

EXPANSION LINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE B&DMES

EDITOR JOHN TAVINER-VOLUME FOUR-ISSUE ONE

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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of "Expansion Link" of 2010.

I trust that you all managed to survive the recent cold spell and hopefully we will enjoy good weather for the planned programme for this year. You will note, in the forthcoming events section, that we are public running on Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. In May there is to be a visitors open weekend. This again is a two day event to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the track in 1980. The month of June also sees two public running days. Help from members will be needed for all of these events.

In this issue, our new Treasurer introduces himself. Mike Lowe continues the story of his escapades on the railways. Tom Burgess tells the story of the building of his Class 37 loco. from kit form and also details some of the modifications needed to make it look more like the real thing. Dave Andrews describes a process that many of you may have used in the past and John Croker tells an amusing account of a test drive with a wobbly fire engine. (Not strictly a model engineering project but interesting).

As always, I make a request to all those that have something they may like to share with us all to put pen to paper or finger(s) to keyboard and send it to me. The deadline for the next issue is end of May.

I had an e-mail from Steve Papworth (a former member) a short while ago. He now lives in Devon but keeps up with the club news via the website. Steve had read the sad

news on the passing of Pete Simmons and sent his condolences. He also sends his regards to all who remember him.

John Taviner. Editor.

Forthcoming events

The events listed here are provisional and may change if additions or cancellations are made to the club programme. Watch the notice boards.

April

- 4/5 **Easter public running (Sun/Mon)**
- 6 Meeting Night
- 18 **Members Running Day**
- 20 Bits & Pieces Evening

May

- 2 **Public Running**
- 4 Bring & Buy Evening
- 15/16 **30th Anniversary Visitors Open Weekend**
- 18 Stationary Engines

June

- 1 Meeting Night
- 6 **Public Running**
- 12 **Efficiency Competition (Sat)**
- 15 Meeting Night
- 20 **Public Running**
- 29 Meeting Night

Chairman's Chat.

Time seems to fly faster these days, it is already time for the March issue of the club magazine. At least the weather has improved and enabled members to get started with all the work at the club.

Dave Andrews and John Poulter, with the help of a few others, have made a very good job of erecting the new fence on the station. You will also notice that there is a new roof on the running shed and at the time of writing, this is almost completed. Thanks to Dave Blaza and Tom Burgess for this along with help from a few others.

John Poulter and others have removed the old station canopy and John has started welding the new trusses, Fred Cooper is waiting in the wings ready to put the cladding on when the new frame work is in place. All this new work will require painting so hopefully a good number of you will volunteer to help Dave Andrews with this mammoth task.

Graham Blisset has also finished the signalling, or had until we removed the station canopy, he will re-do the platform signal when the new canopy is completed. Graham has also passed the Treasure's duties over to Jon Evans, who is our new Treasure, so please will you pay your now due club subscriptions to him, and hopefully he won't have to chase too many of you for your subs this year.

Malcolm Duckett has modified the 2 guards/driving trolleys so hopefully they will operate better this year. Easter week end sees the start of our public running season so no doubt this will show us if the mods. will work.

Graham Blissett has sent in the grant application for the garden railway and we are eagerly awaiting the outcome.

This year we are celebrating 30 years of

opening the track and members have asked for 2 events to be organised to mark this occasion. The committee will be expecting offers of help in the organising and running of these events both of which are 2 day events. Moans and grumbles from those who stand about and talk about a good event but do nothing to help will NOT BE ACCEPTABLE and can expect some flak in their direction from other club members who make the effort.

And talking of making the effort, as some members suggested extra running days to help pay for things like the new fence and garden railway, hopefully we will have a good turn out of members to help on these days, it is not only drivers and engines but people to help run the day, eg. setting up/ putting away equipment, helping make up trains, selling tickets, riding as guard and helping on the station etc etc. There are 14 running days listed plus Viables Christmas fair in November making 15 in all and whilst I would not expect any member to turn up every time it would be good if we could arrange among ourselves to have each day well covered, hopefully the weather will be more obliging this year.

Terry Hobbs Chairman.

An introduction from the New Treasurer

Dear All.

As you may, or may not know, due to increased commitments at home i.e. renovating a house complete with a resident bat colony, Graham decided to step down as Treasurer at the last AGM and I was elected as the new Treasurer starting in March 2010. However, Graham will still retain a place on the Committee.

I would like to thank, on your behalf, Graham for doing an excellent job over the previous years and wish him well with his new project. Now knowing what is involved, I have a lot to learn.

Treasurers' Reminders

I would just like to remind you that, once again, subscriptions are due for the forthcoming year. The subscription rate is unchanged at £36.00. As in previous years, if you have moved address or changed phone or e-mail address, please let me know. If you wish to collect your membership card from the Club House, can you please let me know when sending your payment.

As our financial year end of February 28th 2010 has now passed, could anyone who has any outstanding receipts that need to be paid please provide me with the details so that I can reimburse them.

Many thanks,

Jon Evans Treasurer.

This is a copy of an article I did for the Class 37 Loco Group

It all started in 2004 while I was at the Guildford model show. I got talking to Robin Neighbour from Bexhill Models about spending 15 years building a steam loco and not having anything to play with. His reply was why not build one of his loco kits and in only 20 hours I could have a loco on the track. A week later, I went to see him at his shop in Bexhill, saw a Class 37 body on the shelf and after a long conversation with him about the build, placed an order for one there and then, paid a deposit and was told

it would be up to six weeks delivery. I eventually went and collected it after about eight weeks.

Got it home and started to put it together then after about five hours into the build I realised it didn't look anything like a scale model of a Class 37. I stopped work, took it apart and started to do some research on the loco. I found a Class 37 at Buckfastleigh in Devon, contacted them and spent a day down there taking lots of photos and measurements. Once back home I made some plans of alterations to the kit, then re-machined the parts. This included shaping up the axle boxes from just square blocks to look more like axle boxes, put a trim around all the bogie



chassis to make them look like castings not just flat plates. I then cut the chassis down by 1/2 inch each end also cut 1/2 inch off the width of the buffer beam (because the kit body sat on top of the buffer beams which then stuck out beyond the body shell itself). I cut the bottom edge off the full length of the body, as it was finished with a square edge not the rounded "tumblehome" of the prototype. I fitted headcode boxes with LED lights, extended the cab ends of the body to come down over the buffer beams, and finally had to make up the fuel tanks between the bogies.

While I was doing all this and still researching for a finish for the loco, I came across your website (www.c37lg.co.uk) and found D6703 and then the name "The 1st

East Anglian Regiment". This was my father's regiment and I was born in a small



village called Harlstone in Norfolk, which is not far from where the D6703 is kept. This seemed like fate and the finish found! The period of the finish is some time between March and September 1963 when she was named, although never had the name unveiled.

The power is from two 12-volt leisure batteries, through a Parkside electronic control, driving four 120-watt axle hung motors. Parkside also built me a scaled-down speedo, which is fitted in the back cab end windows along with a 100 amp meter and a battery condition meter. The central gangway doors at the back end lift out to gain access to the light and sound switches. The sound was a cheap sound card just giving a generic diesel sound but this season it burnt out. I now hope to fit a new sound system which has been recorded from a full size Class 37. Just out on the market is a smoke generator unit that gives the exhaust effect, giving large gulps of smoke at start up and pull away then a steady steam while idling or just running. Still got to work out

the plumbing for that.

In the end, it took 13½ months in total to finish; so much for the 20 hours to build (that has put the steamer back yet again). I mainly run the loco on the raised track at my home club of Basingstoke on public running days, usually the first Sunday of the month from Easter until December. I also belong to the GL5MLA (The Ground Level 5" Gauge MainLine Association) we all get together about three or four times a year when we hold Main Line rallies, some members build locos, others build rolling stock. We use a ground level track, usually at Gilling, just outside York, and run a BR type timetable for the weekend. It's good fun, when you really have to keep to the speed limit for the train while pulling twelve to thirteen Mk1 BR coaches or twenty-five to thirty fully loaded coal wagons and keep to a timetable.

Tom Burgess

This article was previously published in the magazine of The Class 37 Loco Group. Ed.

The Footplate Career of Mick Lowe No. 7

My how time flies, it's time to book on again so here goes.

Recently I have been asked about engine performances, all I can say is that some did the job better than others. Bearing in mind that in the latter days of steam, many were not so good as they were in a rough and run down condition, but we soldiered on with them.

One question being 'What were the Lord Nelson's like?' At Basingstoke we had several turns on them which were passenger jobs and a couple of turns that were mixed – freight, passenger and parcel. When they were in good condition they were great

performers

One job that cropped up now and again was boat train work, these were varied in as much as that Nine Elms, Basingstoke and Eastleigh all had a share of them and the locos booked on these turns were varied too. Yes as a Fireman I have had a Lord Nelson on a boat train Waterloo to Southampton Old Docks – Ocean Terminal (now demolished). These were usually 11 or 12 coaches plus a baggage van. With the large boiler feeding 4 cylinders the secret was to keep at least three quarters of a boiler full of water as the boiler pressure would soon drop when the injectors were used. All in all good trips.

The start of the turns were varied - at times it was light engine to Nine Elms or pass to Nine Elms prepare the loco and work the train from Waterloo to the Docks. This resulted in getting a headboard for the loco front for the appropriate shipping line (Sitmar Line, Greek Line, Orient or Cunard Lines).

If you were pass to Waterloo the loco was prepared for you and on the train ready for the right away at start time.

As well as the Nelson's we did have varied



used on the boat trains West Country, Schools and Class 5 7300 Standards. I was never aware of a Merchant Navy being used on a boat train – not when I worked them anyway – perhaps other depots had that

luck!

One crime, once in the Ocean Terminal, was to let the loco safety valves lift – as it was a huge enclosed space the sound reverberated terribly – when working into the terminal it was a dead end. If working from the terminal with the loco just about outside, it was not so important. Someone would soon tell you, if you made a lot of smoke, that it was smoking the place out!

Lord Nelson's were a great favourite with the Eastleigh men perhaps because they had most turns on them. One train turn we had was to relieve a pair of Eastleigh men at Basingstoke on a rake of boat empties to go to Clapham Yard. This particular Sunday evening job always turned up with any class of loco including freight locos which resulted in a very rough and lively ride. You have to take it all in your stride – some you win and some you try to forget

At Basingstoke in the 60's we had a batch of Class 4 Standards 75074 – 75079. In my humble opinion they were quite good locos as long as they were not overloaded. Ours were converted to double chimneys – this resulted in a distinct improvement in their performance but this still caused detractors from them as competent locos and some drivers were not happy with them.

One week I was booked with Driver Fred Carlisle (a very good Engineman) he always said they were up to the job of working the 5.9pm Waterloo- Basingstoke (stopping at Woking, Farnborough and all to Basingstoke). This was a 10 coach service with sharp timings.

When cabin talk was about the 75's Fred always maintained that the regulator in the first valve and cut off at 25% was adequate to time this service, often many drivers dismissed this as rubbish.

Well, everyday Monday to Friday we had a

75 and to prove his point Fred, on the right away, made me open the regulator in the first valve and leave it there until up over Westminster Bridge, cut off was pulled up to 40%, then by Vauxhall up to 25% - going well - shut off at the carriage washer at Clapham Yard - 40mph round Clapham Curve - I then opened up the first valve, still 25% cut off - full boiler pressure and we run into Woking dead on time!

No sweat, it just proved that Fred knew his job as an Engineman and he proved his point that the 75's were up to the job! Much these days, no doubt to do with 'Elf and Safety', is responsible for preserved locos being stopped for repairs due to



firebox and stays leaking - well back in steam days this problem was there then. Many times the locos had quite bad leaks of steam and water in many areas - in fact when on shed with fire up one side of the firebox, water could be seen dripping from the ash pan and even small areas of fire just dead and wet due to the leaks.

I can never recall a Bullied loco with firebox

leaks

Until next time - keep the fire bright and the pressure on the red line

Mick Lowe

A useful tip.

Ever painted a lot of small mild steel components on a locomotive and wondered how long the paint is going to stay on in service? Here's a simple method to blacken small mild steel components.

First polish to bright finish, then take your gas torch and heat the component to dull red heat. Now plunge the part into the jet of steam from the spout of a boiling kettle. (An old non auto electric one is ideal for this).

Move the part continuously around in the steam jet until you get a satisfactory oxidised black finish. Allow to cool naturally. Repeat process if necessary. Larger components may need more repeated treatments to build up an oxidised layer. Do this near the open door of your workshop if you don't want to turn it into a sauna.

Some of the parts on my Western Region 1500 class (Speedy) are treated by this method, noticeably the buffers. The finish is quite hard, the only rub marks being where they have met other buffers. I have experienced no flaking and it looks quite authentic. Have a go.

Dave Andrews.

THE TALE OF THE WOBBL Y FIRE ENGINE

Sitting in front of the television around the Christmas and New Year period, absorbing the dismal news of snow, more snow and abandoned cars everywhere, I could not help but wonder why so many people start a

journey in bad weather, only to abandon their car soon afterwards, because they 'did not think it was that bad!

'Why is this? It is not just a simple case of "in the old days we... etc". Obviously, there is the density of traffic these days; if one vehicle stops, we all stop. Modern cars don't help either with the average motor producing around 150 bhp, plus vehicles with automatic transmissions which make it difficult to 'ease away' on a slippery surface. Power steering and big brake servos also reduce the feeling of being in control.

Unfortunately, driver training is no better with driving schools which, like our education system, give sufficient training to pass the test only. This seems to make many modern drivers come to the conclusion that - 'if I pull away on a slippery surface and the wheels spin, then I need to press the 'go' pedal harder". All this thinking makes my head hurt but it did remind me of a project to which I was introduced approximately 15 years' ago. One of my duties as a 'Man from the Ministry' was to examine any commercial vehicle (passenger or goods) which had been modified, especially if this involved changes to the Manufacturer's specifications. One day a pile of papers landed on my desk which, initially, led to disbelief. The only way to find out what all this paperwork was about, was to contact the company making the application. This was a small firm in Whitchurch which seemed to specialise in changing things. What is all this nonsense about Gordon? I asked. "You will be impressed when you see this one John", he replied. "We have joined forces with a local electronics guru to produce an unusual driver training vehicle. This one is designed to train drivers of fire appliances and, if it is successful, we aim to convert a normal car along the same lines for police driver training or, even for public driving schools.

"When the vehicle arrived for test, it turned out to be an old fire tender based on a 12-ton (gross) Dodge chassis with coachbuilt bodywork, including a crew cab, the usual array of side lockers and a 600 gallon water tank mounted amidships. The only change made to the manufacturers specification by the Fire Brigade being a Rolls Royce engine coupled to an Allison automatic gearbox, plus the various mountings for the water pumps. The modifications made by the Whitchurch staff were, however, something quite different. The steering column was severed and fitted with a device incorporating solenoids, clutch and locking



mechanisms. The standard 8-ton rear axle with twin wheels was removed and replaced by a 5-ton front axle from a Fiat/Iveco 4-wheel drive all terrain vehicle fitted with single wheels. The steering mechanism on the new rear axle was controlled by either hydraulic rams or electric motors (cannot remember which!! The reduction of the rear axle weight capability necessitated a reduction in the number of spring leaves in the rear suspension, thus preventing the vehicle from being used on the road with water in the 600-gallon tank. Both the steering column device and rear wheel steering system were controlled by a computer program which included a locking device which could render the brake pedal inoperative. Most of my checks on the vehicle were relatively straightforward i.e. workmanship of an acceptable standard and that the vehicle

met the relevant legal requirements. The problem was, however, making sure that the ELECTRICKERY could not come into operation when the vehicle was being driven on the highway, as this could have disastrous results.

Once satisfied that this could not happen, I issued the relevant paperwork which overruled the manufacturer's chassis data plate. As usual, to somebody who had taken more than their allotted time, I made some tongue in cheek remark to which the reply was "If you're so clever you had better come and see if you can handle it". A nod is as good as a wink as they say.

On the allotted day I reported for duty at 15.00 hours at the old Barton Stacey military parade ground. There were a number of cars and vans together with the old fire engine parked down one side of the parade ground with the rest of the parade ground covered by a sea of traffic cones. I was informed that this was to be the introduction of the training vehicle to a countrywide selection of Fire Brigades and that several dignitaries were expected and that I could 'have a go' after some technical official had examined the vehicle.

After some delay, I was invited to have a drive and was escorted to the vehicle by my guide and gismo operator. He explained that he would be sitting in the rear of the crew cab; he would instruct me where to go through the various lanes in the traffic cones and that he would endeavour to deter my progress by using the various computer programs under his control.

For the purpose of the exercise I was forced to enter a corner much faster than felt safe. The first thing I was aware of was that the water tank was now full and with the high centre of gravity acting on a softer suspension, there was an alarming amount of body roll. I reluctantly felt it necessary to apply the brakes.

This is where it all started to go wrong. The brake application immediately severed the drive between the steering wheel and the road wheels, the vehicle straightened up and, turning the steering wheel had no effect whatsoever. At the same time the brake pedal lock came into operation, preventing the application of the brakes from having any effect. Although I should have expected this problem, it still came as a shock when it happened.

Having regained control of the vehicle without knocking any/many cones over, I felt that I could relax a little as I went into the next corner (without touching the brakes) when all of a sudden the rear end swung round. Whilst attempting to control the latest problem, the machine then slid off sideways in a four wheel drift! Thus it continued round the course with directions being given and the vehicle seemingly doing the opposite. I was literally driving a motorised jelly around a maze at speed. I should, perhaps mention that the footbrake would operate as long as the steering was straight ahead and the steering was connected as long as the brakes were not touched.

It was obvious that my handler had broken me in fairly gently, but now that I had experienced the likely problems, they then came at me thick and fast. This then became a battle of wits with me determined not to let this contraption beat me and my handler thinking 'let's see how he gets out of this one' After approximately 35 minutes, my turn was up as there by then a number of portly gentlemen in dark uniforms with big hats and lots of gold braid were waiting to 'have a go' They did not look like typical fire engine drivers to me!! On driving back to the office, I must confess that I had found the experience both mentally and physically tiring as it did become a battle to keep the vehicle within the lines of cones. It

was, on the other hand, quite exhilarating - like going round Alton Towers without paying!!! On the positive side, I felt that many people would benefit from this type of experience. I certainly would have done 50 years ago after passing the test.

Some weeks later, when I next met one of the



Whitchurch fitters, I enquired about the results of trials at Barton Stacey. I was informed that the project was now shelved as the Fire Brigade Chiefs did not appear to take the training vehicle too seriously. Apparently, most of them seemed to have enjoyed a liquid lunch, took the driving experience as a 'joy ride' and flattened most of the traffic cones in the process. They finally agreed that the Fire Service budget could not support a training vehicle of this type which, in their opinion, would be of little benefit. My immediate reaction was - were these the best people to evaluate the machine or should the trials have been held in the morning (before opening time), or perhaps was everyone connected to the project, including me, looking through rose-tinted specs?

However, should you be out on your travels and see a tatty old fire engine trundling down the road, be warned, it may suddenly go into a Samba type movement. Well I couldn't give it a lifetime warranty, could I, on the day of test and all that!!

John Croker.

Reading through this article reminded me of a similar experience in a car that had been modified to train drivers in the art of skid control on wet or icy roads. It was named , appropriately as the skid or slide car. (I cannot recall which). In this case the car was mounted in a cradle that was fitted with a castor type wheel at each corner. These could be lowered by rams which had the effect of taking the weight of the car, and thus the adhesion, off of the cars own wheels. By lowering these casters in various combinations the instructor, seated beside the driver, could simulate all kinds of skid and the trainee was expected to be able to control the car under any skid conditions thrown at him. The most scary was when he lowered them all at the same time when control was completely lost. A bit like trying to control a shopping trolley.

John Taviner. Editor.

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Jon Evans
Treasurer

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