



# Feather River Rail Society

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Portola Railroad  
Museum

Preserving

*"The Feather River Route"*

P.O. Box 608  
Portola, California 96122  
(916) 832-4131

Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day -- open seven days a week 10:00AM to 5:00PM. Fall, winter and spring hours: Open weekends 10:00AM to 4:00PM.

The Feather River Rail Society, a tax exempt public benefit California corporation, is the historical society for the Western Pacific Railroad and operates the Portola Railroad Museum in Portola, California. The FRRS is not associated with the Western Pacific Railroad.

FRRS Tax ID number is 68-0002774  
Member of Tourist Railway Association Inc.

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Associate----- \$15.00  
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Dues are paid for 12 months from time of receipt. All memberships have one vote except for Associate. Associate members also do NOT receive the The Headlight.



# From the Desk of the President

After a very busy year, putting in 10 hour days, 7 days a week, Barbara and I needed a vacation. We decided to visit England and parts of Europe. We took two escorted bus tours, rode trains on our own and visited several railway museums and tourist railways. In England we rode on the 15" gauge Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch line, operated as a full size working railroad. It is mostly double tracked for its 14 miles. Both steam and diesel locomotives are used. We also rode the Keighly & Worth Valley. They have 30 steam locomotives and 6 diesels. As in our country, diesel preservation is just now becoming important. Most railway equipment has been purchased instead of being donated, however local governments have realized the tourist drawing power of the railways and have made generous grants toward their preservation. We were indeed fortunate to have two WW II USA locomotives in operation on the K&WV on the day we were there. A 2-8-0 had recently been brought over from Poland and an 0-6-0T. Both were coal burners and had hook couplers and buffers, but were unmistakably American. With certification, steam locomotives can operate occasionally on the British Railway system.

We visited the National Railway Museum at York and although a large part of their collection is in storage pending completion of the main hall rebuilding (expected to open Easter 1992), they had a very impressive display of equipment. Several of the trains we rode to and from London operated at 125 mph. Britain operates more 125 mph trains than any other country. They operate diesel and electric locomotive pulled and self propelled trains. America should be so lucky. Freight trains operate mostly at night and seldom exceed 15 cars or 1500 tons.

At a suburb near Amsterdam on October 5, 1991, we chanced upon a "steam parade." About 10,000 people were waiting for the steam engines to show and soon they did. Nineteen different steamers appearing in age order from 1838 to modern 2-10-0's and a streamline 4-6-2. Also at the site was a railroadiana flea market in a tent; but it was so crowded we could not move about.

The French National Railway Museum in Mulhouse was a pleasant surprise. The main hall has 12 tracks - 500 feet long displaying steam and electric locomotives, the oldest was built in 1844, the newest in 1953. Freight and passenger cars and self propelled motor trains were also on display. Track structure, tools, signals and everything else associated with railways was very nicely displayed. A steam powered Alco rotary snow plow and a 1945 Baldwin 2-8-2, one of 1340 built for France after the war, were included in the collection. This museum has to be the finest railway museum anywhere. We got a lot of good ideas for Portola here.

Some of the French trains we rode were equally as fast as those in England. One can go anywhere almost anytime in Europe and they are continually improving the system. Amtrak officials and our politicians should go over for an eye-opening ride.

After 30 days of travel, however, it is good to get back home.

P.S. If the person who "borrowed" my Radio Shack scanner from the Gift Shop last summer will contact me, I'll give him the instruction booklet. I have no need for it now!

- Norman W. Holmes