

Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society

Incorporated

NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 302 · READING, MASSACHUSETTS 01867

John C. Alden, Editor

February 22, 1978

Thomas R. Engel, Asst. Editor

Dear Boston & Maine fans:

MARCH MEETING: March 11, 1978, 8 PM (2000 hrs.), First Parish Unitarian Church, Woburn Square, Woburn, Mass. The entertainment will be put on by John Boardman who will show movies of B&M and other subjects. Included will be shots of snow plows in action; these pictures are very unusual. Last spring at a members' night his slides were the hit of the evening so this should be a very good show you won't want to miss. (This is the same program that would have happened February 11 but for acts of God and His Excellency the Governor.)

●●● Our regular meetings are held at 8 PM on the second Saturday of every month at the above church in Woburn, Mass. Notice of meetings to be held at different times or locations will be carried in this Newsletter. Highway-wise the church is on Rte. 38; it is also about three blocks north of the end of track (and passenger service) on the Woburn Branch. This church is also the only church in Woburn Square without a steeple.

SPECIAL NOTE: APRIL MEETING: The program for this meeting is being arranged and at this typing the date and time and subject matter is still up in the air; tentatively the meeting date is still April 8 but it may well be changed; we'll do our utmost (even unto sending the Newsletter out early in an abbreviated form!) to notify you of any changes in arrangements. While we are not at liberty to say what the program will be we can assure you it will be of no little interest so stay tuned, keep your schedules flexible, and be prepared to come.

SOCIETY ADDRESSES — For faster processing of specialized matters, use these:

BUSINESS MANAGER: Box 223, Harwood Station, Littleton MA 01460. All publications orders

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Box 369, Belmont MA 02178: Membership applications and information, dues payments, address changes, and other circulation matters. For those interested in joining dues are \$10/yr.; life membership is \$100. Membership year is July 1 to June 30.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: 11 Riverside Ave., Concord MA 01742: All news and other items for these Newsletters.

BULLETIN TECHNICAL EDITOR: Don Clerke, 132 Laurel St., South Windsor CT 06074.

B&Meeting The February Meeting of the B&MRRHS was not called to order by President Leroy C. Hutchinson on February 11, 1978 — the Great Blizzard of '78 (and Gov. Dukakis' driving ban) forced its cancellation. Rescheduling of the meeting for another time in February proved too difficult and as we had a hole in our schedule John Boardman's excellent presentation has been moved to March. We hope no one was inconvenienced by the cancellation, the first in our history.

WHA' HOPPEN A few of you are wondering probably what happened to the pictures of the GP-40's that were to be in last month's (January) Newsletter. They are on an inside page in this issue. Your Asst. Editor takes full responsibility for their not being in the January issue; while not going into too much detail on how it happened due to some confusion over whether he had plates or negatives and the exigencies of half-tones the extra day that our printer needs for half-tones was not provided for so it became nip-and-tuck as to whether the plates would be ready in time; with a 50-50 chance we prepared for either contingency. Mailing too was delayed one day to allow inclusion of the trip flyer. The January Newsletter went out Monday Feb. 6 — just as the storm was growing. Weather did the rest. We are taking steps to see that these problems don't occur again; though it seems every so often we have an unlucky Newsletter that has one problem after another. Bear with us: we think this one'll be a good issue!

HISTORIAN'S CORNER Many of you have requests for information relative to B&M history, motive power, and operations. All such requests should be routed to Mr. Harry Frye, B&MRRHS Historian. Harry will either respond himself or will pass your request for information on to someone who does have the information at hand. Please do not add such requests to orders for publications or other business correspondence as that makes it very difficult to provide the level of information service we would all like to provide you. Mail your requests directly to Harry at 14 Riverside St., Hooksett NH 03106.

COMMUTER RAIL NOTES It's certainly been an interesting winter for the B&M's commuter operations. The two storms that crippled the Boston area and caused the Governor to ban driving in most of eastern Massachusetts after the blizzard of Feb. 6-7 wreaked havoc on the B&M's schedules. Some notes on what happened:

Budd Car Sandwich — The B&M ran a series of passenger extras from Tuesday to Saturday which shuttled back and forth between Boston and outlying points. On the North Side Budd trains were pulled by a variety of power ranging from GP-7's to GP-38-2's; engines 205 and 211 were seen in this service. This created unusual color combinations such as maroon-and-gold GP-7, B&M RDC, and bicentennial GP-9 in blue. This style of service ran to mixed reviews; the ride on the NH route was characterized as a tug of war between the unit powering the train and the unit in neutral lagging behind the train. Others found that running RDC's with engines at either end doing the pulling gave a steadier ride.

Engine 7538, the MBTA's "Purple Cow" (as some have called it), failed at Islington Station on Feb. 7 with ground relay problems; the agent at Franklin ordered new power for the unit's rescue. ● A portion of the Rockport Branch was washed out from the ocean waves' pounding in Manchester MA. Fortunately the damage was not as severe as first heard and the line was back in service within a week. ●● The tender at draw 7 (Mystic River) was rescued on Tuesday night Feb. 7 from rising tides by an MDC patrol from the nearby Amelia Earhart Dam. The crew of SE-5 described the tide as less than 6 inches from the rails. ●● Locomotives were borrowed from Amtrak as MBTA power failed; the Lake Shore's power ran a few commuter trains.

To the B&M's credit it provided the only operating public transit for several days; all North Side lines had service. The South Side lines also operated (Kudos to Amtrak: the B&P main line was kept clear and their trains were back to their usual schedules by late Wednesday). On some lines the storm created even more service. More trains were run on the line to Framingham than are normally run in weekday service.

The snow was not without its dangerous side: the plowed rights-of-way attracted cross country skiers who merrily skied up and down the lines creating a menace. One skier was killed on the line to Framingham on Feb. 13 when he fell beneath a passing commuter train.

Public Officials urged commuters to take public transportation when business resumed in Boston. The result: on Monday Feb. 13 the Boston & Maine carried 110,000 passengers, 80,000 more than normal.

The MBTA, after surveying the damaging effects the storm, the increased loads, and non-stop use have had on the equipment, has ordered a 25% cut in service starting Feb. 21. We have it on good authority this was strictly an MBTA decision. The cutback is being managed by dropping some trains and adding some cars to remaining trains. This reduced service will last at least 2 months and the repairs will cost \$3 million. The MBTA is seeking Federal disaster assistance to help pay for the repairs. Figures: North Side, 75 RDC's needed, 64 available for service (26 with only 1 operable engine) with 21 cars totally out-of-service; South Side, 21 locos. required, only 14 are operable and only 5 have cab signals compatible with the Shore Line.

On January 24 a rebuilt Buddcar was spotted on the Shore Line in a new paint scheme. One end was painted yellow and the panels around the windows were painted purple rather than the letterboards. Yellow pinstripes were painted around the windows. ●● A rebuilt RDC was observed on the Western Route at Reading. What is unusual is that the RDC was an ex-PC unit in revenue service.

B & M GALLERY: (opposite page) 317, 312, and 316 bring NY-20 into East Fitchburg on January 4 (Ben Crouch photo). "Drifting downhill into Greenfield at West Greenfield", GP-40's, with 307 in the lead being brought to East Deerfield after delivery at Rotterdam Junction. (Don Clerke photo)

●● Bob Buck of Tucker's Hardware, 18 Main St., Warren MA 01083, is assisting in the production of a set of Consolidation Coal Co. decals in HO scale for use on the MDC Thrall unit train hopper model which is quite close in design to the Greenville cars used on the B&M unit train. Bob desperately needs color or black & white (preferably the latter) 5x7 or 8x10 shots of the sides and ends of one of the Greenville cars used in the B&M train. If you can help, please contact Bob at the above address.

●● George R. Cockle and Associates, Box 1224 - Downtown Station, Omaha NE 68101, are currently putting together a 144-page hardbound book entitled Those Bicentennials which will cover all the bicentennial Diesel locomotives as well as brief mention of the Freedom Train steam power. The book will contain 250 color plates and retail for \$24.95. The pre-publication price until July 31, 1978 will be \$20.00; publication date is Fall 1978. The book can be ordered direct from the above address. Also, good shots of B&M 200, the B&M's GP-9's in the red-white-blue striping, and MEC's U18b "Independence Series" are still needed in both still and action poses. If you would like to contribute contact the publisher. Don't assume that everyone else got there first. Send your color shots or at least contact the publisher right away. Let's make sure that New England is well represented!!!

ERRATA: The Plymouth switcher at Beebe River NH is not ex-B&M 100, subject of a feature in the Nov. Newsletter. Harry Frye tells us the misidentification is rather common but the two engines were different models. Final disposition of #100 is unknown. ● The Clarendon & Pittsford had 9, not 3, steam engines.



SPOTLIGHT ON B&M HISTORY — From Boston & Maine Railroad Employees' Magazine

- 50 years ago MARCH 1928, Vol. 4, No. 12, Front Cover shows Santa Fe type 2-10-2 #3028 being repaired at Billerica. Leading Article entitled: "Our Grand Old Man" — William J. Hobbs, VP of Finance, started with Eastern RR Feb. 27, 1873, on present job since 1913. "Car Lighting, Today and Yesterday" by P. J. Callahan, Supervisor of car and locomotive electric lighting, explains 3 methods used — 1) Straight storage system, 2) Head-end system, 3) Axle-generator system. "The Shops at Billerica" by J. J. Rowlands in the Boston Transcript gives detailed account of repairing steam locomotives with photos. Brief account of "Apprentices at Billerica Shops" with photo showing 2713. R. E. Baker, Train Control Supervisor, describes operation of Automatic Train Stop with photos showing how system works on locomotives. "The America" 4-4-0 steam engine with unique type of Coventry boiler described by G. F. Starbuck, Office of Mech. Eng., with photo, ran on Fitchburg RR in 1886. Sketch of the New North Station center spread, no Boston Elevated tracks. "We carry Uncle Sam's Latest Rifle" photo story of 14-inch gun for use in Panama Canal Zone, en route from Watertown MA on special car "Division Offices Are Moved" Portland Div. Hdqts. moved to Dover NH, formerly in Boston and Salem MA, Terminal Div. offices now on 1st floor, Gen Office Building, Lechmere Sq., E. Cambridge MA. "West Peabody Gravel Pit" J. J. Rourke, Chief Inspector of Work Equipment, describes large operation — 100 cars a day — loaded by steam shovel and locomotive crane...
- 25 years ago MARCH 1953, Vol 21, No. 3, Front Cover shows view down the tracks from Intervale N.H. to Mt. Washington. Leading Article "Modernize Laconia Signals" 8 crossings have latest type crossing-signal protection, several photos. Photo-story "Granite Staters Off for Ike's Inaugural" in special Pullman. "A Million Dollars in Scrap" story of reclaiming materials from old locomotives and cars at Billerica Shops, photo of 4-6-2 #3707. "Railroad Family with a Record" story of the Cook Family with photos of 3 brothers: Hugh, a conductor, Charles, trainman on the Conn. River, and Ralph, Conductor on the Fitchburg Div. photo showing engine #637 and train #20 at Preble St. yard Portland ME in 1903; train from Portland ME to Worcester MA. photo showing Jordan Spreader removing snowdrifts at Ossipee NH...

B&Matters — The GP-40-2's continue to amaze: they are now being credited with keeping the B&M running through the Feb. 6-7 Blizzard. The railroad never completely shut down in spite of the 27+ inches of snow; if anything performance was better than in the previous storm. The 300's are now appearing in other than Rigby-Mechanicville service; on Feb. 24 a GP-40 came out on AP-3 from Boston. Some clarifications on last month's information: the GP-40's are turbocharged; the turbocharging "kicking in" point is regulated by the exhaust gases' temperature and the speed for the turbocharging's kicking in is dependent on the load being drawn. Fully loaded, turbocharging starts in at 11 mph; full turbocharging is reached at 23 mph. (Ben Crouch will have a full writeup in "White Flags" in the Winter 1977-8 B&MRRHS Bulletin.)

Will wonders ever cease! GP-40's in branch line service? Louis Beaudoin writes "at 1745 today I observed one of the new B&M GP40-2's working a local freight south at Derry NH on the Manchester & Lawrence Branch. #313 departed Derry with B&M box car, gondola, and caboose. I followed the local south to Salem NH where they picked up 9 more cars, 7 box cars and 2 LP tank cars. The train then proceeded south for Lawrence with a 12 car consist of 11 empties and caboose. The northbound run carries all the loads." Mr. Beaudoin also noted observing two GP-9's (1708 & 1747) powering a northbound local on the M&L on Nov. 10th. This was his first sighting of MU'ing on that branch. The branch has had much variety for power over the years; he notes when you want to see something out of the ordinary and your timing is right try a branch line as anything goes.

The Public Service Co. of New Hampshire has purchased 56,960 tons of coal from the Eastern Utilities Associates' plant at the Montaup station in Fall River MA — about 2,800 tractor trailer loads, all going by highway. PSNH officials are trying to smooth ruffled feathers of residents of the towns the trucks will drive through to the Bow NH generating station. The coal is going by truck as PSNH considered the price offered by the B&M too high considering the additional trucking needed at the Montaup site which has no direct rail line.

We have some financial information on how the Boston & Maine Corp. did financially for fourth quarter 1977 and the entire year. Fourth quarter ordinary loss was \$298,781 vs. \$715,000 year earlier; 1977 ordinary loss was \$4,327,516 vs. \$9,120,000 for 1976. Interest on debt was \$3,265,570 so the B&M came only \$1 million short of having income available for fixed charges; if a RR can get income available for fixed charges it can reorganize on an income basis. The coal strike has put a severe crimp on the B&M's earnings; without the strike (and the concomitant industrial cutbacks) perhaps the B&M might have had income for fixed charges. While there has been great improvement in the earnings picture there are still many obstacles ahead; all this snow has cost the B&M a bundle and the western connections are having great privations both storm-related and not.

SNOW ITEMS — Snow clearing operations on main lines are carried out with plow trains, often with a plow at each end for ease of operation; the more important branches are also plowed out. During the Feb. 6-7 blizzard the main lines were kept plowed during the storm; the Hampton, Hollis, and Greenville branches were plowed Thursday and the Worcester branch was plowed Wednesday Feb. 8. Branch line clearing on the less active branches and around Boston is increasingly being done with front-end loaders (shoveldozers, Payloaders, etc.). While figures are not known on comparative cost of the two methods there are some advantages to front-end loader clearing: snow can be kept away from loading docks and other sensitive areas and impacted snow at highway crossings can be more easily (and safely) removed; front-end loaders also don't derail. However, this method may be slower and possibly harder on track structures than plow trains.

The Montrealer/Washingtonian gets Amflected tonight, February 27th. Definitely. From the horse's mouth: Amtrak itself. Coach accommodations will be 60-seat Amcoaches with "dressing rooms" in addition to the usual facilities. The consist, in addition to the refurbished now electrically-operated sleepers, will include an Amdinette with waiter service and even checkered tablecloths! A new menu has been devised with full-course meals and somewhat fancy dishes. This new style of Amdinette was first tested a few weeks ago on the Panama Limited. The Montrealer will still have the distinction of an Amtrak "first" — "Amlounge"! A new configuration: one third of the car is furnished with chairs and small tables, one third with facing groups of conventional seats, the two separated by a beverage and snack counter in the middle third. A wide variety of lighter fare will be available and a good selection of beer, wine, and spirits will be available. The Montrealer is one of the strongest producers of ridership per mile on the entire Amtrak system; probably for this reason an all-out effort was put on to try to keep it a first-class train. We'll report in upcoming issues on how the public and especially railfans feel about the new train.

EQUIPMENT NOTES: C. W. Daniels sighted engines 1184, 1181, and 1271 at Mitchell's Crossing in Ayer. The stacks were covered with plastic; future disposition unknown ● ● The retirement of 4267B, the last active F-unit on the B&M, on 1-10-78 has been reported ● ● The 2 LIRR engines, RS1 465 and S2 495, mentioned last month did go to N. Bennington VT in late Dec., the units had NIMX reporting marks for Naporano Iron & Metal of Newark NJ. They were in dreadful condition, and missing some parts. Guesses were they were bound for either VTR or GMRC. (Jack Armstrong)

With the GP-40-2's arrival all the S units (Alco) on the B&M West End have disappeared. S3's 1186 and 1187 were the Springfield MA switchers until mid-Jan., now replaced by NW2's 1211 and 1213, the latter still in the old black & red. East Deerfield always had 2 or 3 S3's or S4's working the yard; now 3 GP7's do the work. On Feb. 18 1565 was working, still in the old maroon and gold but with a freshly painted white frame stripe and orange steps. Mechanicville was always a home for NW2's; now all switching is done with GP9's and GP9's and 18's have replaced the GP7's on the hump. (Jack Armstrong)

Believe-It-or-Not Dept., or, Things-Like-This-Do-Happen Dept. We have it on good authority that on Feb. 21 the 5:10 PM Providence local had a close encounter of a very curious kind. It seems the train somehow got switched on to the Stoughton Branch and went as far as Canton Square before stopping and backing up to Canton Junction and there returning to the main line for Providence. This strange story is vouched for by several regular riders of that train. (Mass. Bay RRE Callboy)

MEChatter The Maine DOT has come up with a plan for keeping the MEC's Farmington-Livermore Falls Branch open (abandonment has been approved by the ICC and the decision upheld by the courts). The firms who ship on the branch and are interested in keeping it open would contribute 10% of the estimated \$50-65,000/yr. it would cost to keep the line operating; the remaining amount would come from the state using funds available from the Federal Railway Administration.

Fourth Quarter 1977 and 1977 as a whole were good times for the Maine Central; we present below the MEC's figures as they sent them to us. It is interesting to compare what offsets what; that taxes nearly equal Railway Net and the important part equipment and joint facility rents play in keeping the MEC solvent; the B&M's figure is a multi-million dollar deficit and the MEC's own figures are a sharp turnaround from their pre-1970 experience:

	<u>4th Quarter ended Dec.31</u>		<u>12 Months ended Dec. 31</u>	
	<u>1977</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1976</u>
Operating Revenues	\$10,778,401	\$9,326,464	\$41,555,113	\$37,209,888
Operating Expenses	9,787,968	8,542,667	37,381,168	33,039,358
Net from Railway Operations	990,433	783,797	4,173,945	4,170,530
Taxes	1,010,078	1,012,181	4,070,644	3,754,218
Net Equip.& Jt.Fac.Rents-Net Cr.	852,498	557,622	1,511,296	1,008,568
Net Railway Operating Income	832,853	329,238	1,614,597	1,424,880
Net Non-Operating Income	146,383	145,632	824,868	400,262
Available for Fixed Charges	979,236	474,870	2,439,465	1,825,142
Fixed Charges	409,687	332,348	1,455,960	1,374,864
Contingent Interest	45,025	45,025	180,100	180,669
Income from Continuing Oper.	524,524	97,497	803,405	269,609

PUBLICATIONS The following publications are available postpaid (unless otherwise noted) by ordering direct from the Business Manager's Littleton address. Publications orders sent to any other addresses will be subject to an automatic delay of at least two weeks.

THE CENTRAL MASS. Members \$8.00; Non-members \$10.00. (ONLY 10 LEFT!!)

B & M BULLETINS Spring (12 left), Summer (10 left), Fall 1975 (30 left), Spring 1976, PRICE: \$1.75 @ to members, \$2.00 to non-members. Summer, Fall 1976, Winter 1976-7, Spring, Summer 1977; PRICE: \$2.00 @ to members, \$2.25 to others.

OTHER B & MRRHS PUBLICATIONS 1932 Snow Train menu - 25¢ Reprinted Montpelier & Wells River / Barre & Chelsea RR employes' timetable #62B of January 22, 1928. Members \$1.50, non-members \$1.75.

BOOKS BY OTHER PUBLISHERS Vanishing Markers, a 128 page illustrated description of Boston & Maine railroad-ing, 1948-52, by a former B&M brakeman. This is a captivating account of B&M operations during one of the most interesting periods in the company's history. Members \$12.50; non-members rate is \$14.95

Trains of Northern New England, 96 pp. 120 photos with full-color cover. Soft-bound. This book features John Krause's photography of B&M, CV, Rutland, and MEC operations in Vermont and along the Connecticut River in the 40's and 50's. Includes steam and Diesel action. Members \$6.50, non-members \$7.50.

The Railroad That Came Out at Night, Frank Kyper's account of railroading in and around Boston. Includes profiles of two shortlines, an eyewitness account of the 1973 Chelsea fire on the B&M, and a personal account of life as a B&M crossing tender. Hardbound, 6x9", 160 pp., photos. Members \$6.95, non-members \$7.95.

New England Diesels, Dave Albert and George Melvin's photographic chronicle of the Diesel locomotive in New England from the 1930's to the present day. All Class I roads as well as shortlines are represented in the 420+ photographs from New England's major rail photographers as well as some unknowns. The book is organized on a state-by-state basis including maps of rail mileage in each state. An excellent value! Hardbound, 232 pages. Members \$24, non-members \$26.95.

The Boston & Maine Railroad; The Eastern Railroad; The Boston & Lowell RR — These three softbound books are reprints of Francis B. C. Bradlee's 1921 thumb-nail histories of the B&M and two of its major component lines. Each includes maps, photographs, ticket and woodcut reproductions, etc. We have only 20 of each book and our supplier's stock is also very low. \$2.50 each, \$7.50 for the set while they last.

D&Happenings It is reported that the D&H wants to sell its 3 SD45's, sell or retire their C628's, and retire all the RS3's and buy new 4-axle power (O&W Chpt., NRHS) ●● Pres. Fishwick of the Norfolk & Western (D&H's parent) told security analysts that the D&H will report a 4th quarter loss of \$6 million; however, he believes the D&H's new president, C. E. Bertrand, will be able to reduce the road's losses for 1978. D&H losses for the year are expected to be almost \$12 million. ●● The FRA will guarantee a \$7.9 m. loan to the D&H; the loan in effect will be available as operating cash. Technically, the FRA's guarantee will permit the D&H to refinance a previous purchase of 20 locomotives which was funded by the U. S. Railway Administration, a government corporation, allowing the D&H to use almost \$8 million in new funds to support operations. The FRA has OK'd a total of \$30m. in loans; \$7.9m. of that was originally allocated to the locomotive purchase.

Walter O'Farrell has sent us an interview with Charles E. Bertrand that appeared in the Rochester NY Times-Union. Mr. Bertrand began his career with the old Alton RR and was with the B&O for 26 years. When asked to take the D&H post he was running Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. Mr. Bertrand is trying to determine where the D&H stands; for now he will say: ● The D&H may seek to shrink the number of track miles freight is hauled over. they may ask permission to haul some of the freight that now goes over the old Erie-Lackawanna route from Binghamton to Buffalo over the former NYC main line. ● The D&H will seriously consider outright merger with the B&M, BAR, and MEC. ● Short of that Mr. Bertrand would like to see some merged operations, perhaps including the D&H's big Mechanicville yard operation. ● The D&H will continue "desperately trying" to avoid the financial reorganizations that led to the demise of other Northeast lines. "We can compete with ConRail," Mr. Bertrand says, "it isn't how fast you deliver the freight; it's how reliably. Railroads no longer drop their loads off in warehouses; they're part of a company's production lines. If we can't get the freight there on time we lose the business."

Did any of you know the D&H has trackage rights over the B&M from Mechanicville to Eagle Bridge NY? For some years the rights remained unexercized (save for fan trips) but lately D&H has been running a local over that track and up the D&H Washington branch to the Greenwich & Johnsonville interchange at Salem NY (Greenwich Jct.). Whether it continues on to Castleton VT is unknown. Job has been spotted at Eagle Bridge ca. 1300 Wednesdays; power has been C420's. The Washington Branch had formerly been served M-W-F by SC-17 out of Whitehall NY. (Jack Armstrong)

B&Members

We welcome the following new members to the B&MRRHS: Henry Taves, Cambridge MA; Donald Lammers, Newington CT; Paul E. Levasseur, N. Dartmouth MA; Scott L. Lamontagne, N. Dartmouth MA; Preston E. Rolfe, Washington NH; George E. Pettengill, Arlington VA; Carl E. Kelton, White River Jct., VT; Gregory Hornek, Maspeth NY; Richard Loveman, Denver CO; Frank J. San Severino, Arlington MA; Allan W. Pierce, Groton MA; R. Wesley Hopkins, Plainfield CT. Welcome aboard the B&MRRHS, gentlemen!

B&Memories

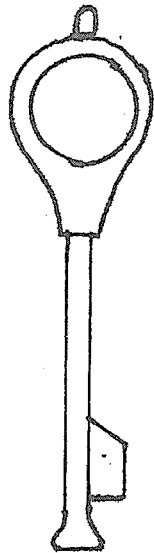
Back in our September 1977 Newsletter, in the 50 & 25 years ago feature; the retirement of a banner signal on the Woburn branch was noted. We checked around on what these signals were and how they operated. We put the question to Don Robinson, one of the most knowledgeable people around on signals and old operations. Herewith a short piece by Don on revolving banner signals, their uses, how they worked, and one good story:



1



2



Although revolving banner signals may once have been used by the B&M as block signals within my time the remaining ones served as station protection signals. That is, they advised an approaching train whether or not the OTHER TRACK was occupied where sight distance was short and it was necessary for passengers to cross his track to get from the station to trains in the opposite direction.

The banner signals I remember had two targets at right angles to each other within a banjo-shaped frame at the top of the pole. The "station occupied" indication was a slatted yellow disc which almost completely filled the banjo, and "station clear" was a horizontal green bar with rounded ends (1 & 2 in the sketch). A switch lantern atop the banjo gave the corresponding night indications. These signals were either weight or spring operated and thus had to be rewound at regular intervals. An electrically-released pawl allowed the targets and lantern to rotate 90°, always in the same direction each time a train entered or left the circuit. Thus you saw the opposite sides of the targets for each succeeding train. I believe the lanterns were oil-lighted although they may have been electric with sliding contacts.

The story concerning these signals involved the one at Concord, Mass. governing westward trains. Fortunately the outcome was somewhat humorous although it could have been tragic, and it did result in the engineer's taking his pension on arrival at Troy without even making his return run to Boston.

It was not unusual for #59, The Minute Man, to find this signal against him because of local freight B-10 switching at Concord. Many minutes had been lost slowing down for what 59's engineer considered to be "nothing" so on this day about two weeks before Christmas he ignored the indication and kept rolling. This time, however, the other train was not B-10 but 4th 54 unloading mail and express. Fortunately their work was almost done and all he hit was the last express truck as it was being pulled across to the station. That vehicle was piled high with henfruit as well as other goods and when 59 stopped nearly to West Concord the P-4 was well plastered with fried eggs and had a tricycle squarely in the middle of the pilot beam. The only thing which saved the engineer from being fired on the spot was that the conductor, in reading the train register at North Station, had failed to notice that 3rd 54 had registered in carrying green signals. He therefore gave the engineer a Form E showing all due trains as having arrived and thus led him into a trap. I never did hear what discipline the conductor received, but there must have been some.

GIANT NEWSLETTER SALE Once again we're selling back 1976-7 Giant Newsletters. Wonder where Schaghticoke is? Try the map in the Jan. 1977 issue. What did Alan Dustin discuss when he spoke to the Amherst Railway Society? Try June 1977. What did the Newsletter look like before your present editors got their hands on it? May 1976. Issues available: May 1976; Jan. 1977 (with 1963 system map, very detailed), March 1977 (with ROUTES), June 1977 (Alan Dustin, D&Happenings, symbol freights, and much more). Of course there's a catch: THE PRICE: MINIMUM ORDER 2 NEWSLETTERS, one 13¢ stamp each; send 4 11¢ stamps and get all 4 issues. Newsletters will be mailed out 3rd class non-bulk. Orders below the minimum will be ignored. Send stamps (usable only) and order to: T. R. Engel, Asst. Newsletter Ed., Dept. NS, Box 369, Belmont MA 02178. They're going fast!!

B&Misc.

(This is the old Extras column, long dormant) The Providence & Worcester went on an errand of mercy on Feb. 10 and ran its first passenger train since the NYP&B took them over in 1889, train left Union Station Providence ca. 2200 with 2 cars and did stops to Worcester. What had started off as an attempt to take a few stranded commuters home snowballed into something bigger so the P&W "borrowed" some coaches from another RR and ran a special train, price was right: free .. the Goodwin RR has run a passenger train, two of them! The Clean Water special ran between Laconia and Lincoln on Oct. 23, and Nov 13, 1977. Purpose was to take people to various environmental and pollution control facilities. Amtrak and Kellogg's have collaborated to sell trains and cornflakes. Free Kiddee ride coupons are printed on the sides of cereal boxes. Each coupon when accompanied by 3 boxtops from Kellogg cereals will entitle a child under 12 to a free Amtrak ticket (when accompanied by an adult) to anywhere in the country. Sorry, offer expired Jan. 31. Nutritionalists are up in arms; can't please everyone.

COMING April 1, 1978; Boston-Portland by conventional train! The Mass. Bay RR Enthusiasts are sponsoring a trip using conventional equipment (the Alco PA's have been requested). Photo-runbys and other railfan amenities. This will be the first public operation of a conventional locomotive-hauled train to Portland in 18 years. Fare: \$34.95. Schedule: lv. Boston 9 AM, lv. Winchester 9:15 AM, lv. Lawrence 10:45 AM; return to Boston approximately 7:30 PM. Write: Mass. Bay RRE, Box 136, Ward Hill MA 01830.

EVENTS March 18, 1978; Jersey Joy Ride: Bus to Penna. Station, Newark, then ride to South Amboy on the NY&LB (CNJ diesel down, PRR GG1 back); bus to the layout of the NY Society of Model Engineers in full operation at Carlstadt. Then supper, then back. If any questions call (413 area) Ken Coombs (work 733-3363, home 732-9873), Jeff Gabriel (739-4830); Bob Buck (w436-5318). Schedule: lv. Amherst, UMass Pkng. Lot 25, 7 AM; lv. W. Springfield, Town & Country Liquors, Riverdale St. 7:45 AM. Price \$16.00/person. Send money and reservations by March 13 to: Ken Coombs, Greyhound Lines, 1780 Main St., Springfield MA 01103.

NOTE

B&Marketplace We'll publish advertisements by members as space permits. Please keep them as short as possible and send them on a separate piece of paper. Don't forget to include your name & address with your ad! We reserve the right to edit ads.

- Boston & Maine Rail Motor Car photo set. Set contains 6 8x10 glossy prints and is \$4.00 postpd. Cars covered in this set are #1141, 1150, 1183, 1184, 1171, and 1190. Send to Comet Films, Box 8741, Boston, Mass. 02114.
- Gary Acker, 3465 Leighton Rd., Columbus OH 43221, is selling models of B&M GP7 #1555. The units are the basic Athern GP7 with modifications to conform to the B&M prototype. Price of this standard version \$29.00; a sample will be on display at B&MRRHS meetings. A deluxe version with MU stand, lift rings, and individual grab irons replacing cast-ons is \$45.00.
- Query: does anyone know about an agricultural exhibit train that toured southern NH in the late 1920's? We have eyewitnesses to its running on the Hillsboro branch through Wilton NH. Anyone have more details? Kenneth R. Dunham, Box 422, Wilton NH 03086.

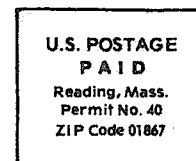
SYMBOL FREIGHTS: Corrections AE-9/EA-10 runs Tues-Sat; NE-84 not Sat. or Sun.; NE-87 not Sun.

ERRATA & ADDENDA: The dispute reported in the Oct. Newsletter between the B&M and the P&W over payments for the use of certain tracks near Providence went to arbitration, not to court... Alan MacMillan who presented the Dec. program is a fully-qualified B&M engineer,



P.O. BOX 302 • READING, MASSACHUSETTS 01867

(FEBRUARY 1978)



 NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
