

Left Hand Running

The February 2010 Newsletter of The British Train Society

www.britishtrainsociety.org

Chairman: Harry Raynis

Treasurer: George Rowland

Secretary: Ralph Transue

Train Show Chairman: Grant Harrison

Webmaster: Peter Carr

Newsletter: John Derler

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A View From The Footplate

If you haven't visited our website recently, check it out. Peter has added some new features including a slide show of some pictures Andrew took of my layout at the last meeting. If you've got some good pictures that you would like to share, get them to Peter and he'll get them on our website. We need to keep the site interesting and dynamic. To do that, we need more input from more people. Please help.

We are confirmed for the All-American Train Show in LaGrange on Saturday the 27th of March. Now is the time for all of us with modules to look them over and clean them up as necessary. If you don't have a module but you do have a vehicle that could transport a module or two to the show on Friday night and back out again on Saturday, let Grant Harrison know. We need help with the logistics of getting things there and getting set up and then tearing down again afterwards.

Please note that due scheduling conflicts and other events this month's meeting has been postponed by one week and is now set for the 27th. The meeting will be hosted by Ralph Transue in Lombard.

Finally, we decided that dues are payable before the end of March each year. It's still only \$10.00, so get your checks in to George as soon as you can. Hope to see you all on the 27th. Be there

Harry Raynis

Calendar of Coming Events

February 27th, 1:30 pm
BTS Regular Meeting
Lombard (Ralph Transue, 82 West Road)

March 6th & 7th, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
High Wheeler Train Show
Palatine (Harper College)

March 27th, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
All-American Train Show
LaGrange (Lyons Township High School)

Throwing On The Sticks

By Martin Venn

Some of you have already read about some of the things that happened to me while I was working at Raynes Park Signal Box. Some were funny, some are very sad (a latter story) and some were very serious. This is one of the later. In the time that I was there, April 1960 – March 1963, I would say that hardly a month went by that something did not happen. Weather, landslides, special trains, funny things and emergencies. We were seldom bored. In the story of "Rule 71" I tried to paint a picture of the of the atmosphere of the AM rush hour (the PM was similar but different - it lasted longer from about 16.45 to about 19:00). That which transpired in this story happened on a weekday in late spring or early summer at about 08:45 - really beautiful sunny day.

The signal box diagram showed when Up trains passed through New Malden (a mile to the west) and the trains were described on the train described at that time.

There was one describer for each of lines, Up Local and Up Through. The describers showed the first three trains, but stored a total of twelve. In the down direction the train descriptions were entered by Wimbledon "A" box when passing and repeated in both Wimbledon "B", & "C" boxes. Wimbledon "A" was at the east (London) end of the station, about 1 ¼ miles away located between Down Through and the Down Local lines (Platform's 7 and 8). It controlled all 10 platforms, which are still there today. Platform 1 – 4 are terminal tracks for the Underground District Lines. The other are all through island platform and the tracks are 5, Up Local, 6 Up Through, 7 Down Through, 8 Down Local, 9 Up Horboln, & 10 Down Horboln. Wimbledon "B" was a little beyond the west end of the station and was also between the Down Local and Through. It controlled the junction of the West Croydon Direct line, (now a tram line) and the Sutton line as well as the exit from Wimbledon West Yard. Wimbledon "C" Box is about another 1/4 of a mile and controlled the main entrance and exit from West Yard. It's also where the Sutton Line turns off to the Southeast and was located in the V between these lines. There is no actual junction. There also was a line which leaves the Down Horboln (and West Yard) which parallels the Down Local to Raynes Park where freights to Feltham via Chertsey and also the local Raynes Park freight. This arrived just before the PM rush hour, & left about 18:50.

The signals between Wimbledon "A", and Raynes Park were all four aspect colored light. Most were semi-automatic and the rest automatic. To understand the full impact of this story is important to understand the location of these signals. At the end of the platform 7 was the Wimbledon "B" semi-auto signal; next came the "C" box semi-autos and at about half way between "C" Box and Raynes Park is

another semi-auto signal. The backs of these can be seen from Raynes Park Box. The signals are about a quarter of a mile apart. Raynes Park box was on the South side of the tracks.

When a train describer came in you could hear it ticking as the rotary step relays clinked around. When it reached the correct description it would buzz and the correct light would come up. In addition to the train describers, there were block bells for sending emergency signals. At about 08:45 the Down Through describer buzzed. At the same time the Down Through track circuit in Wimbledon station lit up (each track circuit was shown by two red lights; the actual circuits were shown in a different color). This was the 08:30 Waterloo to Weymouth express. It was a heavy train of 13 coaches usually hauled by a rebuilt Merchant Navy Pacific. And so it was on this day. It was also the 1st express of the day to Bournemouth and Weymouth. I think that its 1st stop was Southampton Central. The speed limit was 60 I think and went up to 85 at New Malden. There was also a 08:35 to Bournemouth West. This called at some of the places that the 08:30 did not.

Suddenly the block bell for the Down Through from Wimbledon "C" rang out - seven slow beats: "Stop and Examine Train!" The 08:30 was passing an automatic signal. The signalman threw on the semi auto home signal in front of the 08:30. There was a long whistle from the 08:30 as she went into emergency. She stopped a little over an engine length beyond the Down Home. The inter-box phone between us and Wimbledon "C" rang and the signalman said that a door on the Weymouth train had swung open while passing through Wimbledon Station and hit a stopped electric train on the Up Through. This ripped off many door handles and caused the doors to open. No one was hurt, but several were shocked. The signalman immediately set the

Up Thought semi-auto signal to danger. I am not sure if anything was approaching at the time. This was to stop any more traffic going up the Up Through, not knowing the status of the disabled train at Wimbledon. Next the phone by the Down Through signal rang and the fireman of the 08:30 wanted to know why we had thrown the signal in front of him. The signaller told him what we knew. Mean while Wimbledon "A" started putting all traffic down the Down Local Line. In a short while we had the unusual sight of the 08:35, passing the 08:30. We could not put it back onto the Down Through, as the 08:30 was fouling the track circuits. In a short while the fireman called to say that the 1st vehicle in the train showed signs of having had a door come open. It was a bogie utility/luggage van. He also said that they had had trouble closing doors at Waterloo and had understood that had been a fix. The door was made secure, and the 08:30 got underway again. The train at Wimbledon went to Wimbledon EMU depot (Durnsford Road Depot) for repairs. The Through lines at Wimbledon were checked and traffic went back to normal. The passengers on the Up platform had had their excitement for the day, and I put the kettle on for the 09:00 cup of tea.

Editor's note: Other "Tales from Trackside" by Martin can be found in the following issues of LHR;

January 2010 – *Rule 71*

March 2009 – *The Fan Trip*

January 2009 – *One Foggy Night*

May 2004 – *The Disturbance*

November 2002 – *Out of the Box*

Naval Training

After many years your editor and one of his former shipmates from Navy days have gotten in contact with each other again. We have exchanged some photos from those days and one photo that my shipmate sent to me shows a much younger and slimmer version of myself with camera in hand taking pictures of a steam locomotive shunting in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. So here you have your "editor-in-training" doing what railway enthusiasts the world over do - train watching is such grand fun!



Photo by Richard Ingram

Incidentally, the Taiwanese railwaymen who observed this American sailor taking photos of their trains were either bewildered or rather amused.