

The Chairman's Notes

We had a very pleasant Open Day: indeed one loco was in steam at 10.30 am (which was the official time for opening the gates) until about 17.30, so they enjoyed themselves. We used over 3 litres of milk making tea so no one went thirsty and we all enjoyed ourselves despite the occasional torrential shower. There were some magnificent visiting locos a list of which appears elsewhere in the News Sheet.

I would now like to put on my Garden Railway Section Leader's hat. I am pleased to say that this relatively new Section is thriving. At the last general meeting at Colney Heath this year we saw no less than six locos running that have been built since the track was completed. Alan H. ran his 4F, GWR 0-6-2-T and his LNER tram engine, Ron P. ran his new coal fired LNER Atlantic and his G1 Tich and Roger W. ran his new 4F which pulled a goods train for the first time.

This little layout of ours is being used more and more so may I remind all members running on this line all locos running on our track must have a valid boiler certificate.

Finally may I remind all users of gas engines that along with the Gauge One Model Railway Association the NLSME does not allow the use of propane gas or mixes of propane and butane. We will only accept butane as a fuel for gas fired engines.

This winter we hope to improve our layout along the following lines:

G1

We intend to install a turntable (which needs to be built)

To install steaming bays in association with the turntable.

An additional storage loop on the outer loop.

An additional crossover between the inner and outer loops.

Point leavers on all points.

A weatherproof locker for the running book and cleaning materials etc.

Lighting over the steaming bays, preparation tables, and bridges.

G0

We intend to make a complete circle suitable for our shorter members to run their Mamod engines on the far side of the wooden bridge.

Put up a protective edging so stop derailed engines falling off the edge.

Make a path inside the track on the far side of the wooden bridge.

Install a preparation table and steaming bays and lay storage and passing loops.

We usually do our work on winter Sunday mornings starting on Sunday 2nd November. So I hope to see you all during the winter. If any particular job appeals to you give me a call. Unlike the main line I doubt that any of this work will stop us from winter running. But if you do run this winter please make sure that the track is intact and clear before you open the regulator.

John Squire, Chairman, Garden Railway Section Leader and steamroller cleaner.

Secretary's Snippets

By David Harris

The September issue of the Southern Federation Newsletter has been received and is now on the notice board at Colney Heath.

The details for the 2004 Year Planner are gradually being received. This Planner will be printed during November and sent out with the December News Sheet. Will all Sections make sure that the Secretary has all relevant dates and activities.

Contrary to last month's snippets, there are no plans to have a celebration dinner. The 60th Anniversary Celebrations are totally orientated around 4/5 September weekend.

Treasurer Twittering

All is still fairly quiet on the financial front. We have agreed to spend significant sums on the kitchen in the coach at Colney Heath and on laying new rail and sleepers on the Raised Track at Colney Heath. These items will be spread amongst our various funds but will eat into our overall reserves as anticipated.

Bernard Lambert

From the Membership Secretary

Membership now stands at 241 comprising 155 Full, 41 OAP, 17 Junior, 17 Country and 11 Honorary Members.

New Members

This month we have eight membership applications to approve.

**Tom Barratt, Jeremy Deans, (also sons Douglas, Philip and Owen as Juniors)
Anthony Mason, Gordon Williams, Peter Wilson**

Bernard Lambert

Locomotive Section Meeting

Friday 10th October

The October meeting will be at the Headquarters at Summers Lane on 10th October starting at eight in the evening.

The visiting speaker is Bill Davis who will come all the way from Milton Keynes to see us. Bill is an accomplished and well-known speaker on railway topics and will be giving his illustrated talk, *'On and off the Footplate'*. Bill served his time in steam and is now a Driver Instructor for Thameslink.

Please come to the meeting to support the Club and to hear a fascinating talk.

We are pleased to announce that Frank will be responsible for the teas, our trusty Roger will write up the Gazette and Ian will supply the raffle prizes. Any help in any of these tasks would be greatly appreciated.

Please Join Us.

Ian Johnston.

Would You Believe It?

Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a total mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lterer by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

Bolody amzanig. Do you aegre?

Marine Mutterings

By Bernard Lambert

Not a lot to mutter about at this time of year but I would like to repeat some of last month's Mutterings as I believe that the subject is important.

As you will see from the Diary the subject of the first indoor meeting is 'Do we want winter meetings at H.Q.?'

I would be sorry to see these meetings abandoned but unless enough of you are prepared to turn up and possibly make a contribution we have no other choice. It would be nice if we could invite the occasional outside speaker but we need a decent turnout to justify this. So come to the first H.Q. meeting and make your views known.

The working parties will not be abandoned because if they were the Lake and its surroundings would soon degenerate.

Greetings from Scotland

Colin Sears (for newer members, the member who built, amongst many other things, the 7 foot tanker that resides in the coach) has been in contact and sends his best wishes to all. He hopes to make a visit in the not too distant future.

Enjoy the boating.

Bernard Lambert

Tyttenhanger Gazette by Roger Bell

The September Loco' Meeting was entitled *A 'Potpourri' of Model Engineering*, which Nigel Griffiths described as 'a mixed dish of meat and vegetables, a medley, a mass of mingled ingredients.'

Whilst Nigel has been very pleased with his Warco Minor Mill Drill and the cross slides were accurate, putting a depth cut on using the quill was difficult to judge, so he decided that a digital readout was called for. This he fitted to the substantial plastic cover on the front of the machine with four screws. He passed it round for us to see. The readout had been a bit too long so a piece was cut off the end with a slitting saw. The readout does actually work.

There is a club called the Ground Level 5" Mainline Association, GL5MLA for short, which runs its locos complete with trains. This is at Gilling, 20 miles North of York. The club has an open day twice a year, during May and August. There is a lot of work involved in making the wagons. One of them Nigel had on the table before him. To make construction easier David Noble produces a laser cut under-frame accurately profiled, with holes 0.030-inch burned out; the holes are opened out, the plate folded and silver soldered. Instructions are included for folding. The under-frame we saw was for a 1923 RCH (railway clearing house) wagon, which was designed to standardise wagons. The wheels can be bought finished with the tyres fitted. The latest development is an under-frame made from cold cast resin integral with die cast spring hangers

Brian Apthorpe was next to speak of various tools he has made for his Myford; the first ones described were for the care of the lathe. Everyone uses a hacksaw to cut bar in the chuck and all too often as the blade passes through it hits the lathe bed taking a bit of that with it. The tool to prevent this is a piece of wood of tee section, which drops between the bed ways. Brian's has a vertical hole through it; this takes a chuck driven nibbler, which cuts all shapes in sheet metal.

To clean the inside of Morse tapers a piece of wood was taper turned; this is wrapped in a tissue and revolved inside the taper.

Swarf can be kept off the bed ways between the saddle and the chuck by folding down two edges of a piece of sheet metal and securing it with one screw to the hole in the saddle which is for fixing the travelling steady.

It is good practice to oil the lathe before every use, but it is difficult to get the oil gun on the nipple at the far end of the cross slide, as one has to lean right over the lathe to reach it. A right-angled nipple would interfere with the top slide. An adaptor was made to present the nipple in the upright position and clear the top slide.

An improvement to the cross slide was to fit a ball race on the lead screw, make a larger dial and an improved lock which replaces the existing friction lock. The dial taken from the cross slide was used to replace the smaller one on the top slide.

One top slide gib screw was replaced with a screw with a handle on the head to lock the slide.

Tool holders from Myford cost £20 each. If one has a tool holder for each tool, tools can be changed complete with holder, which saves having to set the height of the tool each time. As a facing tool wears it is barely wide enough to reach the work, (it appears that the tool holder will not swivel) so an extra angled tool holder was made that fits into one of the tool holders.

To save moving the cross slide whilst screw cutting, a retractable tool holder was made. It is spring loaded and retracts at the flip of a handle, so the action is to screw cut, flip tool back, traverse to right, flip tool forward, then screw cut. The depth of cut is of course put on with the top slide, which is set at an angle as usual, which is half of the included angle of the thread.

Surprisingly a digital calliper has a life of two years in the commercial workshop - the readout fails or the blades spring open (what happened to Moore & Wright?). Brian described how he used a scrap one with a still serviceable readout to fit to his tailstock to read depth of cut.

As Frank Hills was preparing to speak a small section of rail assembly was passed round. The rail was secured to the chair with a Pandrol clip. The rail is located sideways by its chair and the clip, which looks similar to a paper clip, is inserted in a hole in the chair, which is at a downward angle. As the clip moves in place it bears down upon the rail flange to hold it in position.

Frank described how he made some piston rings for his 'Maid of Kent' from some special cast iron bar, which cost £1-60 per inch. They were turned down to 45mm o/dia. exactly the same size as the bore they were going into. After machining down to 0.1-inch x 0.1-inch section there was not much of the material left. The tricky bit was to break the ring, which was held in a vice and hit with a bar and a hammer – it sheared nicely. It was then held in the open position with the right gap whilst it was heat treated for fifteen minutes and allowed to cool. Soap was used to keep the air out and the ring was sandwiched between some plates. Four were needed so he made eight and only broke one whilst fitting it in the bore; it got caught in a steam way hole.

The making of his superheater was then described; the stainless welding at the tube ends being done by Paul Gammon. The tubes were threaded into the headers and Frank silver soldered the rest. To ensure the assembly did not move during silver soldering it was fitted to a jig like a dummy boiler smoke box tube plate.

As the meeting closed we thanked the speakers, particularly as a lot of preparation had gone on beforehand.

News from the Tyttenhanger Committee

The Tyttenhanger Committee held its September meeting on the 2nd September, we would like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date with some of the goings on at the Colney Heath site.

- As some of you may have seen we now have a check gauge in the mainline steaming bays, and we would recommend that all members check their driving trucks before going onto either the mainline or the cuckoo line.
- The Society has purchased two new batteries for the electric locomotives and will be purchasing a couple of new battery chargers to go with the batteries.
- As I mentioned in the September News Sheet we are going to be doing a trial section of the new rail, identical to that which we use on the Ground Level Railway. To enable us to know how much of the mainline can be changed at once we would like to know which members would be prepared to spend the Sunday morning winter work parties replacing the concrete and rail. If you are interested please contact Keith Bartlam.
- A Kitchen update: the three Mike's, (Chrisp, Dear & Foreman) and Jim MacDonald are resolving each problem as it arises, and by the time they have finished I am sure that we will have top class facilities at the Tyttenhanger site.
- Lastly please do not forget that we are having our usual bonfire night activities at the Track on Saturday 1st November, so do come along and bring the family it should be a spooky night as usual.

Donal Corcoran

The Kitchen in the Coach

Many members visiting the Track this summer, will have noticed that work has commenced on the new kitchen arrangements inside the Coach. This has been in gestation for a number of years, after concerns were expressed about the condition of facilities in the existing kitchen area.

In this day and age food preparation serving areas must be seen to be hygienic, so the opportunity to acquire, at zero cost, proper stainless steel kitchen work units was too good an offer to miss. Following on from this we must thank Mike Deare, for his kind offer of hands on experience in woodworking to transform the inner end of the coach into a kitchen to be proud of. When finished the main serving hatch for the new kitchen will be a stable door arrangement in the side of the coach, thereby obviating the need for crowds of people jamming into the existing area with attendant risk of accidents from spills etc. In the same vein the opportunity is being taken to dispense with the gas bottles, gas heater and cooker and rely in future on electricity for all services.

After the new kitchen has been completed, the existing kitchen area will be refurbished into an 'engineman's bothy' with a small sink, kettle, fridge and benches. This way we will be able keep the new kitchen clean and pristine for occasions that matter.

Mike Foreman on behalf of the Tyttenhanger Site Committee.

August Visiting Clubs Day By William Mason

Saturday 9th August saw another fine day for our visitors, as has been the case for the last few years. Also as usual there were the early arrivals and we soon saw drivers and their locos enjoying our track. The first – and one of the most impressive – was Sue Parnham with her bright red *Juliet*. I never managed to catch her putting on coal or touching any of the controls, but *Juliet* sailed round lap after lap like a sewing machine. (Mike Foreman, Watch Out!)

Because of the grass etc being tinder dry, I was stationed in Dingly Dell as a firewatch and so was not able to get involved with the visitors or to check names and clubs at the time although I have managed to get the list of locos running.

Locos attending:

3 1/2" Juliet	Maidstone
5" Duchess	Maidstone
5" Freelance	Maidstone
5" Simplex	Maidstone
5" Sweet Pea	Maidstone
3 1/2" Britannia	Maidstone

5" Dukedog	Northolt
Ruby	Northolt
5" Claughton	Erewash Valley
5" Netta	Erewash Valley
5" Metre Maid	Northolt
5" Britannia	Northolt
5" Britannia	Northolt

September Open Day By William Mason

The first Open Day for some years was held at Colney Heath on Saturday the 6th September – another fine day with some ten locos attending. The clubs represented included a few who we seldom see.

The first on the track (and quickly off again to get a driving trolley with a different brake lever) was *Red Rum* a recent winner of the Sweet Pea Rally although it is a *Meter Maid*? I videoed her at Peterborough some years ago and is still in immaculate condition. It ran all day and was last off.

Another attractive loco was *Fishbourne*, a SR 0-4-4T, I believe from Sutton. We had one traction engine, an Avery Undertype which performed well on the grass and was driven by various people.

Lunchtime saw a short sharp shower, which didn't ruin the day.

Visiting Locos:

5" Meter Maid	Isle of Sheppey
0-4-0 <i>Bill</i>	Sutton
0-4-4T <i>Fishbourne</i>	Sutton
UPSW 9 Electric (USA)	Tonbridge
5" Sweet Pea	Sutton
Avery Undertype	Nth. London
3 ½" Duchess	Bedford
5" B1	Vauxhall
5" J39	Chingford

There was another undecipherable name in the book with 'O2' written against it. Unfortunately a fine drizzle started and visitors quickly disappeared before name and clubs could be checked properly. Those I spoke to had an enjoyable day and liked driving on our track.

The Lincolnshire Coast Express

Saturday 20th July 2002

A Milestone in the History of Preserved Steam on the Mainline

By Ian Murray

“How would you fancy a run behind an A4 out of King’s Cross Ian?” With these few words our illustrious Editor set in motion a day that, for me, will live in my memory as a highpoint of rail tours. The initial intention of The Railway Touring Company was to run King’s Cross to Cleethorpes, out and back behind an A4. In the event, as is often the case these days, the itinerary changed only one week before the trip to a new destination, Scarborough, with the A4 coming off at Doncaster on the return leg. This denied us the opportunity of a descent of Stoke bank, but as there is no chance of a loco crew “going for it” in terms of ultra high speed I did not consider this a loss and indeed the prospect of an A4 all the way to York and beyond was, for me, much more appealing.

So it was that 06.00 hours found me on King’s Cross station forecourt awaiting Grahame as the usual crowd of suspects began to gather. Departure time was set for 06.20 and ten minutes beforehand an electric loco slid into platform one with a rake of Mark 1’s on it’s tail, 60009 *Union of South Africa* already coupled to the far end. Loco and stock had been brought from Bounds Green as one entity. Strangely, the support coach was coupled immediately behind the electric loco – clearly some sort of problem at Bounds Green – and as Grahame had told me that he understood that our coach, D, was to be immediately behind the support coach I hastened along the platform scarcely able to hope that we would be immediately behind “number nine” but there it was! Coach D coupled directly to that huge tender, the Pullman connections locked together in fond embrace.

The tour organisers had arranged for pick-ups at Potters Bar, Stevenage and Peterborough so the number of passengers boarding at King’s Cross was limited. Grahame and I felt that one of the best parts of the day would be the departure from London and the lack of passengers meant there was no unseemly scrum around the loco. Time at the platform was limited however so we were only able to grab a quick look at “number nine”, and register the fact from her “chonk – chonk” that she is now air brake fitted, before finding our seats. The station seemed strangely deserted, but it was very early, and a short chime from the loco heralded our departure. With much hissing from her drain cocks “number nine” began to move and as we rounded the gentle curve at the platform end Grahame looked back and confirmed that the electric loco had been left behind. We were on our own!

The track slopes down from the platform ends at King’s Cross as it heads into Gasworks Tunnel and as “number nine” picked her way over the pointwork we were able to look across the car park, which now occupies the area where the station loco yard stood, towards Sir Gilbert Scott’s Gothic pile which is St Pancras. Such an imposing train shed for nothing larger than 4-4-0s; talk about all fur coat and no knickers! The morning was clear, overcast and cool with rain forecast for later in the

day and I for one was looking forward to lots of exhaust steam with perhaps some wet rail thrown in for good measure.

The view disappeared as we were swallowed up by the warm embrace of Gasworks Tunnel, wet exhaust steam billowing in through our wide open toplight. For the first time we heard the loco as the regulator was opened to begin the climb which, apart from a mile long dip at Hornsey, would now be continuous all the way to Potters Bar some thirteen miles distant. There had been no trace of a slip on starting and as “number nine” now began to climb we heard the thin, steady “chi – chi – chi – cha – cha – cha” of her Kylchap double chimney as she held a constant speed in the tunnel. My heart was in my mouth as I listened intently for the first sign of a slip, dreading the prospect of us stalling and blocking the tunnel. On we plodded, the blackness seemingly interminable, until there was a gradual lightening and we emerged into the daylight.

Grahame looked down and remarked that we were on the fast line. On the previous three occasions that he had left King’s Cross behind an A4 it had been routed via the slow line. This really was the A4 back where she belonged.

The driver did not seem to alter the position of the controls as we continued making slow but steady progress up the gradient towards the site of Belle Isle box. The once vast yards to the west of the line, in the centre of which sat King’s Cross MPD, are now sadly depleted but the arches carrying York Way gradually came into view before we passed beneath the North London Railway tracks, carried on their high viaduct then leant to the curve to meet the portal of Copenhagen Tunnel. Blackness and billowing steam once more, accompanied by the muffled measured sounds from the loco as we held perhaps 20mph. We emerged at length to find a retaining wall blocking our view and I remembered a photograph I had seen many years ago by C. C. Herbert of an A4 in original condition leaving Copenhagen tunnel in a tremendous swirl of smoke and steam which had been entitled “Into The Light”. I understood the sentiment exactly.

The gradient of 1 in 107 which had been constant through both tunnels now eased to level for less than half a mile but once onto this the driver opened up with confidence and “number nine” began to get into her stride on the climb of Holloway Bank. The sounds of her exhaust were echoing back from buildings, walls etc as the loco announced her return to a strangely deserted north London. The hour was too early for vantage points to be filled but no doubt many people lying in their beds would have been roused by the quickening sound of the A4 as she began to accelerate with purpose. The platforms of Harringey station slid rapidly past, the few people present being treated to a tremendous spectacle as “number nine” really began to get into her stride. The gradient had now eased to 1 in 445 and as the hard acceleration continued the loco developed a syncopation to her exhaust that imparted a decided fore and aft motion, which could clearly be felt in the first coach. I made comment to Grahame about A4’s having oval wheels but that fell on deaf ears.

We swept into Wood Green Tunnel in grand style and once inside the safety valves lifted, bringing a veritable shower of wet dirt and general debris in through the open window causing Grahame to leap up and slam the vents closed.

The long 1 in 200 that, in eight miles, lifts the line from Wood Green to the Northern Heights at Potters Bar was now ahead and with “number nine” continuing to accelerate hard the staccato sounds from her exhaust were making conversation impossible. I believe that if one travels due east from Potters Bar, the first mountains of any size are the Urals! What a wonderfully useless piece of information. Grahame had been lamenting the fact that the driver had made very little use of the loco whistle but the small groups of onlookers at various stations were now treated to shorts blasts as we approached. New Southgate, Oakleigh Park and New Barnet all swept by and I remembered the times, as a young Loss Adjuster working the north London patch, I had taken time out from the working day to seek out places I had seen in photographs or simply read about and stood on various platforms looking at the fast tracks and tried to visualise the A4’s in their prime. Now here I was listening to one of the fabled machines as she hustled me northwards. Hadley Wood south tunnel was followed by us sprinting through the centre roads at Hadley Wood station before the north tunnel and Potters Bar tunnel heralded a brake application for Potters Bar itself where the first set of new passengers were waiting to board. Grahame and I looked pityingly at them for what they had missed so far.

Acceleration away from the station was noisy and swift and on the falling grades towards Hatfield “number nine” really began to run. She was quickly notched up but the diminishing sounds from the chimney top were complimented by continued acceleration. “Yes” said Grahame “there’s no doubt – A4’s do love to run downhill” and I sat back as speed continued to climb. The quiet mastery of the job was so impressive and it was only the occasional swirl of steam at coach roof level that gave away the fact that we were steam hauled. Just after Hatfield, still on a falling gradient, 60009 was truly flying like the old days and touching 80mph before the regulator was opened to take us up the 1 in 200 to Welwyn viaduct which we crossed still at speed and to the accompaniment of a continuous roar from that double chimney. The gradient induced the fore and aft motion again just as Grahame was trying to pour his coffee and I put on my ‘this would never happen with an LMS loco’ face.

Stevenage was the next stop after which we were again treated to rapid acceleration back up to speed. We overtook a local electric (some surprised looks there!) on the approach to Hitchin after which there was a further burst of acceleration, which brought a top speed of 82mph at both Arlesey and Sandy. By this time there was a need for us to clear the main line for service trains so we crossed over onto the slow line at St Neots. North of Huntingdon there was a stretch of 60 foot jointed track panels so we were treated to a number of minutes of “clickety click” which all added to the general ambience. Speaking of which, the sustained fast running had certainly got the A4 nicely warmed through as wondrous hot oil smells were now wafting in through our open window. Just as Grahame and I were savouring these, our nostrils were abruptly assailed with the pungent smell of pig manure. “Does this mean we may have an overheated centre bearing?” I enquired sweetly of Grahame whilst wrinkling my nose. His reply was “Ha!” and dark mutterings about garlic and northern fools. The fast track was regained south of Peterborough which we approached with much whistling and, after picking up yet more passengers, we then moved on into Peterborough West Yard to take water, coming to rest opposite the Royal Mail buildings which now cover the site of New England MPD. This gave us the opportunity to speak with a number of the support crew who gave us the above

speeds, expressed themselves pleased with how the loco was running and said that they were looking forward to the run up Stoke bank.

The heavens opened whilst water was being taken, drenching loco, stock and support crew alike, but by the time hoses were being rolled and stowed the deluge had slackened off to simply heavy or “merely a dry shower old boy” as a friend of mine puts it. I donned workshop goggles as “number nine” made ready to move and with my head out the loco eased forward amid much roaring of drain cocks. We moved slowly through a variety of relatively modern freight stock giving testimony to the yard’s current usage and as a sharp right hand bend was negotiated the side of the loco came beautifully into view moving quietly and steadily forward. The curve of the footplate looked most pronounced due to the foreshortening of my angle of view, sweeping majestically up and forward from the cab and framing the slowly turning wheels with their rising and falling motionwork. The blower was hard on and that strange and very distinctive hollow exhalation so much a part of the A4 appeal for me was much in evidence. Having snaked our way out of the yard and across various sets of points the loco regained the down fast at New England North Junction and, once the tail of the train had followed suit, the rasping chatter of the chimney began in earnest in preparation for the climb to Stoke. A GNER Class 91 was making a slow approach to Peterborough on the up fast and sounded it’s horn in greeting, the fireman of the A4 raising his arm out of the cab in time honoured style by way of reply.

Ahead stretched a straight of well-maintained trackwork along which the loco now rapidly worked her train back up to speed. The rain had ceased and the rails and ballast glistened with water as I peered ahead watching the white exhaust steam as this blew away to our right, caught by the prevailing westerly wind. The syncopated chatter died away as speed increased on the favourable stretch before the climb proper, which commences some two miles north of Essendine and I reflected that the A4 does not have the same raw edge when against the collar as, say, a Lizzie. Being used to LMS and BR types, the quiet competence of the A4 coupled with, generally, a light exhaust is just so impressive.

Speed was well up by the time that the site of Essendine station was reached and two miles farther on we were on to the 1 in 200 which stretches for four and a half miles after which there are one and a half miles of more or less level track before the three miles at 1 in 178 leading to Stoke summit. Cut off and regulator positions were adjusted giving a much louder and more determined noise from the chimney top and the fore and aft motion made its presence felt once again. Speed fell off as the pull of the gradient took it’s toll and I sat and listened and watched the open countryside slowly disappearing as the cutting on the approach to the summit gradually rose, the sides splashed here and there with the pink of the Rosebay Willow-Herb. A loud chime from the loco announced our approach to Stoke tunnel, which we abruptly plunged into. The noise from the loco was deafening and the pace of acceleration rapid on the 1 in 200 downgrade, which actually starts a few hundred yards before the tunnel when travelling north. We sped out into the daylight and continued to accelerate hard past Great Ponton before the loco was notched up which reduced noise levels significantly. Soon the brakes came on for Grantham where we were to be looped to allow service expresses to pass. While we waited the on train announcer broadcast the fact that the loco had been running consistently at a speed of 80mph! What a wonderful re-creation of the 1950s work of the Gresley pacifics.

After Grantham there are fourteen miles of falling grades at an average of about 1 in 300 followed by six miles of level track. There was a most vigorous start from Grantham and after about a mile the loco was blowing off furiously from her safety valves. Continuous hard acceleration, and perhaps judicious use of the injectors, quietened her down after which, on the falling grade she absolutely flew. Our progress was interrupted by the need to be looped to allow passage of a service train, but once back onto the 'fast' we were again treated to hard acceleration back up to 80mph. At this point it was about 10.30am and Graham and I were feeling peckish, not to say thirsty. Out came our cans of beer and food. Recognising the fact that we were being pulled by, so I was told, a quality loco, I had brought bread rolls filled with smoked salmon and cream cheese. Graham on the other hand produced a sizeable pork pie onto which he commenced trowelling copious amounts of Colman's mustard. My eyes were watering and my ears cracking just watching him bite into this concoction.

The line continues with falling gradients for some fifteen miles to the flat at Newark and "number nine" now ran with an almost uncanny quiet, being completely unheard above the sounds of the coaching stock despite our closeness to the loco. We fairly rattled over the flat crossing with the line from Nottingham to Lincoln after which the loco became audible once again on the climb to Askham tunnel. The 1 in 200 downgrade after the tunnel brought further impressive acceleration and as we tore through Retford, Graham and I decided that Gresley and gravity made a formidable combination! 80mph was again achieved on the level at Barnby Moor after which the rising grade to Bawtry was attacked in grand, noisy, style.

We were scheduled to take water again at the new Royal Mail (or whatever the name might be by the time this article appears in print!) Terminal south of Doncaster where none of us could leave the train as the platform level is meant to mate with the new Royal Mail trains and the doors on our coaches would not clear this platform. Quite how the support crew got out I could not say. However, on leaving we experienced the first slip of the day followed immediately by a second as "number nine" wound her way back onto the main line. We learnt later that we had changed drivers at the water stop and as we began to accelerate this became quite clear. The pace of acceleration can only be described as electric, accompanied by the quickening beat from the chimney top that developed into a quite deafening cacophony as we simply thrashed through the centre roads at Doncaster station. Passengers on the platforms would have been treated to the magnificent spectacle of a truly top link loco, in perfect "nick", being whipped back up to speed to keep any delays to following traffic to a minimum.

Looking at the gradient profile between Doncaster and York one could be forgiven for thinking that the thirty two miles of level track or gently undulating 'umps and 'ollers would provide no challenge to the loco at all and would all be quite boring. Nothing proved farther from the truth. I had become used to the loco being wound back and flying with a quiet ease on favourable grades, now she was being put at it on the level, which required a sustained measure of continuous power output and boy was there now a difference to our progress. Once it dawned on me that the noise from the loco was not diminishing and that this was high speed against the collar I grabbed my goggles again and made my way to the front vestibule where I made it clear to the

droplight hanger that it was now my turn. He graciously made way and I thrust my head out into the 80mph airflow. Just as I did so we went over a set of crossings and my first vision was the great slab side of the A4's tender as she rolled and nosed her way over the pointwork. The cab side swung out and disappeared again as we took a slight left curve. The exhaust was a continuous, even, staccato, roar, and as I clung to the side of the door, with the force of the air trying to remove my beard, I greedily breathed in that wondrous aroma of hot oil and hot metal that was washing down the side of the train in copious amounts. Smells were followed by a dousing as the injector overflow spat a combination of water and steam onto the ballast, promptly spraying the coach side in the process. Thunder and turf along the flat – I could hardly believe it. Mile after mile went by in similar unrelenting fashion as I looked ahead. The tender continued to sway and roll but on long right hand curves I could see that the loco was riding steadily with no hint of nosing. That long, rigid, eight wheel tender seemed unable to settle comfortably into one position and gave the impression of a truculent child being hustled along by a no-nonsense adult in a hurry. Conditions on the footplate were obviously going well as level crossings were whistled at and waiting cars and small groups of onlookers waved at in that lovely slow way which belies the efforts being made on the footplate to keep up the momentum. Again and again the impressive sweep of the A4's running plate swung into view, shrouding the spinning wheels and motion, the light glinting off the compound curves making up the loco cladding. Although the track after Selby is, as mentioned, 'umps and 'ollers, the overall inclination is rising and it was this general rise that required the continuous effort to maintain speed. The tracks from Leeds joined from the left and we were then on the final two miles or so of flat before York station itself.

"Number nine" rolled under the graceful curves of the centre arch her whistle of greeting echoing around the interior of that vast train shed. The platforms were filled with a motley collection of travellers and enthusiasts, all of whom were turned to watch the loco's stately progress until she drew to a stand at the northern end of the station, still under that wonderful roof. The on-train announcer had indicated that we would only be at a standstill for two minutes in order to ensure an "on time" departure and thus keep to our booked path. Looking out of the window there did not seem to be a single person on the platform who was not wearing a smile and joining in the feeling of occasion. The station announcer was still advising the general public not to board the train when the chime whistle rang out again followed immediately by a roaring from the drain cocks as, with some slipping, we began to move. Children and ladies, their faces alight with pleasure and excitement, clapped their hands over their ears and they had no sooner done so than the safety valves lifted to raise the cacophony to a truly deafening level beneath the station roof. Even men now put their hands over their ears, but once clear of the roofline the noise was not so intense, as we swung away from the main line to the north and pointed our nose towards Scarborough. The balcony at the National Railway Museum, that overlooks the northern exit from the station, was full of onlookers who would have had a superb view of our very audible and visual departure. Once over the river Ouse the driver again treated us to some rapid and noisy acceleration and the remainder of the journey was completed without further drama.

On arrival at Scarborough I grabbed a number of photographs before the hordes descended and also snatched a quick word with the driver who was leaning out of the driver's window wiping his hands. To my surprise he was probably only in his early

forties, despite a shock of grey hair. He confirmed that he had taken over at Doncaster and I congratulated him on his willingness to run hard. Was he rostered for the return trip? Yes. Would there be the chance to run hard and fast again? Yes. With those happy confirmations ringing in our ears Grahame and I set off for the fleshpots of Scarborough. None being immediately apparent around the forecourt of the station we reluctantly concluded that we would have to make do with a pub.

Grahame had brought a photocopy of the Scarborough pages of the Good Pub Guide and from this we selected our first pub, which proved rather disappointing both from the point of view of décor and beer. When we came to move on, however, it was raining. Recognising that our trip was to a northern seaside resort at the height of summer, I had dressed in stout shoes, thick trousers and brought a waxed jacket and cap. Grahame was in light trousers, summer weight shoes and a short-sleeved shirt. I grinned at his attire from the depths of my waterproof apparel but Grahame then, with a gesture of triumph, produced a folded umbrella from his bag and sallied forth in the general direction of our next pub. Said umbrella was opened with a flourish. It proved to have the surface area of a postage stamp and a propensity to revert to its folded state every few yards. Clearly this was one umbrella that did not like the rain! Thus challenged, the map reading was left to me which was probably just as well as Grahame had been trying to get us to a pub he rather liked the sound of that I could not find on the Scarborough map. When I checked his Good Pub Guide papers I found his eye had wandered somewhat and that the pub he was looking for was, in fact, in Skipton! Unabashed he declared that it was all my fault and continued on his merry and rather damp way wrestling ineffectively with his broolly. Some time later, suitably sated with beer and delicious fish and chips from Mother Hubbards, we made our way back to the station, where we watched the A4 reverse her train into the platform and begin preparations for departure.

The current condition of 60009 Union of South Africa is superb, her BR green livery now set off with the later style of tender emblem and red backing to her nameplate. Her owner, Mr John Cameron, was much in evidence on and around the loco. He announced to the gathered crowd that 60009 had been passed to run at 80mph that day and that she could probably have been passed for an even higher limit but, understandably, he had his bank account to consider. I watched as the twin Wakefield lubricators, set into the right hand running plate, were filled with oil. One feeds the driving axleboxes whilst the other pumps greeny-blue, glutinous and very familiar steam oil to the cylinders. The hinged plate set into the side cladding immediately above the lubricators was in the raised position and within I could see a small crank handle, similar to the old starting handle for cars, the shaft of which disappeared at an angle down into the bowels of the loco in the direction of the firebox throatplate. An enquiry of the support crew member with the oil can elicited that this was the priming handle for the steam powered air pump supplying the air brakes, which is attached to the rear stretcher behind the rear coupled axle. A lovely place in which to work I'm sure! Some ten minutes or so before the off the pump was started to charge the air brake reservoirs. The exhaust steam from the pump finds it's way to atmosphere via the loco's chimney and we were thus treated to the strange spectacle of the loco producing a "four beats to the bar" exhaust from her chimney without moving. It was almost as if "number nine" was mischievously mimicking an LMS loco for my benefit. For my part, though, I was beginning to feel more than a sneaking regard for this loco.

Departure time approached and Grahame and I made our way to what was now the very last coach. Not much chance of hearing the chimney chatter from there, but sweeping curves might be interesting. At 5.30pm prompt we got under way and immediately we began quickly to accelerate. I decided to take an early opportunity to check what the views were like from our nearest droplight. My head went out as the loco was in the process of blowing off furiously and much to my surprise the steam was condensing and descending on the rear coach like heavy rain. A very wet head was rapidly withdrawn and I went back to my seat where the “clickety click “ of the rail joints provided an appropriate accompaniment to picturesque views of flat wheat fields bathed in hazy, late afternoon, sun. We then entered onto a series of sharp reverse curves around which the coaching stock was hauled at indecent speed, wheel flanges squealing in protest. Our driver did not intend hanging around and I went back to my droplight. From there I had a clear view of the loco and the whole train on a long right hand curve. The engine was beautifully lit by the westering sun, her shining green paintwork complimenting the various shades of green in the landscape. The pure white exhaust steam gave the scene an ethereal feel, almost too chocolate-boxy to be true.

Some five miles from York we came to a stand and thereafter were held for long periods as a thunderstorm in the Northallerton area had disrupted power supplies causing a queue of trains through York. Eventually we ran into York some fifty minutes down where we were only booked for a five minute stop anyway. Working on the premise that if we got a clear road we might have a lively run to Doncaster I decided to “droplight hang” all the way from York to Doncaster and so I took up position on the right hand side as we left York. Even before our coach had cleared the station precincts the A4 was being worked hard and her exhaust could clearly be heard as she took hold of her train and began to hustle this up to speed. Again came that, by now, familiar phenomenon of the engine noise dying away as the train continued to accelerate up to her permitted speed of 80mph. White steam drifted past our last coach as we sped south over the plain of York, beautifully lit by the rays of the setting sun. The tearing wind was tugging at my goggles as I positioned myself in the window in such a fashion that I could lean with my elbow on the lowered droplight and my head out in the airflow facing forward, for all the world as if I was in the fireman’s seat. From this position I was able to watch the track as this unfolded in front of us, but, more particularly, I could see the changes in grade ahead of the loco.

Constant high speed on an undulating road calls for skill and teamwork on the part of the footplate crew and in particular a willingness on the part of the fireman to keep a level of fire which will allow the boiler to meet this high, but continually varying, demand. I had some concerns that our earlier delays might not have treated the fire kindly but these proved unfounded. Having worked the train up to the permitted speed for the day it was then a question of keeping the whole thing rolling and from my position I could watch and indeed feel as the rising and falling grades were tackled. A rise would see an increase in the exhaust steam from the loco and a rain of stinging small particles of grit against my face, which ceased each time the grade changed again. Our coach rocked and rolled over points and crossings, the clatter and roar from the wheels filling my head along with the wind noise, and tilted with the gentle cantilever of the track on curves. Small groups of people stood at level crossings and

on a variety of vantage points to watch and wave as we sped past. Their view, particularly on long, sweeping, right hand curves where the whole of the train was visible, would have been stunning, the low evening sun bathing the green loco and her maroon train in a gentle, mellow light. Still our speed remained constant as the miles rolled by. There was an impression of tremendous smoothness as the A4 filled the role for which she had been designed and despite the falling temperature I kept my head resolutely out in the airflow, determined to savour the last sprint of the day. Finally, with my skin flayed by the air and cinders and my facial muscles in spasm as a result of maintaining an imbecilic grin for far too long, I withdrew and settled back into the warmth and comfort of the carriage as the last miles before Doncaster were eaten up.

Once halted at the platform Grahame and I went forward to bid our farewells to the loco and support crew. Apart from some element of smoke staining along the top of the casing “number nine” looked no different than at the start of our day. She stood under the wires, hot from her run, that glorious double chimney exhaling continuously as the support coach was unhooked. She looked right, sounded right, smelt right and exuded an inalienable right to be where she was – standing on the up main in her birthplace, Doncaster. With a last chime from that distinctive whistle she hustled off down the line to make way for a boring electric, her syncopated chatter fading as long tendrils of her steam reached across the tracks to the buildings which once housed the LNER’s drawing offices.

That, then, was the excitement over. The on train announcer described the run from York as “breathtaking” which indeed it had been (quite literally at times in my case) and then went on to confirm that the A4 had averaged 81mph for 22 miles with a top speed of 83mph covering the 37 miles from York to Doncaster in about 30 minutes start to stop. *Union of South Africa*, at every possible opportunity during the day had matched the speed required to run *The Elizabethan* on its fastest schedule during the 1950s! Surely this must have been the finest high-speed run of an A4 anywhere since the 24th October 1964 when 60009 herself had been the last A4 to work out of Kings Cross (to Newcastle and back) before steam finally disappeared from service trains on the East Coast mainline at the end of 1964. There was one more brief moment of excitement in store however. The driver of our electric, in his anxiety to pull back as much time as possible, overshot the platform at Stevenage, the last coach finishing some two coach lengths past the platform end!

My lasting impressions of the day? Probably the first is a new respect for the LNER’s racing ground, which is by no means boring, and the A4s in particular. Second, the A4 passing a Eurostar train, the front end of which looked like the A4’s first cousin. This is probably why the A4 still looks “right” on today’s railway, more so perhaps than any other loco. I have seen *Union of South Africa* on numerous occasions over the years and indeed have travelled behind her before and each time I am impressed by what little dark smoke is produced and her eagerness to RUN. The A4s were designed to run fast with light trains but also demonstrated that they could pull as well. The Duchesses were designed to take 600ton trains over Shap and Beattock unaided but demonstrated that they could run as well. Such is the fascination of the steam locomotive.

My next ambition? 100mph behind steam!

(Editor's Note: Curiously enough the day's run was never reported in the steam press. Could it be that the permission to run at 80mph was a fortuitous error on somebody's part which quickly led to an 'embargo' on the news? Whatever the explanation, it does mean that Ian's story is an exclusive!)

Postscript: A similar trip to the above was held again in the summer of this year. Again there were similar speeds and timings and again the railway press was silent. The biggest difference this year was that Grahame brought along two drinking pals and, despite being at the seaside on a very hot and sunny day, led us all on a brisk pub crawl he'd secretly planned, visiting three 'real ale' pubs and an excellent fish and chip shop. Apparently, his wife says that it is typical of him to lead such 'route marches' whenever he's allowed to get away with it.

The views expressed in this News Sheet are not necessarily
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