



November 2015 Newsletter

1. 2015 / 2016 DIARY DATES

a. Meetings of the Friends of the Railway Studies Collection are held in the Passmore Edwards Centre near the Cattle Market and multi-storey car parks. Meetings start at 7.00 pm and all are welcome to attend. Friends of the Railway Studies Collection have free entry; guests are invited to make a donation of £1.

b. Next Meetings of the Railway Studies Collection:

Date 2015	Subject and speaker
17 November	An illustrated talk on <i>Pakistan Railways</i> by Paul Silvestri
15 December	Social Evening with short talks by Denis Lewis, Peter Skinnis, photographs shown by Chris Brown, and mystery station photographs from the Collection.
Date 2016	Subject and speaker
19 January	<i>The trials & tribulations in the life of a Station Manager:</i> A talk by Ian Munday, Great Western Railway Stations Manager, South Devon.
16 February	<i>Northern Ireland Railways:</i> an illustrated talk by Tim Morton.
15 March	<i>The LMS School of Transport, Derby:</i> a talk by Graham Wild
19 April	Photographs from the Collection.
17 May	AGM followed by a joint talk on <i>Managing and Driving the Exeter to Waterloo Line:</i> The Management aspect by our President, John Heaton, and the Driving aspect by our Chairman, Dennis Lewis.
20 September	Provisional: <i>Railway the New Franchise and the IEP Trains</i> by Mike Greedy, Great Western Railway
18 October	<i>GWR Motor Buses, Steam Railmotors, Push & Pull Trains, Diesel Railcars & Halts:</i> An illustrated talk by Brian Jackson, Transport Historian.
15 November	to be arranged
20 December	A Social evening

c. Meeting held on 20th October 2015

Peter Gray entertained a well-attended meeting with slides covering the branch lines of Dartmoor, most of which have long since gone. His recollections, and details of the photographs, made for a fascinating evening and much appreciated by everyone there

d) Exeter Garden Railway Show

Once again we had a profitable day at the Garden Railway Show making over £200, after expenses. These included the cost of the two tables and some petrol money for those who took the books up to Exeter. Thanks to Maureen, Denis, Robin, Tony, Pat, Peter & Alan for all their efforts.

2. NEWS ABOUT THE COLLECTION

a. David St John Thomas's Collection

The books and photographs which came as a bequest from David St John Thomas arrived at the Passmore Edwards Centre on the 15th October 2015, following a 600 mile + trip from Nairn in a hired *Enterprise* van. The surplus books have already been disposed of, courtesy of the stand at the Garden Railway Show, and Sherryl is working on the Bradshaws and timetables to be incorporated into the Collection. The photographs and other papers will be worked on over the next few months. Thanks to Graham & David Beer for travelling and picking up the Collection, Tess, Wendy, Sherryl, Alan and Pat for helping unload the van. Also thanks to John Heaton and his wife for boxing up the material in Nairn.

b. Slide Identification.

Denis Lewis and Chris Brown are now working on the slide identification process. First tackling the slides which have been donated over many years and which Carole Smart had put into slide holders. So far there are plenty of Modern Traction photographs being 're-discovered' which came from a donator in Essex several years ago.

c. Copyright Volunteers

Alan Hughes and Passmore Edwards Centre employee, Mick Cockerham, are making steady progress on this complex task. It has involved tracking down the copyright permissions from several firms which are no longer trading. A fuller update will be given in the December Newsletter.

3. MEMBERS' SECTION

James Roberts

I am sorry to inform you that James died a couple of weeks ago. Unfortunately we only received the news last Wednesday and his funeral was held on Monday 2nd Nov 2016.

James was an active member of the Friends helping to find Speakers for several meetings and doing the huge task of the 'initial sort out' of the photographs donated by Derek Brough. He regularly attended meetings, travelling from his home in Curry Rivel, near Taunton and staying overnight. He will be sadly missed.

b) Peter Skinns' Bike Ride

Peter completes 1,000-mile ride on secondhand bike

YOU don't need an expensive top of the range bike to complete a marathon.

Peter Skinns has just finished the 1,000 mile John O'Groats to Land's End classic ride on a secondhand machine he bought for £50 from a Teignmouth shop.

'It served me well, and I didn't have any problems with it. It just proves that you do not need to fork out a lot of money for long distance journeys,' said Mr Skinns, 70.

'I was passing a bike shop in Waterloo Street, and wanted a bike for just local rides. I saw one I fancied, and bought it.

'I always had an ambition to do the end to end, and decided the bike was good enough

to complete it. It didn't let me down. I was quite lucky with the weather, but it was very cold at times, especially going through the Great Glen.'

David Margrie, proprietor of Teign Cycles, said he was surprised when he learned that Mr Skinns was going to use the Diamondback hybrid on the journey.

'It is about ten years old, but very sturdy. There is nothing wrong with an older bike as long as it has been looked after and checked over properly. I gave him some spares just in case, but apparently he did not need them.'

Mr Skinns, pictured here with Mr Margrie, raised sponsorship for the NSPCC during his epic journey.



Mid Devon Advertiser 16 October 2015.

Reporting the 1,000 mile cycle journey by Friend's Member, Peter Skinns, raising money for NSPCC.

Well done, Peter!

c) *Railway Tour of the Cotswolds and East Anglia in 1959, by Ian Watkins*

On 8th July 1959 my parents and I left Yeovil Pen Mill on the 8:25 am train to Westbury & Chippenham, changing to a stopping-train to Wantage Road Station, and saw the Wantage Tramway Company Engine No. 5 on the platform.



Wantage Tramway Co.loco No. 5 Shannon, on Wantage Road Station platform.

© Ian Watkins

We then caught a bus to Wantage town and had a look around, and saw the Wantage Tramway Company Offices in Mill Street.



© Ian Watkins



© Bill Nicholls

The building had the Tramway name and date moulded in tiles at the top.

Then on to Oxford where Modified Hall No. 6967 Willesley Hall worked a freight train through the station. Changing trains again, we went to Bedford where we stayed overnight.



No. 6967 Willesley Hall at Oxford Station

© Ian Watkins

The next day was spent looking around Bedford in the morning, then we caught a train to Cambridge, and then another to Haughley Junction to catch a train to Norwich. At the station we were met by friends of my parents, and stayed at their house at Wroxham for four nights.

Day three: into Norwich and a train to Lowestoft, another to Yarmouth South Town Station and a walk to Yarmouth Vauxhall Station for a train to Norwich and back to Wroxham.

Day four: spent looking around Norwich and out to see Aunt Emily for tea and left at 8pm for Wroxham.

Day five was a Sunday and all of us went out on the Norfolk Broads on a motor yacht belonging to guests we were staying with.

Day six and we left Wroxham on the 10am to Norwich, and another train to Ely for a look around. We took a train to Peterborough and, after a break here, we caught a cross-country train to Market Harborough. The first few miles of this route is now part of the Nene Valley Railway.

Overnighting in Market Harborough, on day seven we caught the 11 am service to Rugby Midland and after visiting the town, went over to Rugby Central station for a train via Banbury to Oxford. We spent three hours there before catching a train to Kingham Junction and then changing to a Cheltenham train to Bourton-on-the-Water, where we stayed the night.



Kingham Junction:
the Cheltenham line on the
left and the Chipping
Norton line on the right.
© Ian Watkins



Foss Cross station on the
Kingham Junction to
Cheltenham line.
© Ian Watkins

On the final day we went to the Model Village and the full-sized Bourton-on-the-Water in the morning. Then the 10.30 train to Cheltenham, the 1.52pm through train to Southampton on the Midland & South Western Junction line as far as Andover Junction.



On the Midland & South
Western Junction line: a
view of the rear of the GWR
Works, Swindon.
© Ian Watkins

Finally a train back to Yeovil Junction and then to Yeovil Town. Home by 8.30pm.

Editors note: *This journey would not be possible by rail today. Several of the lines have been closed and many of the former main line stations have disappeared such as Wantage Road. Thanks to Ian for the article showing how many different routes could be travelled in 1959.*

d) Alternative Routes, by Denis A Lewis

Since the disastrous flood damage to the Railway infrastructure at Dawlish in 2014, there has been much discussion by the media of building an alternative route. The Western and Southern regions both used to have their own routes between Exeter & Plymouth. In an emergency, each used their rival's tracks as an alternative route. Exmouth Junction and Friary (Southern), plus Exeter and Laira (Western) had rostered work on each other's route. This meant that the locomen retained the necessary road knowledge and were ready to cope with an emergency if one of the routes was blocked. Each weekday, two trains per day operated each way over the other's mileage. The most prestigious of these trains was the 15:00 Waterloo to Plymouth. This was worked onwards from Exeter to its destination by Laira. All the other services involved were stopping trains. With approximately twenty stops one of these trains took 2 hours and 50 minutes to travel from Exeter to Plymouth via Okehampton. Plenty of time to enjoy the scenery if you were not in a hurry! Stopping trains over the shorter Western route via Totnes would also take over two hours but involved a short layover at Newton Abbot. Southern motive power in the late 1950s over the Western route was usually a *West Country* Pacific. The Western favoured their Moguls (53s & 63s etc) when working over the Southern. Larger GWR Locomotives did appear over the route but at a reduced speed. This usually only happened when the Western route was blocked. The ability to always be able to catch a train between Exeter & Plymouth came to an end in 1968. Due to the misguided wisdom of Dr Beeching, the Southern route was severed in that year. This has left the former Western route having to cope with any severe weather & emergencies. Not always with success! Train services mentioned are based on the 1957 timetable.



24 April 1957: No. 34027 *Taw Valley* waiting to leave Newton Abbot with the 12:30 to Plymouth. It arrived in Newton Abbot at 12:14 with the 11:25 from Exeter. *Taw Valley* has been preserved in 'rebuilt' form.

On the right of the photograph is Bristol-based No. 5904 *Kelhorn Hall*. Also a, once familiar, K6 red telephone box in the steam!

© Denis Lewis

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All cheques are payable to ***Friends of the Railway Studies Collection***, please.