



THE NEWSLETTER

“Every foot of track on the B&M, mainline or branch, rain or shine, was the scene of legitimate human endeavor.”
– Robert W. Jones, *Boston and Maine: Three Colorful Decades of New England Railroading*.

September-October 2023

Meeting/Membership Telephone Number (978) 454-3600

www.bmrrhs.org

Copyright 2023



GATX SW-1500 #1505 (ex-New England Southern #2555) operating for Vermont Rail System passes Concord Tower on Friday, August 11. CSX had applied with the city for a permit to demolish the old B&M signal tower constructed in 1944. Though it still stands of this writing, it is believed this may be the last New England Southern train to pass the tower. Jesse Mazzie photo.

TIMETABLE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sat. Sept. 30 – Sun. October 1:

Nashua Valley Model Railroad Show

Boxboro Regency Hotel & Conference Center
242 Adams Place, Boxboro, MA, 01719
10 AM – 2 PM

We will be at the show with merchandise, clothing, books, and DVDs. We hope to see you at the show!

Saturday, October 14:

October Meeting

Everett Arena, Loudon Road, Concord, NH, 03301
10 AM – 3:30 PM

We will be at the show with merchandise, clothing, books, and DVDs. We hope to see you at the show!

BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization composed of people who want to share their knowledge, and learn more about, the history and operations of the Boston and Maine Railroad, its predecessors, and successors. Formed in 1971 by a group of interested B&M employees and railfans, the B&MRRHS now has nearly one thousand active members.

Our principal activities are publication of our journal, the *B&M Bulletin*, and our *Newsletter*, monthly speakers, archives and hardware preservation, preservation of the B&M 0-6-0 switcher No. 410 and coach-baggage combine No. 1244, participation in railroad shows, and maintaining two web sites: www.bmrrhs.org and www.flickr.com/photos/bmrrhs. If you would like to join the Society, you can join on-line or download an application at www.bmrrhs.org.

OFFICERS

President	James P. Nigzus
Vice President	Rick Kfoury
Treasurer	Paul T. Kosciolk
Secretary	William Marnik
Clerk	Michael E. Basile, Jr.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul T. Kosciolk, Chairman
Russell F. Munroe., Director Emeritus

Myles Gadon	Scott Batson
Daniel W. Hyde	Paul Burke
Andrew Riedl	Carl R. Byron
Mal Sockol	Jesse Mazzie

ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

Jim Nigzus, Stephen DeFrancesco

STAFF

Archives Chairman	Rick Nowell
Bulletin Editor	Andrew M. Wilson
Bulletin Distribution	Jim Nigzus
410 Chairman	Jim Nigzus
Hardware Chairman	Daniel W. Hyde
Hardware Curator	William Marnik
Historian	Russell F. Munroe
Membership Secretary	Stephen J. DeFrancesco
Modelers Notes Editor	Wayne Slaughter
Newsletter Editor	Rick Kfoury
Program Coordinators	Mal Sockol & Jim Nigzus
Show Coordinator	Jim Nigzus
Webmasters	James P. Nigzus; Rudy Garbely (Consult)

About the Newsletter

The Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society *Newsletter* is published six times a year. We welcome your articles, photographs, and news items about the Society, the Boston & Maine Railroad, and current railroad events in New England. It is best to query the editor before writing articles. Please address correspondence to the Newsletter Editor at:

Rick Kfoury, B&MRRHS Newsletter
B&MRRHS, P.O. Box 9116,
Lowell, MA 01853
or email rkfoury@bmrrhs.org.

Opinions expressed in the *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent the views of the Society, its officers, or members. Reference in the *Newsletter* to products or services is for the convenience of readers and does not constitute an endorsement by the Society. © 2023 B&MRRHS.

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

Join us on-line or renew your membership on-line at bmrrhs.org. Credit cards may be used if you join or renew on-line. Dues are also payable by check, money order, postal money order, or cash (in person only). All payments in U.S. dollars. Please allow four to six weeks for processing.

Basic Individual - \$40	Basic & Spouse - \$43
Contributing - \$50	Sustaining - \$55
Supporting - \$80	*Canada & Overseas - \$75
Benefactor - \$100	Corporate - \$500

* *Canada & Overseas members please pay via PayPal*

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Notices are sent monthly based on members' renewal dates. If we have an email on file for you, a renewal reminder will be sent via email. Envelopes are clearly marked "RENEWAL NOTICE." Not responding will result in removal from the member list.

- When members renew, typically the month of renewal does not change. (A member with a 06/19 renewal date who pays in August would have a 06/20 update to renew.)
- The label on your *Newsletter* envelope shows your renewal date.
- Refer questions to the Membership Secretary Stephen DeFrancesco at bmrrhsmembership@gmail.com.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please advise Membership Secretary of new address before you move. Returned and forwarded mail costs the Society money. Write *Stephen DeFrancesco, Membership Secretary, B&MRRHS, P.O. Box 1438, Tewksbury, MA 01876.*

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to take the opportunity to welcome new members who have joined the Society since the last *Newsletter*.

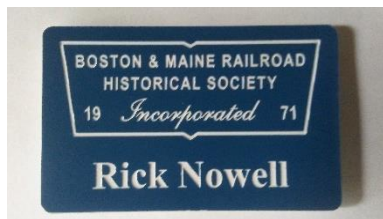
- David Fellon (President, Progressive Rail); Lakeville, MN
- Jim Murphy; Westfield, MA
- Anna Barry; South Boston, MA
- Curtis C. Caden; Mentor, OH
- Collin Devaney; Bow, NH
- Kenneth Ford; Belton, TX
- Christopher Harmon; Estero, FL
- David Spurduto; Lexington, MA
- Phillip Tipper; Chesterfield, England

Welcome Aboard!



MEMBERSHIP BADGES AVAILABLE

B&MRRHS members are entitled to wear the official membership badge at all society events. The badge is an attractive shade of blue with white lettering, 3 inches wide by 2 inches tall. The badge has a secure magnetic attachment system that eliminates pinholes from shirts and sweater. The Society sells and mails badges at cost. Please make checks for \$12 payable to B&MRRHS and send to: Name Badge, B&MRRHS, P.O. Box 9116, Lowell, MA, 01853. Please specify name for the badge. NOTE: Magnets are known to be harmful to those who utilize Pacemakers.



NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR MEMBERSHIPS

Please be advised that we have moved our P.O. Box for new and renewed memberships, and we are **no longer using** the Derry, NH P.O. Box address. Our current P.O. Box address is:

Membership Secretary, B&MRRHS
 P.O. Box 1438,
 Tewksbury, MA 01876

WEBMASTER'S REPORT

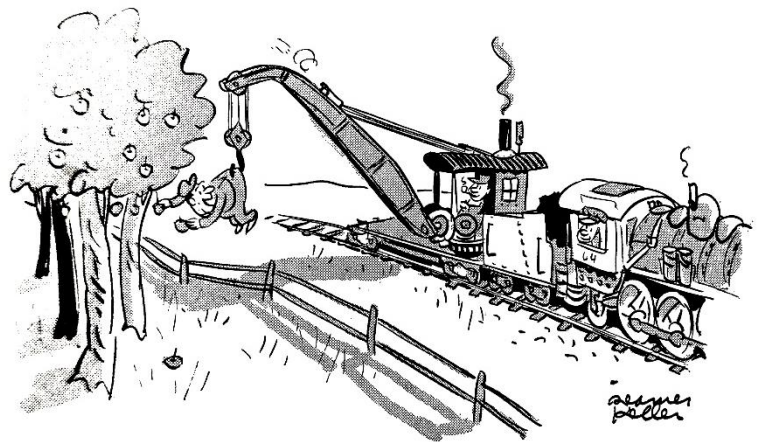
The Online Committee has been busy monitoring our YouTube channel and maintaining the website. We are in the process of assisting the Archives Committee with reverting the Online Archives back to our main website after a trial with Omeka software. We are also in the process of completing editing an episode of Minuteman Tales focusing on West Concord. Our YouTube channel currently has 2,220 subscribers (up from 2,130 at last Newsletter). We hope you have been enjoying! Thank you, and stay tuned!

– James P. Nizsus, Webmaster

EDITOR'S NOTE

I hope that your summer was fun, safe, and fulfilling. September and October are always interesting transitional months, busy nonetheless for us as we head back into the meeting season. I'd like to apologize on behalf of the Board of Directors for the delay in getting the July-August issue out to you all. We were in the process of switching the mailing process for the *Newsletter*. Thanks as always for your support. ☘

– Rick Kfoury, Newsletter Editor



“They’re a little green yet, Gus—ought to be ripe on our next trip down.”
TRACKS, C&O



FROM THE ARCHIVES

B&MRRHS Archives Report
Rick Nowell, Archives Chairman



B&MRRHS ARCHIVES COMMITTEE REPORT

July 25, 2023

I previously reported on our last work session held at Lowell on June 7. Our next work session will be held tomorrow, July 26, at North Chelmsford.

Rick Conard completed his inventory of the tube files at Lowell. These files contain drawings that are too long to be stored in flat files. His inventory is available on the on-line archives.
<https://www.bmrrhs.org/archives>.

A donation by Jim Dufour has made possible the acquisition of an LED work light for use in Lowell. The light has been installed and is ready for use.

Since our last report we have received the following donations:

- 2023.28 Bill Walsh
- 2023.29 James R. Dufour
- 2023.30 Estate of Dwight Winkley c/o Mike Lennon
- 2023.31 Thornton H. Waite
- 2023.32 Melvin S. Garelick

Those of you who follow the Society's website know that last fall, in connection with the re-design of the site, we adopted the Omeka platform for our on-line Archives. Omeka recently notified us that we had run out of storage space on the site and that we would have to pay for additional space. This prompted an evaluation of the Omeka platform. After consultation with Messrs. James P. Nigzus and Rick Kfoury, we decided to revert to the old format and discontinue the Omeka format. Since the adoption of Omeka we have kept the old on-line archives site up to date. We will now begin to move the content of the old on-line archives to the re-designed site.

Your chairman had a preliminary discussion with one of our volunteers who has expressed interest in succeeding me as chairman of the Archives committee. To further this discussion, I have asked our volunteer to submit a resume to be presented to the Board.

New volunteers are always needed to organize, catalogue, and preserve our growing collection of paper materials and photographs. We also need data entry assistance that can be done anywhere. No experience required. Contact Rick Nowell, Archives Chairman, fnowell3@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Nowell
Archives Chairman

FORM 19	BOSTON AND MAINE RAILROAD	FORM 19
Train Order No. <u>2</u>		
Aug. <u>2</u> , 19 <u>61</u>		
To <u>C&E Eng. 47</u>	At <u>Bradford, N.H.</u>	
X _____ Opr.; _____ M.		
<p>After 259 two fifty nine pm Eng 47 run extra Bradford to Sunapee and return to Bradford and need not protect rear against following extras.</p> <p style="margin-top: 50px;">RWA</p>		
Repeated at <u>2.10 PM</u>		
Made <u>Cam</u>	Time <u>2.10 P</u> M.	(<u>Adams</u>) Opr.
Employees addressed must each have a copy of this order.		

5-60-1000 pads

Yankee Ingenuity! Unused Boston & Maine Form 19 train order, reused by F. Nelson Blount's Monadnock, Steamtown & Northern Railroad during their brief 1961 season. Rick Kfoury Collection.

VOLUNTEERS FOR B&M 410

We are continually maintaining and B&M 0-6-0 steam locomotive 410 and combine coach 1244 in downtown Lowell and are always looking for new volunteers. This year we will be doing some cleaning and painting. If you would like to help, contact 410 Committee chairman Jim Nigzus at 978-866-8504. Thank you!

LOWELL FOLK FESTIVAL



LOWELL, MA – The B&M Railroad Historical Society once again had our exhibit in Lowell open for the 36th annual Lowell Folk Festival. The B&M 0-6-0 # 410 and combine attracted much attention. Over the course of the weekend our volunteers fielded questions from many visitors, everyone seems to have a memory of the Boston & Maine. Approximately 1600 people toured our exhibit.

So often we heard “my grandfather” or “my father” worked there. Also, many retired B&M workers came aboard bringing interesting conversations. The HO layout is a huge attraction, captivating both young and old alike. Merchandise sales were very good, and the positive exposure of the B&MRRHS is terrific.

This event would not be possible without our volunteers. Thanks go out to Dan Hyde, Paul Kosciolik, Dave Hampton, Rick Hurst, Paul Burke, Christine Nigzus, Mal Sockol, Rick Nowell, and Andrew Riedl.

Submitted by Jim Nigzus

**WEST CHELMSFORD FREIGHTHOUSE
TO BE POTENTIALLY SAVED**

CHELMSFORD, MA – Rick Conard reports that the town of Chelmsford has made moves to save a former B&M structure located in West Chelmsford. In the Town of Chelmsford warrant for the Spring 2023 Annual Town Meeting, Article 30, a move was made by the Community Preservation Committee to “transfer \$50,000 from the Community Preservation Fund General Reserve for the dismantling, transporting, and preservation of the School Street Freight House (sic) to the Garrison House property located at 105 Garrison Road.” Many years ago, this structure was used by Stan’s Hobby Shop. ☿



BELOW: Yellow caution tape at the Troy, NH depot outlines the spot where newly acquired rails and ties will be laid. The group hopes to acquire former Boston & Maine RDC-1 #6154 from Vermont Rail System and display it at the depot on the former B&M Cheshire Branch, abandoned in 1972. ☿



MORE CHANGES TO THE FORMER B&M SYSTEM IN NH

NEW HAMPSHIRE – Change has become the norm for those following the former Boston & Maine Railroad in the modern day. Last year, after nearly 40 years of ownership by Guilford Rail System and Pan Am Railways, the old B&M properties became the domain of railroad megacorporation CSX Transportation, based out of Jacksonville, Florida.

As such, CSX inherited the first half of the Hillsboro Branch from Nashua to Wilton. The “Hillbilly”, the last intact railroad line in southwestern New Hampshire, has become well-known in recent years for its poor track conditions and frequent derailments. These issues, resulting from poor maintenance, date back to the final days of B&M operations before the Guilford and Pan Am era. CSX recently began a large tie and track job on the Hillsboro, starting at the western end of their ownership in Wilton and working towards Nashua. As of this writing, the tie job has progressed as far as Charron Avenue near the airport. Track equipment and trucks have assisted with replacing nearly 16,000 ties. Old unused turnouts and switch stands have been removed, and crossings are being rebuilt.

CSX has also been working to clean up their property in New Hampshire’s cities. Some months ago, the *Newsletter* reported on the “impending demolition” of the old CTC signal towers in Manchester and Concord. Alas, it has become reality. During the week of August 7th, demolition crews began asbestos abatement in Concord Tower to prep the structure for demolition. It is reported that the old freight house off Storrs Street in Concord and Manchester Tower are soon to follow. CSX has also been working to clear brush, trash, and homeless encampments in the remnants of Concord yard. ☞



ABOVE: Concord Tower being prepped for demolition on August 9. Jesse Mazzie photo.

BELOW: Track equipment, ties, tie plates, and spikes staged near the airport in Nashua for rehabilitation of the Hillsboro Branch. Benjamin Campbell photos.





Vignettes from the Archives



Above: Ayer, MA, November 11, 1982. Boston & Maine EMD GP38-2 #203 leading eastbound loaded Bow coal train with Conrail 8109, 3203, 7873, and BM GP7s 1555, 1559. From a slide in the Charles A. Petlick Collection, B&MRRHS Archives.

Below: Rockingham Junction, NH, June 22, 1980. The Portsmouth Switcher, Boston & Maine EMD GP9 #1701, works the interchange track with the Western Route Mainline. From a slide in the Charles A. Petlick Collection, B&MRRHS Archives.





Above: Portland Terminal 0-6-0 824 at Rigby Yard, South Portland, ME - September 4, 1937. From a negative in the Robert E. Chaffin Collection, B&MRRHS Archives.

Below: BM 1798 (Observation Coach) at the Billerica Shops, Billerica, MA - May, 1939. This car was formerly used on the branch from Fabyans to the Cog Railway's Base Station. From a negative in the Robert E. Chaffin Collection, B&MRRHS Archives.



ANDREW'S EXCURSIONS #21 EAST ARLINGTON – URBAN OASIS

B&MRRHS DIRECTOR ANDREW RIEDL



This rusty structure was in fact once the bell for the crossing of the Lexington Branch at Linwood Street in Arlington. Last used in the early 1980's, the structure was still standing the last time I rode my bike past this location. Andrew Riedl photo, 9/13/2009.

There are no visible reminders today of an industry that was once the largest source of tonnage leaving Boston in sailing ships.” – *William M. Deen, Minuteman Railroad: Boston & Maine's Lexington Branch*

I've always been drawn to the town of Arlington, MA, in particular the densely populated neighborhood of East Arlington. I lived there for five years not long after graduating from college, as the slightly more reasonable rents enabled me to afford my own apartment without roommates at a fairly young age. During these five years I spent much time exploring the town and was immediately thrilled by the variety of restaurants, proximity to Boston, as well as the ample opportunities for outdoor recreation as well. Two of my favorite places in town for outdoor activities and exercise were the

Minuteman Bikeway and Spy Pond. Both go together hand in hand as the Minuteman passes right along the north shore of the pond, and while both of them serve the town for recreational purposes these days, they also both have a very proud industrial past which of course directly ties into the Boston and Maine Railroad as well.

The B&M Lexington Branch was originally built as a route to connect West Cambridge with North Billerica, essentially being a bypass of the Boston & Lowell. Running through the agricultural communities of Arlington, Lexington and Bedford, this line would become a modest passenger and freight route over the years. Post World War II, automobile traffic severely impacted passenger service, as did competition from MTA streetcar and bus service on the inner portions of the line as well. Passenger service was able to hang on with MBTA subsidies until a snowstorm in January of 1977 interrupted service, and the MBTA never restored it. Marginal freight service continued until about 1981 (It's worth noting that one of the final freight customers on the line was Brigham's ice cream which was a childhood favorite of mine, and countless other New England children), and a decade later the line was repurposed into the extremely popular Minuteman Bikeway.

The first time I rode my bike on the Minuteman Trail was roughly 2007 and I yearned to explore this corridor as I knew that it had once been the famous B&M Lexington Branch. At the time, I knew that this rail trail would enable me to explore the remains of the Lexington Branch up close, but I didn't know that much else about this branch, so that curiosity was enough for me to strap my bike on the trunk rack of my Honda Accord and set off to the trail. As I peddled my silver Trek mountain bike up the paved trail through the leafy green neighborhood of East Arlington, I was amazed at how seamlessly the railroad sliced through the rows of residential dwellings and how neat it must have been for the occupants of the multifamily homes along the route to be able to look out their back windows and see an RDC running behind their house.

Crossing busy Lake Street I passed a small dirt parking lot which now services the bike path, and I assumed that this must have been the site of Lake Street depot which as East Arlington's neighborhood B&M station. A mere 5.48 miles from North Station yet somehow feeling fairly far removed from that downtown hustle. I don't know when the actual depot building itself was demolished but the location was further confirmed when I rode several more feet beyond the parking lot and discovered the old platform curbing embedded in the dirt! The actual asphalt platform was gone, but discovering this

curbing was my first railroad archeology discovery of what would soon be very many within the town of Arlington.

As I continued down the shaded bike path, I soon discovered the other great East Arlington location, that in my mind, goes hand in hand with the Lake Street depot site given their close proximity to one another. The trees thinned out and soon I was at a small grade crossing of Linwood Street. Beyond this crossing to my left, gorgeous Spy Pond spread out before me. I'll never forget the first time I set eyes on the pond on this first ride through Arlington as it was one of the driving factors that made me want to live in the town. A small but oasis-like park at the shore of the pond beckoned me to pause in my ride and take a water break, and as I enjoyed the moment looking across the water, I had no idea that this little body of water was once an industrial powerhouse for the greater Boston area.

Before mechanical refrigeration was invented, the ice industry was booming, and a huge moneymaker for the railroads including the B&M. Ice houses sprouted up on the shores of numerous ponds and lakes, in which massive blocks of ice were then hauled away by rail service. Spy Pond was no exception to this, and in the late 1800's several large ice operations were on both the north and south shores of the pond. The Lexington Branch served the ice houses on the north side, and on the south side a branch from the Fitchburg railroad served that complex. Like so many industries of the past century, modern appliances dealt the death blow to the ice industry and what was once a huge source of income for the region is all but forgotten today with no traces of these ice houses remaining.

While the ice houses may be long gone, one doesn't have to look too hard to find B&M artifacts along this section of the Minuteman Trail. In addition to the aforementioned platform curbing of the Lake Street depot, the crossing right at Spy Pond features a rusty crossing bell that to the best of my knowledge still stands even though the flashers and cross bucks were removed many years ago. Heading slightly further towards Arlington Center, a granite milepost can be seen in the foliage alongside the trail which back in the day would have indicated the B6 marking for the distance from North Station.

I have been on countless more walks, runs and bike rides along the Minuteman Trail, during the five years that I lived in East Arlington, and made countless other discoveries along the former B&M roadbed that will be discussed in future articles. I have also had the pleasure of exploring the waters of Spy Pond in a kayak

and spent a few balmy summer evenings on the water after getting home from work. While sitting several hundred feet from shore looking back at the rail trail, it was not too difficult to picture the single late afternoon Budd car drifting past the pond, ferrying a modest number of commuters home for the day. Spy Pond has the distinction of being a little oasis within the town, and on these hot summer night kayak adventures it certainly felt that way.

For the B&M history enthusiast I highly recommend exploring the section of the trail between the Alewife MBTA station and Spy Pond as you will not only get to see some fascinating railroad history hidden in plain sight, but also you will get to enjoy this gem of a rail trail that's reusing a former B&M line to the fullest extent possible. Cyclists, runners, and dog walkers will all be plentiful, and don't forget to take a break at Spy Pond Park and envision a landscape of the past, drastically altered by the ice industry.

While I haven't lived in Arlington for nearly a decade now, the town made a lasting impression on me and my interest in exploring former B&M lines. My searches along the Minuteman Trail have reminded me that just because a rail line is abandoned and repurposed into a trail, you can often still find plenty of railroad artifacts alongside of it, and more often than not, these artifacts will stand out pretty clearly if you know what you're looking for. I still often explore the East Arlington and Spy Pond area, and I'm always making new discoveries and piecing together more and more history of this fascinating B&M line. I encourage you to do so as well. Happy Explorations! - AR



Looking east towards the Lake Street crossing along the Minuteman Trail, the old platform curbing for the former Lake Street depot can clearly be seen on the right side of this photo. While the depot building itself is long gone, other traces will continue to remain for the time being. Andrew Riedl photo, 9/13/2009.



Our Archives are filled with intriguing images that highlight not only vast changes in rail infrastructure throughout the history of the Boston & Maine, but also subsequent changes in roads, cities, and towns. We are looking east on Baker Street in Manchester, NH, at a crossing with the Manchester & Lawrence Branch. Today, Queen City Avenue cuts more-or-less diagonally across this view from bottom left to top right (inset view from 2011). Queen City Avenue bisected several smaller roads, like Baker Street, turning them into dead-ends. The brick building was only recently torn down in 2022 and replaced with a bank. The Baker Street crossing of the M&L became the Queen City Avenue crossing, and cantilever crossing lights replaced simple crossbucks. Although the tracks were likely last used in 1989, those cantilever lights still stand on Queen City Avenue to this day.

Undated; 1950s. Official Boston & Maine Railroad photo from the MacMillan/Hutchinson Collection B&MRRHS Archives.

