



# *Turntable* TIMES

The Official Newsletter of the  
Roanoke Chapter, National  
Railway Historical Society, Inc.

**Volume 35, Number 12**  
**December 2003**



*Happy Holidays from the Turntable Times Staff!*



# Turntable TIMES

**Volume 35, Number 12  
December 2004**

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## **SMALL RAILS**

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Turntable Times is published monthly as the newsletter of the Roanoke Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, Inc. Opinions and points of view expressed herein are those of the staff members of the Turntable Times and not necessarily reflect those of the members, officers or directors of the Chapter.

## *Meeting Notice*

The Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will hold its next regular meeting on Thursday, January 15, 2003 at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke. We will not have a regular December meeting, but our holiday gathering see the information on the next page.

## *From The Head End*

### **Cards and Flowers**

If you know of a Chapter Member who is sick, lost a loved one or has a new birth in the family, please contact Bonnie Molinary. Bonnie is responsible for Chapter cards and flowers and can be reached at 362-0273.

### **Deadline for Turntable Times**

The deadline for the next issue of Turntable Times is Tuesday, December 18, 2003. Please send all articles, information and exchange newsletters to: Kenney Kirkman, Editor, Turntable Times, 590 Murphy Road, Collinsville, Va. 24078-2128.

### **Material for Turntable Times**

We are always in need of articles, photos or news items for the Turntable Times. Due to copyright restrictions, we cannot reprint articles from most newspapers; a condensed rewritten article crediting the source, however, is acceptable.

We love having articles of news, of a historical nature, the staff will be glad to assist in finding information or illustrations if you do not have any available.

### **Cover Photo**

You can be sure that exhaust was barking in the cold air as Y6b No. 2187 was blasting away from Christiansburg this wintry day about 1956. The glory of steam is depicted well here, and it was thought to be glamorous, but the plain and simple truth is it was cold and dirty job, even the photographer John Krause should be recognized for his effort to record the scene in the frigid weather.

## **Holiday Gathering**

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by Bonnie Molinary

Bring your family and join us once again this year for an evening of food and fun at our regular meeting location at the First Presbyterian Church on the corner of McClanahan and Crystal Spring Avenue in Roanoke on our regular meeting night, Thursday, December 18, beginning at 7:00 pm. You can enjoy a wide variety of finger foods, desserts and beverages. Also, for the first time, there will be many fun activities for children of all ages.

There will be plenty of time to socialize with no business to be conducted except for the installation of officers and directors for 2004. Come and enjoy! For details and/or to volunteer to help, contact Bonnie Molinary, Kathy Overholser or Wanda Troutman.

## **Membership Renewal**

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Membership Chairperson Lawanda Ely has gotten a number of renewals back in, is yours among them? Please send your renewal in as quickly as possible, as National has set December 31st as the cut off date for renewals!

## **Meeting Cancellation Policy**

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Since it's that time of year, as a reminder we have the following policy regarding inclement weather.

The meeting will be considered cancelled if any of the following conditions are met: Roanoke City Schools are closed on the day of or for the day after the meeting, or Virginia Western night classes are cancelled for the night of a meeting.

## **Mixed Freight - December**

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by Mr. Robin R. Shavers

Last month I reported that CSX had nixed plans to stop running empty coal and grain trains via it's Piedmont Subdivision and Mountain Subdivision. According to an associate whom is an engineer for CSX, the company still has plans to operate those trains via what railfans and railroaders refer to as The River Line but has not disclosed when this will go into effect. If you are interested in video taping and or photographing what railfans refer to as the Mountain Sub via Charlottesville, don't procrastinate.

The N&W caboose at Carson, Virginia is now a railroad museum with photographs, railroad corporate logos and railroadians on display. To gain access, simply ask for the key in the adjacent library. The caboose is climate controlled.

Amtrak just ended it's fiscal 2002 year on September 30 of this year with it's highest ridership in it's 31 year history, 24 million.

And you thought you had a tree mess from Hurricane Isabel? She laid down 2,700 plus over Norfolk Southern's tracks in Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania.

The Blue Ridge Live Steamers had an extremely successful Autumn Run and Open House the last weekend of October. It was our best this year in terms of member participation and public attendance. We also had overnight guest with a Cub Scout troop from Bedford and a Boy Scout troop from Troutville. It was great having numerous steamers in operation again. It was also fun having trains run at night again even if it was just for a little over half an hour. We had a plentiful feast for Saturday night with enough leftover for a Sunday lunch. The

Cub Scouts presented a good feast Friday night and considering how cold it got both nights, a full stomach was a necessity. The weather was great for both days. Plans were not finalized but we are looking forward to an after the holidays get together in January somewhere in Bedford or Roanoke.

May you all have a safe and pleasant holiday season and please keep in mind the reason for the season.

## Small Rails

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by Dave Meashey

The Big Lick Big Train Operators held their November meeting at the home of Tom and Karen Harris on Sunday, November 2nd. Karen is the garden railroad enthusiast, but since she is without a layout at present, Tom's HO layout was star of the meeting.

Tom had the basement of their home built especially to house his HO layout. There are no corners in the layout room; the walls are covered to allow the backdrop to flow. The backdrop, itself, is pieced together with photographs that Tom has taken around the Wytheville area. Tom then carefully sized the photographs to HO proportions and printed them using special paper and inks.

The results are spectacular. Roads cross the layout and flow right into the backdrop. Trees and rock formations seem to be a continuance of the three dimensional scenery. Best of all, one looks at the backdrop and thinks, "Hey, I know that place. I stopped for lunch there once!"

Tom uses DCC (Digital Command Control) to run the layout. Locomotives and cabooses are individually addressable, as are the passenger coaches. Tom can turn the lights on and off in individual cars and locomotives. Locomotives can also be assigned as a consist, with the lead locomotive's number becoming the control number for the group.

Since Tom's rolling stock is weighted to NMRA standards and most of his locomotives are low-horsepower diesels—such as GP9s, mid-train helper units must be assigned to the longer trains. One of the trains that day was over 70 cars long.

It takes a train at least ten minutes to traverse Tom's mainline, moving at a scale 45 mph. At least half of the mainline is hidden behind the backdrop in the staging area. Most of the visible portion of Tom's layout is a large freight classification yard. Tom's master plan for the finished layout will allow operators to work the classification yard while a desktop computer selects trains from the hidden staging yard, and sends them out for mainline runs. The challenge will be to effectively work the yard while staying out of the way of mainline traffic.

All locomotives have sound systems, which means that bell and horn signals must be observed at the proper times and locations (grade crossings, bridges, passing other trains, etc.). The signals are lit, but not controlling traffic as yet. Tom's future goals include bringing the staging yard up to automated functionality, and computer controlled CTC with functioning signals.

Operating on Tom's Lakeside Lines layout is a real treat. It is as close as many of us will come to participating in the operation of a real railroad.

## Fifty Years Ago

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by Kenneth I. Miller

It was a typical, dreary December day in Roanoke. However, this overcast Thursday just fifteen days before Christmas of 1953 would become anything but typical. It might not have been as noted at the time, but it marked a significant event in rail history.

The forecast was for rain showers with a high in the mid 40s, with the chill in the air

that morning, it looked and felt like snow. The N&W photographer loaded his 8x10 film holder with a single sheet of black and white film, loaded up the camera and tripod and headed out the door into the cold. He was probably unaware of the importance of that single exposure he would be shooting soon. Just a routine assignment, a builder's portrait at Roanoke Shops of their latest locomotive. Something that had been done a number of times before, however, this assignment was a bit different, however, this was the last of the order, not the first.

Otherwise, this was a routine job, easily distracted by the holiday spirit in the air, perhaps he was thinking of the big holiday gift that season; a television set. Roanoke had moved up in the world, for almost a year now it had its own TV station, rather than fiddle with an aerial and pick up distant signals from Greensboro or Richmond, Roanokers had broadcast news and could watch McCarthy hearings in Washington.

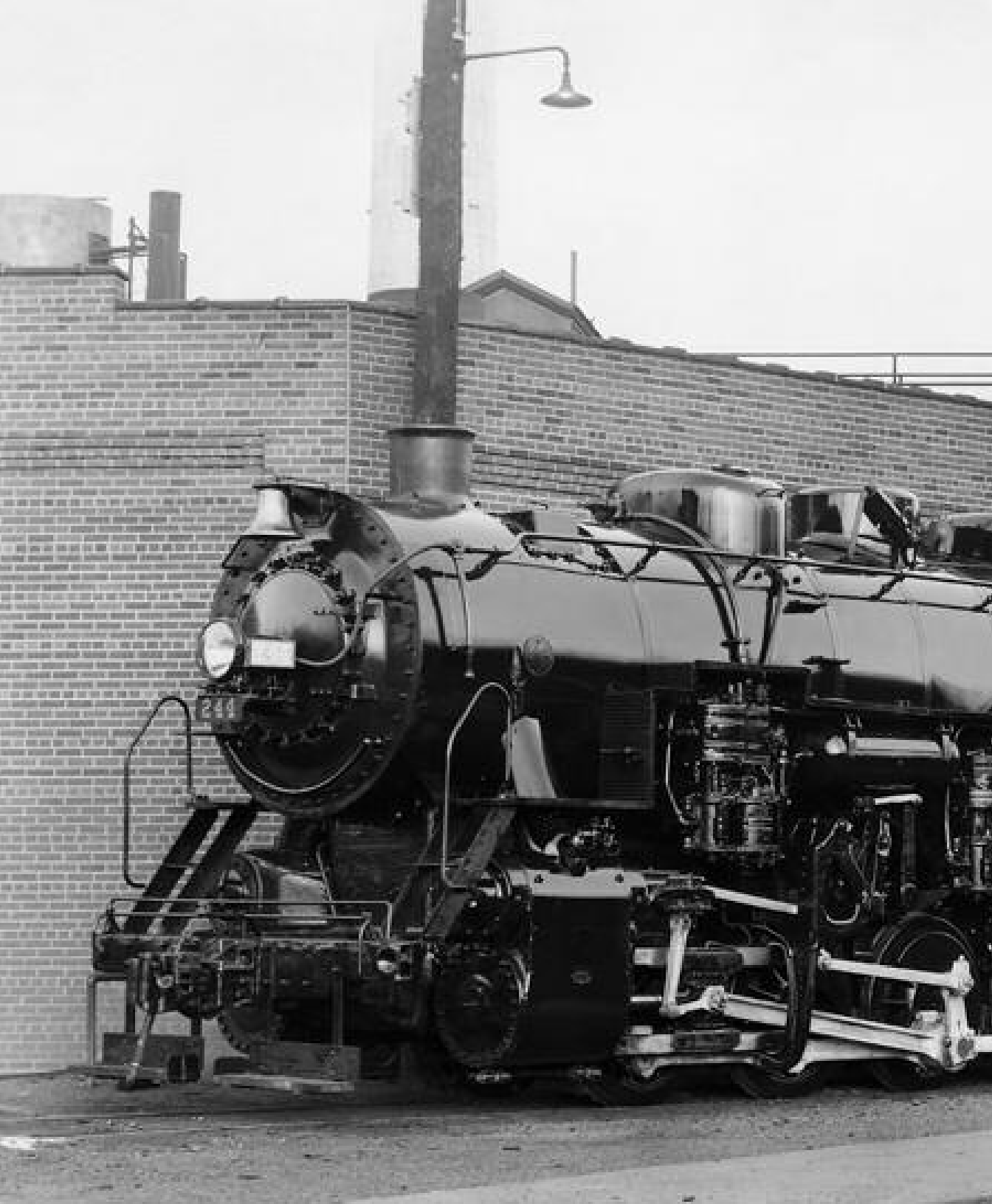
As he carried the heavy tripod and camera along the platform from the motive power building, an S1 switcher coupled up to a diner in front of the commissary building. The switchers; acquired at a bargain price a few years before from the C&O, were now seen almost everywhere. The doughty little 0-8-0 switchers were good deals for both railroads, the C&O anxious to dieselize their yard service, had nearly new switchers to replace, the N&W looking to replace older motive power with more reliable switchers, snapped the two-year old switchers up at bargain basement prices. Of course, they underwent some modifications to bring them to N&W standards, but quickly made a solid impression, and less than a year after purchase, the N&W announced that forty-five more 0-8-0s with Roanoke improvements, would be built in the Shops. Naturally, any announcement of construc-

tion at Roanoke Shops was welcome news to the workers and Roanoke merchants, it meant that work was on hand, and money was in the retail pipeline.

As distant church chime rang the hour, in the crisp air, the hiss from the steam lines, almost drowned out the soft chuffing of the S1 as she backed away up the Shenandoah Division track pulling the spotless tuscan red heavyweight De class diner. The photographer crossed the tracks carefully and walked quickly to the area just west of the Shop turntable. The new switcher already sat off the lead in perfect position, with rods down. Superintendent-Motive Power Pond had already arranged the locomotive to be posed in one of the usual locations.

The overcast was actually welcomed by the photographer. It makes his job easier; it was simpler to expose the film of a dark locomotive without the sharp glare of daylight. As he locked down the tripod legs, the aroma of fresh paint almost burned the eyes. After removing the lens cap; he pulled the black cloth over his head as he studied the upside down image on the ground glass. The all black locomotive, only accented by the yellow-gold number 244 and "Norfolk and Western" across the tank. The orange window frames, polished bronze number plate and bell was the only other breaks in the black boiler, even the builders plate had been painted over black and un-highlighted. The color was of no concern today, this event warranted only the use of black and white film; color was for calender images. Our photographer adjusted the focus a bit, then snapped the film holder in place, pulled the dark slide out and opened the shutter for the exposure. The whole process took less than 10 minutes.

In all likelihood, many shop workers, motive power people and management realized the importance of this event, the last





N & W  
ROANOKE SHOPS

244

NORFOLK AND WESTERN

steam locomotive constructed at Roanoke Shops. Would this be the last ever? Work was still proceeding at Eddystone on the huge steam turbine soon to be dubbed "Jawn Henry." However, the track record on other turbines had not been good, the C&O's turbines delivered in 1947 had been failures; new, unproven technology, cheaper diesels, and low cost foreign oil combined to doom the huge beasts. The N&W was not discouraged and fully expected the "Jawn" to be the next generation of coal burning power and still proudly advertised "100% Powered by Coal Burning Steam Locomotives," there was currently no plan to change that phrase. However, elements were conspiring outside the company to see that changed, like it or not.

It was a different world in those days; coal smoke permeated the area. On bad weather days the smoke hung in the valley. Coal was still the fuel of choice, from locomotives to homes to business. Every city of any size along the line was beginning to look closely at smoke abatement.

This little 0-8-0 represented the end of an era, a basic design from the USRA era in 1918, but improved by the N&W designers. The commercial builders had already spotted the trend, the last domestic use, steam locomotive construction was completed four years before this chilly day in Roanoke.

We cannot know today if the photographer made any special mental note on completing his photo, it is doubtful. He probably was more interested in returning to the warmth of the photo lab, getting the film in process with several other sheets from days before and sitting down for lunch.

The photographers job now complete, the 244 had her moment of glory, even if only quietly, her birth was not even noted in the Roanoke Times.

Her moment of glory completed, the 244

headed to Shaffers Crossing to go to work, a day or two of breaking in around Roanoke, then off to a fairly unspectacular career, usually serving in Ohio, before she was retired in September of 1958, less than five years old. She was most certainly in need of flues and tube; a class three rebuild.

Sadly, the powers in Roanoke had determined that this was money not to be spent at this late a date. It is possible that a passing thought was given to preserve the 244, but orders from the top management were scrap as much steam as quickly as possible and save nothing. Only outside intervention would see the saving of a single modern steam locomotive on the railroad.

It is sad, many of the glamorous locomotives were saved, Union Pacific Big Boys are common as are C&O Kanawahas, but little unremarked switchers were not special enough to be saved. But the 244, perhaps should have been saved for future generations to represent the true passing of an era.

## Book Review

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by John Austen

Railroads of Pennsylvania:

Fragments of the Past in the Keystone  
Landscape, by Lorette Treese

Stackpole Books, 5067 Ritter Road,  
Mechanicsburg PA 17055; 2003. Paperback  
6"x9", 274 pp. + xiii. \$18.95.

This interesting book succeeds both as a travel guide and as a condensed history. The interplay of the two realms produces a synergism that enhances both.

The work is divided into eight regional sections following the areas defined by the Pennsylvania Office of Travel and Tourism. Each of the sections consists of the same five topical divisions: Great Railways of the Region (mostly the pre-merger class one railroads); Rail Stories of the Region; The Region's Railroad Giants (people); Sampling

the Region's Railroad History (including the local NRHS chapters); and Rail Trails.

The Great Railways sections provide a condensed history of the major lines. The Stories sections cover short lines and other topics, such as "Railroads and the Civil War" near Gettysburg, or "The Molly Maguires" in the anthracite region. The Stories section for each region ends with a review of the local NRHS chapters and their accomplishments. The Giants sections provide biographies of noteworthy historical figures, such as Herman Haupt, Asa Packer, or Tom Scott. The Sampling sections provide a thorough introduction to the sites (including engineering marvels such as viaducts), museums and tourist lines. Each regional section concludes with a brief article on Rail Trails.

The book is illustrated with over a hundred historic black and white cuts, photos, portraits, and maps. Two full-color Grif Teller prints grace the covers. All the illustrations are reproduced very well, indeed better than might be expected in an economically priced book that is essentially text. The book concludes with an index, a decent bibliography showing both recent and older secondary works, and a section of contact information, showing web sites as well as addresses and phone numbers.

The book succeeds on several levels. For those unfamiliar with the Pennsylvania railroad scene this is an excellent introduction. For those who have studied the subject (or parts of it) in greater depth it can help us step back and appreciate the broader view, in case we "can't see the forest for the trees." The descriptions are accurate, thorough and up to date, and often include recent changes or additions to sites, programs and collections.

This book should be of great interest to N&W fans, since traffic connected at several points, such as the New York, Philadelphia &

Norfolk which ran down the Delmarva peninsula; and the Cumberland Valley and other lines at the north end of the Shenandoah Valley. It also shows the history of lines recently absorbed into the modern Norfolk Southern system.



## How The Railway Timetable Got Its Start

By Arthur L. Stead London Correspondent  
From N&W Magazine, August, 1951

**I**n many branches of railroading progress has grown out of the initial ingenuity of one great pioneer. In the motive power department, the genius of George Stephenson was to the fore in early days. Another outstanding pioneer, and a contemporary of the "Father of Railways," was George Bradshaw, "Father of the Timetable."

Many N. & W. men and women may never have heard of George Bradshaw, to whom we largely owe the railway timetables. Actually, the world's very first timetable was produced in England by Mr. Bradshaw in September, 1839- twenty-nine years prior to the first appearance of that now well-known American publication, The Official Guide.

To appreciate George Bradshaw's unique contribution to railroading, we have to go back to the old stage coach days, before the "Iron Horse". In that romantic era, it was the habit of the stage coach proprietors in England to advertise their services by means of printed bills, usually displayed outside the historic coaching inns. These advertisements were not genuine timetables as we regard them, but more or less general indications as to the services provided by the stage coaches. Times of departure were

given, but intermediate timings and arrivals at destination usually were cleverly omitted or only hinted at very vaguely. In time, the stage coach proprietors did give definite departure and arrival times in their announcements, but right up to the coming of the railway nothing comparable with a genuine timetable made its appearance.

On the opening of the world's first public railroad-the Stockton & Darlington-in September, 1825, there was produced an official advertisement which gave the times of departure of trains from Stockton and Darlington, respectively, but cleverly relieved the company of responsibility for delays by prefixing the little word "about" before the arrival times. Thus, the train leaving Stockton at 7:30 a. m. was advertised to arrive at Darlington, about 9:30 a. in., and so on, right through the day's services.

Five years later, the Liverpool & Manchester Railway was opened to the public, and on this line, too, the proprietors fought shy of giving definite train arrival times in their advertisements. Even in 1835-after the Liverpool & Manchester Railway had been carrying passengers for five years-the company continued to give details of train departures in their announcements while carefully avoiding publishing arrival times. Imagine what confusion and inconvenience today arise were the N. & W. and other American railroads to merely advertise the hour of departure of trains and leave arrival times more or less a matter of guesswork!

In the 1830's, "Railway Guides" by the score appeared in Britain, each containing a history of railroads and a description of the territory passed through, but carrying little detailed information as to train arrivals. One guide of the period, however, did improve upon its contemporaries. This was *The Iron Road Book and Railway Companion*, written by Francis Coghlan and published by A. H.

Baily and Company, London, describing "the towns, villages and mansions" on each side of the line, and giving-unlike previous publications-the times of departure and arrival of trains on the London & Birmingham Railway, then opened from Euston Station, London, to Denbigh Hall, and from Rugby to Birmingham.

September 17, 1838, saw through rail communication established between London, Birmingham, Manchester and Preston, and this momentous event brought into the limelight the genius of the railway timetable. George Bradshaw, born at Windsor Bridge, Salford, Manchester, on July 29, 1801.

George Bradshaw came of humble parentage. He was the only child of Thomas Bradshaw and his wife, Mary Rogers, and while they gave George as good an education as their purse would permit, it became necessary for the boy to leave school at 14, when he was apprenticed to a Manchester engraver named Beale. In 1820, Bradshaw moved to Belfast, Ireland, and commenced business as an engraver, but moved a year later to Manchester, England, where he commenced the engraving of maps. In 1831, an apprentice named William Blacklock came to work for Bradshaw, and letterpress printing having been added to the firm's activities, Blacklock became a partner and the name of the firm was changed to Bradshaw and Blacklock.

When Bradshaw first began to toy with the idea of printing railway timetables, it was the custom of the various local railroads which had sprung up in Britain to advertise the times of their trains in the newspapers serving their particular regions. It became obvious to Bradshaw that travelers required some handy sort of guide they could keep in their pockets for ready reference.

Out of this idea came the first issues of Bradshaw's *Railway Timetables*, issue num-

ber one being dated "10th Mo." (the Quaker equivalent for October) 1839. The complete title of the book was Bradshaw's Railway Timetables and Assistant to Railway Travelling. It was a slender volume in a green cloth cover, measuring three inches by four-and-a-half inches.

Bradshaw's first book of timetables sold at sixpence per copy (about 10 cents). There were three issues, all dated October 19, 1839. On October 25, 1839, George Bradshaw published another book covering the English railroads to the south of Manchester, including the London & Birmingham and the Great Western systems. On the same date, he also published a third volume which was a sort of combination of the other two works, and bore the title: Bradshaw's Railway Companion.

The Companion for a time proved a instant success. By 1841, it had grown to about 50 pages, and in 1845 it commenced to be published monthly. Bradshaw's Railway Guide actually was being published at the same time as the Companion (later discontinued), the first number appearing in December, 1841. This original number may today be inspected by visitors to the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It carries the title: "Bradshaw's Railway Guide: containing a correct account of the hours of arrival and departure of the trains on every railway in Great Britain; a map of England with the railways completed and in progress; hackney coach fares, etc." From this it will be seen that, while railways were gradually coming into favor, the good old hackney coach was still a power to be reckoned with.

When publishing his Railway Guide, Bradshaw faced most of the problems which today confront the timetable experts and the printers, plus a host of other difficulties arising out of the fact that railroads were then in their infancy, the electric telegraph

had not been perfected, and universal time did not exist. The various local railways in Britain each favored their own pet methods of train timing, the larger systems frequently making alterations to train running at any moment that suited their convenience, without any prior consultation with connecting systems. Today, of course, throughout the world of railways, alterations to train timings and additional trains which affect neighboring systems normally only are made after prior arrangement with the interested companies.

Bradshaw fought all his life for timetable uniformity among the different railroads, but it was not until long after his death in 1853 that the railways agreed to adopt a standard system for announcing changes in their train services, and to furnish the railway timetable printers with details of all changes by a recognized date-in Britain the fifteenth of the month preceding issue of the timetables.

Bradshaw is published every month with clockwork regularity. In addition to Bradshaw's Railway Guide there is also an ambitious volume, Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide, covering rail services throughout the European Continent; and a British and International Air Guide. Bradshaw is found in all European, and in many American travel offices, hotels, steamships, and so on. Throughout a great part of the world it rubs shoulders in the friendliest fashion with the well-known Official Guide of the United States, published by the National Railway Publication Co., of New York City.

There is no railroad timetable in the world which has not, in one way or another, been largely influenced by Bradshaw, and as N. & W. employees thumb their own company timetables, they will be interested to know that across the Atlantic more than a century

ago a clever Englishman, George Bradshaw, invented these invaluable railroad guides and laid the foundations of railway timetables everywhere.

## **East Tennessee Railway**

From the Watauga Chapter Newsletter  
**D**ue to a lack of business in Elizabethton and other factors, the East Tennessee Railway has ceased running the 11-mile Johnson City to Elizabethton line as of Friday, October 10, 2003. The East Tennessee stored Eastman hoppers in Elizabethton for the past several months. With the Railway taking over CSX switching duties in downtown Johnson City, this has opened up yard space and has allowed the ET to bring these cars to Johnson City for storage. By doing this, operation to Elizabethton is now eliminated.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

Holiday Gathering - December 18, 2003

January 6, 2004 - Board Meeting

January 15, 2004 - General Meeting

February 3, 2004 - Board Meeting

February 19, 2004 - General Meeting

March 2, 2004 - Board Meeting

March 18, 2004 - General Meeting

Spring Outing? More to come

Your dues are due no later than December 31, 2003, otherwise you will be dropped as a member.

<http://community.roanoke.com/RoanokeChapterNationalRailwayHistoricalSociety>

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