

December 2011

On his 10th visit to Burton Railway Society over the past 20 years, Les Nixon did not disappoint the 100-strong audience. The show was in fact the second part of his presentation entitled “45 Years of Railway Photography”. However, Les stated that although that title was the main theme, he was able to extend the time span to nearly 60 years by courtesy of the digital era and including a number of extra illustrations from his very early train-spotting days. The presentation, which contained images of steam and modern traction, had been carefully selected from his photographic achievements during that time span.

His photographic exploits took him to locations situated both on home territory and also abroad where vantage points were chosen to obtain maximum advantage. Perhaps it is fitting to highlight one his ‘extras’ in this introduction as the photograph concerned related to one of his local vantage points where he began his photographic career. In the early 1950s and only having a Kodak Brownie camera at his disposal, a much younger Les Nixon secured a very acceptable result, which depicted Stanier Class Jubilee No 45658 ‘Keyes’ in charge of a passenger train at Cudworth station. Later, he explained that this former Midland route was no longer in use and therefore the photograph had joined the ranks of an historical record. As the show progressed, the presenter certainly emphasised the importance of recording photographically railway infrastructure, motive power and other surrounding artefacts, taking into account the pace at which the railway environment was constantly transformed.

Les’s splendid presentation included photographs taken during his visits to other countries spread across the globe - Sri Lanka, France, east and west Germany, Kenya, Malaysia, India, the USA, Canada, the Lebanon and Taiwan, to name but a few. However the UK, which also included the Isle of Wight and the Isle of Man, completed the list of locations where he had carefully thought out where and how he could obtain the most successful outcome for his never ending commitment to obtain the best picture. Nevertheless, he was quick to point out that not every one of his attempts was indeed successful and that he had included some of those images in his selection to highlight the point.

The presenter had thoughtfully selected the images – not in any particular order, either chronologically or otherwise – to ensure that his presentation captured the audience’s attention for long periods. His eloquent and informative narration throughout contributed to his ultimate aim being achieved. Whilst it is not possible to go into detail about the content of each photograph, considering some 200 were screened, I have nevertheless selected some that in my opinion are worthy of special mention.

Starting off the first half of the show, the impressive signal gantry at the west end of Southampton Central station suitably framed a 1967 photograph depicting a Standard Class 5 heading a down train to Bournemouth whilst, waiting at the adjacent platform, was a Class 33 diesel in charge of a Bristol-bound service. Next was a photograph of the Royal Train taken at Valley on the Isle of Anglesey in 2003, the train’s motive power being none other than Stanier Class 4-6-2 No 46233 ‘Duchess of Sutherland’ – that being the only time since the end of steam the Royal Train had been steam-hauled on the national network.

During the show, Les highlighted a number of special events, such as the trip to Budapest in 1998, so he could attend the Hungarian 150 Celebrations. It was in the goods yard that he captured a splendid shot of German streamlined steam locomotive No 01 1102 as it posed majestically at the head of several passenger carriages. “It was a fabulous event and the entrance fee was a tremendous bargain at the equivalent of £1.50,” he said. As the show progressed, more mundane railway pictures were screened, including a run-of-the-mill shot of an ex-LMS 4F No 44097 passing Attercliffe Road station as it headed south towards Sheffield before reaching its destination of Derby.

Across the channel and into France, Les made special mention of capturing ex-BR Class 20 locomotives which, after withdrawal from UK service, had found further use on the continent. He

said that he had been delighted at the time of securing a shot of one such locomotive poking its nose-end out of the CFD [*Compagnie des chemins de fer départementaux*] engine shed at Autun, one of the locations near to where they regularly worked.

Back in the UK, it was interesting to view one of his very well thought out compositions - a nondescript Class 150 2-car diesel unit on the single track line near to Blackpool South. The picture comprised a backdrop of a section of the Pleasure Beach complex, black and gold painted ornamental railings, and, brickwork of surrounding buildings, all of which contributed to the creation of an excellent photograph, rather than a very mundane picture of a diesel train traversing a single track railway. I am sure most of the audience would have agreed that his thoughts regarding its composition had worked very well indeed! Another similar instance to that was his effort of an Inter City 125 High Speed Train speeding along the electrified line near Congleton *en route* to Manchester. In that picture, the sun highlighted the train and in the process created a golden glint along its entire length.

From the wide-ranging selection he had chosen, it was evident that the presenter was an opportunist and a very prolific photographer, always on the look out for securing a photographic record of some kind, especially any one-off event or incident that may have occurred from time to time. In that respect, an opportunity befell him in 1976 just west of Chinley station where he was on hand to photograph Class 40 diesel No 40044 which had been deliberately derailed to avoid a more serious incident. The picture depicted a Class 25 diesel hauling a rake of hopper wagons past the scene where breakdown cranes were already working to clear the aftermath of the unfortunate incident. The presenter commented that any similar incident today would have seen the close proximity taped off immediately in order to prevent any onlooker getting a closer look.

On several occasions during the show, Les mentioned that in his many decades of railway photography he had achieved optimum results without a train forming part of the overall scene. An example to illustrate that point was the picture of the semaphore signals close to the platform ends at Blackpool North station, where, at the most appropriate time, a rainbow appeared in the sky and as a result brought a different perspective to the photograph.

The human element will always bring interest into a photograph and it is therefore fitting that special note is made with regard to a picture taken at a local station in India. In the shot, a woman was pictured in the foreground carefully sweeping the ground as a metre-gauge Class YD steam locomotive stood awaiting departure in the background. This was another example of the photographer creating an impressive photograph by including the woman in the picture.

The first half of the show concluded with a photograph of a freight train in 1966 hauled by a Britannia Class locomotive as it stormed through Clifton & Lowther station situated south of Penrith that closed in July 1938.

After the break, Les continued the show with another carefully selected batch of transparencies, all of which contained social and historical interest. As had been the case during the first half, the transparencies were screened in the same format to ensure that audience interest was kept at an optimum level.

The transparency selected to bring the second half of the show into life fell to a 1968 photograph of another Britannia Class locomotive, this time No 70013 'Oliver Cromwell' (the last remaining locomotive of that class remaining in service at the time) pictured alongside a number of withdrawn BR Standard Class 5s that were resting on the shed yard at Stockport Edgeley. This was followed by a view of the freight yard at Rose Grove, where on a Saturday afternoon in 1967, the steam-hauled freight trains awaited departure to their respective destinations. That shot demonstrated that freight traffic in the north-west of the UK was still in much demand.

Earlier, I mentioned that the presenter had screened a photograph of a Stanier Jubilee passing through Cudworth station in the early 1950s. Well, approaching three decades later (in 1981), he secured a fine shot of a northbound special train hauled by the now preserved locomotive of that class, No 45690 'Leander', which incidentally had been a regular performer on that route in the 1950s and early 1960s. He remarked that the scene in the later photograph could no longer be recreated as the whole area had been transformed following the abandonment of this former Midland Railway route in 1988. The former tracks and surrounding area has been completely overgrown by vegetation as over the ensuing years nature had taken its course.

A journey across the Pennines in 1966 took the presenter to the old Manchester Central station where, once again, he used the infrastructure to create a splendid scene encompassing a Stanier Class 5 locomotive easing a rake of empty coaching stock beneath the elevated signal box. The signal box, which had replaced an earlier structure, was of a modern design and had been erected in a relatively unusual fashion in that it was placed upon stilts, which therefore gave signalling staff an improved view of the railway tracks in its vicinity.

The Derbyshire Peak District featured prominently with Buxton and the area around Peak Forest being amongst the regular haunts for the intrepid photographer. Amongst the examples screened, Stanier 8F No 48191 was pictured at Buxton Shed where it stood unprotected from the elements of inclement weather as a result of the shed roof having been removed for a reason unknown some years earlier. The removal therefore allowed the elements to penetrate into its confines, as clearly seen on that day. Still in north Derbyshire, the former Midland main line at Peak Forest was the location where the photographer captured freight workings. A Stanier Class 5 loco on a freight train provided a suitable example to highlight the quantity of workings in the area as it eased its train towards the now-closed station there. Sadly the route no longer carries passenger traffic but, at the time of the photograph, local passenger trains traversing the route between Derby and Manchester were still timetabled to make a stop there.

Several visits to the East Coast Main Line location of Little Ponton, south of Grantham, brought a variety of interesting examples, which included ex LNER A3 Pacific No 60066 'Merry Hampton' pictured on an up express (incidentally, one of the nameplates from this locomotive was sold to a resident of Derbyshire at an auction held in Derby some three days after Les's presentation to the society). Steam traction was in abundance there: ex LNER A1 Pacific No 60133 'Pommern' was pictured heading another London-bound express and a Class 55 Deltic diesel was screened with a Kings Cross-bound train, the latter was photographed after the elimination of steam traction on this route. Scenes at other ECML locations, such as Doncaster, Retford and London Kings Cross, featured too, where, following its arrival at the latter terminus station on a charter train, preserved Class A3 No 4472 'Flying Scotsman' was the subject of much attention by literally hundreds of spectators. The presenter told the audience that it was virtually impossible to obtain a photograph of the train there due to the vast numbers of spectators who had congregated near to the locomotive resting at the buffer stops. In order to overcome the situation, he said he had to initiate a different perspective; this was achieved after some careful thought, by observing what facilities were around. He repositioned some platform barrows that were parked nearby, by placing them upon one another, the result of which allowed a photograph being obtained from a different perspective - with the extra elevation a very satisfactory shot was achieved with an overall view of the crowd looking at the most famous steam locomotive in the world!

Les, for much of the duration of his decades of railway photography, has been a resident of South Yorkshire. Consequently, from that base he has been fortunate to undertake many strenuous journeys throughout the entire United Kingdom and beyond. These forays took him to numerous interesting locations in his search for photographic opportunities - his artistic skills playing a vital role to transform an ordinary picture into something special. Locations that I believe were certainly worthy of mention are: during a trip to Java, he captured a picture of a metre-gauge 2-8-8-2 DD52 Class locomotive No 52 03 in the process of being turned on the turntable with local children keen to assist; Cuba in 1998, where he found locomotive No1307 working at Mannalich Mill on the Industrial Sugar

Railway; Ullukisla, in Turkey where an American S.160 was pictured in 1975; and, Kenya in 1974, a shot of two 1953 Bagnall-built 2-8-2 steam locomotives on a freight train was the reward. Other foreign visits took in the Zillertalbahn in Austria, the railways in the former Yugoslavia, the Lebanon where a 0-8-2 rack tank featured, and the railways of South Africa, Europe, New Zealand, Canada, and the USA. As one expected, the British railway scene provided subjects for many of the transparencies.

The presenter brought laughter from the audience when he screened several non-railway photographs, all of which depicted unusual names of various establishments. The photographs he had accumulated over the years in the Far East of some of the wayside medical practices included: The Tan Dispensary, The Pile Specialist, The Lip Klinik, Klinik Wee, and Klinik Kok! He said that he had photographed thirty-three similar examples over the years.

Eventually the presentation came to a conclusion. It was not surprising therefore that Les once again, as he had done on previous visits, selected from his photographic archive, a transparency which contained something unusual. On this occasion, he chose his photograph of a 2-6-4 wood-burning tank locomotive pictured at the Sumatra town of Medan, in 1973. The picture depicted an enormous quantity of wood of all shapes and sizes, which had been stacked onto the locomotive. May be this picture could be described as one of the most bizarre railway scenes to be seen!

On behalf of Burton Railway Society, I would like to extend a personal thank you to Les for sharing with members and guests his excellent selection of railway-orientated transparencies that he has accumulated over the past sixty years. I am confident any future visit will be well received and we can therefore look forward to viewing another sample from his extensive photographic collection at some point in the future. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable and entertaining evening.

John Tuffs

November 2011

The November meeting saw David Cross making a welcome return to Burton on his fourth visit. This time he took as his theme "Paddington to the West". Starting at Brunel's HQ, we enjoyed views of 1013 'County of Dorset' and double-headed Castles. Down at Westbourne Park, Derek, (Cross senior), demonstrated that he didn't mind pointing his camera at diesels. A lengthy sojourn at Iver included one shot with three trains in view, and, in Sonning Cutting, there was a rare 1961 shot of 90630 on an eastbound freight. An appropriate slide here was of 1002 'County of Berkshire' and Warship diesels D804 'Avenger', 809 'Champion' and 814 'Dragon' demonstrated their looks pre-yellow nose ends.

Arriving at Westbury, we were amused by a Hymek using an Esso petroleum tank wagon as a barrier wagon between it and a gunpowder wagon! Derek next positioned himself near the Bathampton Loop and obtained a 1958 shot of ex-works Hall 5972 'Olton Hall' on a running in test train to Bristol. I wonder what he would think now that it is painted maroon and sports the name 'Hogwarts Castle'! One of the original Warships D604 'Cossack' also made an appearance. A lovely photograph in Bath featured a cricket match in the foreground whilst in the background a Warship was heading towards Bristol and steaming along in the opposite direction was 1000 'County of Middlesex' hauling green carriages. Sidney Gardens just had to feature and blue-liveried Warship D831 provided the honours. Sadly Network Rail plan to fence in this classic location.

In 1963, an RCTS special to Avonmouth attracted Derek's attention. Shots here included: a clean Grange 6841 'Marlas Grange' and a Port of Bristol industrial Peckett; and, a view of the dock shed with at least six Pecketts and a policeman complete with bicycle clips making sure the photographers behaved themselves. Son David's shipping interests came to the fore and we were informed that the ship in the background "Colorado Star" belonged to the Blue Star Line. Next it was to Box for an

H.S.T., adorned in its first livery, leaving the famous tunnel. A 1973 shot of Bristol Bath Road Depot featured six classes of diesels: Hymek, 50, DMU, Warship, Peak, and a 47.

Then it was off for a short excursion to the S & D: 41296 at Highbridge; 40698 'Binegar'; Midford with 34043 'Combe Martin'; Midford Valley 53808, and 40700 double-heading with 44558; the last day of services 34006 'Bude' and 34057 'Biggin Hill'; 53810 leaving Bath; 40564 piloting 34041 'Wilton'; Western visitor 7023 'Penrice Castle' near the shed; 'Radstock' 47316; superb gardens at Midsommer Norton with 92204 and 47275; Cole – 3206; and, finally, Norton Colliery with Peckett 'Lord Salisbury'!

Back to the Western main line where the red cliffs at Dawlish Warren provided a backdrop to a motor rail service, whilst in Dawlish itself, David indulged with one of his own photographs of 5051 (now known as 'Drysllwyn Castle') taken in 1985. Further locations included: Newton Abbot; Aller Junction with filthy 7813 'Freshford Manor; Liskeard; and, finally, 305 miles from Paddington we reached Penzance.

David chose to return via the Southern, so a start was made with Beattie Well Tank 30585 at Dunmere on the Wenford Bridge Branch, and 5557 with 30586 at Wadebridge. Moving over to Braunton, we witnessed '222 Squadron' at Morteheo. Then it was off to Weymouth to admire a shot of very clean, green-liveried 73029. Several shots at Upwey Wishing Well Halt featured and included 35007 'Aberdeen Commonwealth' banked by a Class 33 diesel, and, 80146 on parcels. The scene is much changed today, but back in Derek's day he relaxed between trains by using a portable fold up picnic chair and this featured in the foreground of a shot of D6509! On to the New Forest and Brockenhurst where, sadly, motive power for the "Bournemouth Belle" was D1921. Poole produced D6501 and Bournemouth West revealed 35027 'Port Line' being banked out from the station by 76009. A detour across to Portsmouth Harbour Station and my favourite West Country 34002 'Salisbury' shone beautifully in the October light of 1965 with the "Vectis Farewell" tour. This was followed immediately by another of my favourites, Merchant Navy 35028 'Clan Line', but in early preservation days on the Longmoor Military Railway and with the Merchant was, of course, 34023 'Blackmore Vale'.

Over at Southampton was 34015 Exmouth and, by the art deco signal box and the famed nine-armed gantry, was 34006 'Bude'. (Strange to think that this loco once worked through Burton and Gresley!). Nelson 30856 'Lord St. Vincent' also appeared and was framed by the signal gantry. Moving up to Worting Junction, we witnessed named-standard 73113 'Lyonnesse' before moving on for several shots around the Battledown flyover, amongst those was 34090 'Sir Eustace Missenden - Southern Railway' going over the top. At Worting box, water was being delivered courtesy of a locomotive with 30850 'Lord Nelson' himself drifting underneath the pneumatic signal gantry. At Brookwood, later to be preserved 34046 'Braunton' appeared - in those days it just had a nameplate, and today it has a crest to go with it. We were nearing journey's end with 35025 'Brocklebank Line' at Weybridge, red-painted D869 'Zest' with a yellow end at Esther, and 35024 'East Asiatic Company' in streamlined form and painted blue.

Having drawn up at the buffers at Waterloo for the 10 o'clock deadline, it was time to thank David for a wonderful evening, not forgetting his late Father Derek who had the foresight to go out and about to take the images that so richly entertained us. Three members of the audience had made the long journey from Cheshire especially to see David's show and he was able to spend time with them whilst the tidying up took place. He also signed a copy of his latest book for them.

Mark Ratcliffe

October 2011

On 27th September 1935, York station witnessed the passing of the inaugural run of the “Silver Jubilee” express, the iconic streamliner of the pre-war age: forty years later to the day, another piece of railway history was written in York with the opening of the National Railway Museum (NRM) by the Duke of Edinburgh. The NRM is arguably the finest railway museum in the world and the evening’s presenter was one of its volunteers, Rob Tebbits.

Rob introduced himself as a native of Warwick with strong affections for the Great Western Railway, having been brought up on a diet of “Kings” and “Castles”. His first slide showed Warwick Castle – the building – followed by one of 4081 ‘Warwick Castle’, the locomotive looking a sad sight having been withdrawn on Carmarthen Shed in 1963, which Rob had visited with a friend and his father, who appeared on the slide.

Rob began as a railway volunteer early in his life - whilst he was still at school – on the fledgling Festiniog Railway in North Wales, which, at that time, ran from Portmadoc to Tan-y-Bwlch. A Fairlie loco was shown at the latter location. In 1972, Rob’s work took him to live in North Yorkshire for two years before he settled in York, one year before the Shildon Cavalcade and the opening of the NRM. This gave him the opportunity to work for the Museum on a volunteer basis, which he did from day one in September 36 years ago.

The 150th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway four weeks earlier had been attended by Rob and we saw some slides of locos and coaches making their way north to Shildon. These included: 8233 double-heading 43106 with coaches from the Severn Valley Railway; and the incongruous sight of 0-6-0 PT 7752 heading a mixed selection of stock on the down fast line! An interesting slide taken on Rob’s doorstep, so to speak, was of 9220 on the “Dick Turpin” railtour of 10th July 1977. It was returning from Scarborough to Leeds, for it was shown passing the slotted ex-NER caution signal near Haxby, which survived *in situ* until October 1984 and now graces the foyer at York station.

It was also during 1977 that the Derwent Valley Light Railway, which at that time ran from York (Layerthorpe) to Dunnington, started hiring steam locos for some of its services. 790 ‘Hardwicke’ and 69023 ‘Joem’ were depicted on these workings, on a line that amazingly retained its independence throughout its 68-year history from 1913 to 1981.

Throughout the evening, Rob was to mention many people with whom he had worked at the NRM. Some were well known, others not so, but he paid tribute to all of them without whose dedication many of the sights of steam locos on the mainline since 1968 could not have been possible. Some of them appeared on slides including John Bellwood and Bill Harvey.

One of our presenter’s favourite locos was 46229 ‘Duchess of Hamilton’ and he showed a selection of slides of its restoration to mainline running, in which Rob had a hand. He explained that NRM volunteers enjoyed richly deserved ‘perks’ including, on occasion, riding of the footplate during mainline running. Being from Warwick, Rob noted that on 4th May 1985, 46229 was to haul an excursion from Sheffield to Marylebone through his home town. He managed to get a footplate ride on this section of line on which a top speed of 86½ mph was reached, when steam specials at that time were limited to 70! Later in the trip, 82 mph was attained at High Wycombe. While the loco was at Marylebone, it had been parked next to a garage called “Hamilton Motors” and when a picture of this was featured in the railway press, the caption read – “She certainly does!”

Being a volunteer at the NRM also gave Rob ample opportunity to photograph many rare and “one-off” visits by locos to various parts of the site. One pleasing example was of 990 ‘Henry Oakley’ in steam alongside a class 47 diesel by the diesel depot. Another one was of 925 ‘Cheltenham’ in ghost-like white livery being prepared for Rainhill in 1980. This loco was also shown many years earlier (1962) at Ashford Shed before heading its well publicised railtour to Darlington which it double-headed with an ex-Midland Railway 2P 4-4-0.

Of course, any show related to the NRM could not omit to mention 4478 'Flying Scotsman' and this was shown in its pre-1990s state in LNER livery with a single chimney. We were informed that the NRM had no idea what a poor condition the loco was in when it was bought for the nation and its protracted overhaul continues at the East Lancs Railway at Bury.

One successful railtour operation that has run in conjunction with the NRM is the "Scarborough Spa Express". Rob said that no less than 34 different steam locos had been used in its 30-years of existence, and a fair selection of these were seen during the evening.

Of course, it is not only steam locos that the NRM is concerned with. Rob reminded us, that all being well, next year should see the return of its flagship diesel 55.002 'The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry' to the mainline.

For his final slide of the night, Rob returned to his roots, showing a "King" at work near Warwick in the 1960s. This concluded the evening's entertainment – a thoroughly enjoyable show with an informative commentary and excellent slides that highlighted the working of the NRM and its volunteers to the audience.

Paul Forbes

September 2011

Wednesday 21st September saw our youngest Committee member, Adam Crick, make his debut as presenter for the evening. His chosen title of "Today's Railways" aptly summed up his total interest in railways with preserved steam, modern traction and scenes from abroad. His aim was to provide something to please everybody and he most certainly succeeded.

He started the first session with a shot of the bridge remains into Marstons Brewery that whilst still spanning the canal, no longer carries trains and then we were off to Little Burton Bridge for a view of Black "5" 45305 on a special. Adam declared a particular fondness for the Class 60 diesel locos and several featured in the presentation. Those passing over the Trent on the Stapenhill Viaduct with the tube train working was a shot well worth the wait. Adam rarely uses computer manipulation programmes such as "Photoshop", but was candid when he had cause to do so. The view of A4 'Bittern' masquerading as 'Dominion of New Zealand' at Elford was a case in point. The going away view with a parked car "removed" was a classic image. Similarly the scene of 5643 on the Llangollen Railway would have been spoiled by the blue aggregate bags; Adam's solution was to turn the photo into a black and white image.

Memorable images for me were: 5043 leaving Birmingham; the front end of 34070 with the ACE headboard beautifully framed by condensing steam; and 7812 at Bewdley with a man in a blue foreman's style coat walking by the engine. Adam, not having witnessed the 1960s first hand, often strives to reproduce this era and he succeeded very well with the latter shot and also with a similar composition at Llangollen. He proudly shared his view of 3205 on the Victoria Bridge and this was his first published shot appearing in the Severn Valley magazine. Similarly he was delighted when his image of Pacer 142001 at Teignmouth was chosen for use in the Society calendar.

Adam also declared his admiration for that inspirational photographer Colin Gifford and his attempt with 3738 at Didcot I feel would have drawn praise from the great man himself. Similarly I think Mr G would have liked Mr Crick's shot of early morning on Tutbury & Hatton station - no train in the shot, just an atmospheric composition.

Narrow gauge and industrial preserved sites were also featured. The "top heavy" signals on the Gartell Railway provided a talking point and the orange clad men working away on another preserved

S & D site, reminded us all of the debt we owe to people who give up their spare time to ensure we can enjoy a day out.

The second half of Adam's programme started with a trip he had just completed with his father to Germany, France and Luxembourg. We all laughed at the gentle fun he made of his father Malcolm's obsession with making sure he was well provided for, but there again four bags was a bit "over the top!"

Trams at Llandudno were briefly show cased. Then it was time for the fortunate shots – 66113 and 66187 passing one and another in different directions at Claymills and three Great Western locos, 1450 and 3850 with 6990 in the middle, at the south end of Loughborough Station. A photograph taken at on the newly opened line to Cauldon Lowe was taken on Adam's 18th birthday, the best way ever of celebrating your 18th he declared, not for him going out and getting blind drunk! Finally, I must mention his shot of an HST at Sheffield, the unit was in colour, but the background was black and white – very, very effective.

What a variety of well-composed, sharp images this young man has for his age - our youngest presenter ever. Well done Adam and congratulations Malcolm on a successful case of indoctrination!

Mark Ratcliffe

September 2011

September saw the first visit to the Society of John Morten from Buxton with a slide show entitled "The Midland Through the Peak and Buxton to New Mills" which was a series of views taken mainly by John or his father from as early as the 1920s to some latter day shots of the 21st Century.

The show began with a shot of 5585 'Hyderabad' leaving Derby for the north and we were treated to a series of photos heading gradually north along the line through the Peak, arriving at Buxton for the half time break. There was a wide range of motive power from 0-4-4 tanks to Jubilees to Crabs and even a Garratt, dmu and the prototype main line diesel 10000 at Millers Dale in what looked like torrential rain. Of interest was the shot of part of Cromford station which has been converted to holiday accommodation, and the first occupants were members of the Arkwright family whose ancestors had so much involvement in Cromford and its industrial history.

Memorable to the reviewer were: shots of the Royal Train hauled by a Patriot; the series of views of Monsal Dale and its viaduct; and views of Millers Dale station showing how busy it was. A colour picture of a Crab leaving Buxton was also excellent. But the outstanding shot for me was of a 4-4-0 entering Darley Dale station in, I think, 1938, with a very young John Morten on the platform being sheltered by his brother. All the way through this journey (and also that in the second half) the real star of the show was the superb scenery the line passed through – it was truly majestic.

The second half was another photographic journey, this time north to as far as New Mills with interludes at many stations and tunnels as well as the huge quarry and its railway connections at Tunstead. There was a shot of the Midland Pullman on one of its first runs on 4 July 1960. This was followed by a series of images showing both steam and diesel operating around Tunstead with 8Fs prominent, although there was an excellent shot of a Class 60 in a very busy scene there. There were other very good shots as well: a Metro Cammell dmu at Peak Forest Junction (in colour); and, a Jubilee approaching Dove Holes Tunnel where everything came right for the photographer - there was even a rainbow! Another picture appreciated by all was that of rebuilt Patriot 'Sir Robert Turnbull' at Chinley North. The most interesting shot for the reviewer was that of MR 4-2-2 No 614 on Chinley turntable with a busy Chinley station in the background. This was taken in late Midland Railway days and showed the joy of Edwardian rail travel to good effect. At the other end of the scale there was a shot of 'New Brunswick' with Chinley station in the background with *all* platforms occupied,

followed by a more recent photo of (I think) a Sprinter at the same spot, but you could hardly tell there was a station there at all!

So, a most enjoyable evening was had by the 70 or more attendees who showed their appreciation in the normal way. Incidentally, John has a fair amount of video that he is trying to change to digital format. That would be worth seeing, wouldn't it?

Dave Hook

August 2011

Grateful thanks were expressed to Rodger Smith, for stepping in to ensure that the booked show could take place, this was following the sad death of Rodger's brother in law Geoffrey Kingscott who was originally scheduled for the presentation. Rodger provided a fitting tribute to Geoff's work in the Lost Railways series.

The first line to be reviewed was the Leicester (West Bridge) and Swannington Railway which opened on 17 July 1832, the first railway in the Midlands. Appropriately the show started with a view of the recreated stretch of railway and signal at West Bridge itself. Moving on to the main feature of the line, Glenfield and its famous (or infamous) tunnel, we were treated to past shots of 58143 and its later replacement, 78028, emerging from its tight confines - a most vivid contrast to the photographs of the current non-railway situation. Rodger informed us that George Stephenson himself drove the official train on the first day that carried passengers in open coal wagons. The chimney was knocked off on entering the tunnel and the directors and invited guests were covered in soot. George then made an unofficial stop at a nearby brook so that they could wash themselves clean. After 1847 two major changes were made to the line when the Midland Railway took it over. A link was made to the east from Desford to Leicester via Knighton Junction and to the west from Coalville to Burton on Trent via Ashby de la Zouch. Passenger services between West Bridge and Desford were withdrawn in 1928. The line west of Knighton Junction is now freight only, so by definition of the Lost Railways books, it too is a lost line.

The second line to be reviewed was the Leicester section of the Swadlincote loop and Rodger illustrated the scant remains: a bridge under Moira Road and the abutments in Occupation Road.

The third line, the Charnwood Forest Railway, was often referred to as the "Bluebell Line". This was a 10¼ mile length running from a junction with the Ashby and Nuneaton Joint line near Coalville to Loughborough Derby Road and was operated by the LNWR. The line was never profitable and for 24 years it was in the hands of the Receiver. Despite adding three primitive halts and introducing a steam passenger coach service in 1907, passenger trains ceased to run in 1931, but freight services continued until 1963. Various parts of the line are now public footpaths and thankfully the best part still remains, a grand viaduct at Grace Dieu which can be both walked over and under. The embankment there provides a grandstand view of the remains of the 13th century Augustinian Nunnery. In Loughborough itself, a footpath follows on or close to the track alignment almost to the centre of the town. There the line is commemorated by the Station Hotel, the old goods shed, and various streets with railway-related names.

The Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway was then examined. This was a joint venture between the Midland Railway and the LNWR. The line, which ran from Nuneaton Abbey Street to Overseal with a branch from Shackerstone to Coalville, opened in 1873. Mention was made of the 'ghost' line from Stoke Golding to Hinckley where track was laid, but revenue-earning trains never ran over it. In 1922, Shackerstone was a busy passenger station with five trains a day each way running through it between Ashby and Nuneaton, one return train between Burton and Nuneaton, and the steam coach service between Shackerstone and Loughborough. The branch line closed in 1964 and the main line was severed at both ends in 1969. Thankfully, a part of the line has been restored under preserved railway status known as the Battlefield Line. In 1992, the first train for 25 years steamed into Shenton station. We saw much evidence of remains of the line, both track and buildings with Measham featuring prominently. From Measham, there is a path all the way to Overseal which keeps on, or close to, the original track alignment.

Then to the Midland Counties Railway's route between Leicester and Rugby which opened in 1840 as part of the main line to London. However, in 1857, it was down-graded to a branch line serving four intermediate rural stations. The line closed in 1962. There are not so many places of interest surviving on this line. One of note is the one-mile Jubilee Walk in Leire, a village that never had a station. This railway crossed the A5, but in my journeys down this road, the crossing gates were unfortunately never closed and I have a dim memory of the line being used for storing wagons after closure. Rodger related that a 2005 report stated that 74% of the track-bed remained intact, 11% was occupied by buildings, and 10%, mainly cuttings, had been used for landfill and was now returned to agriculture.

The Joint line constructed by the Great Northern Railway and the LNWR ran north to south from Bottesford to Hallaton. A western branch from Marefield to Leicester was solely a GNR line. The lines were an obvious case for closure with little in the way of centres of population being served. Passenger trains went well before Beeching and with higher quality iron ore being readily available from abroad, the iron ore quarries closed and the line was no longer required. Up to 1962, it was heavily used for summer holiday trains to Skegness from Belgrave Road and how I wished I'd have travelled the route. Twenty-thousand people on 72 trains left from Leicester during one season. In those days of community spirit, families from whole streets from Leicester used to go on holiday together. Peter Wardle added some of his recollections of the Belgrave terminus having worked in the goods depot there in the early sixties. Rodger had some interesting views for us to look at. These included: a sign in Bottesford proclaiming a £200 fine for trespassing on the railway - very interesting seeing that no railway infrastructure could be seen; the magnificent 13 arched viaduct at Marefield; the derelict station at Lowesby (I should now say the not so derelict station at this location, because Rodger's photo taken four-years ago showed it with builders hard at work restoring it to its former glory ready for use as a family home); a view of the derelict signal box at Ingarsby; and a painting of the station, all of which helped revive memories in this area,

Thus to end at the Great Central - poignant photographs showed remains of Leicester Central, with illustrations from the preserved section in Loughborough relieving the gloom - despair, neglect, back to nature and the bright seeds of preservation.

Thank you Rodger, it was a most entertaining evening and Geoff would have been proud.

Mark Ratcliffe

July 2011

Wednesday 6th July saw John Bagshaw and his nephew Kurt give a show entitled "UK Railway Photography - the Digital Way". This proved to be a large collection of their images from 1983 to the present day (almost literally) of the preserved railway scene, on the main line and private lines, and both steam and diesel. All of the images were of very good quality and some were excellent.

There was a scare at the start of the presentation when, just as Mark was making the introductions, John disappeared out of the door in haste, but it was not stage fright, he had left some of his notes in the car and soon returned, albeit a bit breathless!

First there was an audio visual presentation of a variety of digital pictures taken since 2004 which could not really be categorised. There were shots with human interest, steam and diesel and even one of a pony with a train in the background – but all good quality stuff. The highlight for me was that of the L&Y Pug and its reflection at Goole Docks.

The second feature was that of slides taken between 1983 and John's advent to digital in 2004 but scanned from the original slides so they could be stored and shown digitally. With such a long time span there was a rich variety of motive power, including some almost forgotten locos such as 'Burton Agnes Hall' and 'City of Wells'. Memorable items for the reviewer were: those shots at Derby of

'Clan Line' in bright sunshine but with heavy storm clouds brewing; 'Britannia' at Ely in amazing lighting conditions; and the superb glint of 34027 'Taw Valley' at Llanddulas on the North Wales Coast. There was also a section on the Settle and Carlisle with a miscellany of locos, finishing with a silhouette of 5407 on Ribbleshead Viaduct which was quite stunning. For this shot, John told us he was accompanied by Dave Richards of PSOV fame and both went a*** over t** trying to reach the vantage point in time!

Taking us to the interval was another audio visual (AV) presentation of what John called "Different Stuff". In here were a close ups of lamps, smoke effects, flowers and all manner of unusual railway views. We also discovered that at the end of the rainbow was O4 63601 seen on the GCR. This was a superb collection of shots.

The second half began with another AV selection of views this time of main line trains followed by a longer presentation of images taken from to June 2010 to July 2011 (yes, July – one shot of 6201 was taken on the Sunday before the show). Outstanding were: two shots of the T9 on the Bodmin and Wadebridge (one early morning and one afternoon); the Dukedog on the South Devon Railway; Peaks at Swanwick; and some very good night shots including a Deltic at Bury. Mention should be made of John's prowess on "Photoshop". There was a photo of a cat walking along a rail – and he put a hi-vis vest on it. Also he took a picture of 'Duke of Gloucester' on the Churnet Valley in appalling conditions, so John converted it to Black and White but retouched the loco and coaches into colour – it was very effective.

To finish, John showed us two more AV presentations, one a plethora of high quality views of the West Somerset Railway, and then about five minutes of nocturnal images. These were excellent, especially the diesel ones (praise indeed from a committed steam man) with the most memorable being of Class 20s at Staveley

So, to sum up, a most enjoyable evening - excellent photography, an informative but not intrusive commentary - one of the better visits we have had in recent times. I think Mark had better book John again!

Dave Hook

June 2011

Approximately 45 members turned up for the return visit of David Court and Mike Notley. David started the evening by relating his part as the Chairman of the organisation proposing to build an entirely new LNER P2 locomotive. As a passionate supporter for all things Doncaster, David outlined how the new build would be constructed in his home town using the ex-Jarvis Rail building in Marshgate. This he hoped would become an offshoot of the NRM and he contended that it was a perfect site with it already being rail-connected. Doncaster in the past, he asserted, had not been interested in its rail heritage and he cited a past proposal to place a B1 locomotive on a road roundabout which had come to naught because of lack of local political interest.

He said that money was available for the frames to be cut which, when assembled, could be then displayed in the NRM and also in Doncaster to stimulate further interest. Driver Court pointed out that the six original locos were all slightly different and therefore the original drawings would not be compatible with computerised models. Five-and-a-half million pounds, (at today's prices), was the figure quoted for completion and the engine could be running in ten years time, should funding be available. The boiler, we were informed, would be made in the UK. David told us that the Chairman of Doncaster Rovers Football Club, John Ryan, was a keen and interested supporter.

The A1 Society had in the past stated that its next project would also be a P2, but a different variant to David Court's group. Mark Allatt of the A1 group was stated to be interested in a joint cost saving

approach for the major components, but obviously the main thrust for the A1 group must be for it to get 'Tornado' back in good working order, so its interest in a P2 has taken very much a back seat. An eight-coupled locomotive is quite a "beast" and turning the engine would be a major issue: it couldn't for example be turned on the triangle at York. Mike Notley raised a salient point regarding work for the locomotive when it wasn't being used on Network Rail track. He said it was too big for use on most preserved railways and the logical choice, the Great Central, was a long way off from being re-connected to the main line.

The members present raised £56.20 from a collection towards the P2 funds which David gratefully received.

David then moved on to some past main line trips and made mention of a very fast trip with Deltic loco 'The Green Howards'. The speed indicator was broken and Driver Court covered the distance between Peterborough and Kings Cross in 47 minutes with 12 coaches in tow. An exhausting trip for him as a fireman occurred on a March to York working with 9F 92036 which gobbled all the coal available. Whilst a favoured engine was 78023 which replaced aging J50s, David rounded off his talk by describing his progress through the links from pilot working to main line trips.

Mike then took over to describe how to go about timing trips on the mainline. He advised the purchase of Quail Maps (these show which side of the track the mile posts are on) and a book of gradient profiles. Using a stop watch, a rough idea of speed is gained by dividing the number of seconds taken between quarter mile posts and dividing into 900, thus 15 seconds into 900 = 60m.p.h. For advanced timing Mike recommended the purchase of a GPS set up at approximately £65. He told us that the booked timing for Voyagers between Derby and Burton was 9 minutes 20 seconds - the fastest time he has recorded was 8 minutes 50 seconds.

With time running out, some swift questions revealed that his locomotive of the year was 5043 and that James May's Jaguar beat 'Tornado' to Edinburgh by seven minutes and this happened only because a local train was turned out into the path of 'Tornado' as it approached the end of its journey. We were told that another race could happen next year - so that is something to look out for.

It was a fascinating evening and we would have liked to have heard more from Mike, the lad from "Chadd" [Chaddesden], but the clock was against us.

Mark Ratcliffe

June 2011

Well, it must be June, 'cos it's cold, raining and it is Railway Quiz time!

Once again, as is their wont, 30+ stalwarts from the length and breadth of the country, (well, Leicester, Coventry, Derby, Swadlincote and other odd exotic places), assembled at Marston's Club on the traditional June club night, to be beguiled, bamboozled and bedevilled by that ace of quizmasters, Dave Hook.

Watching events from a point of safety (at the rear of the hall and handy for the bar or a quick escape - whichever was needed), I was struck by how much over the years that the quizmaster has grown to look more and more like a rather roughened version of Bamber Gascoigne or even a harder version of Magnus Magnusson! Mind you, I don't remember those worthies ever having to wear the hi-viz vest, though given the set of questions, it was a high risk event!

Initial excitement came before the 'off' itself - who had put his name in the hat twice, one asks? Once this problem had been overcome, and John Tuffs drafted in to make up a quartet, the quiz began.

Dave Hook had already intimated that this would be his final year of invoking the wrath of the microphone on the stalwart quizzers. He has grandly performed for eleven-years in this capacity, which includes assembling the questions, and it gets progressively more difficult to introduce fresh and interesting material into this event. So right at the beginning, on a serious note, a big thank you to Dave from the Society and the quiz participants over the years who have more than enjoyed his efforts and a good night out.

As a first round of the 21st consecutive Railway quiz, and to commemorate those eleven-years of tenure, there were ten questions taken from past years of this quiz. Questions were varied, ranging from: what was the name of a V2 wheel arrangement? (Prairie – got that one!), to the location of Inch Garve Pier? (Forth Bridge), what was unique about Boness station on Lake Windermere? (it only served lake boats), the official colour of LNWR locos? (Blackberry Black), and 84029 was the final loco from which works? (got that too – Darlington).

However, question 3 created the first furore of the evening when the official answer was challenged from the floor. The question being: what was the shed location of the last ex LMS Compound in service? The answer was given as Monument Lane. Upstanding member protested that this should be Derby - but quickly sat down when threatened with the £10 note friendly fine! Excitement so early!

Having set the tone for the evening, Round 2 was announced as “Railway Relations”, which ranged from real life characters such as Dugald & Peter Drummond (brothers), who was Dorothy Mather married to? (HA Peppercorn - shouldn't it have been H A Mather?), who was HA Ivatt's son-in-law? (OV Bulleid). There was also a sneaky one – a husband and wife on narrow gauge? (The Count and Countess being the required answer). And we also learnt that Bob Reid and Robert Reid were not related - even more sneaky!

Round 3 came in as “Scene from the Station” - from which stations could specific buildings be seen? Examples were: Taylor & Challon? (Snow Hill), J & C Evans Maltings? (Lichfield Trent Valley – a generous half mark being given for a Lichfield City answer – Dave must have been feeling really mellow to be that generous!), Birmingham Racecourse? (Bromford Bridge), and it was surprising how some of the local contestants were bemused by: Roberts and Birch later to be called Robirch? (at one time regularly entertaining passengers on Burton station's Platform 2 to the sight of porcine carcasses swinging past a small window).

Round 4 was announced as “Religious Connections”, and given the looks on some of the faces, not many had been to church last Sunday. Revolving around loco names, examples: the Paignton and Dartmouth 2-8-2T? (Goliath), 62686? (The Fiery Cross), 37906? (Star of the East), 60847? (St.Peter's School, York AD 627), 45623? (Palestine), and 30913? (Christ's Hospital) – I'm sure you get the drift.

The picture round came in at Round 5. In glorious Technicolor, from Dave's UK wanderings with camera, showed us cast iron NER ironwork from York station (easy!), the clock in Derby station car park, surmounted by the Midland Griffon – even easier, but then the level of difficulty increased until the final picture of Burton station from under the bridge. Lichfield Trent Valley wasn't too bad, but I'm sure picture 7 was a night shot of Porto Ferrario harbour, even down to three blue rowing boats in the water, but if the questionmaster says it's Sheffield, then Sheffield it has to be, I suppose.

A beer break having been allowed before round 6, it was realised why this was essential, with a round on “Western Namers” - the class of diesel hydraulics so beloved by the questionmaster on regular occasions. Thoughts turned to that well known song of the fifties - was it Teresa Brewer who sang something like:

“To know, know, know them
Is to love, love, love them
Just to hear them growl

Makes my life worthwhile”

or something on those lines? Not a round for the non-Western region men, though guesses helped with – Western Swearing? (gotta be Western Trooper), JT Kirk’s machine? (Western Enterprise), a Western Tour Company? (Western Pathfinder - my mate got that one), and Western could be 12 inches? (which was obviously Western Foot, but no, it turned out to be Western Ruler. And there were others of similar note.

Moving swiftly on, Bamber, - sorry, Dave, came up with a round of “Railway Numerical Palindromes”. Shock, horror from the floor – was this a technical round? I thought a Palindrome was where we used to go dancing when I was a young squaddie: it seems I was confused between the Weymouth Palais and the Devizes Hippodrome, until it was explained that a Palindrome was the same spelt forwards or backwards, but in this case it applied to numbers. Read on, and you’ll see how this works.

Opening question: a named LMS Black 5? (answer, 45154 - reads the same forwards as backwards – simple, yes? Also included were: a streamlined GWR steam loco? (5005 ‘Manorbier Castle’), a Burton-based Crab? (42824), an early mainline diesel loco? (10001), and the 32nd diesel shunter built? (13031) – simple, as I said, eh?

Round 8 was entitled “The One and Only”, and as the title suggests, questions were based on unique individuals such as locos and classes. Question 1 asked: what was the only class of GWR engines to have outside Walschaerts valve gear as standard? (15xx). In the same vein: what was the only unnamed BR Britannia loco? (70047), what was the name of the only member of the Class 89 electrics? (‘Avocet’), and the 0-10-0 loco of the MR? (58100 or 2219 in LMS days).

A review of the scores took place after round 8. A tight finish looked on the cards with a number of tables in contention, as they rounded the Tattenham Corner of the quiz into Round 9 which was headed as “Cars”. Questions and included: the name of a GWR 4-2-2 broad-gauge loco? (‘Rover’), the name of the Shropshire & Montgomery loco? (‘Gazelle’), the name of a GW Castle class? (‘Spitfire’), and multi-answer availability from a question on the Western diesels? (‘Cavalier’, ‘Vanguard’ or ‘Viscount’). You get the picture?

And so, with not a dry eye in the hall, we arrived at the final round. Dave Hook bowed out with his favourite cryptic setting ... “What would you get if ...” - always designed to give groans of admiration (?) from the assembled players, and this was to be no different.

So, what would you get if: you had 70017 with shed 1D? (Bow and Arrow, 1D being Devon’s Road, Bow); D803 was on 17B? (Burton Albion); 70022 double-headed with 60163? (2 Tornados); and, a Lichfield station and 70016? (a TV Ariel - *aerial* Dave!). His very last offering and final question was an incomprehensible affair involving a long-haired station employee and 5972? (yes, you’d better believe it Hairy Porter on the Hogwarts Express!).

Goodbye Dave and thank you, mate!

By popular demand, the Last Man Standing tester was conducted, and managed to get to only the second question, before the winners emerged. Question 1 was: what do the initials PLA stand for? (Passenger Luggage in Advance quickly sorted the men from the boys, leaving only two tables in contention. The matter was settled with the question: which class of steam loco had a nameplate background which differed from the normal black or red? (“Battle of Britain” class with a pale blue background.

Finally, “Nearest the Bull”- give the total number of London Underground Stations. I think it was Team B, (might be wrong there), who provided the figure of 250 nearest the correct total of 270.

Well done all - so enthused was I with applauding the winners and runners up, and getting further liquid refreshment, that these were not recorded (oops!).

Thanks go to Pete Wardle for his usual stalwart scorekeeping, and to all who made the effort to attend – as always, everyone looked to have enjoyed it.

So ended a further era of quizzes, as Dave steps down, though it was announced that the master raconteur Dave Fleming will be producing the 2012 event, so, you railway quiz fans, all is not lost!

I hope this little write up has been interesting – just a flavour of what happened on the night, rather than just stringing the whole of the questions and answers together. Copies of the quiz and answers are available on request via Dave Hook or the committee.

“Crofter”

May 2011

On Monday 23 May and Wednesday 25 May, two parties of members, (34 in total), were privileged to visit the East Midlands Train Maintenance Depot at Etches Park, Derby. This was courtesy of the Depot Manager, Mark Coney, who very kindly gave up his own time in order for the visits to take place. (Most of the following notes apply to the Wednesday visit).

Having visited the gate-house to sign in, Mr Coney gave us a short safety briefing before we retraced our steps to look at Meridian 222003 which was in for refurbishment. Then Mark carefully explained the under-frame workings of 153 unit 153379, one of three units still sporting the old style green livery. Newly overhauled bogie units had been fitted, this work being carried out at Graham Lee's establishment at L H Plant, Barton under Needwood. At the far end of the original Etches Park Shed, Class 08 – 08899 awaited us and having been suitably adorned with the Society headboard a group photograph was arranged. This was more successful on the Wednesday evening, the sun being too strong for the Monday group. A few of us also took the opportunity to photograph the name on the driving end of the Meridian 222003. This car number being 60163 and so it was named 'Tornado' to coincide with the new steam A1 pacific loco of the same name.

Carefully walking down the road we followed the behind a large fuel tanker lorry, one of three that evening, which was bringing in a supply of red diesel to keep the wheels rolling. It was a quick march past the toilet tank unit to look at the waste reclamation section. Around 70% of waste left behind on East Midlands trains is reclaimed which we all thought was admirable. A Meridian went through the washing unit whilst we walked by. The door recesses prove problematic to machine clean so hand washing is still essential for a thorough clean. Several of us were pleased to see the original refuelling depot still giving good service. (The one at Burton was dismantled and taken to the Severn Valley Railway years ago, but still waits to be re-erected). Another Meridian was waiting the go ahead to enter the site as we crossed the line in order to inspect the wheel lathe. Mark was justifiably proud of the work that goes on in here, the wheels being the most important part of the well-being of the rail fleet. Then it was into the recently constructed depot on the site of the old Derby Four shed and Mark told us that the turntable foundations had been uncovered during the building work. The line of jacks manufactured in Germany is capable of lifting a complete Meridian set high off the ground.

Retracing our steps, we gathered together to thank to Mark and also Steve [*we also thanked Vikki Whittaker on the Monday visit. Ed.*] for an informative and thoroughly enjoyable evening. Treasurer Pete wrote out a cheque for £170 which was duly dispatched to the Railway Children Charity as a measure of thanks for the two visits.

Mark Ratcliffe

May 2011

On Wednesday 18th May we welcomed professional model maker and railway artist, David Wright, to give his second helping of hints and tips of the modelling scene. David's first show of building structures was very well received and on this night he took one step further into creating a landscape to which our recently built models can be displayed.

David brought along with him a selection of "here's one I made earlier" examples to show how the techniques he would be describing could be used with one another to build up a range of scenes. He started by building up the template formers from polystyrene sheets so as to get a feel of the contours in which our land would sit. He also used this template to show how a rock formation can be created within a hillside or cutting by using dead bark glued against one of the formers. Whilst building the framework, David said that to help to keep the formers secure, pins could be added during the drying time to ensure pieces glue together properly. This was left to dry as we ventured into another area.

Das modelling clay - to be found in good model and craft shops - can be used in creating landscapes and the details that fit into them just as simply as with buildings. Firstly David showed how pre-dried modelling clay can be used to make cobbles. Using an old semi-blunt modelling knife and an old toothbrush, he got underway, firstly by scribing away at the cobblestones in a random pattern (however he recommended using plenty of photographic proof if modelling a specific area). The toothbrush was used to clean away any clay left from cutting out and to add a worn look to the cobbles. This process takes time and patience but superb results will be easy to achieve. If baseboard joints come into the area where the cobbles are being laid, one easy way to minimise the join is to model a water gully. Whilst on the topic of modelling roads, David described how tar macadam can be realistically produced by using sand. This is applied in a similar manner that woodland scenic scatter would be, but making sure a background colour is applied beforehand.

No landscape will be the same without boundary fences and walls. David's simple but very effective method again used the Das clay. Dry stone walls were created in the same way to that of the buildings. Using a card skeleton, the clay is built up on either side (if it is a free standing wall) and allowed to dry for at least 48 hours. Once completely dry, the same process as mentioned for cobbles can be applied to create the effect of rock. Other fences can be built using card as well by simply gluing the connecting pieces. Gates follow the similar principle but often have a cross brace for added strength. But again careful research into time and location will determine the most realistic model.

David went back to the formers although they were not completely dry (he recommended allowing at least 12 hour). As the formers were in place, the cross bracings could now be added. Here David used card strips to lay across the formers, pinning and gluing them in place. Once one direction had been completed, he then laid another set of strips, this time interlacing between those strips already in place, creating a strong surface to apply the plaster bandage. Before doing this, David first applied slightly diluted PVA on to toilet tissue strips, and laid these over the formers. He explained how Mod rock and plaster bandage can be used at this stage to create a hard cover to the former. By cutting the bandage into sections allows easier application when creating contours. Up to 12 hours drying time should then be allowed.

Once the formers are built with hard shell forming the land formation, it is time to add the greens. There are many different brands, colours, textures and sizes to choose from when looking for your perfect coverings. David uses a range of these. Firstly all ground cover is painted a wash of browns before applying any covering. David uses the Greenscene electrostatic machine which plugs into a diluted PVA area, where grass is to be applied and creates a static charge. The mixed coloured hair inside the container is sprinkled over the surface that has been glued and as if by magic, the hairs stand on edge. Unfortunately this machine, as good as it is, comes at cost. However if a club is looking for a good quality covering system and members spread the cost and use it for all the layouts then it will be worth it.

But for those looking for a more cost effective one off system that looks as good, then using carpet underlay felt is the way forward. As with the Greenscene machine, a painted basecoat is applied before applying glue over the dried surface and then layering dyed carpet underlay felt over the land. Press down gently and peel off, leaving the hairs stuck on to the landscape. Any hairs that fall flat can be tweaked upwards or built on with scatter. Woodland Scenics is the main supplier for scatter material. David recommended using only the dark greens as the light-coloured flock powder gives an unrealistic glow to the grass. To apply this scatter, David suggested that adhesive spray mount such as diluted PVA will dampen down the existing ground covering. The powders can be scattered where growth such as weeds, tufts and clumps would fall. Again, careful examination of the area is vital.

The final demonstration of the evening was building bushes and shrubs. For this, David used rubberised horse hair cut into irregular shapes and sizes. These were glued on to the landscapes using PVA and sprayed with spray mount. Scatter materials come back in here to apply the foliage to the bushes, depending on the season you are modelling - wintry scenes will be bare and if snow has fallen then a little snow powder can be applied.

We thank David for giving his time to provide this show - it was well-received and very informative. The Society is lucky to be able to have someone as talented as David close at hand to give us inspiration, hints, tips and the best advice.

Adam Crick

May 2011

Every picture tells a story is an apt way to describe Stephen Gay's show for his second visit to Burton. Stephen gave us detailed information and tales with each shot on his tour around Britain with his dog Wrawby for company. Many of the slides dated from 2005.

We started in Carmarthen, west Wales with Stephen having twelve attempts to get the shot he wanted of Wrawby and himself. We then moved to Langstone Rock, Dawlish for a view of the Saturdays only Paignton - Preston with 47 haulage. An overnight rail trip enabled him and Wrawby to be in Newcastle for a sunrise shot of the King Edward Bridge: Stephen was very glad he had his dog with him in the early hours prior to taking this shot! Our presenter then portrayed Portsmouth, Lancashire and informed us that this was the location for the 1961 film "Whistle Down The Wind". We then gleaned that it was a 45-minute walk from Ulverston to get the view he wanted of the Leven Viaduct, but worth the effort. A lovely February snow-clad shot of a 66 on the viaduct at Ribbleshead on a working to Drax was followed by a 60 at Blea Moor. Stephen enjoyed tea with the signal man and discovered that the latter usually walked over the viaduct to get to work! Still in the snow, we enjoyed a scene of a multiple unit at Dent Station.

By way of a complete change we moved onto the Isle of Wight to look at 1938 former "tube" stock at Ryde. Stephen passed the comment on the fact that all that is left of the island's railway system is an 8-mile stretch and the preserved section. A bonfire on the beach at Helmsdale kept him and Wrawby warm during the night and featured in the view of the Wick - Thurso service train. At Rogart the line was closed due to a landslip, the driver of the replacement bus wouldn't let Wrawby on. But passenger power intervened with a lady shouting, "Let the doggy on!" and with the agreement of other passengers the driver relented.

In this whirlwind tour of the country, we were next down in Cornwall. Penmere Platform on the Truro - Falmouth branch looked good with its flower display as did the Penryn Viaduct. Flowers and palm trees made a Voyager unit look attractive on the Hayle Viaduct - a thoughtfully composed shot. Back to Wales and this time it was the turn of Great Orme Tramway in Llandudno for the showcase. The first half drew a conclusion with a 7.45a.m shot of a 153 unit framed by the eight-sailed windmill at Heckington.

The second half started in Dronfield. On the train that Stephen caught, a lady passenger was “ticked off” by the conductor-guard for not buying her ticket to York from the booking office prior to joining the train. She quickly put him firmly in his place by informing him that the booking office closed in 1967! Stephen proudly told us that the Forth Bridge of 1890 was designed by John Fowler of Sheffield. I also love the bridge, as in my case my Great Grand-father worked on it as a tool-smith. Down to Derbyshire where Stephen was in place at 6.00a.m for the view that he wanted of Monsal Head Viaduct - how I wished trains still ran over it. I remember in 1961 a friend and having to dive over the wall by the footpath at the end of the viaduct when a Peak diesel caught us unaware as we placing pennies on the line! Continuing the bridge / viaduct theme we were treated to views of the Royal Border Bridge at Berwick and a 1984 view of a 506 unit on the Dinting Viaduct at Glossop. The Marple Viaduct and canal aqueduct made an attractive sight with a yellow Mersey Rail unit on the former and a narrow boat on the latter. Marple to Guide Bridge is an interesting 8-mile ramble we were informed.

At Bridlington, Stephen was keen to include the former excursion platform in his shot of a two-car 158 unit on a Sheffield service. How times have changed with cheap excursion trains being a thing of the past. The 21st of October 1966 was the date of the Aberfan disaster, in order to visit the site Stephen and Wrawby had to alight at Merthyr Vale Station and walk. The photograph had a train in the far distance, but the electricity pylon in the foreground marked where the slurry landslide started on that sad day. Returning to Scotland we viewed Kyle of Lochalsh. The shot of the night as far as I was concerned was of a Class37 fitted with mini snow-ploughs sending snow in all directions at Corrou. The show ended in Wales with a Class 66 passing the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. It was an excellent evening’s entertainment.

Mark Ratcliffe

April 2011

Our presenter for the night was Chris Banks who, accompanied by his son John, continued his series of slides of British engine sheds, this being part 8! Before he began, Chris explained that the slides were made up of images taken by him, duplicates from friends and some taken from collections.

TRAFFORD PARK 9E: We started our alphabetic journey in Manchester at 9E, a 20 road shed that was situated close to Manchester United's football ground. I remember passing it on the back of my friend's Honda 50 as we were on our way to "bunk" the shed. Our first slide of the evening was Black 5 44665, but memories of 9E's illustrious past were brought to life with shots of 46142 ‘The York & Lancaster Regiment’ (20 Oct. 1963), and 70015 ‘Apollo’ (Oct. '59). A reminder of the Cheshire Lines Committee association was provided by J10 65194.

MARCH 31B: A surprising slide to start depicted 4 44075 and two other L.M.S. locos - a Crab and an Ivatt 2-6-0 on this Eastern Region stronghold (21 Aug. '60). 49115 and J15 65420 along with V2 60803 followed along with B17 61613 ‘Woodbastwick Hall’. An April '59 shot depicted the unique K5 61863 - the savings it made in coal and water were so slight that no other K3s were altered. 62613 looked very smart with the original valancing standing out very well indeed. Whilst March had lots of freight locos on its books, it had very few tank locos allocated, but Chris was able to show J69/1 68499. Of course a Britannia had to feature and 70037 ‘Hereward the Wake’ duly obliged.

MELTON CONSTABLE 32G: Staying in East Anglia, we first had a general view of this shed. Chris told us that it was still standing in 1990 in use as a potato store, all track in this area having disappeared long ago.

MERTHYR 88D: Then to Wales and Chris had one slide only of this three road shed with an asbestos-clad roof. The covered over coaling stage and ash disposal stage stood alongside.

MEXBOROUGH 41F: This was a massive South Yorkshire shed of which no trace now survives. A July 1960 shot of a packed shed yard made this hard to believe. B1 61167 was used by the shed on one of its few passenger turns - this being a mainly freight shed. Chris showed two old war horses, 04/7 63772 ex-works in July 1960 and 04/5 63851, both very different in appearance with regards to looks and paint work.

MIRFIELD 56D: I have happy memories of this shed on another Honda 50 trip! An interior slide of 9F 92231 from York shed - an engine that probably wouldn't return home again because it had been withdrawn from service. This was in Nov. 1966 and W.D. 90233 and 45208 appeared alongside it.

MOTHERWELL 66B: August 1960 and still around there then was Drummond 2F 57325. Of course Chris had to show one of the Scottish based 2-10-0s 90756: a couple of these were found to have serious firebox defects so the whole lot was swiftly withdrawn. A Pickersgill Caledonian 3P 54465 was a rare beast, but better still was the "wee Puggie" 56031 coupled to a wooden constructed tender and looking very rusty. McIntosh 3F 56278 accompanied an L.M.S. Jinty whilst 76002 was photographed at the end of its days in 1967 having been allocated to 66B for the whole of its career.

NEATH 87A: Back to Wales and first we started with the N. B. sub-shed with its pannier tanks before progressing to Court Sart, the actual 87A. Of course in the 1962 shot, again pannier tanks prevailed.

NEWPORT (I.O.W.) or the Southern overseas! There were lots of rare shots of this depot which closed in Nov. '57. Three out of the four E1s - W2 'Yarmouth', W3 'Ryde', and W4 'Wroxall', the later in Southern green - made an appearance, whilst O2s - 31 'Chale' and 32 'Bonchurch' looked fine in B.R. black.

NEWPORT EBBW VALE 86A: It was September 1963 and seven locos were arranged around the turntable. Chris even had a slide of 0-6-OT 1506 which was "on the books" for awhile and also ex-works 3103 one of only five in the class. The big "tankies" were represented by 4230, 5209 and 7229 and of course the Giesl oblong ejector-fitted 9F was seen on its home depot. This fitting was initially an experiment for a year, but lasted the whole of its life.

NEWPORT PILL 86B: Round the corner, so to speak, was this two-road shed especially for servicing the tank engines used in the docks. Six pannier tanks were shown in a line up with the unusual Transporter Bridge framing the background. "No tipping of ashes in front of this notice" said the amusing sign because there were certainly plenty of ashes behind it!

NEWTON ABBOT 83A: A stone built six road depot and I remember having to run swiftly out of it having completed my notes to escape the clutches of the Railway Police, but that was in diesel days! 6938 'Corndean Hall' was ex-works in B.R. green whilst 4971 'Stanway Hall' (June 1951) was shown in B.R. black livery! 1016 'County of Hants' was another ex-works loco photographed by the wall of the loco works whilst 4500 class 4566 was fresh from the actual Newton Abbot Works.

NEYLAND 87H: This was a rare shed and visited by very few. It was a former broad gauge outfit which featured one through-road and one road terminating in the shed. The turntable was on the other side of the main line. 5902 'Howick Hall' and 1027 'County of Stafford' were the featured engines.

NORMANTON 55E: On my way to this shed (on the same Honda 50 trip as Mirfield), I wanted to see the rare B.R. 2-6-0 Class 3s which were allocated to this depot. I was delighted that the first loco I saw as I walked down the shed path was 77000 itself (sadly withdrawn), so I was personally delighted that Chris had a slide of this particular loco in the said condition and location. The slide was taken in September 1966. I was also thrilled that there was a Q6 inside on my particular visit. Normanton closed in January 1968 before it "fell down" as great baulks of timber shored it up. Railway lines spread everywhere then, so today's drastically contracted site is hard to comprehend.

Locos depicted by Chris included 42138, 90243 (with the chalked name 'Merlin') and 45562 'Alberta' which was positively glowing in the dark in an October 1967 scene.

COLWICK 40E (NOTTINGHAM): This was a massive shed and notoriously difficult to "bunk". I personally had to make three attempts before being successful and I went round so quickly that I now can hardly remember even going round! The shed closed to steam on 12 December 1966. B1s 61232 and 61198, and K2s 61767 and 68075 were Chris's selection. The latter loco was used for shunting on the Colwick Estates lines.

NOTTINGHAM MIDLAND 16A: A large establishment of three round houses which closed 4th April 1965. I "bunked" this on more than one occasion and on one visit I was stopped by a driver who asked me if I had permission.

"No, but I'm looking for the office," was my reply.

"Hmm, first time I've ever found someone looking for the office in the middle of a running shed, now off you go to the office and ask," I was told.

"No! Please let me finish, the foreman will refuse," I pleaded.

All in vain - I had to go to the office and of course the result was a flat refusal. Chris showed 40454 in store and 43856 by the bike shed along with images of Jubilees 45650 'Blake', 45611 'Hong Kong', and 45667 'Jellicoe'. The latter two were to move to Burton at the end of 1961. [Just a thought, but if 45611 were still around today, would it now be called "Part of China"?] I also liked the shots of 46157 'The Royal Artilleryman' taken in April 1960 and an August 1959 view of 70004 'William Shakespeare' visiting from Trafford Park - this was the first loco I can remember seeing so it was special for me. 46100 'Royal Scot' itself was also on Nottingham's books and Chris had fond memories of it at his local station near Hinckley.

NUNEATON 2B: This was an eight-road shed and Chris told us that the depot had a high roof and was built with possible conversion in mind for use by electric locos. 45556 'Nova Scotia' and 45541 'Duke of Sutherland' were used to illustrate the shed, the latter being on the turntable. Why did I never visit this shed, I asked myself?

OSWESTRY 89D: The first slide of this six-road shed dating from 1895 was preserved Dean Goods 2516. Naturally there were slides of typical Cambrian route motive power, these included Dukedog 9018, Manor 7807 'Compton Manor', Ivatt class 2 46503 and 2251 class 3201 with "GWR" on the tender in 1957! A local lad helped me "bunk" the shed and we were talking to members of the staff when the shed master appeared.

"My pal here has come all the way from Burton," my new friend announced.

"Oh, has he?" replied the shed master. "He's got a button missing from his jacket!" he said before walking on his way and leaving us to it.

A sad memory was of Castle 7033 'Hartlebury Castle' withdrawn in the sidings outside, only six weeks out of works, but a minor fault had rendered it surplus to requirements - the throwaway society is nothing new. Local idiots had smashed all the gauges in the cab, but apparently my friend and his pals had sorted them out. It was then round to the Red Lion (where my friend lived) for a lemonade.

OXENHOLME 12G: A four-road shed for banking engines 42098 and 42571 appeared on the screen. Then it was the turn of 42210 with the rolling countryside of the fells in the background.

OXFORD 81F: An antiquated wooden shed, how did it survive without burning down? You crossed the canal to get to it and there was only one way in because a stream flowed by the side. On one of my visits, the shed foreman was standing at the entrance so I walked by and noted down the locos I could see on the yard. The stream was just too wide to leap and too deep to wade through so back I went. The foreman was still there so I gave up and walked back to the station. Why didn't I just ask him if he would let me round? A miracle might have happened, but I don't think so. On Chris's R.C.T.S. visit 5932 'Haydon Hall', and 4149 were photographed and 6136 held poll position in an August 1965 view. 5033 'Broughton Castle' also made an appearance with Nuneaton Super D 49350.

PENZANCE 83G: This shed opened in 1914. Illustrations we saw included 'Pioneer Grange', 6800 'Arlington Grange' along with 6808 'Beenham Grange' and 1003 'County of Wiltshire' and a Warship diesel.

PERTH 63A: Our final shed of the evening, the first slide featured a packed yard with Black 5s everywhere - Perth had the largest allocation of these locos in the country. The area where the shed stood is now an Asda Superstore. Lots of slides of 63A included 60101 'Cicero', 72005 'Clan Macgregor', 46252 'City of Leicester' under the coaling plant, 46244 'King George VI' on the turntable and 62691 with the delightful name of 'Lord of Balmawhapple'. McIntosh 2P 55215 and three Pickersgill locos in store at the back end of the shed celebrated the locos numbers beginning with "5". Chris visited in March 1967 and super clean 44997 sported the "Granite City" headboard alongside 60009 'Union of South Africa', then in private ownership. Chris had the nerve to ask the shed master to draw the A4 forward so he could get a much better photograph - well done that man! The locos were prepared ready to double-head a special train to Aberdeen for which tickets were priced at £4 2s 0d. The tour sold so well that 18 coaches formed the train. The two locos maintained an average speed of 61mph to Aberdeen. The only slide missing was of the Western Region pannier tanks that went to Scotland and were stored at Perth prior to scrap. The show finished with a line up of four A4s - 60009, 60019, 60026 and 60031.

In all, twenty-three sheds were visited and our thanks go to our guides, Chris and John Banks.

Mark Ratcliffe

March 2011

The site of Etches Park has been in various forms of railway use over the past 140 years. Currently it is used by Midland Mainline for servicing and upgrading its various trains and units. Mr Coney, the Depot manager, outlined briefly his career having been involved with various electric class locomotives - types 86/87 and 90 whilst working on the West Coast Lines for Virgin Trains. He moved to the Etches Park site in 1998 and, having been involved in repairs and modifications to the HST fleet, he was asked to run the depot in 2006. He gave a few facts and figures about Midland Mainline: 66,000 passengers per day; 888 route miles; 87 stations; 2000 employees; and, 80% of trains run on time with 93% being within one to ten minutes late.

THE FLEET

17 Class 153 single car units which carry 72 passengers.

11 Sprinter 156 twin units (with four more due to be transferred from Northern Trains), these carry 152 passengers and are sometimes used on the "Skeg. Vegas" trains!

25 Super Sprinters (or Class 158) built by BREL Ltd in 1989, 138 passengers carried.

222 Meridian sets built in 2004 which are all allocated to Etches Park. There are 27 in the fleet, with a maximum speed of 125m.p.h. built by Bombardier in Bruges.

10 HST units all maintained at Neville Hill, Leeds. These have been fitted with new engines, the Paxman VP 185, and are still considered to be the best trains to travel on despite their age.

5 Class 08 shunters - four at Leeds, all recently re-painted, and one at Derby.

2 HST barrier vehicles.

MAINTENANCE DEPOTS

The depots Mark is responsible for are: Etches Park; Nottingham Eastcroft; and, Cricklewood. The Leeds Neville Hill site services 40 Midland Mainline and 126 other users over night. It recently carried out the C6 refurbishments of the HST sets for which 200 product lines were required. The work included fitting new skirts and new doors. Eastcroft looks after the Sprinter 156 units and has a staff of 111. The Etches Park depot has two sheds with eight shed roads and has a staff of 667. Maintenance staff are also out-based at key stations and there are also six technical riding inspectors on call should a unit develop a problem such as low power en-route. Work in the depot is quite varied over a 24 hour period and includes C4 overhauls every 250,000 miles - 650 man hours are involved in this operation. As Mark spoke, Meridian 222018 was in for an engine change which would take 10 hours. Every train gets a heavy clean from ceiling to floor on a 36 day rota. Tyre turning is an ongoing task and this work is also carried out under contract for Freight Liner/Network Rail 37 fleet and G.B. Rail Freight. The wheel is the most safety critical factor hence the need for tyre turning. A 1.2 million pound wash plant is in regular use, but there is still a requirement to hand wash. The most unpleasant task on the depot is under-frame washing, but it is a very necessary operation, the vehicles are steam cleaned. 700 bins of rubbish are collected each day of which 70% is recycled. Currently, Midland Mainline is refurbishing the Meridian fleet at Etches Park at a cost of six million pounds. It takes two weeks for a complete train - first class seats are now leather. Mark added that the bogies for the 156 units are overhauled locally by L.H. Plant at Barton under Needwood.

FUEL

Red diesel is used and, sadly, it is delivered by road with three deliveries per night! Litres per power car are: HST 4,500, Meridian 222 1,500, the 15x units 1,500.

We look forward to our visit in May to see at first hand the work that goes on and we thank Mr Coney in advance for organising it

Mark Ratcliffe

March 2011

For the night's presentation, Mark Ratcliffe introduced Ken Horan, who had worked on the railway as a fireman based in the Sheffield area. Ken was a keen photographer and his line of work gave him access to locations normally off-limits to 'civilians', and this would give rise to some really unusual and interesting views during the evening.

The show started at Staveley works with a shot of a veteran half-cab Johnson 1F 0-6-0T, and then moved a short distance down the road to Barrow Hill shed, where we saw a Flying Pig (otherwise known as Ivatt class 4 2-6-0) and several Thompson B1 4-6-0s. Following the Midland's 'Old Road' northwards, we then visited Canklow MPD, where we viewed another Flying Pig, a Black Five, a B1, a WD 2-8-0, and a Stanier 8F 2-8-0. Moving further north, another WD and a Black Five were seen at Masborough (Midland) station. Heading down towards Sheffield, Ken produced two unique views at Nunnery Junction of 4472 'Flying Scotsman' heading north. This location is completely inaccessible to the public, and to this reviewer the shot of 4472 heading away from the camera was one of the most memorable of the evening.

Sheffield Midland, where Ken started his career, was the next venue, and we moved along the route of Ken's first trip as a fireman to Chinley. At Edale we saw a class 25 diesel on its first day of service, along with Black Fives, 8Fs, WDs, Flying Pigs, Ivatt class 2s along the way, and a Jubilee, 'Ulster', at Sheffield. The Sheffield end of the Woodhead route then featured with slides of the unique Woodhead electrics at Rotherwood and Victoria station.

Ken then moved us on to the Wakefield area, where we viewed slides at Royston, Normanton and Wakefield, before moving to Holbeck shed in Leeds. Holbeck was extensively covered, and we saw a number of 'namers', including Jubilees 'Alberta' and 'Kolhapur', Britannias 'Rudyard Kipling' and 'John Bunyan', and Royal Scot 'Scots Guardsman'. A few views at Gargrave on the Settle – Carlisle line followed, after which we headed south to Crewe, where we visited both Crewe South shed and Crewe Works. The Works contained several locomotives that are now well-known in the preservation movement, including 'Evening Star', 'Duke of Gloucester', and 'Sir Nigel Gresley'.

We then headed across the Pennines, calling on the way at Trafford Park and Manchester Central, before arriving at York, where a visit to the roundhouse (now the National Railway Museum) yielded superpower in the form of standard 9Fs, A4 Pacifics, V2 2-6-2s, Jubilees, B1s, WDs and even a class 40 English Electric diesel! Then it was on eastwards to the WD heaven of Hull Dairycoates, and a few sombre views of Draper's scrapyards, where so many steam engines met their fate.

If Dairycoates was WD heaven, then the 9F equivalent was Birkenhead, which was the next location. Moving on swiftly we visited the Lancaster and Carlisle line at Tebay, Scout Green and then Kingmoor, before leaping down the country to Salisbury for a look at the Bulleid Pacifics, then back up to the North-East, where the last examples of pre-grouping steam could be found at Tyne Dock, Blyth, and Sunderland. Then we returned to Manchester, viewing Victoria and Exchange stations before heading down to Edgeley shed at Stockport. Then it was north again to Preston and Blackpool. This area of the North West was heavily into Black 5s and 8Fs. The first half concluded with some shots of one of Ken's regular workings, the 07:06 Sheffield Midland to Leeds (all stations), and Ken working 4472 'Flying Scotsman' at Sheffield Victoria.

The second part of the evening covered firstly preserved steam, and then diesel traction. Space does not permit a detailed description of what was covered, but we visited the Great Central Railway first, followed by Barrow Hill, the Churnet Valley, the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway, the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, the Bluebell Railway, and the Severn Valley Railway. Ken then followed this with several studies of 6233 'Duchess of Sutherland', mostly between Preston and Glasgow via Shap Fell. The 'preserved steam' section concluded with visits to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway and the Foxfield Railway.

The final section covered modern images, although the occasional steam locomotive sneaked in from time to time, as did a few scenes of foreign parts. The locations were wide-ranging, but predominantly in the north of England and Scotland, and we were treated to views of class 87 electrics, Virgin Voyagers, class 66-hauled freights, Eurostars, class 37s, High Speed Trains, Pacers, and even the yellow HST measurements train. Steam workings featured on the "Jacobite" workings on the West Highland line, on the Bolton & Embsay Railway, and the Dukedog appeared at Llangollen. Foreigners and the broad-minded were also entertained by a section on Chinese steam, a slide of double-headed class 15D locomotives in South Africa, and a few slides from the United States of America.

As with all good things, it had to come to an end, and after a short speech from Mark Ratcliffe thanking Ken for his presentation, the audience showed its appreciation with a well-deserved round of applause.

Rod Nelson

February 2011

Renowned as the most popular night of the year, this show did not end tradition. Despite the cold weather, people flocked to see the film made by the PSOV team that captured the best of British railways on the mainline during 2010. The night got off to a quick start following the usual notices: we were also reminded that during the unlikely incident of a fire, we were not to help ourselves to the DVDs on the way out. Luckily it didn't come to that.

A warm welcome was given as usual to the visitors and the show got on the way. As always the show started with my personal favourite - the musical introduction. Stunning photography set in the most beautiful parts of the British countryside set to superb music never fails to get the emotions stirring. The first train of the year was a private charter hauled by 5043 on the 9th January hauling from Tyseley to Gloucester and return. The perfectly still conditions it was travelling through allowed beautiful footage as the steam hung in the air as the train stormed against the sunset through Worcester.

2010 was the year of the Great Western Railway's 175th anniversary, so the GWR's most impressive locomotives were free to roam the network to show that they haven't lost any of their attraction and beauty. Film included shots of 5043, 4965 and 6024 working along traditional stamping grounds. With brilliant thinking on part of the railway operating team, an ex-GUV van was altered to accept additional water tanks, so there was no need to make excessive water stops or to attach a second tender. Also thanks were given to Network Rail for allowing the steam locos priority over other trains so that they could follow the original timetable of the "Bristolian". But the Great Western didn't get all the attention. The London Midland Region's Scot and Princess classes certainly kept up to their reputations almost giving our audience a time warp back to the late 1950s.

'Oliver Cromwell' was another performer of the year working Three Bridges to Bath and return on the 6th March. Like on the "Great Britain", it was double-headed with 44871 and they showed off all the hard work put in by both mechanical and operating sides - even if a Cross Country Voyager spoiled the evocative climb up the Lickey. But it makes one wonder how lucky film crews are to make a show like this. Continuing the "Great Britain 3" from Glasgow to Inverness via Aberdeen, 'Cromwell' is caught roaring through the beautifully restored station of Stirling on the 11th April. But it was not just the audience that were stirred by this sight - on the "Brit's" route at Carmont so was a flock of geese. 'Cromwell' was also captured near Inch where telegraph poles and short rail sections gave the lovely sight and sound that could have been recorded back in the 60s.

As done years before, the Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh charter was one not to miss out: beautiful lighting conditions and still air were brought together to capture superb footage of the K4 as she climbed between the beautiful Scottish lochs. Another loco that worked into the yearbook was 30777 masquerading as sister loco 30453. On the 23rd April it was working hard, producing some gorgeous smoke, making the Southern Region proud. Stanier's 'Duchess' made her appearance in LMS black on the 8th May working the Crewe return via Shap and Carlisle and the film crew was on hand to record her passing through Preston Station. Birmingham had its place in the history books too when 46201 made her departure from New Street, a first since the late 60s.

With every new happening, there must be an end. One covered by the PSOV team was the removal of the signalling of the Warwickshire line, with evocative music combined with images of another lost part of our heritage. More film of dismantling was of Falsgrave signal gantry at Scarborough added to earlier railway infrastructure giving way to modernisation. This was balanced with archive film of Upwey Bank from 1966 showing 34004, 41324 and 43071: this was followed by present day footage of 5043 at the same location. Also, with the revival of Moor Street terminus after a spell of closure, there was archive film along with 7029 working the last train. Moor Street terminus section was shown respectfully opened by GWR 5043 on November 11th.

Back to 2nd October saw 46201 working "The Severn Valley Limited" from Bridgnorth to Blackpool. Banking with Pannier 9600 made some dramatic filming passing over Old Hill Bank looking like a crash site of an aircraft. November saw 'Leander' working amongst the snow over the Settle to Carlisle route. She later worked another special with 44871 on the Manchester return over the S&C. As remembrance to a fireman who suddenly died whilst on an earlier special, a wreath was placed around the smoke-box door.

The night proved yet another success for the PSOV team. Burton warmly welcomes its presenters for shows as good as this. We had been taken on a trip through the most beautiful landscapes across Britain, chasing the most impressive machines to celebrate their power and influence, all shown through the wonderful eyes of the film crews in artistically creative ways. The night ended with a kind farewell and a wish for more years of superb filming yet to come.

Adam Crick

January 2011

It was a pleasure to welcome Les Henshaw from the Matlock Railway Club to open proceedings for 2011. Les is a long standing friend of the B.R.S. and it was good to see him looking so well especially as he is in his 85th year. Both B.R.S. Chairman Mark and Les remarked upon the appropriateness of the programme with tremendous strides being made by the members of the Churnet Valley Railway. The speedy re-opening of the Cauldon Lowe took most people by surprise. Indeed the Chairman in his opening words declared that: "If I'd been told three years ago that an 8F painted red would operate over the track to Cauldon Lowe in 2010 I would have looked for the pigs flying by!"

The films were a delightful mix of ciné film, still photography and reminiscences of the line in action, so let's pick out some highlights. A photograph of the staff at Rushton Station in North Staffs days showed chairs carved with the Staffordshire knot emblem. The station at Rudyard Lake was given a new name in 1926 by the LMS and became Cliffe Park - a good job Rudyard Kipling was named after the lake and not the station! A narrow gauge railway thankfully now runs on the site of the old line by the lakeside and is well worth a visit. One of the tales recounted told of a large lump of coal being pushed off a loco for a railway worker named Bill to use in his lake-side cabin. Unfortunately the coal acted like a bouncing bomb and destroyed the table and stove in the cabin, but at least Bill got his coal!

Leek was the major station on the line and the film showed a view of the station site following redevelopment. Its replacement being a supermarket, but how things have changed since that view, Safeway has been taken over by the Morrisons Chain, but petrol was being advertised at 48.9 a litre, (currently 123.9). Down the track at Leekbrook Junction, film was shown of a train travelling to Stoke. A friend and I walked this section a few years ago and we never dreamt that one day attention would be turned to re-opening this section of line. There was even a film clip of the overhead electrified railway to the former Cheddleton mental hospital. This opened in 1899, last carried passengers in the 1920s and was closed to freight in 1954. Back to Leekbrook Junction this time to 1992 to watch a "top & tailed" 37-hauled special tackle the line to Cauldon Lowe (37417 and 37429 being the locos concerned). I had intended to photograph this special thinking it would be the last opportunity to film a train on the line, but unfortunately forgot about the event. Little did I know that 18 years later I would get a second opportunity. This line was opened in 1899, with fearsome gradients of 1 in 45 and 1 in 39. The standard gauge line from Caldron Low, as it was spelt at the time, extended to Waterhouses where it joined the narrow gauge Leek & Manifold Railway. A short film on the narrow gauge was included, but with the closure of this line the Waterhouses section of standard gauge was removed in 1943.

Down to Cheddleton, the hub of the current preserved railway, thankfully the Jacobean style station building was saved at the very last minute from demolition. Film of early days at the site reminded us that the first service consisted of a shuttle train in the station sidings using Kitson loco Austin No.1. Sand traffic on the "main line" ceased in 1988 and efforts were made to buy the line. Locomotives in the shape of 80136 and 44422 were liberated from Barry scrap yard with a view to providing future motive power. Down the line at Consall we were shown how the beer was delivered to the Black Lion pub by rail.

The current end of the preserved line is Froghall once the home of the Thomas Bolton copper wire works. Film of dozens of workmen dashing to get onto the passenger service of the day demonstrated just how much working patterns have changed. The works were visited by the Duke of Kent in 1942, just a few months before he was killed. Froghall was also the work place of the famed peg-leg signalman severely injured on the line in North Staffs days. Bolton's also had a factory at nearby Oakamoor and Bel.2 was the motive power for the branch into the works till 1962 when this site was closed. Bel.2 is now preserved in the NRM at York. The wagons for the sand traffic to Oakamoor originated from Liverpool and we learnt that the practice was for the engine to drop them and then continue light engine to Uttoxeter so that it could turn ready for the return journey.

Alton station, alighting point for the famous Towers, was designed by Pugin. Nearby Denstone was busy at the beginning and end of school terms with pupils wearing straw boaters. At Rocester there was a junction for the line to Ashbourne, sadly there wasn't any film footage of this route. Then there was Spath, it was here in 1961 that the first continental-style half barrier crossing gates were installed on an experimental basis. It wasn't long before train crews were alarmed to see traffic weaving in and out of poles. A clip from the original promotion film of the then-new set up was included in the programme. Uttoxeter shed was also featured and it was interesting to note Burton 4F 44332 on shed.

Parts of the line were doomed before Beeching: Macclesfield Hibel Road to Leek closed in 1960, and the last service to Leek carried the note: "Leek or bust!" The preservation group's aim to save Leek Station was doomed when the site was bulldozed in 1973, resulting in the move to Cheddleton. The programme drew to a close with two very different film clips with the first depicting a run from Uttoxeter to Macclesfield Central behind 42665 in the death throes of the line. Finally there was an amusing amateur comic film based on the line entitled "Two Hours to Wait" which was made in 1939.

Two hours of great entertainment ably narrated by Ray Johnson & John Heywood, both videos were well worth seeing together and were watched by an appreciative audience of 120. Our thanks go to Les for providing two hours of riveting entertainment.

Mark Ratcliffe