

UNDERGROUND NEWS

ISSN
0306-8617

Second series Issue number 184

THE TIMETABLE for period beginning 2 October 1977

Sunday 2 October

Library evening. The Society's library open for inspection. 1900 at 9A Dunrobin Court, 389 Finchley Road, London NW3 6HE.

Wednesday 12 October

Afternoon visit to Aldenham Works. Fully booked.

Friday 14 October

Presidential Address by Mr. J. Graeme Bruce "Never a dull Moment" 1900 for 1915 at Hammersmith Town Hall.

Saturday 22 October

The Society will have a sales stand at the LOTS spectacular '77, Central Hall, Westminster, SW1. 1100-1500.

Tuesday 1 November

Library evening. The Society's library open for inspection. 1830 at 9A Dunrobin Court, 389 Finchley Road, London NW3 6HE.

Friday 11 November

Talk by Mr. D J Carson, 'Bye-Bye Glasgow Subway'. 1900 for 1915 at Hammersmith Town Hall.

Saturday 19 November

The Society will be operating its sales stand at The Transport Enthusiast's Bazaar, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, Islington N1 between 1100 and 1500.

The entrance to Hammersmith Town Hall is in Nigel Playfair Avenue, off King Street or the Great West Road. The nearest LT station is Ravenscourt Park, NOT Hammersmith.

UNDERGROUND STOCK ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

As readers will know, ex-London Transport "standard" tube stock has been operating the Ryde - Shanklin service on the Isle of Wight, since 1967. The transfer and re-numbering was generally covered in 'Underground' No.64, for April 1967, but some of the more recent events on the island have not been covered in this Society's publications since. With co-operation from the Wight Locomotive Society, we publish below further information which may be of interest to our members:-

SUMMARY OF STOCK ON THE ISLAND (as delivered)

3-TIS Units

031 - S26S (5294),	S47S (7279),	S1S (3703)
032 - S28S (5304),	S92S (7285),	S3S (3251)
033 - S30S (5312),	S93S (7282),	S5S (3185)
034 - S32S (5290),	S94S (7287),	S7S (3209)
035 - S34S (5302),	S95S (7292),	S9S (3223)
036 - S36S (5350),	S96S (7290),	S11S (3705)

4-VEC Units

041 - S20S (3308),	S27S (5279),	S41S (7286),	S13S (3141)
042 - S22S (3010),	S29S (5293),	S42S (7280),	S15S (3253)
043 - S 2S (3706),	S31S (5283),	S43S (7275),	S19S (3045)
044 - S 4S (3702),	S33S (5291),	S44S (7281),	S21S (3041)
045 - S 6S (3084),	S48S (7298),	S45S (7293),	S23S (3315)
046 - S 8S (3074),	S49S (7296),	S46S (7283),	S25S (3313)

Spare car S10S (3696)

The L.T. numbers are shown in brackets, driving motor cars being in the 3xxx range, trailers 7xxx and control trailers 5xxx.

The original S15S (3253) was damaged within the first few years of operation on the island, to such an extent that it was replaced by ex L.T. car 3273. The new S15S, having been overhauled and repainted in B.R. livery at Acton Works, left there on 20.3.71 and arrived at Ryde St. Johns on the following day, having travelled all the way by Pickford's Lorry. At about the same time, all the remaining 41 cars were given their first repaint since arriving on the island. The original S15S (3253) was finally broken up at about the end of 1971.

A shunting mishap at Ryde St. Johns on 10.9.73 involved 4-VEC and 3-TIS units 045 and 035. The intermediate couplings held, but the coupling between the units gave way and caused two vehicles to become badly damaged in the consequent heavy collision. Four of the above coaches were returned to traffic by summer 1974, but S48S (7298), S45S (7293) and S23S (3315) were withdrawn as beyond economical repair. Motor car S6S (3084) from unit 045 was attached to the end of unit 035 and the whole renumbered 045, thus becoming: S6S (3084), S34S (5302), S95S (7292), S9S (3223). Unit 036 was renumbered 035, presumably to avoid there being a gap in the sequence.

The 3 damaged cars were moved to the up sidings at Ryde St. Johns and were cannibalised for spares before being broken up on site by a mainland scrap dealer from 11.11.75.

Gales brought troubles to the Ryde - Shanklin line during the morning of 11.2.74, when the 06.30 Ryde to Shanklin train struck a tree, which had fallen across the line at Brading, damaging the front of the electric unit.

Two separate incidents of vandalism occurred at Ryde St. Johns involving damage and in the more serious incident on 8.9.75, a severe fire gutted one carriage (probably S25S (3313)). Two local fire appliances attended to bring the blaze under control within 15 minutes. S22S (3010) and S25S (3313) were under repair during the winter of 1975. Unit 046 from which S25S came, ran for some time as a 3-car unit, while the spare car S10S (3696) replaced S22S in unit 042.

Unit 043 is used in winter as a de-icing unit.

3-TIS unit 034 emerged from Ryde Works in May 1976 in a revised livery. The basic colours remain the same, i.e. 'Rail Blue' with yellow cab ends and dark metallic grey roofs, black underframe and light grey shoebeams. The main difference is that the sliding doors are also painted light grey. The suffix letter to the number has been omitted, making, for example, S7S into S7. Unit 035 (S36, S96, S11) was in ex-works condition in the new livery in October 1976 as was spare car S10. This car was repainted at the same time as unit 034 and by 24.1.77 was running with 034 unit to form a 4-car set.

The whole future of the Shanklin line was in the public eye as a result of comments by Mr. Peter Cowell (Southern Region Assistant Social Services Manager) to the Isle of Wight County Council Structure Plan examination on 18.11.76. He said that a decision would have to be made on the replacement of the ex-L.T. stock within two or three years, and that new purpose built stock would cost £4 million. Mr. Cowell stated that it was 'unlikely' that the Government would make available the necessary funds for this and the Shanklin line could not continue without financial aid. He nevertheless recognised the 'undoubted social need' for the line, which was subsidised to the extent of £283,000 in 1975, and called for joint studies with the I.W.C.C. to improve traffic on the line, as well as I.W.C.C. involvement in a Ryde-Shanklin-Ventnor transportation study, which has since been followed up.

The resultant speculation received an official reply from South Western Divisional Manager, Mr. L.S. Edwards, who stressed that it would be for the Government to decide the line's future in the long run. There was no intention of sharpening the axe but the eventual replacement of present rolling stock had to be faced.

EX METROPOLITAN RAILWAY BODIES ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

The Isle of Wight Railway bought eighteen ex-Metropolitan Railway 40ft rigid eight wheelers and were all sold out of service by the Southern Railway in the late 1920's and remarkably 12 of these have survived, largely intact at St. Helen's Duver, 10 as beach huts and two converted into a cafe. Another also survives at Gurnard Marsh.

Other reports of ex-Met. coach bodies indicate that examples also existed, at least until recent years, as follows:-

SR No. 2436 in the grounds of a nursery at Alverstone - broken up 2-1972.

Newport - visible in the garden of a house in Barton Road.

Part of one in a back garden in Ash Road Newport.

We are indebted for the information in both the above articles to the Wight Locomotive Society who originally published it in 'Wight Report' Nos. 16, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 34 and 35.

AN EVENING WITH THE MAD COMMUTER

"Tube Theatre" said the local paper's What's On column for Saturday 27 August. "Travel with a comedian on the underground as a secret audience and watch ordinary passengers try not to laugh. On a good day, it is the funniest thing in London. Ring 794-7296 for further details. £1."

Although I had heard rumours about this venture before, I had never seen it for myself. So I rang the number given and was told to meet on the Eastbound platform at Green Park at 7.30 that evening. Arriving there, I joined some 15 or 20 other people who were to be the audience. We were introduced to the Mad Commuter (a tall well-dressed, bearded man) and his cast of assistants, and were briefed on what to do; we would be travelling up and down the Piccadilly Line between Gloucester Road and Leicester Square. Before getting on each train, we would all be told where to alight, but thenceforward we should act as if we were strangers travelling independently, in order to avoid attracting the attention of the ordinary passengers.

The performance duly started, and each time we got on a train the principal character acted out a sketch whose length varied according to how far we were going. He missed stations, dropped money all over the floor, tried to find his way using a bus map, lost his hat, fought with newspapers and struggled with his tie. He went up to other passengers (who were of course members of the cast) and on various pretexts managed to cause all sorts of mayhem and confusion which would have been highly embarrassing in real life. In the course of the evening, two ties and three newspapers were either cut up with scissors or last seen departing in the general direction of Cockfosters.

The reactions of the ordinary passengers were as interesting to watch as the antics of the comedian. Some changed seats to get away; others changed seats to get a better view, and one or two even tagged along. At the start of each sketch, most passengers tried to conceal their amusement (and so did the audience), but by the end everybody was laughing out loud.

However, one incident occurred at South Kensington that was not in the script, or the timetable. We came off a Westbound train and walked up to the Eastbound Piccadilly Line platform, where the only other passengers were three coloured men. Looking back down the side passage leading on to the platform, I saw two uniformed station staff, apparently following us. They didn't come on to the platform however, but stayed lurking in the side passage until the train (of 1973 stock) arrived. The doors opened, and we boarded the third car.

Leaning out of the door and looking back along the platform, I saw one of the stationmen coming out of the side passage and running to the rear cab of the train, where he spoke to the guard, who promptly closed the doors. I could not see what happened after that, but the train stayed in the platform with its doors shut for about a minute. (I remember thinking "We're trapped"). Then the train started, but it only went a few cars' lengths and then stopped. It then restarted, went a few yards, stopped, started again, went a few more yards, stopped again, and this time it stayed stopped. (I thought: "Now we're really trapped"). The motorman (or maybe the guard) came over the intercom, apologising for the delay and saying this was due to a technical fault. ("Technical fault my foot," I thought. "There's nothing wrong with this train if we've just made three perfectly normal starts and stops. This is LT's standard procedure for dealing with troublemakers on a train.") I began to rehearse my story of innocence.

After about ten minutes, I was looking back along the train, and saw uniformed figures coming towards me, using the communicating doors between cars. (The rear of the train must still have been at the platform.) To my relief the uniformed men (seven LT police and one of the stationmen) walked straight past me through the car and into the one in front, from which they soon returned escorting the three coloured men back down the train to the station platform. Obviously, these were the troublemakers (presumably thieves), and not us! A few moments later, the train continued on its interrupted journey, and I realised that the motorman had been starting and stopping the train under the guard's instructions so that all the doors except those of the guard's cab would be in the tunnel.

In fact, I needn't have worried, since I later found out that LT tolerated the Mad Commuter. This individual is a professional actor and children's entertainer, who started Tube Theatre several years ago. It is now so successful that he has an Arts Council grant and does a show most Saturday evenings.

The show lasted about two hours, and I found it very enjoyable - much funnier than would appear from just reading this description.. The only drawback was that the audience was a bit too large to see the action at close quarters and yet mingle inconspicuously with the bona fide passengers, who were often outnumbered. (However, I am told that the audience is normally smaller).

The beauty of Tube Theatre is its audience involvement; everybody concerned is simultaneously a character in the play, a spectator, and a passenger, regardless of whether they are nominally one of the "cast", the "audience", or the "ordinary passengers". Something worries me, however. Somebody is playing a joke, but who are the victims? LT?. The Arts Council? The cast look foolish, but are paid. The ordinary passengers unwittingly provide free entertainment, but also receive it; and the audience, whilst nominally "in" on the joke, are not only providing part of the action without realising it, but are also paying for the entertainment that ordinary passengers get for free.

Everybody is the joker in one sense, and the victim in another, but nobody seems to mind. So if you have a Saturday night to spare in London, why not ring 794-7296 and take part in the joke, even if that means being its victim.

NEWSFLASHES

- NF 1809 The Piccadilly Line service was severely disrupted at about 2000 hrs on Friday 12th August as a result of a fire in a multicore cable between Wood Green and Arnos Grove. As a result of the fire, the remote control facility for Wood Green was lost, giving rise to the extremely unusual manual working of Wood Green frame by Signal Dept. staff under Operating Dept. supervision. The frame at Wood Green is usually locked and covered by aluminium panels, preventing access to the levers.
- NF 1810 With reference to the article on 1959/62 Tube Stock in UN183, 1962 stock unit 1408-2408-9409-1409 is now back in service on the Central Line. As a result of the derailment described in NF1795, a reformed unit comprising 1434-2434-9583-1583 is now operating on the Central Line. Cars 1435 and 9435 are undergoing repair at Acton.
- NF 1811 It has been observed that the large barometer in the ticket hall at Sudbury Town station has been missing for some months. Since this station is a listed building, it is to be hoped that London Transport restore the device before a preservationist decides to prosecute.
- NF 1812 The EHO 1960 Tube Stock unit (3908-4929-3909) has recently entered service on the Woodford - Hainault shuttle service. According to recent press reports, highly dangerous blue asbestos has recently been discovered in all of the non-overhauled 1960 Tube Stock cars. The cars are being de-contaminated as they pass through Acton Works.
- NF 1813 1938 Tube Stock car 10100 was turned round (via the Watford Triangle) before being dispatched for scrap. This was done as an unequal number of a and d end cars were scrapped at that time, and BR will only accept scrap over their metals if the vehicles with wedgelock couplings (ie the driving motor cars) are securely coupled face to face in the centre of the scrap train.

- NF 1814 A number of units have recently been emerging from Acton Works without 'Obstructing the doors...' (etc) stickers applied. Additionally, car 9681 has not had its 'No Smoking' symbols applied; it was overhauled 6/77.
- NF 1815 1973 Tube Stock cars 140-540-340x417-617-217 were used for riding tests between Rickmansworth and Harrow on Tuesday & Wednesday 9&10 August and on Friday & Sunday, 12&14 August, returning from Neasden to Ealing Common on Thursday 11 August to load weights. The train returned to Northfields on 16 August.
- NF 1816 Several 'R' Stock cars have been seen in service with what appear to be birds' nests constructed in the ventilation duct above the driver's cab. The cars concerned are: 22673, 22611, 22623, 22608, 21118, 22668, 22677.
- NF 1817 Arsenal and Gloucester Road stations (Piccadilly Line) had both been re-lit with fluorescent lights by 26.9.77 leaving only Holloway Road and Aldwych on the Picc. which still have tungsten lighting.
- NF 1818 All 1959/62 Tube Stock cars are now coming out of overhaul with grey painted roofs.
- NF 1819 It would appear that the Closed / Open labels fitted to the ventilators on 1973 Tube Stock can be fitted incorrectly, since there are two types; when this happens, the ventilator is indicated as open when it is in fact closed, and vice versa. Car 199 demonstrates.
- NF 1820 The Bakerloo Line stores train on 14th September was run with pre-1938 ballast cars L63 & L68. This working has, for some time, been run with 1938 ballast cars.
- NF 1821 C69 unit 5533-6533 has been seen in service with C77 stock melamine car maps fitted, which include the Wimbledon - Edgware Road section of the District Line.
- NF 1822 Re-wired 1959 Tube Stock car 1070, renumbered as 1309R, was turned via Earls Court, Mansion House and High Street Kensington, between pilot cars L130 & L131 on Friday September 9th. The car was taken straight back to Northfields Depot, where it was re-formed into its unit, which is now in service on the Piccadilly Line. The 'R' suffix to the number indicates REPLACEMENT, the original 1309 having been bomb-damaged.
- NF 1823 Cars have been appearing on the Victoria Line with locking 'J' door handles fitted, of the type described in the C77 stock review. The glasses are not yet fitted to the Victoria Line handles; presumably they will not be until all cars are so fitted and all crews have been issued with the special keys necessary to open the doors.

NF 1824 Some LT station car park charges are to be reduced from Sunday 25 September. At the same time, the token system is to be withdrawn from most car parks.

Nf 1825 A system of 'photocards' for use with Go as you Please, Red Bus Pass, and Bus & Tube tickets is to be introduced from September 11. Eventually, every holder of such tickets will have to produce a photograph of themselves before purchasing the ticket; the photocard will also have to be produced with the relevant ticket whilst the holder is travelling. LT must be about the last transport undertaking in the country to introduce a system like this, which is intended to deter persons other than those to whom the tickets were issued from using these tickets.

NF 1826 As a result of unofficial industrial action by Automatic Train Operators on the Victoria Line, there were no trains at all on the Victoria Line on Wednesday 14 September or Thursday 22 September. The men are basically in disagreement with management over duty schedules and, specifically over the short turn round times allowed at such places as Victoria and Sewen Sisters. The dispute has been heralded by the press as a 'tea break' strike, since the crews complain that they have little time for refreshment between trips. Further stoppages are likely.

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SOCIETY RULES

- (i) At the Annual General Meeting on 19 March 1977, a member thought that there was an error in the Committee's proposed new rule 20, because of different treatment of associate members in references to rules 3 & 5 compared with an amendment proposed by Mr. N Fuller. The Chairman undertook to re-examine this point, but there was no incompatibility between the Fuller amendment and the Committee's proposal, as in both cases Associate members were excluded from rule 3 (eligibility to sit on Committee or to elect Committee) or rule 5 (eligibility to elect Committee).
- (ii) The Committee consider that the present rules are satisfactory and are not anxious to amend them further. However, in view of the decision of the members present at the 1977 AGM that the exact rule amendment that had been circulated must be voted on, the Committee is willing to assist members seeking to propose rule amendments to draft them in a way that complies with the rules. Any members proposing to introduce rule amendments for the 1978 AGM are invited to write to the Secretary forthwith on an informal basis for assistance in drafting, for formal circulation of the agreed amendment at a later stage.

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Underground News is the Newsletter of the London Underground Railway Society. All correspondence and items for possible inclusion should be sent to The Editor, LURS, 39 Durnsford Road, Bounds Green, London N11.