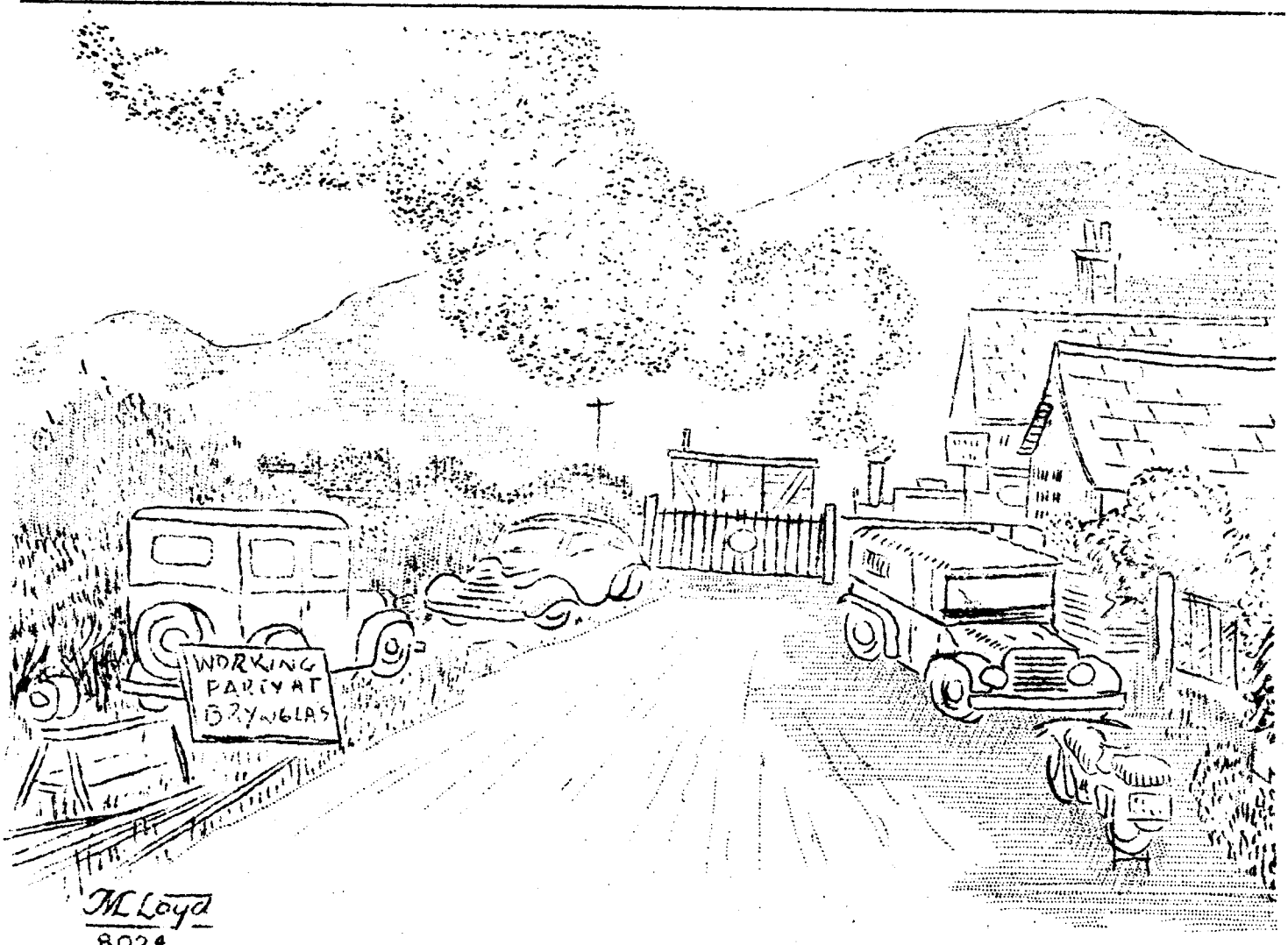
TAL-Y-LLYN NEWS

THE JOURNAL OF THE
TALYLLYN RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Nº 3
MARCH, 1954

President—
The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Northesk

Secretary—
P. B. Whitehouse,
344, Lordswood Road,
Harborne. Birmingham, 17
Tel.: Bearwood 2791



SUNDAY MORNING AT PENDRE.

TALYLLYN LOCOMOTIVE PRACTICE & PERFORMANCE

by J.B.Snell

UNLIKE the great Cecil J., from whose title I have cribbed, I shall not be concerned hereinafter with describing remarkable bursts of speed, since, for a number of reasons which unfortunately remain obvious, none occurs. Except on a very few stretches of well relaid track where speed under favourable circumstances could rise to anything up to 25 mph, there is no chance of fast running. In practice speed very rarely much exceeds 12 mph and when a train does reach 15 mph, the legal maximum, it really is going fast and the impression the passengers get is of a much greater speed. What I am concerned with here is a description of the locomotives from the point of view of the people on the footplate, since little has been written on this subject.

Dealing with the locomotives in numerical order, we come first of all to "Tal-y-llyn." This locomotive has been out of service since 1946, and is as near to being worn out as a steam locomotive can ever be. Perhaps the most serious of her ailments could be described as 'ulcers on the firebox.' This disease has progressed to such a degree that it is now reasonably certain that any attempt to raise steam would raise a number of other things as well, including the person rash enough to try. It is therefore fairly easy to see why she is no longer used.

"Dolgoch," built in 1866, is scarcely less ancient than her sister, but because she had a less comfortable cab and caused more wear on the track she was less popular, and therefore is not yet completely worn out and is still in service. She is unique, too, in that she is substantially the same locomotive as when she was built - even "Tal-y-llyn" has a new frame - and beyond the addition of a cab and the alteration of a few small fittings she is unchanged. The firebox is probably her second but the boiler is definitely the original, which is phenomenal. She is still capable of hard work.

From the engineman's point of view "Dolgoch" has some good and some bad points. For sheer ability to

shift a load she is probably the most powerful engine on the line, and having plenty of adhesion weight she rarely gives much trouble with slipping. On an uneven grass covered track in a land where rain is not unknown this can be a great problem. In fact, on one occasion last year she had to pull not only a heavy train of six coaches and two vans, but also "Edward Thomas," which had been smitten with a violent attack of indigestion, and she accomplished this feat rather noisily but without trouble. But with her great age she has whims which must be humoured. One of these is chronic steaming trouble, which we hope will be cured by a new smokebox, but which has often been a cause of delay and exasperation. Properly handled, she gives no trouble on this account and indeed sometimes steams very well indeed, but she takes a malicious delight in taking advantage of every slight error in putting on more coal, or leaving the injector on five seconds too long; she can be very horrid to you when she wants to be. Although in many ways still a powerful and reliable machine, like the old grey mare 'she ain't what she used to be," needs more than her fair share of maintenance, attention and money, and is definitely too old for regular service. As soon as possible she will be taken out of it and used only for special occasions.

Number 3 is the ex-Corris locomotive "Sir Haydn," built in 1878 and rebuilt in 1900. This is a very competent engine indeed. I have only one grave complaint against her; I am six feet plus, and her cab was designed with nobody taller than 4'6" in mind. In 1878 this didn't matter, since all Welsh narrow-gauge locomotives were driven by a specially-bred race of pigmies. If you don't believe this look at any old photograph of a Corris or Festiniog engine and observe that the relative sizes of it and its driver are exactly the same as those of a main line locomotive and its driver. These pigmies are unfortunately now extinct. She also had one other disadvantage in her early days on the T.R., because she was apt to drop between the rails, but with the improvement in track maintenance and the abolition (we hope) of places where the gauge is more than 2'4" this trouble no longer occurs. These two points and also a certain difficulty of getting at the motion for repair and inspection really sum up all that can be criticised on her. Her pulling power is hardly less

than that of "Dolgoch" and, an extremely good steamer, she is better able to sustain the effort. Her adhesion weight is also great and slipping is reduced to a minimum. Also, since she has been turned to work cab-first up the grade, effective and reliable sanding can be provided by leaning out of the hole in the back sheet and sprinkling sand on the rail. As there are as yet no continuous brakes on the train her combination of the good adhesion of "Dolgoch" with the good brakes of "Edward Thomas" puts her in a class above either. Finally, she is by a noticeable margin the most economical on coal.

The fourth locomotive, "Edward Thomas," built in 1921, is really in a different class altogether. Unlike the others she was not designed for "main line" work, where long distances have to be covered at relatively high speeds, but is a standard Kerr Stuart contractor's design, built with quite different objects in view. The class was designed to pull fairly small loads over short distances at low speeds, and it was necessary to make everything as simple as possible so that maintenance could be both slight and unskilled. Hence the absence of such things as running plates and forced lubrication: the whole thing had to be built at a competitive price. Because low speeds were envisaged, small driving wheels were provided, and at the moderate speeds of the T.R. she has to run faster than she should and is therefore heavier on maintenance than she ought to be. This, of course, is offset to some extent by the simplicity of the design. She burns more coal than so relatively modern a locomotive should, although rather more economical, naturally, than "Dolgoch." Finally, although on paper this locomotive is the most powerful of the T.R. stock, in practice she is not able to handle without considerable loss of time trains which "Sir Haydn" or even "Dolgoch" would find quite within their power, and this in spite of being a good steamer. The reason is, of course, that being designed for light contractor's track she is very light in weight, and lacks adhesion. This has often led to troubles, not only in getting the train started, but in pulling it up the banks. As far as these troubles are concerned, Bulleid Pacifics are angels in comparison. On several trips "Edward Thomas" has taken as much as 2½ hours to cover the 6½ miles to Abergynolwyn, and this, with only

moderately heavy trains can hardly be considered good. However, under normal conditions this engine can be relied upon to deal competently with all but the heaviest trains, and is ideal for light winter work. Some time, when the railway is making so much money that it is having difficulty in finding things to spend it on, it would be a good idea to rebuild this locomotive as an 0-6-0 with slightly bigger wheels, a perfectly feasible mechanical proposition, and one which would dispose of her main disadvantages at a stroke.

From all this the reader will have gathered a pretty good idea of what lies behind a table of dimensions, which I have not given because I expect most members are familiar with it already. "Edward Thomas" and also probably "Douglas" are in a different class to the other two, with certain definite advantages but also equally definite disadvantages; ease of maintenance balanced against imperfect qualifications for the job. They do very well indeed in a task for which they were not built, but miracles must not be expected. "Sir Haydn" and "Dolgoch," however, are both built for "main line" work. Through sheer old age the latter is no longer an economic proposition - again one must not expect miracles. These two share the disadvantage of requiring fairly skilled maintenance, but on the other hand are more suited to the job of dealing with the heavy summer traffic. "Sir Haydn" will probably remain the best proposition for dealing with a really heavy typical summer train, and will pull it with less strain both on herself and on those on the footplate. But using her or "Dolgoch" on a light train or in winter is uneconomic too - like using a circular saw to peel a banana. So in a way comparisons, here as elsewhere, are odious.

SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Will members please note that in accordance with the resolution passed at the last Annual General Meeting the next of these meetings will be held more centrally than at Towyn. The Committee has decided that in this instance the venue will be Birmingham.

Also in accordance with a resolution passed at the last Annual General Meeting, the date is brought for-

ward to May. The next Annual General Meeting will, therefore, take place at the Imperial Hotel, Birmingham (Connaught Room), on Saturday, 8th May, 1954.

In accordance with Rule 17, nominations for the Committee must be in the hands of the Hon.Secretary by the 15th March, 1954. Any nomination must be properly proposed and seconded, and written agreement to serve if elected must be given by the candidate concerned. For the information of members, the Committee meets monthly, alternately in Birmingham and at a venue more suitable to N.W.Area and London Area members in turn. Committee members are expected to attend all meetings and in addition to serve on one of the Sub-committees in an active capacity.

Because of an extension of time of one month for certain delayed ballot papers, the result of the ballot on the venue of the A.G.M. is not known when going to press. This will be announced in the next issue of the "News."

- P.B.Whitehouse,
Hon. Secretary.

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THE "NEWS" We would apologize for the delay in delivery of the November "News" to some one hundred members; this was, however, caused by circumstances entirely outside our control, and necessitated a reprint edition.

Also, we are anxious to get the address sheets as accurate as possible, so if the name and address on your envelope is in any way inaccurate or incomplete, or your status is incorrect (ie. Title, Mrs., Miss, Esq.), will you please notify Mr.David Baxter, "Aucklands," Grey Road, Altrincham, Cheshire.

Two errors in No.2 are recorded with regret; the date of the N.W.Area New Year Social and Working Party was incorrectly given as 5th January, and on page 15, in the item about Bill Oliver, "affect" should, of course, be "effect." This alliterative error was so well concealed by its own alliteration that it was not spotted until the reprint edition was nearly finished, and apparently not at all by readers!

- The Editors.

PUBLICITY

PAST The Calendars have gone. Such was the demand (encouraged by references in a number of railway periodicals that a further 250 had to be printed and now only two are left, both damaged, plus one odd January/February sheet, someone apparently having agreed to start the year in March.

PRESENT With the greatly improved appearance of the new type photo-cards, the sepia cards are not in such demand and, as we have a fair stock of each, from No.3 to No.10 inclusive, it has been decided to clear these at 2d each. Photo-cards Nos.20 & 21 are plentiful at 6d each.

FUTURE Proofs of four new photo-cards have been approved by the Committee and will now be printed off. They will be on sale towards the end of March, at 6d each. One card shows a train headed by No.4, approaching Rhydyronen, the same view as the Sept/Oct sheet in the calendar. The other three are new scenes, No.4 on a train at the Wharf, No.2 on a train at Dolgoch, and No.3 on a train about to leave Abergynolwyn. The series of photo-cards will be enlarged further before the summer season commences.

Film strip No.2 is now in hand and will be somewhat longer than No.1 as it will include station layouts as well as a series of photographs showing work done by the Society in improving the line.

Posters for display at Main-line stations will be produced again and it is hoped to include scenes on the line, which will make the posters more attractive. The possibility of similar but smaller posters, for display at Hotels, etc., is being explored, also the production of poster-stamps for attaching to letters.

The new edition of the Guide will not be published before Whitsuntide, so there is still time to sell the 200 or so on hand, 1953 edition, price 1/- plus postage.

Numerous enquiries are coming along for special trains and it looks as if there will be one every Saturday in May and at least one Friday. The possibility of running an advertised excursion from the Midlands, to include trips on the Fairbourne and Talyllyn Railways, is being discussed with British Railways. It has been suggested that this should be headed by one of the few

remaining locomotives of the Cambrian Railways, as a further inducement to enthusiasts. If this can be arranged, full details will be circulated.

Hon.Publicity Officer: Mr.R.K.Cope, "Brynglas," Beckman Road, Pedmore, Stourbridge, Worcs.

* * *

FILM ==== A second 16mm silent film dealing with the Railway, produced by John Snell, is available for Society and other meetings. It contains shots of the work of rehabilitating the railway, of trains, and of every locomotive in service, including the petrol tractor ("Douglas" excluded). Anybody desiring to show this film is requested to write to J.B.Snell, Balliol College, Oxford, for further details.

* * *

Members will be pleased to hear that profits on Xmas Cards, etc, advertised in and with the November "News" amount to something over £100.

* * *

Pressure of business has unfortunately compelled Mr.Harvey Gray to give up Exhibition organization, and this work has now been taken on by Mr.D.Luscombe and Mr.D.Woodhouse. All matters concerning Society participation in Exhibitions, etc., should now be referred to Mr.David Woodhouse, 17, South Road, Smethwick, 41, Staffs.

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FROM THE HON.TREASURER May I remind members who have not already renewed their subscriptions that these fall due on the 1st.February? Remittances should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Mr.Eric Lees, 143, Balden Road, Birmingham, 32. If you have already paid, or pay by Banker's Order, please ignore this notice. If you normally pay your subscription to Mr.V.Boyd-Carpenter please continue to do so, address: The Ridge, Eaton Hill, Baslow, Derbyshire.

As we are faced with very heavy expenditure in the forthcoming season, both by way of permanent way renewal and provision of additional rolling stock, may I

urge all Members to subscribe as generously as possible so that the satisfactory results so far achieved can be maintained and improved upon.

I know that we can count upon your support.

P.J.Garland,
Hon.Treasurer.

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ENGINEERING NEWS

Locomotives A scheme to send No.1 "Talyllyn" to London for exhibition purposes at Easter with the co-operation of the Model Railway Club, Ltd., has most unfortunately had to be abandoned because of the cost of transport.

The condition generally of No.2 "Dolgoch" is causing grave concern, and after careful consideration and as the result of an outstandingly generous offer from three of our members, it has been decided to have this locomotive sent to the Midlands for a very thorough overhaul. Until "Dolgoch" has been stripped and properly examined it is impossible to say how long repairs will take, but she is expected to be out of service for the whole of the 1954 season.

No.3 "Sir Haydn" and No.4 "Edward Thomas" are awaiting minor repairs and replacements, mainly connected with springs and suspension generally.

No.6 "Douglas" is in process of being re-tubed; the work is proceeding satisfactorily. When this locomotive is delivered at Towyn it is proposed that the road vehicle shall take "Dolgoch" to the Midlands for repair, on its return journey.

Coaching Stock A start has been made on the repainting of the Talyllyn coaches. Other work in hand includes new couplings, new axlebox covers and the provision of Guard communication. Modifications are being made to the two Penrhyn coaches, 7 & 8.

The construction of two new underframes is in hand.

Work is also proceeding on the Corris Van, and new wheels and axles, new buffers, and new couplings are being provided.

(over)

ENGINEERING NEWS (Cont'd)

Wagons The first two out of six new wagon underframes to be constructed by the North West Area are complete, and work is proceeding with others.

In the meantime, considerable repairs are being carried out to existing wagons at Pendre by various members.

Permanent Way Considerable progress has been made with re-laying. 364 Yards between Rhydyronen and Brynglas, and 250 Yards between Hendy Bridge and Fach Goch, have been relaid. Ballasting is complete from Quarry Siding ("Aberdovey Junction") to the sharp curve east of Dolgoch, and also from Wharf to Pendre. A vast amount of ballasting remains to be done, however, so that the re-laid portions of the track do not deteriorate.

A small quantity of second-hand rail has been acquired and this is being made up into points, which are urgently required at Brynglas, Rhydyronen and the Carriage Shed road at Pendre.

Further supplies of rail are very urgently needed.

Civil Engineering Plans are in hand to provide extra covered carriage accommodation at Pendre, and a member has very kindly offered to supply material for this work.

Communications Several members are undertaking the extension of the telephone system beyond Brynglas. It is hoped eventually to have telephone communication right up to Abergynolwyn.

Miscellaneous A new specially-constructed inspection plug spanner is being made by a member. To judge from experiences with No.4 last year, some specially-constructed bods may also be required!

WANTED A small 5-ton Hydraulic Jack; an extending ladder; Steel tubes or wooden poles suitable for use as telegraph poles; someone to tackle the repair and reglazing of Pendre works roof; someone to undertake skilled repair of the leatherwork of the forge bellows, which leak badly.

+ + +

London Area Annual Meeting Fifty four members gathered at the Railway Clearing House on 2nd December to hear of Area activities since last year, to have a "current account" of the Railway and Society from Mr.Garland, and to make plans for the future. A Committee was elected (names below) and the meeting closed with the showing of a new film taken by John Snell.

* * *

Easter Working Party It is hoped that there will be a party of members going to work at Towyn over the Easter Holidays, and to deal with arrangements Mr.John Slater has been appointed Leader. Will all members in the Area who hope to go to Towyn over Easter please write to Mr.J.N.Slater, 14, Castello Avenue, Putney, S.W.15, without delay, saying what dates they will be going and whether by rail or road. If the latter, please state whether providing or wanting transport. If numbers permit, party rate tickets will be obtained for the rail journey. Please advise Mr.Slater as soon as possible so that he can get on with making the necessary arrangements. When writing, please mention whether you intend to visit Towyn later as well, either for a week or week-end.

* * *

Transport Bureau Attention is again drawn to the existence of this service to members. All those going to Towyn by road at any time are asked to notify Mr.Eisele, of 114, Watford Rd, Wembley, Middlesex, (Phone: Arnold 2885) of the number of passengers they can take, and other details. Mr.Eisele will send a form for particulars, if requested. Similarly, would-be passengers should contact Mr.Eisele and let him know their requirements. It is emphasised that all arrangements between drivers and passengers must be mutual and personal.

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(Cont'd over)

A.G.M., Birmingham 8th May, 1954. If you will be attending this meeting, please advise the Area Secretary so that party rate tickets may be obtained. Travel details will be notified later to all interested.

* * *

Model Railway Club Exhibition Volunteers are wanted for day-time stewarding during this exhibition, which will be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, from 20th to 24th April, inclusive. • Can you help, please? If so, apply to Area Secretary (address below).

* * *

Area Spring Reunion Outline programme for this Reunion, which will be held on 27th March, is: 3 pm, Meeting. 4.30 pm, Tea (2/-). 5 pm, Discussion. 6.15 pm, Dinner (from 8/6). 7.30 pm, Film show, colour transparencies, etc. Please advise the Secretary if Tea and Dinner are wanted, so that the Hotel can be warned of numbers. Place: Kingsley Hotel, Bloomsbury Way, London, W.C.1.

* * *

Diesel Car Trip to Towyn Last year's trip will probably be repeated for the last day of the season, 25th September, maybe travelling via Bala and Dolgelley, and it is thought that many members in the Birmingham Area might like to join in. If so, please let the London Area Sec. have your name and address so that he may keep you in touch with plans as they mature with British Railways.

* * *

Area Committee . Chairman: Mr.J.C.Flemons, Eastcote. Messrs.Davis, (Streatham), Eisele, (Wembley), Lake (Stamford Hill), Middleton (Harringay), Slater (Putney), Tonkyn (Purley), and Messrs.Wilkes (Berkhamsted) and Broad (Harlesden), Co-opted.

Secretary: Mr.T.W.Robertson, 23, Portway, Ewell, Surrey. (Phone: Ewell 1417 - evenings).

During the winter months the new quarry siding has been completed and the loading stage extended. The track between Quarry Siding Halt and Dolgoch has been ballasted, pulled into line and packed. The curves have been re-aligned. One or two members were nearly written off the membership strength when they caused a landslide in the quarry. Alan Chorlton did a reversed swallow dive from the loading stage into a ballast wagon, but the bruise has now gone.

* * *

A small - but most select - party saw the New Year in at Dolgoch. Track work included re-laying between Bryn-glas and Rhydyronen. Other members broke down metal fittings off old wagons at Pendre. New Year's Day was given over to a walk up the old mineral extension and the unexpected discovery of a Fox Hunt taking place in Bryn Eglwys Quarry. John Sykes was rather near a discharge of buck-shot and all participants were lucky to escape from the Hunt unscathed (as, apparently, did the Fox). It will be gathered that the Modus operandi of the chase differs from English traditional form.

* * *

Timber for wagon underframes was delivered during January and as these notes go to press three frames have been completed. Erection and assembly are proceeding, and a total of six will be ready in due course.

When this work is complete, other outlets for domestic work will be found.

* * *

The Area Reunion was, by general consent, the best yet. Headed by our President, somewhat over one hundred members and friends filled the Memorial Hall, Albert Square, Manchester, with laughter and good humour.

Amongst those present were the General Manager, the Chairman of the Engineering Section, and the Area Committee.

After seeing themselves in uncompromising attitudes at work on the track the members were quite resigned to further evidence of the year's work in the form of John Snell's film, followed by that of Pat Whitehouse.

In recognition of their services, two lady members,

Mrs.G.Naylor and Mrs.J.Boyd, received gifts presented on behalf of the Area members.

A collection for Area Funds reached a record total of £17.10.0d, and the Reunion broke up after an informal appeal from the President to "Carry on with the good work, North West!"

* * *

Week-end working party dates are: March 20-21, Easter, May 15-16.

Applications for Transport to:
David Baxter,
"Aucklands" Grey Road,
Altrincham, Cheshire. (Alt.1039).

* * *

Area Representative: James I.C.Boyd, 12 Alcester Rd., Brooklands, Sale, Cheshire.

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RAIL

It may not be generally realised what a very severe task lies ahead to put our permanent way into a thoroughly good condition. Members who have visited Towyn recently will have noted with satisfaction the improvements which have been effected by re-laying various sections on new sleepers, together with the requisite ballasting and packing to ensure an even road.

Removal of the rails to carry out this operation has brought home very forcibly the reminder that the effective life of the rails themselves must now be very short, and before long considerable replacement will be necessary to maintain the improvement which is so vital to the wellbeing of our Railway.

It is also, probably, not generally realised that a ton of rail of 40 lbs to the yard section is sufficient for only 28 yards of single track, and, furthermore, that recent quotations for second-hand rail have been in the region of £30 a ton, so that, in simple figures, it will cost at least £1 a yard to re-lay the Line.

Members can render valuable assistance in this direction by (a) locating sources of supply of 40-lb flat-bottomed rail, and (b) making donations towards the cost of such, as and when supplies become available. It is hoped that members will make every effort to meet the exigency before the situation becomes critical.

* * *

*** Bearing in mind the track mileage of the T.R., converting to yards

$7\frac{3}{4} \times 1760 = 13,640$

Knock off a bit for sections in reasonably good condition, @ £1 a yard this leaves, say,

£12,000

!

-Ed

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ACCOMMODATION LISTS Copies of Instructions to Volunteer Workers and Lists of suitable accommodation at Towyn can be obtained on request from

Mr.R.W.Tippetts,
255, Warwick Road,
Olton, Birmingham, 27.

S.A.E., please!

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PERSONAL POINT Mr."Charlie" Uren, whose work on the installation of the "block telegraph" is well known (and who nearly broke the writer's back, amongst others, with his wire-laying device!) will be acting as Superintendent at Pendre this year.

His imperturbable manner and cheerful appraisal of difficulties should help considerably in disposing of our inevitable emergencies.

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CLOSING DATE for material for "News" No.4 will be 31st May, 1954.

And don't be afraid to let us know if you think the "News" can be improved in any way. It's your magazine, not ours.

- R.W.I.

SOCIETY DIARY

1st March	Emmanuel Church Literary Society, East Dulwich. (Talk).
11 March	Hitchin Society of Model Engineers (Talk).
11 March	Youth Hostels Assoc., (E.Worcs.Sub-group), Village Hall, Alvechurch, 7.30 pm. Film Show & Talk by O.H.Prosser. Suitable train from B'ham, (New St.), Selly Oak, Northfield, and other Redditch line stations. Special cheap day ("R.D.A") return tickets at less than bus rates to and from all points on this line.
16 March	Reading Society of Model & Experimental Engineers. (Talk).
27 March	London Area Spring Reunion, Kingsley Hotel, Bloomsbury Way, W.C.1. (See Area Notes).
10 April	Tramway & Light Railway Society, London, (Talk).
20-24 * April	Model Railway Club Exhibition, Central Hall, Westminster. T.R.P.S.Stand. Stewards wanted during daytime; please contact Area Secretary (see Area Notes).
28 April	Harrow & Wembley Society of Model Engineers, (Talk).

* Easter Week-end. First London Area Working Party to Towyn. Volunteers contact Mr.Slater (see Area Notes).

N.W.Area Working Parties March 20-21, Easter, May 15-16. Applications for transport to David Baxter, "Aucklands" Grey Road, Altrincham. (Alt.1039)

Annual General Meeting, 8th May, at Birmingham (see Secretary's Announcements, p.6).

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CORRECTION On Page 2 of the Report of the Directors of the Talyllyn Railway Company (Appendix "A"), para.2, the wording re Mr.Maxwell's period at Towyn should read "....but this arrangement did not prove entirely satisfactory." The Hon.Secretary wishes to point out that this referred to the administrative arrangements and not, of course, to Mr.Maxwell.

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