

# EXPANSION LINK

## NEWSLETTER OF THE B&DMES

EDITOR JOHN TAVINER-VOLUME THREE-ISSUE ONE

DATE March 2009



### *Editorial*

Welcome to the first issue of your club newsletter for 2009. As I start to write the editorial for this issue on 2<sup>nd</sup> February the snow is laying thick on the ground. I went out and measured it in my back garden and recorded a depth of 6.5 inches (about 16.5 cms for our younger members) with more forecast. About six weeks too late to have made Christmas a white one. I trust you all had a good Christmas with lots of goodies to play with.

It is with regret that I have report the passing of one of our members on the 25<sup>th</sup> January. Eddie Hazel had been a member for many years and although not an active member in recent times he will be sorely missed. On behalf of all members I would like to express my condolences to his wife Camille and all his family. On 10<sup>th</sup> February Terry Hobbs and myself attended Eddie's funeral on behalf of the club.

In this issue Mike Lowe continues his series of articles on his footplate career on the railways. Graham Blisset gives an interesting account of a trip to the Hornby factory.

Graham also gives an in depth report on progress of the redevelopment of the station and Steve Newell gives an account of a visit to the Severn Valley Railway

As those of you who attended the AGM will recall the project to improve the station was discussed at length amid concerns for the unevenness of the paving slabs which could cause a tripping hazard. This work is now well under way and should be at a stage where it will be in operation for the first public run in April.

Please note changes to committee. John Croker and myself have stood down and Tom Burgess moves to Vice Chairman. See back page for details.

*John Tavinor Editor.*

### *Forthcoming events.*

#### April

- 5<sup>th</sup> Public Running
- 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting Night
- 12/13 Easter Public Running (Sun/Mon)
- 19<sup>th</sup> Members Running Day (Sun)
- 21<sup>st</sup> Bits And Pieces Evening

#### May

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Public Running
- 5<sup>th</sup> Bring And Buy Evening
- 17<sup>th</sup> Visitors Open Day
- 19<sup>th</sup> Stationary Engines
- 23/25 Eastleigh Works Open Days

#### June

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Night
- 7<sup>th</sup> Public Running (Diesel Electric)
- 13<sup>th</sup> Efficiency competition (Sat)
- 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting Night
- 21<sup>st</sup> Public Running (Class 66)
- 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting Night

It should be noted that extra public running days are scheduled for April and June. This is to compensate for lost income from public running during 2008 due to bad weather.

### *Chairman's chat*

Dear members, The 3 months since the last magazine has simply flown by and the editor is chasing me for this issue's chairman's chat.

I was very pleased by the turnout of members for our work week ends and a large amount of maintenance, tidying up and repairs have been completed and the rebuilding of the station is coming along very well as is the rebuilding of the signalling system. Hopefully those members who for whatever reason were unable to turn up and help will appreciate what has been achieved on their behalf by the rest of us and will support our club in other ways throughout the year.

The cost to the club of all the above when completed will be in excess of £2000 and several extra public running days have been added this year to pay for this so will you please look at your calendars and hopefully give us plenty of help on the public running days. Your support will also be appreciated at all the other events in the calendar that are put on by the club on your behalf.

And lastly on a sad note I have to report the death of long standing club member Eddie Hazell after along battle with cancer. The club was represented at his funeral by two members and we also sent a card to his family signed by several club members.

*Terry Hobbs Chairman.*

### *A reminder from the Treasurer*

Dear All,

I would just like to remind you that subscription time is upon us once again. As agreed at the AGM the subscription charge for 2009/10 is £36.00, an increase of £6 from last years subscription. This increase is due to the short fall in our income which pays the rent and utility charges incurred for unit

5 at Viables.

Apologies to those of you who have already paid for receiving this global reminder.

As always if since paying your last subscription, you have moved address, changed telephone number or have a new/different Email address can you please let me know. If you would rather collect your receipt and membership card from the clubhouse, can you please let me know when sending your payment.

### *Financial Year End*

As our financial year end of February 28th 2009 has now passed, could anyone who is owed money for milk etc. and B&DMES expenses please provide me with details and receipts so that I can reimburse them and close out the accounts for 2008/09.

Many thanks

*Graham Blissett*

*Treasurer*

### *Station Rebuild – the story so far*

At the 2008 AGM it was agreed that the station was in need of considerable maintenance and that our first priority should be to deal with the state of the uneven platform surface, as sooner or later some one would have a fall and be seriously injured. It was suggested that, as the public were unable to see the trains when in the station, consideration would be given to a viewing public viewing area. As part of the work it was agreed that the area around the Class 66 traverser would be paved as this was becoming very muddy, especially following a wet day.

After long discussions on what to do with the platform surface, it was decided to continue using slabs, which could be re-

levelled if needed at a later date. The job was started on a cold Sunday morning, when some exploratory digging was done to see how deep the roots went on the bushes at the back of the station platform, to see whether we needed the services of a mini digger to remove them. Two hours later all the bushes were removed, with some of the larger ones simply pulling out of the ground by hand !



For our first

maintenance weekend, we had a “Bring a wheelbarrow” party, as we had 4 tonnes of ballast and sand being delivered for the foundations of the retaining wall. The reason for the retaining wall was to allow us to fill in what was the dirt bank containing the bushes, and bring it up to the same height as the platform. In doing so, the width of the station platform could be increased. The retaining wall would also hopefully stop the track bed and platform parting company and subsiding, which is the reason for the unevenness of the slabs on the platform. On both days a much appreciated sandwich lunch was provided to the workers. By the end of the weekend the retaining wall was half built and all the old slabs on the station had been lifted. On odd days over the next couple of weeks, in between the snow showers, the retaining wall was finished.

Due to the cable routing for the signalling running under the station platform and considering the problems with the signal wiring we have previously experienced, it

was agreed that new wiring would be installed as part of the station platform rebuild. Unfortunately, it was only when the slabs were lifted and the cable routes exposed, did we realise that just replacing the cables was not an option as all the cables were routed through pipe work that had seen better days, and in most cases there were large gaps in between pieces of pipe, so it was not possible to just rethread the cables through the pipes. Consequently, it was agreed that a new pipe network had to be laid under the new platform before the new platform base could be laid.

At the next maintenance weekend, we had another bring a wheelbarrow and concrete laying party. This time we had 6 tonnes of ballast, which was wheel barrowed to the mixing area, mixed and laid over the weekend. Even then we ran out before finishing the area between the track and the shed.

The following weekend we had another 3 tonnes of ballast delivered along with 120 new slabs and the sand & cement to lay them on. On the last maintenance weekend, which turned out to be just the Sunday, we set to laying the slabs. By the end of the day, all of the whole slabs between the entry and exit gates were laid. An additional Sunday was spent cutting slabs to start filling the gaps between the whole slabs.

So far we have laid over 300 blocks, used 3 tonnes of sand, 30 plus bag of



cement, 11 tonnes of ballast and 120, 2”

thick slabs. Hopefully in the next issue of expansion link you will see the completed platform. The next phase of the work, when we have the money and caught our breath, is to replace the station canopy structure and roof, making it cover more of the platform, and becoming less of a target for our unwanted visitors.

*Graham Blisset To be continued*

### *The Footplate Career of Mick Lowe (spanning 50 years) continued*

Well here we go with episode No. 3  
One of the questions often asked is, " Did you ever get off the road"?  
Well this doesn't happen very often, but yes, once when I was a Fireman on a Basingstoke U Class Engine, when we were working a passenger train to Reading (WR)  
This was in the days of semaphore signals, we had to perform a shunt and release move – push the train (three coaches) out of No.2 Platform and then run round and put the train back on No.2 Platform again. During this move the Station Shunter rode with us (for coupling and uncoupling movements). Whilst waiting for the signal to clear to allow us out to put the train into the platform. The signal came off half-cocked and the mechanical route indicator also was half cocked (danger signal don't take says the rule book!) but the Shunter said " OK Driver" to my mate " that signal always plays up, its OK to take it"  
Well after a couple of engine lengths, we were on 'mother earth' with an almighty bang, with the loco rolling quite badly on the sleepers.  
We were off all wheels, and fouling the opposite running line and due to the damaged tender hose, the tender had drained - so no injectors.

There was only one thing for it – to throw

the fire out there and then. Luckily we had a full boiler of water.

It turned out that not only were the signals half cocked but the points as well!! - A real life lesson don't take signals that are suspect!!

Single line working had to be set up, causing chaos between the Reading Main Line Box and Reading West Signal Box. Fortunately my Driver was cleared and the Shunter 'carried the can' (blame)

The only other time was with a Class 47 Diesel in Woking Yard, another run round movement done with the Shunter.

We had run round and were on the stop blocks with power points in front of us (operated by the Signal-box with the Shunter authorising the movement by phone). He called me ahead, the move being to pull ahead clear of the points then wait for the Shunter to tell the Signal-box to close the road (points) up, well he did it too quickly, the Signal-box man moved the points before the rear bogie was over them.

I looked back to see if the loco was clear of the points and also to pick up the Shunter - something clearly was very wrong - the rear end of the loco was going up the next road. We quickly made a short stop and got down to have a look - well the flanges of the rear bogie wheels had ridden up onto the top of the rails, all the cables and brake pipes (power) under the loco were stretched out. So after isolating the rear bogie and brakes (power wise) we adjourned to the cabin and made a can of tea!! A cup of tea solves everything doesn't it?

Eventually the Control contacted us to whom I explained the position of the bogie wheels, to which I was asked if I were to set back gently would the wheels drop back onto the rails?

My reply was it was a 50/50 chance they

would and if the Controller gave me his name and the authority to try this and to take the consequences if all went 'tits up'! Not prepared to do this he said he would send a CM & E Supervisor down by road from the Stewarts Lane Depot to assess the situation.

When he arrived he too asked me if I would set back gently to drop the wheels back on again – to which I replied 'only if you are willing to take the responsibility.

He said yes he would so I went back very gently and luck was with us- the wheels dropped back onto the rails.

So all ended well, this being a lucky result and with no need to call out the breakdown crew from Stewarts Lane Depot (rail crane and rail breakdown van) saving a great deal of money and time, although the loco required some attention to cables and pipes etc.

Animals on the line again posed a problem when working on a Reading to Redhill stopping service with Thames Trains, the Signaller via the cab secure phone/radio informed me that on the approach to Dorking a herd of cows had been reported on the line.

Yes there were about 20 or more cows on the line halfway down Dorking Bank – I stopped several hundred yards from them (they were walking in my direction) but to complicate matters another train was stopped on the opposite running line about a hundred yards short of a Public Footpath Crossing.

Now what do we do? – I moved slowly forward with short blasts on the horn and the herd changed direction but scattering up the banks but still going towards the gated area.

YEE HA, this was a Wild West round up with a difference, quite comical really.

I made a PA announcement to inform the passengers of what was going on and to say if anyone wanted to come up the front (highly irregular) to see for yourselves what was happening, they could.

For the next few minutes along came a steady flow of passengers (some armed with cameras, cam recorders etc). All enjoying the fun and making good-natured remarks about the situation.

At last near the crossing the cows made their own way through a hole in the fence back to their field (which they had obviously trampled through onto the line)

We informed the Signaller by radio and carried on as usual, the Signaller, no doubt, would have contacted the Police and Farmer to repair the fence.

Another little incident when working a cross-country passenger service to Bournemouth with a Crompton Class 33 at night in winter. On passing through Micheldever Station at maximum speed of 85mph

There was an almighty bang, the route indicator flew open and there was blood and feathers everywhere. Quite a fright really, we had hit a night flying pheasant, which had gone through the illuminated outer cabinet case, through the case door and spread himself the cab in bits. Several bulbs were broken in the cabinet, so used a Bardic Lamp in the window and carried on to Bournemouth, which I managed after wedging the cabinet door shut with my bag and a paddle.

It's a horrible feeling to hit an object at night with such a thud not knowing if its man or beast!!

At next stop have to a quick look around on front of loco for evidence to see if its fur, feathers or bits of clothing, hanging on front, brake rods/pipes etc.

Just hope as always it's not the latter.  
It's not all doom and gloom, as we all know  
things do have a lighter side  
Do you like mushrooms? - We do!  
Well one week when I was at Basingstoke  
working Banbury/Eastleigh Freight (single  
manned) I noticed a field at the end of  
Weston Waller's Ash, which was white with  
field mushrooms. Very nice!!  
There was no chance of getting off to pick  
any, as we did not go down the loop with  
this train, talking to the Guard he said what  
a pity we didn't go down the loop.  
So I suggested that if he were up for it we  
would go down the loop tomorrow, don't  
forget to bring a bag in case we get lucky. (I  
had a cunning plan, as Baldrick would say  
ha ha!!)  
Next day all was as normal, we stopped at  
the Weston end of the loop, phoned the  
Signalman at Eastleigh and asked to be put  
down the loop as we had smoke coming  
from a wagon!  
OK he reversed the signal and said phone  
me back when you have inspected the  
vehicle. Stopping at Waller's Ash end the  
Guard and I made a rapid exit of the train  
into the field and filled our bags only to find  
a gang of Signal/Telegraph men doing the  
same. Back onto the train with our haul,  
phoned the Signalman to tell him that the  
brake handle had dropped down and brakes  
were red hot (our big fib), given the signal  
and off we go to Eastleigh Yard where we  
are met by the Yard Inspector who wanted  
to know the wagon number, so I said I  
didn't take but the Guard did!! When the  
Guard reached the loco from his brake van  
the Yard Inspector asked him the same  
question, to which he replied that he didn't  
think to take the number down and really  
couldn't remember which wagon it was,  
A good result and the cunning plan had

worked - they were delicious  
On this note will recount another episode  
soon, leaving you all drooling over the taste  
and smell of proper field mushrooms

*Mick Lowe*

### *Meeting The Experts*

Since my child hood I've been interested in  
model railways, and in particular the  
intricate engineering and modelling skills  
required making model railway engines,  
powered by an electric motor.  
Nearly ten years ago I had the opportunity  
to visit Hornby Hobbies in Margate, who  
produce, among other things, Hornby  
Railway products and the Scalextric racing  
car system. Since my visit, Hornby have  
moved their main manufacturing base to  
China, as the Chinese can produce better  
quality models for less money. Despite  
obtaining my tickets through the then Team  
Hornby Club magazine, which was  
predominantly aimed at the younger  
generation, out of the nine visitors, only one  
was a child!  
My first surprise was that in today's  
automated world of the computer and  
'robot' assembly lines, very little automation  
has crept into the Hornby factory. The  
process of making a model, as always, starts  
with the basic raw materials, these being  
plastic granules and rolls of sheet metal.  
The plastic granules, along with recycled  
plastic parts, are fed into large injection  
moulding hydraulic presses, which form all  
the plastic components such as the bodies,  
chassis, couplings etc. Some of the smaller  
plastic parts are pressed out to form a  
framework, similar to Airfix model kits. On  
different presses, the running gear and  
tracks are stamped out of the rolls of sheet  
metal.

When sufficient quantities of each component have been pressed or stamped out they are passed on to the first stage of assembly, where they are put together to form sub-assemblies. For example, the sub-assemblies could be the conrods and piston assembly for a steam engine, or the rear axle containing the bearings and gears for a Scalextric car. Wherever possible, individual components are made up into sub-assemblies because Hornby has found from experience that the final assembly is quicker and it produces a more reliable model. Most of the sub-assembly work is completed manually using hand-operated jigs. Assembling the components is, however, only half the story. Most of the plastic components have to be painted with at least one colour, and some, such as logos, have to be painted in multiple colours. The main colour on the body or chassis is spray painted by one of the few automatic machines in the factory. This allows the paint finish to be the same on every item. Any additional body colours are spray painted by hand using specially designed jigs. The component is held in the jig so that when the jig is dosed only areas that need to be painted are visible, similar to a stencil. All the hand operated jigs that are used during the assembly, and painting processes, are designed and manufactured by Hornby themselves.

Crests and company logos, especially those found on Scalextric cars, are printed or stamped on to the body one colour at a time. Consequently, this process can take a considerable time to complete, especially with the wide variety of colours found on the real cars that the Scalextric cars are modelled on. Probably the most difficult painting job is that of painting the bands around the steam engine boilers. This job is

done by hand using a mapping pen 'loaded' with paint, and requires so much skill that only four employees in the whole company are skilled enough to do it.

That's the complete production and assembly cycle, but what happens to the plastic frameworks, individual components or assembled models that fail to meet the high standards required by Hornby? The answer is, nothing goes to waste, as everything is recycled.

For example, all the plastic components fall into the two basic categories of accurate and less accurate. Accurate components are intricately detailed or must be a specific size, and less accurate components that have to be the correct shape and a similar size. For instance, railway couplings are made from waste frameworks and recycled components. So a faulty body may become plastic wheels for rolling stock or Scalextric pickups.

This is just a brief insight into what was a very enjoyable day. So the next time you see a model railway engine or Scalextric racing car in a shop window, just remember how much effort, and time, has gone into the making of it.

*Graham Blissett*

### *The B&DMES hits the trail!*

Every year there are some really cracking events organised on both the big and small railways and for some reason I have never really thought about attending many of them – but if you go with a couple of friends it turns about to be a great, and dare I say it, cheap day out. With 2009 set to be a grim year financially, I figured that even our railways and model events need our support to see them through the tough times and so I've made a pledge to do as much as possible this year!

### *Severn Valley, 7<sup>th</sup> March*

For those who have been to the Severn Valley before you can appreciate how good the Gala would have been. The line itself is just shy of 20 miles and weaves along the valley of the Severn, obviously, through some stunning scenery with some impressive civil engineering along the length of the line making this possible. There are several viaducts, a 500 yard tunnel and the famous Victoria Bridge, which appears in every edition of steam railway magazine!! The loco line up was equally impressive with some giants of steam, with GWR *Nunny Castle*, LNER *Sir Nigel Gresley*, *Oliver Cromwell* and *Duke of Gloucester* visiting plus some of their own locos in steam.

The day started way too early by my standards as we left Basingstoke in formation at 0700. The two drivers were John Hutson and Dave Andrews with Eric Widowson, Simon Hutson, Johnny Croaker

and myself as passengers. Mike Lowe, the seventh member of the group had a visit from Uncle Dick that weekend and didn't come. Bob Lovett drove up by himself so he could make an early departure. We all made good progress on the journey to just outside Birmingham; some made better progress than others until the pigs finally court up with him and issued three points and a fixed penalty. 'He' shall remain nameless, but fortunately he didn't have any embarrassed passengers in the car!! We had made the services on the M5 by 0900.

We arrived at Kidderminster where the station was packed, with a ticket queue to match! We all decided to get the second train up which was hauled by the bathtub on



wheels, or as others call it, the A4 *Sir Nigel Gresley* with the correct teak nine coach set on. On arrival at the end of the line at Bridgnorth we looked around the shed where they had a replica of 'Catch me who can' in steam and *Taw Valley* under overhaul. We hung around for the next down train which was fortunately hauled by *Nunny Castle*. Simon, Dave and myself made sure we got the front set of windows! The trip

back was brilliant, the Castle made the nine coaches seem effortless whilst the sound of the Swindon music bouncing off the valley is something I won't forget in a long time!

We all got off at Bewdley where we had a look round some of the shops and waited



the next up train. It was here where Bob left us, going down the line to Kidderminster getting a few miles in behind *Oliver Cromwell*, whereas we were all unlucky to get stuck with the bathtub again on its next trip up the line. Dave, Johnny and myself fancied a look around their new museum of locos in need of overhaul at Arley but John and Simon stayed on *Gresley* to Hamoton Loade to see the 32mm gauge live steam layout there.

The day was getting on and it was nearly 1800 by the time we got the train back, it was getting dark and decidedly cold! However, being a Gala the railway runs the trains until 0000; in their big autumn gala they don't stop running at all – they go on with steam through the night! It was a real experience for me seeing all the signals lit up, the signal boxes and stations in the original lighting; it's something I've never experienced with today's 'modernisation' –

it was very atmospheric and is what sets the SVR in the top in my opinion.

We arrived at Kidderminster and got some chips for dinner – we saw the *Duke of Gloucester* head up the line for the evening freight photo shoot (the size of some of the floodlights photographers were lining the fields with was quite eye-opening) and *Gresley* to take the evening dining train out. It turns out there had been a line side fire and the Fire Brigade had been called with loco operations being delayed. Eventually this was dealt with so the *Castle* could return and the A4 go out.

We all parted company in the two cars from Kidderminster at 2000 and arrived in Basingstoke for 2230. Everyone agreed they had a brilliant day and that the bigger Autumn gala should definitely be on the cards. The SVR is well worth a visit and surprisingly isn't that far away for such good quality.

*Steve Newell*

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## **Email Addresses**

If you have received a copy of the newsletter by post, it is because we don't have your Email address. Each newsletter costs us 60p to print and post, where as Email is effectively free. Currently, we do not have an Email address for nearly half the membership. If you do have an Email address, which we can use, could you please Email me with your details.

*Graham Blissett*  
*Treasurer*

## **Who's Who.**

Chairman	Terry Hobbs
Vice Chairman	Tom Burgess
Secretary	Brian Hogg
Treasurer	Graham Blissett

## **Committee Members.**

Bob Lovett	Member
Jon Evans	Member
Barry Spender	Member

## **Project Leaders.**

Catering manager	Fred Pheby
Electrical Work	Simon Hutson
Library	Ken Jones
Painting/Decorating	Vacant
Publicity	John Dixon/ Assistant required
Signalling	Graham Blissett
Station Building/Contents	Vacant
Track/Site/Ground Maint.	Dave Blaza/ Mick Lowe
Traction Engine Track	Vacant
Webmaster	Stephen Newell
Newsletter	John Taviner