

Left Hand Running

The July 2010 Newsletter of The British Train Society

www.britishtrainsociety.org

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A View From The Footplate

This month's meeting will be a departure from our usual British railway theme as we will get a chance to view and experience some of the Midwest's electric railway history. We will meet out at the Fox River Trolley Museum in South Elgin IL. This is a living history museum with interurban and rapid transit electric cars operating on two miles of track along the Fox River that was once part of the Aurora, Elgin & Fox River Electric Company. The collection includes cars from the C.A. & E, the C.N.S. & M, the C.S.S. & S.B. and of course the C.T.A. The prize jewel of their collection is a recently acquired car which actually ran on the A. E. & F.R. from 1924 until end of passenger service in 1936.

Usually two cars are in operation for rides up and down the line. We are fortunate in that Grant Harrison of our club is a working member of the F.R.T.M. He will be able to give us tour of the yards and a close look at all of their equipment. Plan to be there at about 1:30 as usual and wear your BTS shirt if you have one. The tickets are reasonably priced and include two rides on the line

We apologize to our more infirm members. This is a museum and the cars are relics of the past and all were built long before A.D.A. None of the cars or station platforms are handicap accessible.

The museum is on route 31 in South Elgin about 2miles south of route 20 and 6 miles north of route 64. Hope to see you there.

Harry

Calendar of Coming Events

July 17th, 1:30 pm

BTS Summer Train Excursion

South Elgin (Fox River Valley Trolley Museum)

August 8th, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Great Midwest Train Show

Wheaton (DuPage County Fairgrounds)

September 18th, 1:30 pm

BTS Regular Meeting

Lincolnshire (Mike Perry, 24 Wimbledon Ct)

September 25th & 26th,

Southland Model Train Show

Oak (Richards High School)

British Double-Deckers



Conceived by Oliver Bulleid and built for the Southern Railway's Dartford commuter route were two 4DD electric multiple units which were the only double-deck trains to run on the main line in Britain.

Because the restrictive railway loading gauge in Britain, normal double-deck coaches with two fully separated decks are prohibited so on the 4DD's the upper-

level seats were squeezed in between the lower-level seats to ensure that the overall height of the unit was within the clearances necessary to pass through tunnels and under bridges. The two 4DD electric multiple units were somewhat unsuccessful because of the arrangement of the bi-level seating needed to obtain the desired extra seating capacity.

Contributed by George Rowland

Revolutionary

In the 1980's the aggregates carrier Foster-Yeoman Ltd set in motion a major revolution on Britain's railways by introducing foreign-built locomotives into main line service. What led to this revolution and why did FY choose to buy locomotives from overseas? In a word: reliability. Foster-Yeoman is a major supplier of aggregates to the construction industry and has long furnished contractors with the stone required for concrete by rail. By the 1980's delivery schedules became increasingly tight while reliability of delivery by rail was decreasing rapidly. On-line failures of trains not only jeopardized customer relations but clogged the tracks causing system-wide delays for all railway users. Even when FY purchased and maintained their own rolling stock, British Railways could not ensure timely delivery of the trains to customer depots. Against this background revolution was brewing! FY negotiated an agreement with BR to purchase and maintain its own locomotives. Prime requirement: the supplier would have to demonstrate, not merely promise, 95% reliability. This requirement no British manufacturer could meet. So FY looked to General Motors Electro-Motive Division [EMD] in the United States as a potential supplier of the needed new locomotives. But to see the day-in, day-out demonstration of EMD reliability FY had to look no farther than across the Irish Sea.

The railways of the Irish republic had already gone through the agony of unreliable locomotives and, not having a home locomotive industry to patronize, the Irish Railways [CIE] looked beyond their traditional British suppliers. In January 1961 a strange sound was heard in Dublin as the first of 15 new locomotives were placed on the rails. These new locomotives spoke with an American accent echoing for the first time the chant of EMD in the British Isles. These new locomotives were standard products right out of the EMD export catalog: little B₀-B₀ end-cab road switchers powered by a 950hp model 567 engine. They were basically somewhat compact and light weight versions of an American yard switcher. After attaching a few detail parts they ran, virtually right out of the box! The railwaymen had never seen anything like them! Put fuel in them and they ran. And they ran farther between maintenance intervals than any locomotive in Ireland [or for that matter, anywhere in the British Isles]. They were so successful that CIE bought more in 1962, although this time with a cab at each end. As if that was not enough, adding insult to injury CIE even used EMD engines to re-power some of their British-built locomotives! And then more EMD locos were ordered in 1966.

In the 1970s new, fast "Enterprise" passenger trains were being introduced into Belfast-Dublin service and to work them CIE turned again to EMD to supply their locomotives. But in Northern Ireland to purchase American locomotives was politically unthinkable so for the Northern Ireland Railways' [NIR] portion of the new prestige trains locomotives were purchased from England. But on-line failures of these brand new locomotives caused NIR authorities to swallow their pride and in 1981 NIR joined the CIE in the ranks of EMD customers.

So by the early 1980s virtually every main line locomotive working in Ireland was a product of Electro-Motive, a fact not lost on the authorities of Foster-Yeoman. Day-in, day-out proof of EMD reliability was visible on the rails of Ireland for Foster-Yeoman to see while British diesel locomotive builders could offer only hollow promises. The inevitable then followed when the EMD factory in LaGrange built the first of what became the class 59. And when privatization hit Britain's railways the newly formed English, Welsh & Scottish Railway [EWS] also turned to EMD for reliable locomotives, those which we now know as the class 66. The rest, as they say, is history.



Photo from Wikipedia

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