slide presentation by the well-renowned railway photographer Dr. Les Nixon. The eloquently narrated show comprised a compilation of nearly 200 colour transparencies taken at worldwide locations. Around 30 countries were represented where narrow gauge railways have operated at some time during the past forty years.

Furthermore, as an added attraction and also to complement the show with humour, the occasional slide depicted items other than that of a narrow gauge train. An opportunist

photograph taken in the Far East showed the pillion rider on a motorcycle sporting an umbrella in an effort to protect both riders from torrential rain, was one such example.

The vast majority of the slides were of steam locomotives operating on narrow gauge railway tracks. Included were well-known examples such as the Ffestiniog, Talylyn, Vale of Rheidol, and Fairbourne railways located in Wales, as well as many other lines in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, America, South Africa, New Zealand and numerous other countries. Representatives in more than 30 countries portrayed a mix of both steam and diesel traction hauling a variety of coaching stock. One picture that brought laughter from the audience was the unique example portraying different classes of travel. The illustration showed a crowded train with journey-makers clinging to the carriage sides, sitting on the carriage roofs, and also perched on the front beam of the locomotive. It is worth considering what view our Health and Safety Executive would hold about that!

As on his previous visits, Dr. Nixon expertly narrated his superb collection of transparencies so there was a story to each illustration and as a result the attentive audience found this most interesting and entertaining. It was hard to imagine beforehand that so many varying examples of narrow gauge railways could be brought together to make the evening so entertaining. The presenter said at the outset that he considered any gauge less than the standard 4ft 8½ inches could be termed narrow gauge; therefore he included many examples of these railway systems that he had found operating throughout the world.

Dr Nixon told the audience that during his worldwide adventures in search for railway activity there had been very few occasions that he had gained more satisfaction than the time when he finally discovered an industrial narrow gauge system in the depths of a Far Eastern jungle. Through sheer determination and following endless inquiries he finally came across the narrow gauge system marked on the map but seemingly disappeared from the scene completely. He said the reason had apparently been due to the whole system having been flooded during the Second World War prior to a Japanese invasion of the territory; the line however had since been partially restored and was concentrated entirely in the midst of the jungle.

It was interesting to see that some of the locomotives appearing in the illustrations had connections with the United Kingdom. Several machines, both steam and diesel, had been built in this country prior to shipment abroad, and many of these have since operated for a long time.

Narrow gauge railways may well have been the theme of this show, but there were certainly additional elements to consider. The combination of the first class illustrations and the important information, which Dr Nixon was only too pleased to share, gave the overall presentation a feeling of an interesting lecture relating to the history of world railways.

OCTOBER 2000

John Ireland, of Derby, eloquently presented a slide show entitled “Transport in the 60s: with a local flavour”. Mr Ireland explained that he began taking railway photographs in late 1962 experimenting with monochrome until 1964 when he changed to using colour transparency film instead.

The show began with a number of images around the Derby station area. 'Jubilee' Class locomotives prominently featured, including a Burton-based favourite. This was 45721 'Impregnable' captured passing beneath the impressive signal gantry to the north of the station with a southbound passenger train.

Visits to the former Great Northern line between Derby Friargate and Nottingham Victoria brought a series of pictorial images depicting the last day of passenger services. West Hallam station was the focal point to witness dozens of passengers assemble on the platform in readiness for one of the final trains. Ivatt Class 2-6-0 43160 was pictured arriving and departing from this rural station before continuing its journey to Nottingham and the aura of Victoria Station, full of atmosphere and nostalgia. Sadly, the grandeur of this Victorian structure no longer exists - the station was razed to the ground in the 1970s to make way for a shopping complex - only the clock tower now remains. But the station was the location where the presenter pictured ex-SR Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 35030 'Elder Dempster Lines' arriving with a special from London Waterloo on the last day of ex-Great Central main line operation. Subsequently, the train was taken forward for a visit over other tracks in the area by a brace of ex-LNER Class B1 4-6-0s, 61131 and 61173.

Continuing with special workings in the East Midlands, ex MR/LMS 0-6-0s, otherwise known as 'Duck Sixes', featured on at least two occasions in October 1965. Firstly, 43953 made the long trek from Workington to haul an East Midlands rail-tour - a shot of this train was recorded as it passed over the freight-only line between Stenson Junction and Barrow-on-Trent, whilst sister locomotive 44113 made a nostalgic trip along the Wirksworth branch. The latter may have gained the honour of becoming the last steam-hauled passenger train to traverse this rural branch line in Derbyshire. In contrast, a photograph of special interest was that of ex-SR Merchant Navy Class 35026 'Lampport and Holt Line' seen passing through Spondon station in June 1966. The enthusiasts' excursion, returning to London following a weekend trip to Scotland, was later halted in Burton to allow the interloper to be replenished with coal. It is believed that it was the only time Burton motive power depot was 'host' to a locomotive of that class.

Steam operation was well advanced by the mid-1960s therefore the presenter screened many images captured on celluloid during his visits to Buxton, the Manchester area and the North West. Not surprisingly, the area around Chinley in North Derbyshire was also included where an abundance of steam hauled activity dominated the scene, even on Saturdays when many of his trips were made.

As well as line-side photographs, the presenter had visited many locomotive depots in his search for steam. During the transitional period when steam was gradually being eliminated, he visited many steam depots including Buxton, York, Leeds Holbeck and Carlisle Kingmoor.

Complementing the routine workings were a number of enthusiasts' excursions - one special certainly worthy of note was the BR-sponsored "Centenary Special" from St Pancras to Manchester in June 1968. This brought the last operational Britannia Pacific 70013 'Oliver Cromwell' to Derby where it took over the train from a Peak Class diesel. The train was then captured on film as it passed through Rowsley on this 'doomed' former Midland Railway route, just two weeks prior to this picturesque route being closed to all traffic. The same train was also pictured near Chinley on the return journey before diverging on to the Hope Valley metals.

Whilst not all of the transparencies were of local origin, some had parochial connections, such as that of 46447, pictured at Wigan North Western. This locomotive spent many years as one of the station pilots at Derby Midland station. Likewise, pioneer co-co diesel 10001 was pictured at the north London depot of Willesden, but it had been constructed for the LMS at Derby in the late 1940s. Sadly, this unique locomotive was cut up on site prior to the implementation of the 1968 Transport Act, otherwise it may have been preserved.

Mr Ireland, keen to portray transport in the 60s, included all forms of railway traction - steam, diesel, and electric. Furthermore, he concluded the show with a series of images of well-known omnibus operators' vehicles at many local spots - Burton Corporation and ESDC, Blue Bus Services, and Trent Motor Traction Company being amongst those included. Nostalgic scenes showed local buses at the terminus near to the Queens Hospital and also in New Street - the latter on the final day before council operated services ceased.

SEPTEMBER 2000

The railways in the county of Cornwall featured in a slide presentation given by Mr Peter Gray, of Torquay. He gave a talk illustrated by a superb selection of colour transparencies showing scenes of the infrastructure and operating side of the railway environment in the United Kingdom's most westerly peninsular. A complementary narration described the railway scene during the period between 1957 and 1962, the year in which regular steam working in the county ceased. But as could be expected, other relevant information was highlighted.

The show began with a picture of a push'n'pull train at Saltash, near to Brunel's 1859-built Royal Albert Bridge, that spans the River Tamar and links the two counties of Devon and Cornwall. The pictorial journey to Penzance and back recorded many fine examples of steam-hauled expresses on journeys along the stretch of line from Saltash to the terminus station of Penzance, the farthest railway-connected town in the south west. He explained that to allow longer trains to use the terminus, reclamation of an area of sea was undertaken in 1938 whereby the platforms were extended and the adjacent sidings enlarged.

Locomotive types included ex-GWR Counties, Castles, Granges, Manors and Halls were seen on the expresses, but lesser-powered classes such as 0-6-0 Pannier tanks and other types of non-tender locomotives dominated branch line and secondary passenger trains. Furthermore, the overall scene also included a substantial amount of freight train operation; these services produced a varied selection of locomotive classes. Likewise, the many special workings that operated too, gave a similar variety.

In addition to illustrating main line workings over the railway route through the Duchy, encompassing places such as Lostwithiel, Liskeard, Bodmin Road, Par, St Austell, Redruth and St Erth, several forays on to the branch lines in the county featured too. The Looe, Falmouth, Fowey, Helston, Newquay and St Ives branches, some of which at the time incorporated freight trains, gave a pictorial insight. Likewise, a photograph depicting some small steam shunting locomotives at Falmouth Docks illustrated the industrial side of the Cornish railways.

The presenter explained that many of his selection had been recorded on summer Saturdays when extra services ran to accommodate the influx of visitors to the area. However, some enthusiasts' specials had been included, such as the trip over Cornish branches that also traversed the freight line to Newham Goods near Truro in its itinerary. That particular special comprised an ex-GWR Prairie tank locomotive and a number of brake vans jointly coupled. Mr Gray explained that he had participated in the latter but decided to record the train passing Penwithers Junction on its way back to Truro. As a result of leaving the train prematurely, he was rewarded by capturing a steam-hauled non-passenger train emerging from Highertown Tunnel with a pristine condition ex-GWR 4-6-0 locomotive in charge. The train was accelerating away from Truro in a westerly direction at the time.

It is fitting to acknowledge that had it not been for the foresight of railway photographers such as Mr Gray, the opportunity to view many exclusive and historical railway photographs of a past era would not have been possible.

AUGUST 2000

Steam operating in Poland, Czechoslovakia and the United Kingdom featured in a video presentation given by Mr Chris Smith, from Bromsgrove. He began his show by screening sequences of steam at work in both Poland and Czechoslovakia. Later, preserved steam operating over routes within the United Kingdom over the past few years produced some interesting sights, especially those which had been filmed at locations that are less well-known.

The foreign steam action was captured whilst he and his wife journeyed through Poland and Czechoslovakia in their search for steam. Moreover, they jointly participated in a steam safari - a steam-hauled rail-tour that ran over some of the network of railway tracks. Mr Smith explained that his main objective of the foreign visits was to secure video sequences of steam locomotives in action. The presenter's wife, Pauline, also contributed on numerous occasions by video-recording passing trains at alternative locations - a technique commonly used by other video recordists. The duo, therefore, successfully captured many steam operations during their travels -visiting the trackside whenever possible to exploit every opportunity.

Later, Mr Smith screened a selection of preserved steam locomotives operating over a vast area of the United Kingdom. It was pleasing that many sequences had not been taken from familiar vantage points but alternative locations having been used instead. Nevertheless, one of the highlights of the evening was the procession of steam-hauled specials that ascended the steeply-graded two-mile Lickey Incline, which is located between Bromsgrove and Blackwell on the Birmingham to Bristol railway line. This 1 in 37 gradient witnessed the passage of several enthusiasts' specials. The steam locomotives recorded included ex-LMS Crab 2-6-0 42968 and ex-GWR 2-6-0 7325 on two separate occasions, albeit in reversed roles; ex-LMS 8F 2-8-0 48773 with another excursion; and a further special hauled by ex-LMS Class 5 4-6-0 45110 took the honour of becoming the first steam-hauled passenger train to be 'banked' over this section of line since the early 1960s with Severn Valley Railway-based Standard 2-6-4 tank 80079 performing the duty.

Main line steam featured prominently throughout the show due to the splendid efforts of both the presenter and his wife, who made numerous treks to the trackside. Their efforts were appreciated by the enthusiastic audience, many of whom keenly show their interest when opportunities arise to view steam locomotives especially, as in this case, when they had been recorded in action, irrespective of the country in which they had been filmed.

JULY 2000

The guest speaker, Mr Cliff Wrate, a former investigating officer of the Great Train Robbery, journeyed from his Suffolk residence to make his first visit to the Society. He is now retired from the police force but still pursues an avid interest in railway operations. His knowledge of railways therefore complemented his enthusiastic and interesting talk, a dialogue that included an account of events leading up to the capture and subsequent convictions of the villains. The audience was reminded that although nearly four decades have elapsed since the theft, it is still regarded as one of Britain's major crimes.

Mr Wrate said that the idea of a mail train robbery stemmed from two convicts serving goal sentences for other criminal activities. The plan conceived by the two men - a bank robber and a former postal worker - was to 'rob' the train at Euston Station. However, following their release and subsequent visits to the London terminus to make personal observations, their original plan was deemed a non-starter as when they found the station to be a hive of activity in the small hours. Instead they drew up a revised plan which led to the mail train being stopped and 'robbed' near Cheddington, Buckinghamshire, some distance from the Capital.

During his talk, Mr Wrate successfully diverted from detailing the robbery itself and gave anecdotes which related to the men and women who were later charged and convicted for their respective part in the mail train robbery. The former officer also explained the reason why the most famous of all of the train robbers, Ronnie Biggs, is still exiled in Brazil and not detained in the United Kingdom.

The audience learnt that on the night of the robbery, the train, en-route from Scotland to London, had been halted due to a red light glowing at a signal, close to the village of Cheddington. Believing the signal was at danger the driver understandably brought the train to a standstill. It is alleged that the original plan was for one of the criminal gang to take control of the 2000 hp English Electric Type 4 diesel locomotive D326 and move the train to a spot closer to the farm that had been bought for use as a hideaway. However, having little experience, the person assigned to this job was then unable to take charge, forcing the driver, Mr Jack Mills, to move the train to the location instead. The driver was a highly respected and conscientious railwayman and had tried in vain to protect the train. In doing so, he was seriously hurt during the hold up and urgently needed medical attention. But under duress and to minimise any further suffering he co-operated with the gang's demands. Sadly, Mr Mills never recovered from the ordeal of that viscous attack in August 1963 and was unable to return to his career. He passed away in the early 1970s.

Mr Wrate explained that officers from Scotland Yard spent many hours investigating the mail train robbery. As a result, some of the villains were arrested as the net closed in on gang members. Frivolous spending by some, accompanied by help from vigilant members of the general public assisted in their apprehension and subsequent convictions. He also said that although the offenders received goal sentences of up to 30 years, most had been released after serving around one third of their time.

MAY 2000

The Royal Scot Class 4-6-0 steam locomotives served the London Midland and Scottish Railway and subsequently British Railways for a period spanning some 40 years. Hence, Mr Bob Goodman, during his talk and slide presentation, went on to deliver an insight into these successful locomotives. The first part of the show was solely an informative address but Mr Goodman complemented this later by narrating a representative selection of slides to outline these locomotives.

Mr Goodman endeavoured to furnish the appreciative audience with an accurate description of the Royal Scot Class, facts that included details about their construction, performance, workings and final withdrawals that occurred during their existence. Enthusiastically, he gave a factual account of the class and this insight included details of the 1933 visit of a Royal Scot locomotive to the United States of America to represent the LMS. No. 6100 'Royal Scot' was due to make the Trans-Atlantic crossing, but sister locomotive 6152 made the journey instead and masqueraded as 6100 during the event. The locomotive was fitted with a headlamp, bell and cowcatcher to comply with US regulations.

The presenter went on to explain that an element of conflict relating to the origination of the Royal Scot Class existed, some accounts therefore being questionable. However, he regarded the story given by one senior character as being the most trustworthy and other anecdotes being less reliable.

Documentation in the form of photographic transparencies depicted the life and times of the Royal Scots during their 40-year existence. The images showed examples of the class in charge of top link passenger services, parcels trains and, after relegation from main line duties, hauling freight trains and following their ultimate withdrawal from service, stored at several motive power depots pending removal for scrap.

The presenter said construction of this locomotive class took place from 1927 onwards and subsequently entered service on metals owned by the LMS. The West Coast line between London and Glasgow was for many years a route that witnessed their regular use on express passenger work. Nevertheless, as newer locomotives entered traffic on this route, especially the influx of diesel traction in later years, the cascading process saw the 'Scots' relegated on to other services, especially after transfers took place between depots. The route linking London St Pancras and Manchester Central, Leeds and Carlisle, the North East to South West route (which runs through Burton), and finally, the ex-Great Central line between Nottingham and London Marylebone became familiar tracks upon which they operated. Nevertheless, by the time transferral on to ex-GC metals had taken place, declining maintenance took its toll that led to locomotive performance being poor - timetabled services therefore suffering as a result.

Mr Goodman's selection of photographs diligently portrayed the Royal Scot Class to have been locomotives worthy of commendation. Accordingly, this reflected the sterling work they did on several other railway routes, including the period when their progressive withdrawal from traffic was taking place.

John Tuffs

APRIL 2000

Former Burton resident, Mr Patrick Webb, was welcomed to the Society to present a selection of photographs depicting railway operations that once existed in Burton-on-Trent and the surrounding area. Mr Webb, who now lives in North Wales, followed these slides by enthusiastically screening a collection of transparencies of the ever-changing railway scene on the Isle of Anglesey.

The large audience found interest in all aspects of the presentation, none more so than prior to the interval as monochrome photographs of the local area were screened by means of a paxiscope. Unfortunately, with this mode of screening problems do present themselves. For example, the image can become distorted, but with the sheer number of people in attendance, this method was the only practical way in which the photographs could be viewed concurrently by the entire audience.

During his railway career, Mr Webb worked at Derby but later transferred to Burton motive power depot. It was during this time he availed himself of many an opportunity to photographically record the general railway-operating scene. Now, close on a half century later, we are thankful we can share in appreciating railway history of the local area as a result of his foresight. Mr Webb has been away from this area for a considerable time now, but many local railway enthusiasts will recall that the *Burton Mail* published a series of photographs from his collection some years ago. Nonetheless, it was certainly to

everyone's advantage to have this further opportunity to view these interesting railway-orientated images once again.

Passenger and freight trains featured incorporating ordinary routine workings along with chartered specials as well as a number of static portraits. Amongst those highlighted were: photographs of the in-famous 'Tutbury Jinnie' at various locations along its five-mile route; the "Devonian" headed by Jubilee Class locomotives; and numerous freight trains and routine passenger services hauled by other classes of steam motive power, which, at the time provided enormous variety. Finally, photographic portraits depicting several locomotives at Burton Shed were also shown. However, quite possibly the most interesting images may have been those which showed special passenger trains traversing tracks in the district, normally the preserve of local freight trains. The latter was certainly highlighted with photographs depicting an "LCGB" special hauled by ex-LMS Ivatt 2-6-4 tank 41328. The ensemble comprising three carriages was caught by the camera: on the Dallow Branch at Shobnall; adjacent to the Midland Joinery Works at the branch's terminus of Bond End; and, finally, as it reversed along the tightly-curved track from Dale Street crossing extending towards Leicester Junction.

After the interval, Mr Webb gave a photographic insight into railway workings on the Isle of Anglesey. A selection of transparencies including day-to-day passenger and freight services together with numerous special trains were screened. The latter, produced a selection from the range of steam locomotives that are now preserved and certified to run on the main line. Interestingly, former Burton-based ex-LMS Class 5 4-6-0 45407 was one such example. This locomotive was pictured along with newly named Class 47 diesel 47849 'Cadeirlan Bangor Cathedral' hauling a specially chartered train that ran in conjunction with the Britannia Bridge 150 celebrations. The bridge itself links the Isle of Anglesey with the north Wales mainland.

MARCH 2000

An admirable picture of ex-MR 4-4-0 40633 parked in the yard at Burton 17B shed was a fitting introduction to Mr Peter Groom's slide presentation entitled 'Steam in the Midlands - A Black and White Show.' The show comprised a selection of good quality monochrome photographs that had been suitably copied to allow projection on to the large screen.

Mr Groom's choice included examples from a variety of steam locomotive classes that had been photographed at numerous locations in the East Midlands. Nonetheless, other forms of traction did feature too such as: the characteristic 'Fell' diesel; ex-SR Bullied 10202; an 0-6-0 diesel shunter; Metro-Vic Co-Bo D5705; and, the experimental gas-turbine locomotive 18000 pictured before its rebuilding into an electric locomotive. (Incidentally, both the latter two locomotives are now preserved).

Photographic locations included well-known places such as Derby, Toton, Nottingham, Newark, Grantham, Peterborough, Leicester, Melton Mowbray and Rugby. But lesser-known branch lines featured too - a couple of examples being the Uppingham to Seaton and the Southwell to Rolleston Junction branches.

Throughout the show, the presenter voiced many interesting anecdotes. This provided a complementary aspect and tended to explain why indeed a particular photograph had been taken. There was a story to accompany each photograph, some of which, the pictorial image was sufficient to portray the scene whilst others tended to need the expertly delivered narration to give an overall picture.

Mr Groom recognised there could well be examples screened during the show where relative information may be incorrect; therefore, at the start he said he would genuinely welcome any amendment the audience would like to make if it became necessary. 'It was the only way to learn being told when something was incorrect,' he said. Having been briefed beforehand that Society members and guests were extremely knowledgeable, appreciative and attentive gave the presenter optimism to expect a positive response when it was appropriate.

The presenter stated that many of the line-side photographs emanated from vantage points afforded him by possession of an official photographic permit. That privilege allowed him to stray onto the trackside of several British Railways main lines in the Midlands. Nevertheless, some of the gems screened were captured during official visits to railway installations: Beyer-Garratt 2-6-6-2T including 47967 and 47998, Class 3P 4-4-2 tank 41947 and 17B-based ex-LMS 'Reidinger' Crab No. 42825 at Toton depot. Continuing on to Nottingham, the Midland shed yard was host to ex-LMS Patriot 4-6-0 45532 'Illustrious' whilst at the former LNER depot at Colwick in 1963, a K2 2-6-0 was accompanied by a line of withdrawn locomotives. Still in Nottinghamshire, Class IP 0-4-4 tank 58065 and its auto-train graced the small shed at the quaint location of Southwell. Numerous ex-LNER examples including A4, A3 and V2 locomotives dominated the scene at Grantham Shed, a depot considered very important for services operating along the East Coast main line.

Main line activity witnessed an LI 2-6-4 tank on the ex-Great Central, a K2 2-6-0 61754 on a Birmingham to Cromer service near Melton Mowbray and, an array of ex-LMS Pacifics on express services south of Rugby on the West Coast main line. As a fitting epitaph, K3 2-6-0 61812 was pictured at Grantham station, to end a very interesting and enjoyable recall of the railway scene that existed in the late 1950s and early 1960s before mass rationalisation took place.

FEBRUARY 2000

The Society welcomed around 150 members and visitors to its February meeting for a video presentation of preserved steam operation on the main line during 1999. The large audience was not disappointed with the content of PSOV's show, in its ninth successive visit.

Dave Richards ably narrated the two-hour show and left the technical side in the capable hands of Karl Jauncey who monitored the projection equipment to ensure levels of optimum quality.

Yet again, the duo, showing the utmost of professionalism and expertise, presented an action-packed spectacle incorporating preserved steam operation over main line routes of the railway network. The PSOV evening has now become one of the highlights of the year for the Society.

1999 witnessed the return to service of freshly restored ex-GWR 4-6-0 4965 'Rood Aston Hall' and it was filmed several times at a variety of locations whilst in-charge of special workings. The final year of the old Millennium also allowed a considerable number of other preserved steam locomotives to show their paces on the main line. In this respect, the PSOV film crew captured amongst others 'Blue Peter', 'Clan Line', 'Canadian Pacific', 'Sir Nigel Gresley', and 'Green Arrow' together with 45110, 45407, 48773, 73096, 80079 and 80098, all of which are prime examples of those registered to haul special passenger trains.

Interestingly, ex-LMS 4-6-0 45407, which is now a regular performer on the main line, was formerly based at Burton Shed, being allocated here during the 1960s. This locomotive was seen at work on several routes as filming took place.

The review did not feature any steam operation through Burton, as had been the case in previous reviews, but did however include several clips taken a short distance away such as 45110 pictured at Hednesford on the Walsall to Rugeley line that runs through Cannock Chase. Another local image was of a steam special passing by the high level platform at Lichfield Trent Valley - the train was double-headed by a brace of 2-6-4 tanks 80079 and 80098. Editing of the footage made it appear that Merchant Navy Class 4-6-2 35005 'Canadian Pacific' had entered the low level platform at the same time but the latter had, in fact, stopped at the station about one hour earlier with a Blackpool bound excursion.

Several specials were filmed during the hours of darkness. These nocturnal scenes were very impressive - none more so than a Stanier Class 5 4-6-0 storming through Abergele station on the North Wales coast route. Just as impressive, though, was the sight of Stanier 8F 2-8-0 48773 as it reached the climax of a steady two mile climb along the 1 in 37 gradient of the Lickey Incline.

Nevertheless, the sight of Gresley A4 4472 'Flying Scotsman' heading a special up Saunderton Bank in Buckinghamshire at a more leisurely pace produced a sight not unfamiliar to that of an ordinary service train of the late 1950s or early 1960s. At that time the locomotive was itself a regular performer over the ex-Great Central route into the Capital.

In their quest to capture footage of preserved steam on video Dave and Karl trek thousands of miles each year. It was evident that in 1999 they continued to do so by the area of the United Kingdom they visited. Hopefully, steam will continue to run on the main line well into the 21st Century, but just how long remains to be seen! In the meantime, however, I'm convinced the pair will continue to undertake numerous breathtaking journeys in their never-ending search for steam.

John Tuffs

JANUARY 2000

Burton Railway Society greeted the new Millennium with an illustrative and informative slide presentation at the January meeting. The show, given by Mr Trevor Owen who had journeyed from Aberystwyth, showed railway operations as they appeared during the 1950s and 1960s around Britain and Ireland, when the steam locomotive was still a prominent part of the overall railway scene. Whilst steam traction dominated the selection of transparencies, diesel power did feature too, albeit to a much lesser extent. Furthermore, the presenter enlightened the audience with his complementary narration; this contributed towards each portrait being given a well-suited description.

The show began with a visit across the Irish Sea to take a look at the railway systems operating in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, before returning to mainland UK to continue the illustrative journey. The audience of around 100 people was certainly amused by the content of some images screened; several portraits required the pictorial evidence to prove the object really existed, especially those captured in Ireland. However, there were other pictures equally as exciting, such as the horse-drawn contraption taken at the Dane Moss Peat Railway, situated near to Macclesfield.

Returning to the mainland, the Anglo-Scottish 'journey' continued; this followed closely to the London to Aberdeen route. Nevertheless, several forays did occur, these deviations gracefully taking into account some railway tracks that no longer exist, such as the Midland and Great Northern, the Waverley, and the Great Central Railway. Moreover, a number of routes less well-known had been included too, as were the numerous branch lines and secondary lines that witnessed the passage of few trains, but equally as important. Fortunately, during his travels the intrepid and illustrious presenter had photographically recorded both regular services and special workings on these railway routes.

Mr Owen emphasised that his main objective had been to photograph steam locomotives at work, the latter unfortunately declining at an ever-increasing pace at the time. Consequently, he made many long journeys to capture these operations on film whilst it was still possible. The north east of England was an area that he visited shortly before steam power was superseded by diesel traction. Whilst in the area, he secured a number of superb images recording the decline. A prime example was the special trains that traversed some of the more obscure branch lines. Nonetheless, deviations from steam locomotives did occur from time to time - steam-operated water vessels forming delightful scenes instead. These vessels included steam tugs, paddle steamers and other types of watercraft.

As the show progressed, comments made by Mr Owen stirred the attention of the audience. On one occasion he stated that the reason for a hoard of people pictured clambering all over a locomotive was because some 'human power' was required to help in the process of turning the locomotive on the turntable. The locomotive, having already been replenished with water and coal, had been deemed as too heavy to use the turntable without help coming from another source, or so it was alleged! Another picture worthy of special mention was the steam-hauled charter train taken at a branch line terminus. During the process of running round its carriages in readiness for the return journey, the locomotive derailed on a set of points, completely marooning its rake of passenger rolling stock. As a consequence, the return journey could not continue for a considerable time, as firstly, the offending obstruction had to be cleared.

Inclement weather did not deter the presenter from any of his railway expeditions. Many of the excellent selection of transparencies had been recorded in less than favourable conditions. Therefore, the attentive audience was afforded many opportunities to vividly recall memories of this bygone era. More importantly, events had been photographically recorded that have subsequently allowed others to share in his memorable railway adventures. Had it not been for the ingenuity of individuals, like Mr Owen, an archive of an era of railway history could well have been lost forever.

John Tuffs