

# NEWSLETTER

Meeting/Membership Telephone Number (978) 454-3600

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September - October 2014

Bob Warren, Editor (bmbobwarren@comcast.net)

Visit the B&MRRHS on the web at: [www.bmrrhs.org](http://www.bmrrhs.org)

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## B&MRRHS CALENDAR

Meetings commence at 3:30 pm on the second Saturday at Rogers Hall, Lowell, MA unless otherwise indicated.

**Sept 20 th** — Plymouth, NH railroad station. Bob Sheridan will be putting on a slide presentation of Northern New Hampshire railroading. Be sure to see the accompanying flyer for more info on this event in this and last month's newsletter.

**Oct. 18 th** — Tentative schedule: Longtime member, director, and current society historian Russ Monroe will be presenting a slide show of his many years photographing New England railroads. Russ is a 30 year veteran railroad conductor, and has many published photos in books relating to the B&M, this will be a trip down memory lane.

**Nov. 8th**— Our hardware chairman Richard Nichols will show us a sampling of what the historical society has in our extensive hardware collection. Richard and his crew have been digitally photographing all of our collection. You will be surprised to see what we have!

**Dec. 13th**— Member's night. All are encouraged to bring slides, DVD's, VCR or digital images, PowerPoint presentations to show our members. Infocus presenter available.

**Nominations** for several Officers and Directors' are open to all members in good standing...Nominations should be sent to the Lowell PO Box by October 18, 2014.

### Directions To The Rogers Hall Society Meeting Location

From Rt. 495 take exit 38 which is Rt. 38, go right, this is Rogers St. Depending if you come from the north or south there are six and seven sets of lights respectively. Approximately 1.3 miles from Rt. 495 is the last set of lights (working) bears to the left here. Rogers Hall is about 3 tenths of a miles on your right. Directly across the street is Rogers Fort Hill Park, parking is available there.

If you come from Rt. 133 (Andover St.) follow that until you intersect Rt. 38 in Lowell. Go through this intersection and take your third left which is High St. Go to the end and take a left and this will take you to

Rogers Hall on your left and Rogers Fort Hill Park on the right.

If you come from Rt. 38 or Rt. 113 you need to get off at the overhead traffic circle as if going to St. Johns Hospital. Follow this to the intersection of Rts. 38 and 133 and follow the above directions to High St.

### Help Wanted!

Our society is growing in many areas; we need to add to our staff of volunteers to help with archives, hardware, train shows, web design, #410 restoration, and many other types of positions. If you can give some time and talent, whether it be a couple hours a week or a couple hours a month, contact [CPC835-DD@juno.com](mailto:CPC835-DD@juno.com) or send a note to B&MRRHS, PO Box 9116, Lowell, MA 01853 and we will connect you with the right person! No particular skill is necessary, just a willingness to help your society continue to grow.

## MEMBER INFORMATION

**Newsletter**

Correspondence concerning the Newsletter can be sent to either  
2285 Stagecoach, Los Lunas, NM 87031  
or emailed to:  
bmbobwarren@comcast.net

**All Other Correspondence** goes to the following address (or by email) including catalog orders, correspondence with the Board of Directors, Archives, Historian, or Bulletin.

B&MRRHS, P.O. 469, Derry, NH 03038 or  
CPC835-DD@JUNO.com

In all instances involving money DO NOT send cash as the society will not be held responsible for if lost.

Make checks, etc. payable to **B&MRRHS**

**Address Change:** if you change your address please let the Society know by mail or email. When you do not let us know, it costs extra for postage: first mailing, returned postage and second mailing, i.e., three mailing costs to one person.

**Society Officers, Directors and Staff**

President	Carl Byron
Vice President	Rick Nowell
Treasurer	Paul Kosciolek
Clerk	Michael Basile
Secretary	Paul Kosciolek

**Board of Directors**

Dave Hampton	Rick Hurst	Dan Hyde
Gerry Kelly	Paul Kosciolek	Richard Nicols
Jim Nigzus	Mal Sockel	Buddy Winiarz

**Alternate Directors**

Brian Bollinger & Richard Nichols

**Staff**

Archives Chairman	Frederick N. Nowell III
Hardware Archives Chair.	Richard Nichols
Bulletin Editor	Andrew Wilson
Distribution	Buddy Winiarz
Layout and Art Director	John Alan Roderick
410 Chairman	Jim Nigzus
Historian	Russell Munroe, Jr.
Membership Secretary	Buddy Winiarz
Modelers Notes	Bruce Bowden, Bob Warren
Model Projects Coordinator	Vacant
Newsletter Editor	Bob Warren
Program Chairman	
Jim Nigzus, Buddy Winiarz	
Show Coordinator	James Nigzus
Webmaster	Andrew Ryan
www.bmrrhs.org	

## MEMBERSHIP

- Please renew your membership within the ninety-day renewal period or you will be deleted from the membership list. • All renewing members are provided a preaddressed renewal envelope, containing your membership data on the flap. Please **DO NOT** over tape the flap.
- Write any address changes on an additional piece of paper and include within the renewal envelope
- Payment is by check or money order ONLY... please do not send cash. You may pay by cash if you attend a Membership meeting or train show at which the society has a presence.
- If you do not get society publications after renewing contact the society at the address below.
- Prior to moving, please notify the society to insure continued receipt of society publications, etc. Failure to do so requires additional expenditures to have returned mail forwarded to you if your new address becomes known.
- A RED DOT on your address label indicates that this is the last item you will receive from the Society, as you have not renewed within the allotted timeframe.
- All questions regarding your membership should be addressed to:

**Membership**

c/o B&MRRHS, PO Box 469

Derry, N.H. 03038-0469

Buddy Winiarz, Membership Sec.

**B&MRRHS Membership Dues**

All values in US dollars. Dues are payable by check, money order, postal money order or cash. Sorry, but we are unable to accept charges. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for processing.

Please send membership requests to:

B&MRRHS - Membership  
PO Box 469  
Derry, NH 03038-0469

Basic	\$35
Basic & Spouse	\$38
Contributing	\$40
Canada & Overseas	\$55
Sustaining	\$50
Supporting	\$75
Benefactor	\$100
Corporate	\$500

## Lowell Folk Festival 2014

Once again our volunteers manned the B&M combine and steam locomotive #410 for this annual event. Over the July 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> weekend approximately 1400 visitors came through our exhibit.

Much work goes into making this event a huge success for our historical society, even before we ever open the doors to the exhibit. We wash the locomotive and car, clean all the windows, wash the floors, and test and repair any problems with the HO railroad exhibit.

This event is a valuable platform for us to explain what the society is all about to the general public. Our volunteers in general fielded questions about the B&M Railroad and railroading. Often we sign up new members on the spot during this exhibit.

We have a sales table with society clothing and books for visitors to purchase as well as free handouts of Operation Lifesaver promotions, commuter train 'Downeaster', and tourist railroad schedules.

It would not be possible to do this without the continued support of our society volunteers. I would like to thank the following people who gave us of their time this year.

Fred and Quesen Brown, Carl Byron, Dave Hampton, Don Hampton, Rick Hurst, Dan Hyde, Jerry Kelley, Paul Kosciolk, Russ Monroe, Richard Nichols, Jimmy Nigzus, Jim Nigzus, and Peter Victory

*Submitted by: Jim Nigzus*

## BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### REPORT OF HARDWARE COMMITTEE FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 2014

To the Board of Directors and Members of the Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society:

The Hardware Committee Staff is pleased to submit the following report for July 2014.

The committee staff of Daniel Hyde, Fred Brown and Richard Nichols have logged in two hours a day, once a week on July 10, 17, 24, 2014

We have now photographed, tagged and cataloged 1209 items from the Hardware Collection, since July 17, 2013. B&MRRHS Hardware Storage Center, North Chelmsford, Mass

Mounted on the wall- Wood Box Telephone.

Mounted on the wall a Coupling Rod from B&MRR Steam Locomotive 4-6-2 Pacific #3666.

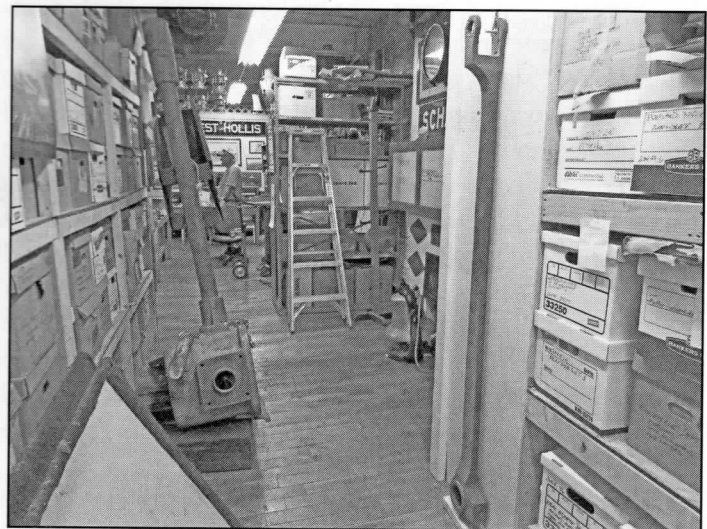
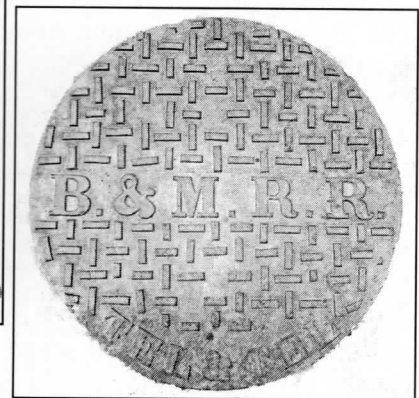
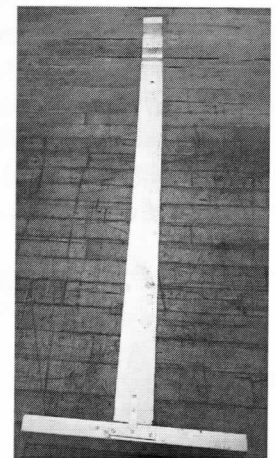
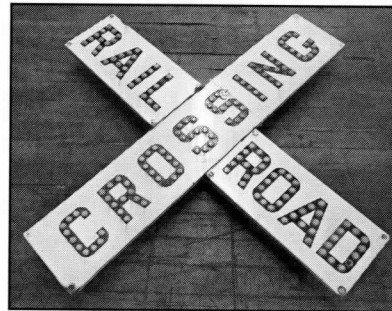
The following donations have been received  
B&MRR Tel & Tel Manhole Cover/ Cross Buck wood post /w R.R. Cross-Buck

Donation: Jack Keene, Severna Park, MD.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Richard Nichols, Hardware Chairman*

Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society  
Railroad.nichols@gmail.com



*The No. Chelmsford Hardware Storage Center*

## Leased Engines Being Returned

Leased Helm SD40-2s 7014, 7180, 7192, 7842, 7843, 7860, 8070, 8072, 8145 and 8146 all taken out of service by May 1.

*Submitted by Jack Armstrong, Railpace*

## **Anthracite RR Historical Raising Funds To Restore F3-B Unit**

The Anthracite RR Historical Society, which owns an A-B set of F3's, is raising funds to restore F3B #664B for operation.

Plans to restore #664B include an oil change, starting batteries, water pump and injector work, a governor and a number of minor items such as gaskets.

The unit was built for the Boston & Maine as F7B #4268 in 1950.

After the ARHS acquired it, it was externally restored in the Lackawanna paint scheme to match the A unit, a former Bangor & Aroostook unit.

*Salisbury Points Newsletter submitted by Buddy Winiarz*

## **Brunswick Amtrak Facility Ready To Go**

The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) found that the proposed layover facility for Downeaster trains and crews will have no significant environmental impact on a Brunswick neighborhood. The decision, dated June 13th, spread throughout the passenger rail community, as well as the neighbors that have opposed the facility. Patricia Quinn, executive director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA), said, "The finding gives the 'Rail Authority' permission to move forward with construction of the \$12 million, 60,000 square foot layover facility at the site of the Brunswick freight rail yard between Church Road and Stanwood Street. The building will be located six-tenths of a mile from the downtown Brunswick passenger rail station. "There are obviously some things we need to complete, said Quinn, so its not as though construction will start immediately? The proposed facility will provide an enclosed building to house three Downeaster passenger trains overnight, allowing them to power down and receive routine maintenance, repairs and cleaning. It will also reduce hotel costs and pollution by eliminating the last trip of the day for trains, a deadheaded round-trip, to the Portland Maintenance shops, and then return the next morning. Opponents continue to argue that a building this large, equivalent to two football fields, will increase diesel fuel fume pollution and produce noise in a quiet residential neighborhood.

Daniel Sullivan, President of the Brunswick West Neighborhood Coalition said, "We can't just lie down and go to sleep. We will appeal the decision to higher authorities? The FRA acknowledged that the large building would have a visual impact to about eight homes, but determined that would not be significant because of the existing rail yard, presence of other industrial use in the area, distance to abutters, benefits of screening vegetation and the small number of homes affected.

Quinn said, "The NNEPRA submitted an environmental assessment study to the FRA for their review.

They could have asked for more information but they didn't". The PRA said the rail authority's assessment met all the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, adding, "The project will have no foreseeable significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment, nor will there be a need for a full environmental impact statement? Wayne Davis, chairman of the board of directors for TrainRiders/Northeast, said a full environmental impact study would have taken up to three years to complete. "TrainRiders" is a non-profit volunteer organization promoting use of the Downeaster passenger rail service. Other than a lawsuit, Davis said he does not see any further obstacles to the layover facility, and adds, "When the dust settles, I think the neighbors will find the controversy was a tempest in a teapot". However, Dennis Bailey, spokesman for the Brunswick West Neighborhood Coalition said, "I think it's premature to suggest this is the end of the story".

While there is no administrative appeal process for the FRA's findings, it can be challenged in U. S. District court.

Also uncertain is what NNEPRA plans to do about an external power source. Concerned Cedar St. residents requested the Town to insist that an external power source be installed so trains that currently idle near the neighborhood can shut down their engines. With the engines not operating, power to refrigeration and air conditioning equipment and lighting is lost. The town Councilors sided with the residents and will send a letter to NNEPRA requesting the power source. The NNEPRA Board has decided against the external power source because the layover facility should be in the construction phase and expenditure of \$50 to 60,000 would be wasted. Now that the FRA decision has been made, Quinn, of the NNEPRA, will meet with the contractor, Consigli Construction Co., to formulate a construction schedule. They already have 50% of the layover facility design completed.

*Bangor Daily News via Tracy Hasting, the Portland Press Herald and The 470 The 740 Railroad Club*

## **Railroad Fined for Improper Tie Disposal**

Boston & Maine Corp. and its parent company Pan Am Railways Inc. were fined \$57,747 with \$10,000 of the penalty suspended, the Department of Environmental Protection stated. The companies must follow a plan to recycle ties that can be reused, and properly dispose of others left at the side of rail lines according to the state.

State authorities alleged that the companies left ties in West Boylston, Sterling, Deerfield and Charlemont.

Thousands of ties were left over a 7.5-mile stretch in West Boylston and Sterling, in an area in the Wachusett Reservoir watershed, alleged the state.

## The Whale Trains 1861

By Carl Riff

The Boston Aquarial gardens were established in Boston, 1859-1860 by James Ambrose Cutting and Henry D. Butler. The Conservatories were filled with rare marine animals imported and collected just for this public aquarium. It was first located on Bromfield Street but the following year was moved to a new location Central Court and was renamed the Boston Aquaral and Zoological Gardens. The Gardens opened to the public on October 5th 1860. The following year the Gardens added its showpiece, a very live twelve-foot long beluga whale to its collection

The outstanding whale was caught in the spring of 1861 in the St Lawrence River, Lower Canada between Riviere Orelle and Riviere duLoup. Its capture was made by using weirs, a sort of trap made of wooden stakes, enclosing an area of several miles of water that converged to a point that trapped the whale in a small area. The whale was nabbed at this point. Having been secured the whale was placed in a huge box for transportation. The box was lined with seaweed, and was partially covered at the top with slats. The cargo was carried over seven difficult and rough miles to the Grand Trunk Railway line built only a few years earlier from Quebec (Chaudiere Curve) St Thomas (Riviere du Loup). May 1861 a live whale was shipped over the Grand Trunk from its point of capture along the St Lawrence, through Chaudière, Richmond, Sherbrooke, south over the GTR to Portland then along the Boston and Maine Railroad to Boston.

John Davis sites the Oxford Democrat that reported May 24th, 1861 that a live whale passed on over the Grand Trunk on Tuesday night May 21st, 1861. A tank filled with salt water, gave him comfortable quarters. The whale is going to the Aquarial Gardens, Boston. A week later the paper, reported that the whale that passed down over the railroad belongs to the species called the Gray Beluga, according to Professor Louis Agassiz, a small species rarely exceeding twenty feet. Mr. Davis found that the same newspaper reported on August 16th, 1861, that two more whales passed down the railroad last Thursday, on August 8th, destined for the Aquarial gardens in Boston, where they are now sporting. They were transported in large tanks, on flatcars, and were transported without difficulty; several persons obtained a sight of the monsters, as they were supplied with fresh (salted) water at South Paris, Maine.

At each station the whale was well watered, as if it had been a locomotive. The aqueous attentions were quite necessary during the sixty-hour journey. All along the route the whale was the object of great curiosity. It reached the huge tank at the Aquarial Gardens where it swam at once.

In 1862, the Boston Aquarial and Zoological Gardens were purchased by P. T. Barnum. During this time the "whale attraction" was pulling a girl in a boat, in the big tank. The

whale was fastened with reins and a collar to pull the little boat. The whale died in 1869 and its skeleton was donated to The Louis Agassz Museum of Comparative Zoology on the grounds of Harvard University in Cambridge. It appears that it is still there

There is never mention about the other whales that travelled over the Grand Trunk Route from the St Lawrence to Portland in August 1861.

*Internet*

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## The Giraffe Train

By Carl Riff

One of the most unusual transportation shipments of all time had to be the shipment of two giraffes from Boston to Detroit. A Detroit auto dealer, Aaron De Roy, had purchased two giraffes in Germany and he wanted to present these unique creatures to the Detroit Zoological Park.

They were shipped to North America by a German steamship, and landed at Boston July 16th, 1929 where they were put in quarantine for two weeks.

Plans were made for the giraffes to travel over the Boston and Maine Railroad, to the NYC, then to move them west over the NYC-Michigan Central railroads through Canada.

A number of complications were quickly apparently: how to get them through low bridges and the Detroit River tunnel. Special cages with collapsible tops were built on flatcars used in the past to ship cannons.

On July 30th, the giraffes made a safe passage through Canada. The train on which the giraffes were handled was S.D.-3, one of the fast westbound symbol trains, which made a daily trip between Bridgeburg and Windsor.

The animals, with 27-foot long necks, were forced to duck their heads when passing under all the overhead bridges. An attendant travelled with the giraffes, and with a rope tied around their necks, pulled their heads down at the bridges. They passed through St Thomas at 2:10 in the morning. After a tedious trip through the tunnel to Detroit, they were allowed to stretch their necks and get back to normal.

One of the crewmembers told the story that as the train passed over some of the bridges en route that the animals stretched their necks over the cars and endeavored to take a drink out of the creeks.

*St. Thomas Time Journal*

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To the Editor:

Owing to a bureaucratic mistake I neglected to mention the generous ongoing donations of Mr. Preston S. Johnson in the 2013 Report of the Archives Committee that appeared as an insert to the May-June 2014 Newsletter.

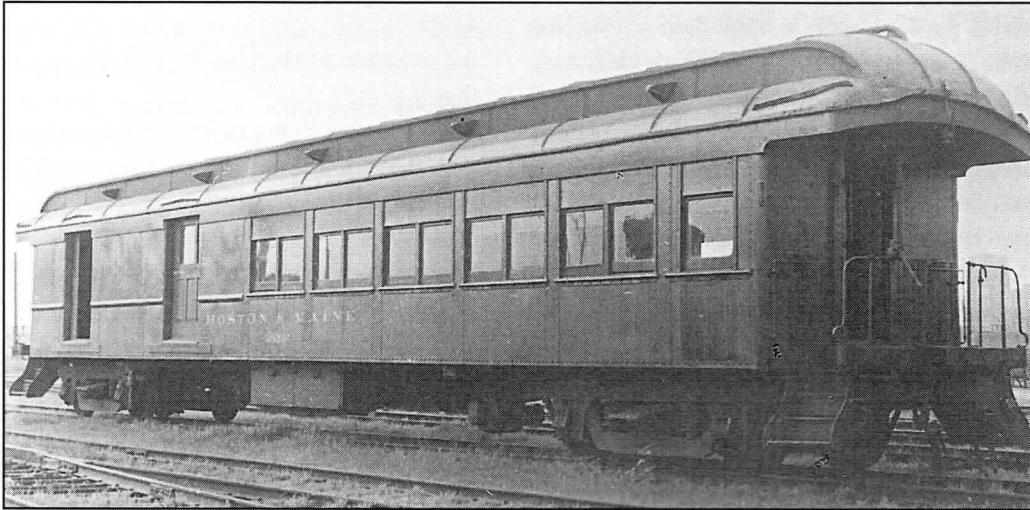
Sincere thanks to Mr. Johnson for his valuable contributions to our collection.

*Rick Nowell, Archives Chairman*

## B&M's ex-DL&W Steel Coaches Turned Combines

(By COL Ret. Tom E. Thompson)

Photo #1



By 1951, the B&M was very serious about replacing more of its wooden-bodied passenger equipment. The baggage-smokers used in suburban service still included many wooden-bodied, SUF combines; some had a single baggage door per side and others had two baggage doors per side. These wooden-bodied cars were well worn. So, a plan was developed to take 12 of the B&M #900-925 series, ex-D&LW, all-steel, open platform coaches and convert them to baggage-smokers. Some would be built with two baggage doors per side and some with one, as found on the wooden-bodied cars they would replace. The cars selected were all from the group that had been originally built in 1914, which featured a more modern clerestory roof than those built in 1911.

The Concord Car Shops did the work, producing B&M combines #3625 through 3636. Cars #3625-3633 (Photo 1, B&M #3626) were baggage-smokers seating 42 passengers and having a baggage section with two, 4 ft. wide, baggage doors per side. Cars #3634-3636 (Photo 2, B&M #3634) had

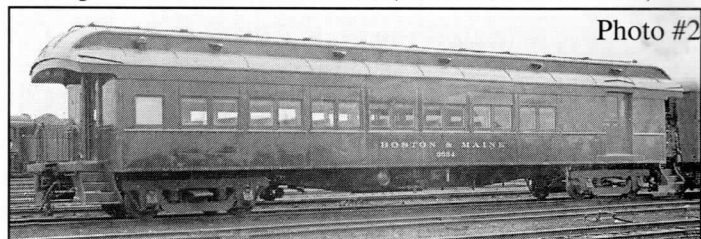


Photo #2

seating for 58 passengers and a single, 4 ft. wide, baggage door per side. These cars were constructed during the period November 1951 through April 1952. Each baggage door had a strange-looking window combination of one small and one large window pane placed above the conventional 3 wooden-panels common to such doors; the large window pane was designed to be an emergency escape exit.

With management satisfied with the first 12 combines, and yet in need of more all-steel, baggage-smokers for suburban service, B&M's Concord Shops took 5 more ex-DL&W all-

steel coaches and converted them to B&M #3637 through 3641 (Photo 3, B&M #3638). This time the cars came from the older group, originally built in 1911. These were converted to combines during the period March – June 1953.



Photo #3

They seated 54 passengers and had a single baggage door per side. They retained their diamond-shaped window on the passenger section end and their older style clerestory roof. However, they did use a newer, ply-metal, baggage door with a large single window. These features made them visually different from the first 12 cars converted.

All of these cars were painted maroon with black roof and underbody, and decorated with "Boston & Maine" and the road number in imitation gold paint, placed on the car side below the windows. Each was outfitted with both head-end and axle generator electric lighting, and a single dry hopper toilet, but still no washing facilities.

These cars did not last very long in service, being replaced with Budd RDCs ordered in 1954. Per B&M Passenger Trains Consist Book, dated April 24, 1955, cars in series #3625-3641 were to be stored for dismantling. Records show that all 17 combines were taken "Out of Investment" (B&M's accounting term for retired) in October 1955. Nine of the cars were destroyed at B&M's Billerica Shops between June and September 1956. Seven others were sold to Schiavone for scrap in September 1956. But, B&M #3633 survived, being

sold by the B&M to Edaville Railroad (owned by Nelson Blount), South Carver, MA in July 1956. In later years at Edaville, the combine was repainted green, lettered "Boston & Maine" in white on the letter board above the windows and numbered "60" below the windows. The car was disposed of sometime after Edaville closed in 1991.

Special thanks to Roger Robar, Rick Nowell (B&MRRHS Archives), and Wayne Hills for help with the photos, and to Roger Hinman for his fine research efforts.

Photo Credits:

Photo 1: B&M #3626, Collection of Roger Robar

Photo 2: B&M #3634, B&MRRHS Archives

Photo 3: B&M #3638, Collection of Roger Robar

### Correction

Alden Dreyer corrects the number of years he's been routing trains around the B&M system. In the May-June '14 Newsletter Alden wrote *Some 39 years ago.....* Alden says should have read 49 years ago.

### Tour Of The Former B&M Ashuelot Branch

By Wayne Gagnon

Brad Blodget, author of Marium Foster's "Boston and Maine" book, conducted a combination van /walking tour of the old B&M Ashuelot Branch southward from Keene, NH on April 27. The Historical Society of Cheshire County organized the trip where Brad continues to do further research about B&M in the Monadnock mountain region of New Hampshire using their archives.

Sites visited included former Keene, NH yards, Swanzey, West Swanzey, Westport, Winchester, (former large tannery site), Ashuelot, Hinsdale (former large paper manufacturing mill) and Dole Junction (former cannery site) down to the former B&M/CV connection at Brattleboro, Vermont. Mileage/Tour dialogue centered along the 21.75 branch miles and existing and former station sites (Hinsdale station still exists and is private residence now), sidings, industries, and products carried by former passenger and freight trains that meandered along the Ashuelot River. After B&M put line up for abandonment, Green Mountain Railroad ran freight service for several years before closure of tannery and paper mill ended line movements. All, including writer, enjoyed trip.

### Additional B&M Pieces On Display

Thanks To Scott Whitney.

S-5 #864 at Mad River & Nickle Plate museum.

Gas electric #? at the St. Louis RR museum.

#6000 at Lincoln, NH.

RDC-2, #6211 at Bedford, MA

### Lease Engines Being Tested On East Deerfield Hump

On April 15th, train 206 delivered GATX 5000 (ex-Port of Montreal Railway) and 5001 (ex-KCS, nee-C&NW) to East Deerfield MA for testing on the East Deerfield hump job.

Submitted by *Jack Armstrong, Railpace*

### Conn River Qualifying Crew Runs

Bellows Fall- White River Junction crew qualifying runs have been ongoing in anticipation of the regular White River Jct. service originally scheduled to have started last fall. PAS crews will soon be handling Vermont Rail System traffic between Bellows Falls and White River Jct., well as switching a few more customers along the way.

Submitted by *Jack Armstrong, Railpace*

### Dailey Foundation Announces Rail Preservation Grants

New England Steam Corp., Winterport, Maine  
Was granted \$2000.

New England Steam Corp. was formed in 2012 to purchase, relocate, rebuild, and care for Maine Central Pacific-type steam locomotive No. 470. Funds will be used to transport the locomotive to its restoration site via a flat bed truck.

### When Is a Train Crew Not a Train Crew?

By William L. Rohde

When they gave Engineer A.B. Sweet forty-five minutes' notice to deadhead from Springfield to Greenfield, Mass. on train 7051, he drank his coffee on the fly and grumbled good naturedly.

"Another day, another dollar, another train, another trip."

He didn't know it would be an extra that he wouldn't mind running every day...a train with half-a-hundred assistants and pretty girls in the cab, the freedom to stop anywhere he choose, and roast turkey for lunch in a little New Hampshire town.

Little K-7 Consolidation number 2400 waved her white flags in the morning breeze and snorted cheerfully, as he took her from the East Deerfield engine house to couple onto a train consisting of a Reading gondola, Boston & Maine coach with green plush seats, and a caboose. All the equipment had been cleaned and iced-and-watered. He shot the air through it at exactly 8:55 a.m.

Conductor "Butch" Clough picked up his orders at WX tower.

"19 Order No. 232. To C. & E. eng. 2400.

"Eng. 2400 run extra Greenfield to Keene and need not protect against following extras between Dole Jct. and Keene.

(signed) George W. Blake, Superintendent."

The skipper settled himself in the buggy, noting the 112 pounds passenger air...on the gage. Then he read Transportation Notice Number 2550, which advised twenty-three officials and employees of the B&M that they were to take good care of the members of the New England Association of Model Railroaders, who would ride their special on the Ashuelot branch for the day.

Butch Clough is a stocky, cheerful conductor who carries his responsibility behind a ready smile of welcome. When Trainmaster Austin Maloy and Passenger Agent W.P. Currier boarded the train at Greenfield, he greeted them as valued passengers and rechecked his orders as the K-7 sped from the automatic block territory of the B&M's Conn River line to the train-order controlled Ashuelot branch.

This stretch of track runs for twenty-two miles straight northeast across the lower part of New Hampshire. It follows a rocky, tumbling stream between rolling green hills that are the beginning of the White Mountains. Paper mills are dotted along the line, and enough express and passenger traffic is carried to warrant two round trips a day by gas-electric buggies, often with one coach, and occasionally a steam substitute. Our special rumbled through the hills to Winchester, the main stop before the branch reaches the Cheshire (Fitchburg) Division at Keen, N.H. At Winchester the fun began.

The little gray station...agent on duty weekdays only...was jammed with more people than had patronized it at one time in a decade. Cars were parked everywhere, and a hundred-odd railfans swarmed over the little train as soon as it stopped.

"Oh boy oh boy oh boy," was all Fireman Findley could say. Findley is a husky young tallowpot with black hair and white teeth that are usually shining in a broad grin. He had been waving at every girl who stood at the crossings and farmhouses, and when he saw those SLACKS...

Cameras clicked and flashbulbs popped as New England Model Railroaders took pictures of themselves and the train. By now it was impossible to find the train crew, because there were fifty men on the train dressed exactly like trainmen and engine crew. The engine cab was jammed, and grinning fans were draped on the tender, the pilot, and along the boiler. Latecomers climbed up and sat on the coal, ready to go.

Howard T. Judd of Winchester, N.H., general-secretary of the New England Modelers, seemed to be the new skipper. When he gave a perfect rulebook highball, the special started for Keene. Findley stopped firing right there. All he had to do was referee the fights among the railfans as to whose turn it was to use the scoop. A little blond in tan slacks seemed to get a lot of the decisions.

Amateur trainmen scampered back and forth through the coach and caboose, roaring station stops and hoping for hotboxes. A breath wind gave a group an excuse to build the fire in the caboose stove, and all the while cameras clicked and clicked before many miles the Consolidated was eased to a stop. The caboose riders were demanding a chance to run the engine, so a few dozen enthusiasts swapped ends and the extra turned on the wye at Keene and backed into the station.

A southbound freight...a Bellows Falls to Winchester drag...called for more pictures, but the crows was eager for more railroading. Engineer Sweet scraped enough fans off the running boards to see ahead for a moment and took her out of town back down the branch, but he didn't get far.

"Look," roars went up, "a hobo!"

There he was, one forlorn old non-paying passenger cooking mulligan in a tin can. He had a nice little jungle beside a stream, about twenty feet below the tracks. S-s-s-ing went the air and he looked up with horror at the charging horde. More flashbulbs spat minute lighting, and ribald comments filled the air.

The man ran toward a culvert from which a tiny spring burbled, carrying a larger can which must have contained something precious. He disappeared into it and stayed there.

"Here's a sandwich. C'mon out!"

"Hey. Pose for me at the fire."

"Please, be a nice man and come out." (From the slacks set.)

"We've got a quart out here."

But none of their offers were persuasive enough to lure this free soul out of hiding. He wouldn't budge.

After awhile the gang gave up and climbed back on their train. Weary Willy stayed in the culvert. He stayed in until the train was completely out of sight.

A Jersey cow was next. She raced the train and crossed in front of the engine amid roars of encouragement. It was almost a case of fresh meat.

At Winchester a stop was made for lunch. Most of the riders had huge lunch baskets, so they wouldn't have to leave the train even to eat. The train crew and officials, however, had roast turkey at the village restaurant.

After lunch many went up to Mr. Judd's large, comfortable farmhouse overlooking the Winchester station to inspect the Sunny Valley Railroad which occupies the entire attic and overflows onto the second floor. Judd's residence is dotted with railroaders; then, it looked like the Grand Central station except for the huge kitchen, where Mrs. Judd plied all visitors with hot biscuits and REAL butter.

Later on, the gas-electric...train 7302...came about to meet fan extra 2400 at Winchester. Again the cameras clicked, admirers threatened to mob it, and she left town to the racket of exploding torpedoes. Someone had found a box of them in the buggy and plastered the rails.

Once again the small B&M Consolidation waved her white flags in the breeze as she got underway, homeward bound with twenty-three miles of steel ahead. Gray dusk was falling when the last hobbyist was regretfully pried loose from the train at Greenfield. Then Sweet and Findley settled down for a fast run to East Deerfield on the rough-riding deck of the proud K-7.

"Nice people," said Engineer Sweet. "Think they had a good time... I'll bet that model railroad cost a lot of money... Some layout that fellow had." Sweet suddenly realized no one was listening.

Findley closed the butterfly doors of the firebox and grinned his broadest.

"Say," he began, "did you see that blond..."

*Railroad Magazine, December, 1946 submitted by Steve Vallee*



Nick Palazini photo