

Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society

Incorporated

NEWSLETTER

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B&MRRHS Newsletter

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MEETING/MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION; TELEPHONE (617) 628-4053

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1991

MARCH 9 (OR 16) 1991 Saturday evening is the traditional night for this meeting, but Howard Pincus, who was going to present us with the program on January 12 which was snowed out is trying to make our March date. As this goes to print, there is a potential conflict with the March 9th date which must be ironed out. Howard, is no stranger to these parts, although we've had a time getting here. He's president of the Connecticut Valley Railroad, and we are looking forward to him speaking on restoration issues. With some luck, we'll succeed this time, but keep your B&M telephone number listed above and check before you make a long trek.

APRIL 13, 1991 Saturday evening, we should be back at our Mack Building site. Am uncertain about the program, and location, but be alert for interim news. Again, it's wise to call.

LOOKING AHEAD - The B&MRRHS is expected to man the railcar outside of the Mack car during Lowell's Annual International Folk Festival over a weekend in July. Here's a wonderful chance to become involved and have a lot of fun with your fellow B&M'ers. Look for further information on this event which will be over some weekend in July.

Coming up on a Saturday in June, we expect to have the 2nd Annual Railfan Day at the Hobo Railroad in Lincoln, New Hampshire. Yes, there are weddings and all kinds of distractions in June, but if you speak to any of the folks that went to Lincoln, New Hampshire, you'll find you missed a wonderful day. No excuses this year.

Dates and places are not yet determined, but July begins the celebration of the B&MRRHS 20th anniversary. There will be a banquet, and other activities over the year. Watch these pages and the interim notices about what is going on, when and where.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS LOOK AT CHALLENGES FACING B&MRRHS

In the longest meeting in several years of the B&MRRHS Board of Directors, Officers, and Staff, the group met to discuss some of the short-, medium-, and long-term goals, challenges and strategies for the Society as it heads toward the year 2000. On Saturday, January 18, the Society leadership met for about seven hours at the Mogan Cultural Center in Lowell. The meeting was rescheduled from an all-day meeting planned for the Saturday membership meeting. The Mogan Cultural Center is a temporary home (see related story) for the B&MRRHS.

Dennis Adams, Chairman of the Board of Directors led the group through a series of though provoking items on the agenda asking for inputs and concerns to various issues facing the Society. The Society plays several roles in serving the membership from providing a monthly meeting or fantrip to those living in eastern New England to publishing the B&MRRHS Bulletin, Newsletter and Modeler's Notes for all members near and far.

With the continuing decline of the identity of the Boston & Maine Railroad in all quarters, there is a strong feeling among those attending that the B&MRRHS does not have to decline with the visibility of our favorite railroad. There remains much strength in the Society, with the prospects of reissuing some of the popular out-of-print publications of the past, continuing to add new video tapes of 8-mm and 16-mm movies and 35-mm slides of B&M life from the private collections of members and other railfans.

The Society possesses among its members and archives, resources second to none for the history of not only the B&M, but its constituent railroads in acquisition, and the communities built up around the railroads. The new home of the B&MRRHS in Lowell is certainly not in appropriate. The Boston and Lowell Railroad, initially leased to the B&M and later bought out by the B&M was the line where it has been said that the Boston and Maine produced the world's first mile-a-minute run (60 mph). The new home of the Society in Lowell presents many possibilities for a lot of exposure and growth with the National Park Service, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, and several Lowell historical and preservation societies. Through maximum participation by its local membership, the B&MRRHS should remain a viable rail organization for a long time. But for us in the meeting, we were asked where we expect to be in 5 years? in 10 years? Can we serve the membership well, living 1200 or 3000 miles away, and support local activities to increase membership? These were some of the questions posed.

The group also discussed for the near future, the problems of a "permanent" home. The Society had no more than hosted two meetings in its new Mack Building (Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management) home when along came the word from Beacon Hill that the Mack Building would be essentially shut down during the winter months. No, not a cheap shot, but an attempt by the state to gain some control over its fiscal problems, it is believed that the good state employees who gave us the new home at the Mack Building were acting in good faith. Had they known that they would have to displace us temporarily, they would not have invited us in the first place. For those who were not able to attend either of the meetings at the Mack Building, the location was fine, parking good, the hall clean and adequate for all but the very largest crowds that the society has drawn. There were some minor inconveniences, but the whole scene is much better than our former Woburn facility.

More near-term planning were initial thoughts on how and where and when the Society would celebrate its twentieth anniversary. many ideas were thrown out, and there are many possibilities because the anniversary celebration is essentially a year long.

Yes, we are planning a banquet somewhere probably with a depot-type restaurant. And, of course, your ideas are welcome too, but get them in to this editor, or to the Board of Directors soon. Some activities need a long lead time.

Other areas of discussion for near-term planning were some of the activities in the spring and summer months. Included is the probability of a return for a railfan's day at Hobo Railroad in Lincoln, New Hampshire much like the very successful event last April. Also in July, as part of Lowell's annual International Folk Festival in July we expect to prepare exhibits of early railroading, and a chance to toot our own horn by manning the old combine outside our Mack Building site. The Folk Festival has become a very large affair for the entire city over the years.

And finally, the Board of Directors, Officers and Staff of the B&MRRHS family, are proud to support all military personnel called up to support Desert Storm operations. All of wish for Godspeed and safety in executing their missions, and we pray for a quick, safe return to stateside. Many a Society member has been called to duty to defend the nation himself in the past, and many have children eligible for active duty if they aren't there already. We all fully appreciate the efforts of our service men and women!!!
[ABT]

TAKE YOUR "NO TRESPASSING" SIGNS SERIOUSLY

An oft-repeated warning in these pages has been reinforced by a similar warning in Jack Armstrong's column in a recent issue of *Railpace* Newsmagazine. It can't be emphasized enough, and with spring approaching, more cameras come out of the closet.

The Massachusetts legislature recently passed a law pertaining to trespassing on railroad property. In short, the laws states that anyone who walks, stands or rides any vehicle on the right-of-way or any other railroad-owned property, except grade crossings, may be arrested without a warrant and fined \$100. [Editor's note: With depressed revenue among the communities and the Commonwealth, many may not hesitate to try to collect quick and easy revenue by this means!]

The article went on to say "While on the subject of trespassing, we received a report that several fans were arrested on Railfan's Bridge at East Deerfield, Massachusetts. According to the Deerfield police department, the paved road (known as McCullen Farm Road) all the way to the UCF feed mill is a "public way" and the bridge is owned by the state. The Deerfield police know of no one arrested

on the bridge; apparently the individuals must have gone beyond the bridge and into the yard. This (Railpace) editor, along with other local fans, has spent many hours on the bridge and has never been harassed by Guilford or Deerfield police. A word to the wise: Stay on the bridge, and park your car well off the road in order to leave room to allow two cars to pass.

[Railpace, December 1990]

TEMPORARY MOVE IN EFFECT

No sooner than we had settled in our new home, we got the bad news from the state. Yes, we'd have to move again temporarily. Thanks to the efforts of Jim Nigzus, and the cooperation of both the state park department, and the federal national park system we were told the good news before we got the back news.

The folks in the Lowell State park regretted telling us this, and really want us around. The problem comes from the poor fiscal shape in which the state is in. The Mack Building comes under a severe budget cut, and has had it's hours cut back considerably. As it appears now, we'll be back in time for the April meeting.

The temporary site in the Mogan Cultural Center is in the part operated by the National Park Service. It's in the same building in which the B&MRRHS archives are located, but again because of state budget cuts, access to the archives are severely restricted.

Only a few blocks from the Mack Building, the Mogan Cultural Center is located at 40 French Street Extension, almost directly across the street from the east end of Lowell High School. There is a large Bank of New England parking lot adjacent to the Mogan Center, and although not officially sanctioned by anybody, the lot appears to be useable during our Saturday night meetings. It was expected that the January, february and March meetings would be held at the Mogan Cultural Center, and that we'd probably return to the Mack building in April. [ABT]

DECEMBER B&M'EETING

The December meeting in the Mack Building on December 8th was the annual member's night with several folks presenting slides, movies and memories. The program was well attended, and several folks saw our new home for the first time.

Jim Nigzus led off the night with some slides of the Lowell trolley, and trackwork, slides of a visit to the Hobo railroad in Lincoln, NH last spring, Some shots of Budds in Lowell just before the end of Budd service in October 1989. Jim wound up his segment of the show with shots of a MBRRE Claremont trip.

John Goodwin followed with some of his collection showing foreign power on traditional B&M trackage; NYC and D&H before Guilford) at Fitchburg, Erie, NYC and Penn Central from Bow and Conrail cabooses on B&M trains. John also showed shots of B&M P4 #3710 of the feature article in the recently-issued *B&M Bulletin*.

John concluded with some shots of telephone company trucks riding flat cars

into the region after the destructive hurricane (Diane???) in 1955.

Don Robinson shared with us his shots of left-hand running on British Rail. He also showed a couple of recent railfan trips, in June 1990 with the Cape Cod Railroad on some rare-mileage onto Otis AFB, Falmouth and Dennis on Old Colony trackage. He concluded with shots of another railfan trip using MBTA equipment on the Central Mass right-of-way.

Mitch Dick shared with us some of his slides from McGinnis era B&M with shots in Somerville, Budds at North Station, the North Shore in the Blizzard of '78. Mitch showed us slides of double-slip switches, E-units at Billerica, and the humping yard in Somerville.

Buddy Winiarz provided the last entertainment of the evening starting with a shot of the former Eastern RR roundhouse in Revere, some slides of the Saugus branch, and Wakefield Center, Wakefield Junction and across the border to Atkinson, East Kingston and Rochester Junction, NH. We then traveled through Concord, NH and viewed its turntable, then onto Milford and Bennington. [ABT]

ANOTHER B&M ABANDONMENT

The Interstate Commerce Commission has approved a request by the B&M to abandon 10.5 miles of track between Pittsfield and Adams, Massachusetts.

"As of right now, it's abandoned," said Colin Pease, a vice president for Guilford Transportation Industries, the parent company for the railroad back in mid-December. "But the public has the right to buy it, and we're ready to close for \$880,000."

U.S. Representative, Silvio O. Conte, R-Pittsfield, who opposed the abandonment, and had asked the ICC to reconsider its approval of B&M's appraisal of the line, said he would try to persuade the state to buy the right-of-way with federal help. [Greenfield Recorder, 12/18/90 by David Ashenden]

BEGINNING OF END FOR LAST OF B&M PASSENGER STOCK

Seven former B&M RDC Buddliners that had been depowered and converted to trailers are reportedly up for sale. They are often called "Boise-Budds" because it was the Boise, Idaho plant of Morrison-Knudsen (M-K) that rebuilt these vehicles.

Originally purchased by the Boston & Maine in the 1950s, these vehicles lived their entire lives and ultimately became the prime passenger vehicles on the B&M until B&M passenger operations were transferred to the MBTA in December 1976.

There were 32 Budds in the initial M-K rebuild and conversion program in 1982 performed in large part by funds provided by the Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA).

Life expectancy of the rebuilt vehicles was approximately 25 years, and it was planned upon receipt of the original 32 that the remainder of the B&M Budd fleet would be undertaken.

MBTA NO.	B&M NO.	RDC-X/ BUILT
403	6113	1 / '55
406	6128	1 / '55
409	6133	1 / '55
417	6151	1 / '55
428	6303	3 / '58
1400	6201	2 / '55
1404	6206	2 / '55

Each car was fitted with diaphragms; both engines were removed (motive and own HEP), fuel tanks and other underbody equipment was removed, and the probably the most visible change to the RDC fan was removal of the exhaust roof bubbles.

Wiring in each car was changed so that heating ventilation and lighting was only from HEP in the locomotive. In addition, each car was retrofitted for connecting a control cab coach and a locomotive in series for push-pull operation.

Inside also, the exhaust stacks which went upward in the center of the cars were

removed, the resulting void filled with another set of seats. All seats were replaced with fixed seats, placed back-to-back at the center of the car and facing toward the ends of the car. Thus, half the seats would face backwards no matter which direction the coach was moving.

Other retrofitting of the former B&M Budds consisted of reglazing, new flooring, and expansion of seats in the former RDC-2s and -3s. The RDC-2s and -3s had their baggage sections removed, and seats and windows installed so that they resembled RDC-1s. Inside, one could not really tell that he or she was in a converted RDC-2 or -3, the alterations were made so well. Externally, it was a little different, for if one knew where to look, one could see smooth stainless steel patches over where the baggage doors had been at one time. Without fluting, the patches were fairly obvious.

These coaches were placed on a "new spur" in the rear yard of the Sullivan Square MBTA bus shops. The spur now off the Eastern line goes onto that property, and was formerly the single track approach to Draw 7 from the south side., which had been demolished without notification a few months ago a few months ago.

Some sources say that CalTrain commuter rail in California is interested in these vehicles, other deny it.

Another rumor has it that there are more Boise-Budds stored on track in East Boston near the former General Electric plant, but this has not been verified.

It appears that the MBTA has learned from its sad experience by placing out-of-service vehicles in the West Cambridge yards near Alewife.

Not all Boise-Budds are out of service, yet. Some Boise-Budds were seen in service early in February. It is expected that they will be until the new bilevel Kawasakis are deployed through-out the system. Delivery of the bilevels is expected to start soon. Nevertheless, these Boise-Budds are among the last survivors of B&M passenger ownership. [ABT]

MEET THE BLHS!!!

One of the bright spots upon receiving the mail as I was preparing this issue of the *B&MRRHS Newsletter* was seeing a new masthead appear before me. The masthead was that of the *Bridge Line Historical Society (BLHS) Bulletin*. If you don't know by now that the "Bridge Line" is a reference to the Delaware & Hudson (D&H) Railroad, you haven't been very observant.

The BLHS Bulletin announces the formation of the Bridge Line Historical Society, which produces the bimonthly newsletter *Bulletin*.

The BLHS is an independent organization whose primary focus is on and about the D&H, it's connecting railroads and business areas. Not affiliated with any other railroad organization, the BLHS hopes to complement the efforts of other organizations. One of the founders of the BLHS has also made a disclaimer of any connection of the former D&H Historical Society.

The D&H is, of course, no stranger to New Englanders, much less to B&M'ers. Part of the Guilford acquisition circa 1983, along with Maine Central and the B&M, the D&H found itself apparently divesting itself of GTI in June 1989.

With a supportive parent like SuzieQ, D&H held on long enough to find what appears to be a rather viable suitor in Canadian Pacific, (CP) who apparently has consummated the marriage.

Annual dues for individuals is \$15, and for family memberships, \$20 starting on the calendar year. After July 1st, the dues are halved. As mentioned, the BLHS Bulletin is published bimonthly, and is delivered by third-class mail. First class delivery may be had by enclosing an additional \$9.00.

My first impression of the Society's newsletter, the Bulletin is very favorable. Well-organized, and composed, the first issue for general distribution consisted of 22 full-sized pages of a font similar in size and typeface to that of this Newsletter.

If interested in BLHS membership, write:

Bridge Line Historical Society
174 North Pearl Street
Albany, New York 12207-2308

The B&MRRHS extends to its west end brethren, the BLHS, a hearty welcome aboard, and hopes for a long and enjoyable association. [ABT]

ST SIGHTINGS

Early in January, Guilford Transportation Industries has changed over on paper, everything to do with GTI to Springfield Terminal, a move that many see will, be the forthcoming of a major takeover in 1991.

Many say that ST is on the brink of bankruptcy, a fact that no one will deny. Canadian National has shown interest in the Maine Central, and Conrail is the most viable operator for the remaining B&M lines.

As recent as January 9th, SE-MA's Conrail power made it as far as Plaistow, New Hampshire to meet up with NE-SE. Power swaps took place, and for the most part, went smoothly. Today (1/10) was no exception as a westbound freight left Lawrence with Conrail power, a very true sign of times ahead.

The remaining operating B&M GP-9 fleet saw the ST numbering system take over. For example, B&M #1709 is now ST #57, B&M #1736 is ST #71, and the remaining B&M GP-7s, should see #1563, 1575, and 1577 become ST #29, 34, and 35 respectively.

MEC U-18B #405 returned to service late December after a four-month term out-of-service. GP-9 #470 returned to service early January and was spotted as lead unit on NE-SE. The majority of the Bow New Hampshire coal trains have been brought up by Conrail power. CP has not been in the limelight for quite sometime, this may be as a result that the CP/ST talks on a possible buyout broke off earlier. [Don LeJeune, as of 1/10/91]

AFTERMATH OF BACK BAY WRECK OF AMTRAK #66

Both national and local media covered pretty well and accurately the wreck of Amtrak's *Night Owl* #66 out of Washington, D.C. in Back Bay Station on the morning of Wednesday, December 12, 1990. Thus, there is no attempt to cover here what has been adequately covered in the media.

There are some issues which surround the wreck, such as indications of excessive speed, application of brakes, partial post-accident obliteration of the audio signals of one the "flight recorder" tapes (other tape was destroyed in the wreck, and what role, if any, did the mandated automatic train control (ATC) play.

The credentials, competence, attentiveness and actions of both Amtrak head end cab crew members, particularly with speed and application of brakes, has been questioned. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is playing its official investigative role and, as usual, results from this may take many months.

Perhaps the remarkable aspect of the wreck was the shock absorbing role of locomotive which was in push mode. There is no doubt among those intimate with the scene that MBTA locomotive #1073 saved many lives and injuries. We would hate to imagine what would have happened had the coaches on the packed commuter train been on the back end of exposed to the rampaging Amtrak locomotives.

There were some 900 people on the MBTA train from Stoughton, and some 190 on the Amtrak train. It was a bit of irony that a MBTA locomotive had earlier become disabled. This led to an unusual request by the MBTA to Amtrak to pick up the passengers that would have been picked up by the disabled train. Thus, the Amtrak train #66 made a mercy stop at Attleboro to pick up about 100 MBTA passengers.

One of the complicating issues of the rescue operation was that the accident tore

out five support columns along with fire fighting standpipes from the street above. With a small, but very smoky fire from spilled diesel fuel erupted near one of the Amtrak locomotives hampered both fire-fighters and passengers in their ability to reach safety.

The locomotives in their initial thrashing around poked a couple of holes through the tunnel ceiling into Dartmouth Street above and in front of the Back Bay station at street level. It took a week and some \$5 million to clean up after the wreck and Dartmouth Street was expected to remain closed for some time.

For those interested in equipment, and numbers, the MBTA locomotive was three-year old F40PH-2C, #1073. It was pushing the 9-coach train from Stoughton #906. Both the #1073 locomotive and the immediately adjacent Pullman-Standard coach MBTA #315 (1978) were destroyed. The next coach on the MBTA train ahead of #315 was derailed, but salvageable. The other MBTA coaches were taken out-of-service for complete inspection as is the usual procedure following involvement in an accident.

The Amtrak train #66 had F40PH's double-headed with #272 on the point and #366 trailing. Both locomotives were part of a 191-unit purchase with delivery spread over five years from 1976 though 1981. Both Amtrak locomotives were destroyed. Amtrak material handling car (MHC) #1551 and baggage car were also destroyed, the remaining vehicles were derailed.

At last report, the MBTA is planning to replace F40PH-2C #1073 with a \$1.6 million rebuilt locomotive from Morrison-Knudsen, saving what they estimate to be about \$800,000 from a new direct replacement locomotive. [A B T]

CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL; IS YOUR DUES PAID UP? IF NOT, PLEASE DO IT TODAY. WITH POSTAGE RATES UP, THE COST TO THE SOCIETY FOR REMINDERS GOES UP!