

Well, here we are, at the end of the road. It seems like just seven and one half short years ago we introduced ourselves to you as the new editors of the B&MRRHS Newsletter, and here it is, time to write our swan song. Time sure does fly when you're having fun!

And, the past seven years have been very eventful, haven't they? We'll have to leave it to future historians to judge the long term effects of events on the Boston & Maine Railroad, but we feel that we can safely say that the Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society will be around to document whatever the future brings. This was not always the case, as we've outlined to you in these pages over the past couple of years, and you're undoubtedly familiar with our financial woes and subsequent recovery from same. With fiscal responsibility as our by word, we feel that we'll be here!

So, to that end, we'd like to take our last editorial and offer some explanations for our policies over the years, give some thanks to those who have helped us beyond the call of duty, say some goodbyes, and make a few observations. Here we go!

The major criticism we have received over the last couple of years is our "soft-pedaling" of the labor-management situation on the Guilford railroads. This was big news, and it's true, we didn't take up sides, or blast one party or the other the way almost every other rail fan newsletter in New England seemed to be doing. But, on the other hand, the B&MRRHS is somewhat unique among New England railfan organizations in that the railroad that we pay homage to is still in existence, unlike the Rutland, or other lines that have long since passed into history. And, since we pay homage to an existing line, it works to our best advantage to maintain a good working relationship with all factions of the railroad.

Over the years, the B&MRRHS has had an exceptional relationship with both factions of the Boston & Maine Corporation. After a shaky start, the B&M has been most generous with donations of materials for both our hardware and paperwork collection, including valuation surveys, control panels from abandoned towers, plus reams of paper for our Archives. Coupled with this, we have many friends and members on both sides of these hotly contested issues, and could not possibly run the risk of insulting one side or the other. Since it was very difficult if not impossible, to get stories that were not slanted one way or another, and personal interviews (if not told in confidence) were even more slanted as to the opinions of the interviewee, what were editors to do? Take one side, over the other? Run "separate but equal" stories, being careful to make sure that we give absolutely equal time? (Nearly an impossibility). Or, perhaps, "soft-pedal" the whole situation, deposit all pertinent information into the Archives for future historians, and try our best to maintain good relationships in a very tenuous atmosphere. Since it's not the business of the B&MRRHS to tell the Boston & Maine, Guilford, or anyone else how to run their railroad, it seemed to be the appropriate thing to do at the time, and we'd make that same decision again today.

The only other major comment that we've received is the comment of a "no news" Newsletter. We've heard this over the years, and our standard response has always been, "We can't print it if we don't have it!!!" And, this is basically true. Scott

and I work regular jobs, like most everyone else, and have to divide our spare time between the B&MRRHS, our families, friends and also non-railfan activities. We rely on YOU for the information to print on our Newsletter. We can't be everywhere at once! So, I guess that while we have to take some of the "blame" for a no-news Newsletter, we can't take the complete blame! More on this a little later in the editorial!

Now that that's out of the way, we can get on to more pleasant matters. The first should be giving thanks to those people without whom our editorship of the Newsletter would not have been as much fun as it was. First, in our own organization, there's **Dick Symmes**, our former BULLETIN editor and graphics specialist, who could always be counted on for a word of encouragement, cheer or constructive (but never destructive) criticism; **Harry Frye**, our historian, who was always good for a trivia question, a photo or two, and the answers to our questions, without making us feel uninformed; **Ron Eames**, always handy with a Newsletter filler or two; and, of course, **Allen Burdett-Thomas**, for coming forward and taking over the editorship, starting with the next issue! Of course, there's many more people: the members of the Boards of Directors over the years who have helped out the Newsletter staff, **Joe Shaw**, **Jeff Ursillo** and **Forrest Mack** come immediately to mind, but of course, there have been many more.

We also can't forget our fearless mailing crew, and all the members thereof, over the years: **Chandler, Bob, Phil, Dave and Dodi, Dick and Barb, Larry, Ralph, Dave and Dot Collinge, Joe and Ronnie**, and whoever else has helped mail the Newsletter over the years! Thank You! And, of course we can't forget Good Ol' Ruth who logged many long hours stuffing Newsletters so that our mailing sessions could finish at a reasonable hour! A big B&MRRHS Thank You!

Nor can we forget the others in the B&MRRHS who have helped the Newsletter along at various times. **Bob Hagopian, Dick Nichols, John Alan Roderick** and again, many others. Thanks to you too!

Over the years we've corresponded with many other railfan newsletter editors, and would like to bid them a fond farewell also: **Marty Walker**, former editor of The 470; **Jim Conroy**, from the Mohawk & Hudson Callboard; **Paul Shackford**, from the Mass Bay RRE Callboy; and the many others that labor for the love of the job as we have. (It sure isn't for the pay!)

We've also had the privilege of meeting some great people over the years, **Bill Crawford**, from the Mass Bay RRE, a finer gentleman doesn't exist (Best to you, Carol and the twins!); **Dwight Smith** and the **Conway Scenic crews**, who constantly outdo themselves for us; **The Green Mountain Railroad people**, who have entertained us for the last couple of years, Alco Lovers Heaven!

And, there's **Bob Foley, John Burroughs, Carroll Robbins**, and the crew at the North Shore Model Railroad Club, who make our November meetings a great time. Thanks, folks, you're the best!

And finally, of course, we'd like to thank all of our contributors over the years, whether you wrote in regularly or only once, thanks to you. You helped make the B&MRRHS Newsletter what it is.

What more can we say? Well, we do think that seven years is too long for any

type of volunteer job like this. After about four or five years, you do begin to lose a bit of enthusiasm for the job, and after six or seven, it begins to become a bit boring, for want of a better term. We wish that we could have given up before this happened, after all, the membership deserves the best that we can give it. However, the old "lack of help" bugaboo prevented us from "giving notice", we didn't want to leave the B&MRRHS high and dry, and wanted to give a year's notice. So, we're sorry if the Newsletter got a little stale over the last year or so, but again, no one ever came up and said "You look like you could use some help. What can I do?" (Until Allen Burdett-Thomas did! Thanks Allen!)

So, when Allen asks for some help from the membership, make sure you give him a hand!

And, as we wind down we have a couple of points to ponder. Our first is wondering why some of our more "social" events do not meet with more acceptance. For instance, turnout at our banquets, while probably good for a week night, has been dwindling over the last couple of years, despite better and better speakers, to the point that we are seriously considering not holding another one at least until our **Twentieth Anniversary**, in about three years. We will try to hold this one on a weekend, so that more may attend, but future banquets will be gauged on how well the response to this one will be. Also, it would be nice to see some spouses there too!

Then again, there was the "Great Softball Uproar" of several years ago, when the B&MRRHS and 470 Railroad Club got together to play a softball game at one of our meetings, and immediately afterwards, the uproar began, to the point that one or two vocal individuals threatened to withdraw from the Society and take their collections with them. That someone dislikes softball is no problem, after all, this is a free country. But to get into such an uproar over it seems absurd to this writer. If a bunch of members of a couple of groups wanted to get together, have a ball game and some good times, (and it didn't cost anything!) So what? Big deal!

And, finally, as we prepare to wrap up this last editorial, we get to the part of this editorial that we have agonized over for the last few months. There's the other side from our congratulations, and it's time to hand out a few "razzberries". Now, before we do this, we must explain. Even though it might seem that we may be doing this for revenge for all the "nastygrams" we've received over the years, that is **not** the case. What we hope to do by printing these are to point out that we are an organizations of volunteers, and that those volunteers put their hearts into their work. To have their work ripped down by a careless comment or rude attitude really hurts, and most of the time it's unnecessary. What can be said nastily can also be said nicely, and a nice letter will get a better response than a nastygram. We hope that any offenders might see themselves here, and realize that their words can hurt deeply. Here we go:

A **razzberry** to anyone who knew of a railfan event or newsworthy occurrence, didn't notify us or cover it for us, and then wrote us a nastygram for not covering it ourselves. We can't be everywhere, and need to know! And, even though we have developed any number of contacts over the years, we still miss things.

A **razzberry** to the Society-bashers out

there. Lighten up, ok? If you don't like something that we do, help us do what you'd like. If we had one-tenth of the help that we have bashers, we'd have several restoration projects finished, more books out and the world on a string! So the next time you're standing by the tracks, or around the counter at the hoppy shop, go easy. Ask what you've done to rectify the situation that you're complaining about.

A **razzberry** to those members whom we constantly see at train shows, but **never** volunteer to man the table, or ask if the people manning the table would like a break to walk around, eat or visit the bathroom. The people behind that table working for the B&MRRHS fund one issue of the **B&M BULLETIN** per year, so remember that when we ask for volunteers to work shows!

A **razzberry** to those individuals who feel that they must correct every mistake that we accidentally or inadvertently let into print with a three page letter questioning our competence to dress ourselves in the morning. We try not to make mistakes, but, being human, we do, and when they end up in print, we **do** like to be corrected. But, like anything, there are ways and there are ways. We don't intentionally make mistakes, but have felt at times that there must be a couple of very knowledgeable people out there that are hovering over their Newsletters waiting to find an error, just to run to their typewriters to "correct" us. We **need** you knowledgeable folks, but why do you wait until you see a mistake to share your knowledge? We could use it anytime!

And, finally, a **razzberry** to the individual who sends us the "anonymous" postcards telling us what a lousy Newsletter we publish! If you want to make the comments that you do at least have the courage of your convictions enough to sign your name. After all, we put our names on the masthead every issue for the world to see, and stand behind what we print. (By the way, you mis-spell the same words on your nasty postcards as you do in your regular submissions!)

Well, that's about it, everyone! Thanks again, it's been fun! Our best wishes to everyone, have a great holiday season, have a wonderful life, and we'll see you around!

Dennis and Scott

FROM THE COURIER, LITTLETON, N.H.

Citing an inability to make a profit, a spokesman for Guilford Transportation Industries says his company may soon abandon its northern railroad line.

Colin Pease, a vice president of Guilford Transportation, said last week that operations on its North Country rails, stretching from Wells River, VT through Whitefield and up to Berlin and Groveton, could cease as early as this spring.

"We just don't have the ability to make a profit, nor do we see a possibility where the line can be profitable," Pease explained.

"If you look at the economy of the North Country," he continued, "it's not rail-related. You don't have the heavy industry."

Pease said the railway was originally built for the paper industry and passenger market. However, since the construction of the nation's highway system, that business has slowly been drawn off.

"Business on the line is now very low and continues to decline," he said. "We've

been struggling to find a solution for years."

Most of the line's business is created by James River Corporation's Berlin and Groveton mills, but the papermaking giant also ships via truck and the Canadian National Rail line.

"The result of that is a market that is very competitive," Pease said.

In that arena of competition, Guilford Transportation claims it is at a disadvantage because its tracks only allow speeds of between five and 10 miles per hour. Upgrading the tracks to permit faster traffic would mean the investment of millions. Pease said his company doesn't have that kind of money available and, even if it did, doubted that it would be wise to invest it where "competition is high and business is low."

At this point, Guilford Transportation Industries is looking for a buyer for its line. By law, the option to purchase a railway first goes to the state.

Submitted by, Roger Robar.

Living up in New England and working with B&M (and probably MeC fans - as well) collectors, would you know if any pictures are available for:

Pullman - **EVANGELINE**, or - as she became later - the B&M's **HEMLOCK**, for the Passageway or (Ladies Lav.) side, as AC'd.

An AC'd 10 Sect-1 DR-2 Cpt Sleeper, "Lake" series, for the B&M-MeC.

Pullmans - **MOUNT MANSFIELD** or **MOUNT ROYAL**, Plan 2521-1, (rebuilt of 1930) - went into service on "THE NEW ENGLANDER", about Nov. or Dec. 1930, via B&M-CV-CNR, Boston to Montreal.

I've enclosed for - Plans of some of these. Perhaps if some collectors saw these - they might Ring a bell - if anyone has a picture. I'd think if anyone did - they would be about 50 - or upwards.

As to **MOUNT MANSFIELD** and **MOUNT ROYAL**, they held over the names (Pullman-Names) of those built for the "NEW ENGLANDER" in 1928, gave them to the "new" rebuilds of 1930, giving the 1928 two, new Pullman Names, that is all gone - into on back of the plan. Off-hand, it sounds confusing, but makes sense, taken from the top.

Any information you could give me - would be very much appreciated.

Sincerely,
George Barth
268-A Grove St., Charleston, SC 29403

The Massachusetts Bay RRE will be operating its Annual Snow Train, Boston, MA to White River Junction, VT. For more information, contact the Mass Bay RRE at P.O. Box 8136, Ward Hill, MA 01835

Member Charles Molnar is looking for photographs of older, first generation piggyback trailers, piggyback flatcars, and autorack freight cars. If any members can help him out, please contact him at: 23837 Edward, Dearborn, MI 48128.

NEW B&MRRHS NEWSLETTER EDITOR

We mentioned in the last issue that Al Burdett-Thomas is taking the reigns of the B&MRRHS Newsletter in January. Al has been a member of several transportation-oriented historical societies for several years. He's been a part of this one for about a year, having been one of those people strongly interested for a long time, but making that final act of joining the Society eluded him. He's making up for it by becoming an active participant of the Society.

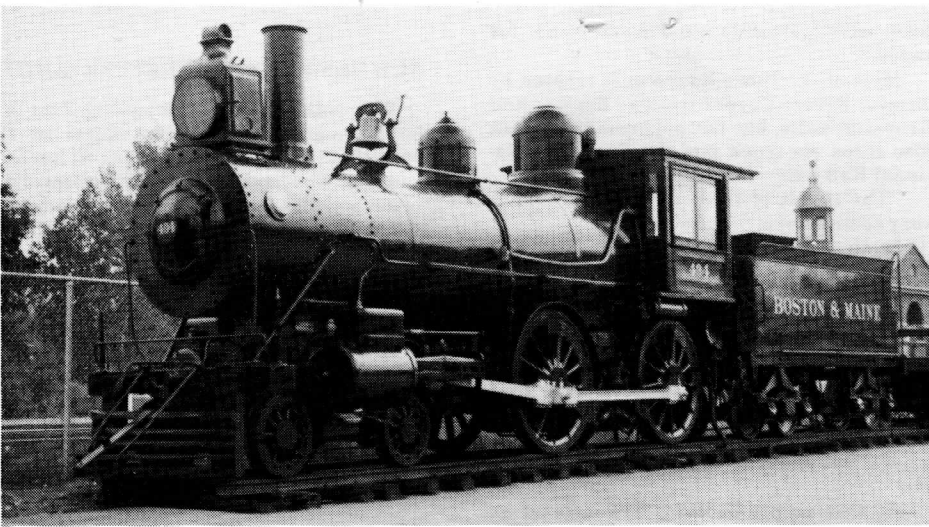
Al brings to the Newsletter a strong writing and editing background. He currently works for a technical services consulting contractor to the Federal Aviation Administration as an engineering documentation specialist, writing operation and maintenance manuals about fiber optic data communication systems being installed at essentially each major airport in the nation. Al has been a writer/editor for some 25 years for many high tech businesses and the Department of Defense. He became involved with the Society for Technical Communication, the largest professional society in the world devoted to the achievement of high technical writing, editing and publishing standards. Al was active with the Boston Chapter, the oldest (along with the New York chapter), and largest chapter in the society, having held most offices along the way, until he became President of the Boston Chapter in 1983.

Al has been fond of trains for as long as he can remember. He grew up in Arlington, Massachusetts and remembers the Moguls on the now abandoned Bedford branch, picking up and delivering the private Buttrick's Dairy milk cars to their main dairy plant near Arlington High School. Also further west in Arlington toward Lexington the Moguls would deliver coal and lumber into the site of the Arlington Coal and Lumber right behind the Arlington Heights commuter station.

Al has been riding Commuter Rail off and on since the mid-60's on the Eastern Line and the Gloucester Branch. He currently commutes on a daily basis from Ipswich to North Station, and occasionally to Mishawum on the Lowell Line, and to Reading on the Haverill Branch. In the past year, Al has also commuted for a couple of weeks to his Cambridge office from Cape Cod by way of Commuter Rail at Mansfield, Massachusetts on the Amtrak Northeast Corridor mainline on the south side, and has also taken the sleeper on a round trip from Boston to Washington, D.C. and Williamsburg, VA a couple of times recently.

When Al was quite young, he rode the train to Pittsburg, PA several times along the old New York, Hartford & New Haven Railroad, New York Central, and Pennsylvania Railroads. He has a special place in his heart for the Pennsy K-4s in a push-push fashion through the Horseshoe Curve near Altoona, PA and the Pennsy workhorse GG1's that did freight and passenger duty over the electrified lines.

Al has thoughts and ideas about changing the Newsletter, and is open to your ideas too for improvement. Unfortunately for many folks in our society, reading the Newsletter is the only form of activity that members do between issues of the Bulletins. Although these two news educational organs have a strong following, there is much more to this society than reading. Become involved, attend the programs (they aren't all in Woburn), and enjoy. We welcome Al.



Boston & Maine Steam Locomotive #494 has recently received a cosmetic restoration, (at least a coat of paint!) which greatly improved its looks.



The historic CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD is on the market for sale, according to Dwight Smith, Co-owner and General Manager of the tourist attraction.

Smith, a veteran of 42 years in the railroad business, says it is time to step down and let younger blood assume command of the property. CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD is a closely held for-profit business corporation founded in 1974 by Smith and two partners. "I am the youngest kid among the owners" says Smith, "The ages of the three of us averages out to 75 years of age."

CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD, a seven mile line in the White Mountains resort area of New Hampshire, was originally built in 1872 and operated by the Boston & Maine Railroad as part of their Conway Branch until abandonment exactly one century later. CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD bought the defunct rail line and after considerable restoration efforts reopened the line as a seasonal hauler of passengers in August of 1974.

The railroad owns 7.6 miles of track, 90 acres of choice land, a remarkable Victorian railroad station located in the center of the village of North Conway, N.H., seven other buildings including a four stall roundhouse with turntable, three seam locomotives, three diesel locomotives, 13 restored passenger cars, 8 passenger cars awaiting restoration, 3 cars on historic display, 9 freight cars used in work train service or for storage, a museum of rail artifacts, a prosperous gift shop business, and a food service business. 30 to 40 employees are on the payroll during the active season from May through October, with a key staff of five persons employed year-round.

The railroad attracts over 100,000 paying passengers each season, and has been an extremely successful operation since the day that it opened, according to Smith. "We will be running our business as we always have until somebody else runs it. We don't envision any major changes in our operating practices until new owners are on the scene, whenever that might be." Smith said.

THE OL' SWITCHEROO!

Those of you that have been keeping track have already noticed that the ranks of former Boston & Maine switcher locomotives is dwindling fast. Of all the switchers on the B&M, only a handful were equipped for multiple unit operation, nine to be exact.

The most famous of the M.U.-able switchers were the four NW-2's that for years were assigned to the Mechanicville hump and local pool. The numbers of these were 1210-1213, and they were equipped with 6BL type of brakes and had M.U. connections at both ends of the locomotive, along with drop steps.

The next two switchers with M.U. were SW-9's 1230 - 1231. Having the same types of brake system as the NW-2's, they differed in that the M.U. connections and drop steps were located only on the cab end of each unit.

There were only two Alco switchers on the B&M that were equipped with M.U. These were S-4's 1272 and 1273. Like the SW-9's, they had drop steps and M.U. connections only on the cab ends of each, however, unlike any of the other M.U.-able switchers, they were equipped with type 14EL brakes.

Finally, we come to the last of the M.U. equipped switcher locomotives on the Boston & Maine, which, perhaps, may be the most interesting by far. This is the case with SW-1 1127. The 1127 was selected, perhaps at random, to be outfitted at Concord, N.H. shops with 6BLC brakes to enable it to be used with road locomotives on the White Mountains Branch in local freight service. Locals venturing up the branch also has to serve the Franklin & Tilton, which is a branch off of the Branch, so to speak. the F&T was restricted to locomotives no heavier than an SW-1, which were, by themselves, too small to handle the additional tonnage for the rest of the White Mountains Branch. Hence, the 1127 would be teamed up with whatever additional road power that was required to move the tonnage, and before venturing on to the F&T branch, the road power would be cut off. Unlike any of the other M.U.-able switchers, the 1127 did not receive drop steps, and the 6BLC (rather than the 6BL) allowed the use of the 1127 leading or trailing the road engines, whereas if the others were to be M.U.-ed to road units they would be restricted to the trailing position.

While on the subject of M.U. compatibility, it would be best to clarify what units could run with what others. Naturally, each group could operate as a unit (i.e. NW-2's, SW-9's, S4's). However, the NW-2's and SW-9's had the same type of brakes and there was no reason that they

could not operate together, though we have never seen or heard of this happening. Also, these units could, if needed, be operated as trailing units with road locomotives, although, here again, we've never heard of it being done. The Alco S-4's were a constant, they could operate singly or as a pair only, as their brakes, as well as their electrical systems were incompatible with the EMD's.

Finally, we are quite sure that the last B&M switcher to have its M.U. used was the 1127. It's last assignment as such was much the same as when used on the White Mountains Branch. This time, however, it was working south out of East Deerfield to Mt. Tom, and then onto the restricted Easthampton branch. It was not uncommon to see the little 1127 leading a couple of road units. Sometimes as big as GP40-2's, and a whole slug of coal hoppers down the Connecticut River route to Mt. Tom power plant, and then disappear down the weed grown Easthampton Branch with a boxcar or two.

For modelers, the possibilities are many. One can be satisfied with keeping within the known operating practices of the B&M, or you can expand on the known possibilities. How about SW-9's 1230 and 1231 with the four NW-2's 1210, 1211, 1212 and 1213 between them handling a train on your layout?

If any of you have photos of the NW-2's operating together, we'd like to see them and share them with Newsletter readers. Send them to Scott at his Newsletter address on the front of this Newsletter.

SATURDAY, FEB. 11, 1989

COME JOIN US at CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD for our first-year MID-WINTER STEAM IN THE SNOW TRAIN RIDE!!! On this one date only 0-6-0 No. 7470 will be fired up to haul stove-heated coaches on a three mile round trip through the snow covered countryside. Enjoy steam sounds and action as the locomotive works up the 3.25% grade approaching North Conway station. Photo opportunities will abound as CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD re-creates the famous Boston & Maine Snow Trains of the 1930s and 40s. This event will also bring back memories of the Mass Bay Railroad Enthusiasts' February excursions to North Conway in the late 60's and early 70's.

SCHEDULES: At 8:30 A.M. an Extra will arrive in North Conway to commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the arrival of Ski Meister Hannes Schneider. No tickets sold for the 8:30 run, it is a Media Event only! Tickets will be sold (\$5.00 for adults, and \$3.00 for children 4-12) for regular departures commencing at 10:30 A.M. and continuing at modest intervals until 2:30 P.M.

COME EARLY AND SPEND THE DAY IN BEAUTIFUL NORTH CONWAY. DRESS WARM. TRAINS RUN SNOW OR SUN. Neither Snow, nor Ice, nor Winter's Might will prevent the folks at CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD from putting on a show that you will long remember.

CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD, INC., P.O. BOX 1947, NORTH CONWAY, NH 03860, 603-356-5251.

Author Query: for a history of railroad dining cars, with recipes. Seeks information on dining cars, their personnel, operation anecdotes, illustrations, menu's, recipes, china/linen/service utensils, food service manuals. Pays expenses, not seeking to purchase. Jim Porterfield, 763 Cricklewood Drive, State College, PA 16803. (814) 238-7989.

Congratulations to John Alan and Heather Roderick on the recent birth of their second child, son, **Stephen!**

The B&MRRHS extends its deepest sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Al Hale, on the recent passing of Mrs. Hale's mother.

Best wishes for a speedy recovery go out to **Bob Allen**, who is recovering from recent surgery. Get well soon, Bob!

THE B&MRRHS FINALLY GETS IT DUE!!!

This sounds like an unusual title for an article in the Newsletter, but it would seem that the B&MRRHS may have finally "hit the big time!"

What do we mean by this?

We would like to think that the B&MRRHS has always been well known within the railfan fraternity, and also within the modeling fraternity. The Society has been instrumental, along with its members, in the production of many of the fine brass locomotives that have emerged in the past few years, and we have also been a constant reference source for those modelmakers, commercial and otherwise, who endeavour to make their models as accurate as possible.

But, in the last year, we have also moved out of the railfan arena, into the arena of the general public. If you happened to see the excellent special on the Boston Garden that aired on Boston's Channel 5 late in October, and watched the credits at the end, you might have been surprised to see the Society's name flashed on the big screen! The B&MRRHS provided both footage and information to Channel 5 for the early part of the show, concerning the relationship between the Garden and the B&M Railroad. If you missed it, the B&MRRHS' contribution was at the very beginning, and a tape hopefully will be available for borrowing from our Archives tape leasing program sometime early in 1989.

The Society has also been listed as a source of information for "Question and Answer" columns, such as "Ask the Globe", in the Boston Globe.

Let's keep the "Big Times" rolling!!!

FOR SALE Book "Vermont's Granite Railroads" A hardcover pictorial history of the Montpelier & Wells River and Barre & Chelsea Railroads, co-authored by Whitney J. Maxfield, Robert C. Jones, and William Gove, contains over 350 photographs, time tables, and maps on 277 pages. It includes material from the groundbreaking in 1870 through the Montpelier & Barre and Washington County Railroads of the present. Close ties with the granite industry and Bombardier Ltd. are also illustrated. The book is available from Whitney Maxfield 20 Cabot St., Barre, Vt. 05641 for \$34.95 plus \$2.00 for mailing. Vermont residents please add 4% sales tax.

MIDDLESEX CANAL WALK

Some 20 members of the Middlesex Canal Association including our new Newsletter editor, Al Burdett-Thomas, walked three miles along the towpath of the old Middlesex Canal in Billerica, recently. The walk was part of an annual walk for enjoyment, and it supported the Association's historical interest in maintaining a rights-of-way along the almost 200 year old canal. The walk was held on one of those not-too-cold-or-windy, somewhat sunny Sunday afternoons, October 23. It had been rescheduled from the wild, wooly, and rainy day before.

The Middlesex Canal is, of course, of significant historical interest, to many a member of

the B&MRRHS. The canal and the current B&M mainline from Boston to Lowell ran parallel to each other and are separated by only a few feet to a couple of hundred feet for most of the 27 miles between Boston and Lowell. There are parts of the abandoned B&M track right-of-way just out of Central Square (near Wyman Park) in Woburn where the tracks were laid directly on the eastern towpath of the Canal. It was the railroads which sent the canals (Middlesex and others) to their early retirement. The Middlesex Canal was under construction in the eight years from 1795 to 1803 when it opened to transport lumber, granite and some foodstuffs from as far away as Concord, New Hampshire to Boston. The canal was also responsible in large part for Lowell's growth with the textile industry.

In 1835, according to Middlesex Canal Association records, the Boston and Lowell Railroad was built. It was reported that the canal boats delivered the granite for the railroad ties, and even parts of the engine was shipped up the canal to Lowell for assembly as the locomotive. The railroad was laid on almost the exact route of the canal as described. In just a couple of years, the railroad had cut into the profits of the canal, and by 1853, the Middlesex canal was out of business. One of the topographic features is that both the canal and the railroad share part of the pre-glacial river bed of the Merrimack River. It is, of course, the gradual slope of the old river bed which provided a smooth, solid path of least resistance between Lowell and Boston which was conducive to construction of both canals and railroads.

The part of the canal that the Middlesex Canal Association visited was where the canal "crossed" the Concord River less than a mile northwest of the Billerica B&M shops. The Concord River was the chief water supply for the canal in both directions at that point. There were, at the time of the canal, floating bridges across the river so that the horses could get across the river with their barges in tow. There is still an anchor for the floating bridge, still imbedded in a granite block at the site. The group then walked south toward the B&M shops along abandoned tracks of the Bedford & Billerica Railroad (later B&M), which at the point of crossing, just overran the canal. The group ventured south into the fringes of the B&M shop property where protected by rather heavy underbrush growth, the canal flowed slowly and quietly into the swampy area toward the southern end of the Billerica shops. After that part of the walk, the canal group drive further south near the site of the former Billerica landfill where a mile stretch of the canal remains almost untouched except for the mountain of grown-over landfill on the east side of the canal, and a couple of cases worth of empty beer cans along the west bank to bring you back into the real world. The canal looked much as it did when it was in use in the early 1800s except that the banks of the canal had some fairly hefty trees between where the barges would be and the towpaths.

Any B&MRRHS members interested in the preservation of the Middlesex canal may contact Al Burdett-Thomas at the B&MRRHS Newsletter address.

Guilford Glances:

The fleet has dwindled again since last month and the future has a bleak outlook to keep up with the needs of a day to day operational locomotive fleet. U-18B 402 is now on the "grave yards" track at Waterville while the 405 needs a new turbo. New turbos cost \$30,000 while rebuilt ones are not necessarily the best choice. It appears that a decision will be made whether or not to keep the better of the two units running by robbing parts from the other.

The GP38's are down to the 253, 255, 256, 258 as active units. B&M GP9's have also lost a couple more units, GP9 1716, 1722, 1730, 1732, have all been out of service for a while now. The 1722, being in the worse shape with crankshaft problems will probably not see service again. ST 50 ex B&M 1821 has only a hand full of usable parts left on it since most of the parts have been used elsewhere, this unit is also just history. B&M GP 7 #1575 is the only B&M GP 7 not stored and active daily. With 9 locomotives currently on lease to the NS for repayment. Which are 361, 362, 368, 600, 683, 684, 685, 687, 689, its evident that they're missed and could be used here. It's been a process of taking whatever you can get to make up the power line. For instance on 11/19/88 BA-SE had the 256-354-1719. BA-DH 333-369-40. Normally even with the amount of cars that they were hauling you could expect a little higher horsepower for the third unit. Under the present conditions its do the best you can with what's available. ST 675 currently stored at Waterville is slowly being robbed of parts. This unit also suffered fire damage and is in need of rewiring. The 686 at Billerica is in need of a re-wiring job. The 677 is stored at Billerica serviceable. The 676, 643, 602, 614, are presently at E. Dfld. awaiting repairs, as far as the six axel units are concerned.

B&M 1838 is now finally being worked on at Dfld. for truck changes, this is the only rewired unit left not turned over to Springfield Terminal... yet. GP40 # 328 will be side lined for quite sometime with cylinder damage and tests. GP40-2 306 is also still at Dfld. for power assembly and combos work. While its evident that certain units have priorities to keep them running or put them aside, the fleet of ex D&H units, now 350 to 369, has been kept in the best operating condition of the whole fleet. A requirement of 8 switchers for certain needs has the following at the present locations as of 11/88. 1400 Woodlands (Maine), 1405 Turntable switcher Waterville, 1407 Billerica Shop switcher, 1411 E. Dfld., 1424 N. Adams, 1430 E. Dfld., 1431 Springfield, 1433 Nashua.

Lowell yard office has ceased operation and now everything is out of Lawrence, even though lately Lawrence yard has resembled a ghost town.

Where are they now? Railfan's have asked... At Waterville at the grave yard tracks. 1410, 257, 1730, 1808 (ST 48), 280, 620, 1736, 618, 252, 626, 408, 409, 251, 11, 616, 627, 402, 51, 23, 645, 692, 1432, 1421, 1422, 622. Dfld. 1743, 1745, 1746, (all long term units O/S). At Billerica work has progressed slowly and the only unit to leave the shop by mid-November that has been O/S for a considerable amount of time has been the GP40 332. In the shop are: 203, 208, 471, 341, 632, 621, 617, 308, 325. The 308 has been there for a couple of months and now is having the Powere Assemblies checked. Other units stored there are: 285, 1563, 1564, 635, 677, 642, 1570, 302, 309, 1568, 334, 649, 310, 281, 638, 648, 663, 1577, 1566, 1556, 4267B, 1700, 1701, 1571, 329, 288, 647, 631, 1423, 1403, 1401, 1412, 1434, 1221, 322, 1715, 646, 1569, 1749, 1222, PC 4648, 632, 1848. Some of those units are stored serviceable but the bulk of them have had parts robbed and are working dead against the elements of time and money to repair them.

Talk going around is that Tower A at Waterville may be relocated... Work on the Saugus River bridge and Pines River bridge in Revere (Mass.) will close off the old Eastern Route Main Line during mid-day track use for about 3 - 4 weeks. This is a good reason WHY the Saugus branch should be kept up and used when Needed.

DON LE JEUNE

