

EXPANSION LINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE B&DMES

EDITOR JOHN TAVINER-VOLUME FOUR-ISSUE FOUR

DATE DECEMBER 2010



Editorial

Hello to all members. Welcome to the final issue of 2010. As you will be aware this issue is very much less than it has been in the past. This is due to the lack of input from the membership. As I have said many times in the past that without material from the membership the newsletter will not survive. There are, of course, those members that contribute on a regular basis and I thank them very much.

So how about it chaps? Lets have some articles from more of you. It can be of any aspect of our hobby or indeed anything that you think may be of interest to us all.

That's the moaning bit over, lets move on. The recent Halloween public run was a great success and on behalf of those members that turned out to help and the public that came along for a ride and to have a few frights I would like to say a "Big Thank You" to Jon Poulter for organising the event. Thanks are also due to Pat Lowe for keeping us fed and warm with hot soup and hot dogs and to our catering manager Eric Widdowson for keeping us topped up with tea and coffee. Thanks must also go to the members that entered into the spirit of the occasion by wearing the appropriate costumes. Even Ivor Padley's wife did not recognise him in his garb as Count Dracula.

John Taviner Editor

Forthcoming Events

December 2010

28 **Members Christmas Run (Tuesday)**

January 2011

1 **New Year Run (Saturday)**

11 Meeting Night

22/23 **Maintenance Weekend**

25 Bits and Pieces Evening

February

8 Meeting Night

13 **Member's Running Day**

19/20 **Maintenance Weekend**

22 Meeting Night

March

5/6 **Maintenance Weekend**

8 Bits and Pieces Evening

20 **Member's Running Day (Sunday)**

22 Meeting Night



Passengers waiting for rides during the recent Viabes craft fair.

Chairman's Chat.

Well another AGM is over, how the last year has flown. About half the membership turned up and those who didn't will read all about it when they get their copy of the minutes of the meeting.

The garden railway is at last underway, the builder has dug most of the footings, hopefully this very cold weather will not affect things too much and that he will be able to keep things up to schedule, he is hoping to be finished in about three weeks time so we will hope the weather will allow him to do so.

Those hardy members that turned up for the Viabes Christmas Fair will know what a great success it was, we ran none stop all day. I have never seen so many people at Viabes before, John Hutson told us it was like the old days only when it was over a three day period.

Those members that turn up regularly will know, but for the benefit of those who we see less often there was an unsuccessful attempt to break into every one of our buildings. This sort of thing seems to be becoming a more regular occurrence locally I am reliably informed.

John Poulter made some black strip curtains for the entrance and exit of the tunnel for our recent Halloween run ,they were left rolled up in the running shed because the organisers of the Christmas fair wished to use them for the same purpose. Mr Nobody seems to think they were more use to himself and taken them so should he be reading this then would he please put them back as John would like to keep them for next years Halloween Run.

Will members please note that the traverser will be removed soon after the last public running [December 5th].This is to enable repairs to be made to it and it will be back in

operation as soon as possible. Until then it will only be possible to get on the track with smaller locomotives.

I will close this missive by wishing you all a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Terry Hobbs Chairman.

Garden Railway Update

As those of you who helped out at the Viabes Christmas Fair will already know, at long last work has started on the new Garden Railway. Excavation work for the foundations was begun during the week of the society's AGM, and the builder expects to have the blockwork base for the trackwork complete by mid-December. This forecast depends to some extent on the weather, of course, which at the time of writing is not looking too favourable, but we keep our fingers crossed. Track laying can then take place through the winter and early spring when conditions allow. In parallel with the laying of the track we shall have to install its protection measures, so this may slow us down somewhat. We expect to be able to run trains by Easter, although we may not have 100% of the track laid by then. We do still need to purchase some 30 or so yards of SM32 track to replace that taken while stored in the clubhouse, so if anyone hears of any going cheap, please let me know. Those of us already working in the smaller scales are at present pursuing a couple of leads.

Any member who is considering downsizing (literally in this context) is more than welcome to contact any of us already involved to learn more about running on 32

or 45mm tracks. Hopefully a few more of you will join us next year and run trains on the B&DMES Garden Railway.

Brian Hogg

*The Footplate Career of Mick Lowe
spanning 50 years continued*

Well here we go again with Episode 9

Many times it was necessary to do a bit of 'ducking and diving'

After a few incidents on the railway it was decided that no person was allowed in the cab of a unit with the Driver unless he/she had the appropriate cab pass, this also applied to other drivers learning the road. We had a Supervisor (loco foreman) who was an ex Reading Driver and on every afternoon shift (14.00-22.00) always caught the 22.39 train (Basingstoke – Reading) and always rode in the front cab with those drivers who had transferred to Reading. This was ok with us at that time of evening/night as no managers/inspectors were expected to be about!

Well this night he rode over with me, running into No.2 Platform just stopping short of the stopping blocks who should step out from behind the advertisement board but my Train Crew Manager (The Governor)!

I said xx??xx?? – That's my Boss, the Supervisor with me as soon as I stopped released his side door and vanished!

I was well and truly caught this time. After shutting down my cab and getting out there he was waiting at the door, so I said 'you are out late tonight Governor' to which he replied 'who was that riding in the cab with you'? (As the Supervisor had been in civvy clothing he was not recognised as Staff).

I explained who he was and his ex Reading Service to which his reply was 'you know

that no one is allowed to travel in the front cab without a cab pass'

I knew I was in trouble here so the only thing to do was to face up to it so replied 'Sorry my error, I was wrong and won't let it happen again'

He said 'get caught again you will be in big trouble – I have caught three of you this evening so be warned'. A very fair decision by him he was after all applying the rules.

A relief for me!!

By contrast another nice incident with a Manager.

All turns of duty when single manned had a Personal Needs Break (PNB) that was booked between the 3rd/5th hours of duty. This was for a rest, cup of tea/sandwiches and toilet needs which were booked away from the train/unit/loco.

One day working a late running Cross Country Service from Reading to Birmingham, I arrived at Birmingham to find that my return service was waiting for me as we were over an hour late.

Now I never liked to delay any service where passengers were concerned as they in effect paid my wages, so I was quite willing to cross over the station to relieve the crew and get away quickly - as I got out my cab on arrival a Cross Country Manager came up to me and asked very nicely if I would be taking my PNB as we want to get this service away as quickly as possible to save further delay. To which I replied that I would dearly love a cup of tea.

He says that if he brought me tea and sandwiches would I be prepared to get away now.

Ok by me – I relieved the Driver and before I got the road along comes this nice manager with a tray, pot of tea, milk, sugar, several packs of sandwiches, fancy cakes and slices of fruit cake

So off I went happy (Mrs Mick who has typed this up asks - what about the toilet needs did he do that for you as well? Ha Ha) Life gets better sometimes doesn't it? But really behind it all was the fact that penalties were in force for late running so they wanted me away as quickly as possible. On reaching Reading the Buffet staff collected the crockery and I passed the remainder of the food to my relief. Another time contrary to the last nice incident when I was working a service which was back and forth Reading to Paddington, due to late running I just carried on working the up and down service and missed my PNB. When I booked off the Supervisor/Foreman asked me why I had not taken my PNB, I told him I was concerned that people wanted to get home after a days work and were paying for the service. He replied that if an accident had occurred and I had not taken my break both of us would have been in trouble with the Board of Trade and an enquiry could say that I had not been following the rules. This was the only time that I came across this observance of a PNB in the appropriate time slot. I think the Foreman had had a bad day so had to have a chirp at me to release his frustrations. During the times I have written these articles on some occasions questions have been put to me about an article. I can assure you all these stories are 100% true as they happened, I have been trying to deviate from the book style writings by showing what life was like on the job. No we did not always have the needle on the red line! Things went pear shaped at times and this is what I have been attempting to put across -

which I hope works!

Engineering Works

Most of this type of work was done at night during the week. Weekend work was Saturday night and all day Sundays. The usual hours on duty were 8-10 hours, which included travel to and from the site. Now this was a bit of a problem at times, book on duty then go by taxi or staff car and find the road on the bridge nearest the site, hoping you can see the section being worked, then scramble down or up a bank and climb the fence enabling you to walk along the track to relieve the crew. The crew then go back the same way to the vehicle taking them home.

This relief of crews often meant walking or driving across fields to get near the site. The information that the site was at Milepost XX was not often helpful when driving down country lanes in the early hours of the day in pitch darkness!!

The system has now improved as more information is available and there is a Working Site Representative in a convenient place to advise where to go. Sometimes the train loco can move to the relief point or station /bridge.

All this now helped by phones to keep in contact as the train moves along as work progresses, which we did not have years ago. Another little snippet of information - when Freight trains worked to Basingstoke North Yard (now the Car Park) it was always set back into the long road nearest the chalk bank.

This was known as the Aberdare Road. The points to set back were under the Reading Road Bridge where the track from the bridge gently curves around to the left, so that with a long train you were out of sight of the Shunters who would set you back when the points were over.

So when approaching Basingstoke from the Reading direction trains passed a fixed distance semaphore (yellow swallow tail). This signal had a bell on it that was operated when it was safe to set back into the yard. This was always a time to keep the loco quiet by not blowing off so that the bell could be heard. As a Meercat would say SIMPLES!!!!

Well that's all for now folks Time to book off

Mick Lowe

Halloween October 2010

Well what a lovely time we all had on the Halloween Public Running Day Everyone entered into the spirit of things by donning hats, wigs, masks and dressing up in various costumes and decorating the locos.

One very smart ticket selling Dracula and a guard dressed as a Witch – who at one stage somehow managed to lose his hat somewhere around the track and had to ride back round to retrieve it!

A big thank you to John Poulter who as usual did a fantastic job of supplying decorations and with helpers adorned the area with tea lights, carved pumpkins all lit up, ghosts hanging in the trees and again the creepy graveyard by the track. The smoke machine was very effective in the tunnel as was huge spider hanging over the track. John provided little buckets of sweets for the passengers to help themselves to as they left the rides.

The day was very busy and a great time was had by all.

To round off the evening members tucked into hot dogs and soup followed by the 'famous bread pudding' all provided by the 'Catering Manager Eric and his assistant Pat (me).

Thank you to everyone else who made the event such a success .

Pat Lowe

Miniature Traction Engine Rally

A few of us members are organising a miniature steam rally for the 16th and 17th of April, the weekend before Easter. This will entail the use of the adjacent field of which the council has granted us the use. This we will fill with model traction engines and other related displays.

We also intend to hire the two halls. This is with the intention to fill with traders, supplying items such as castings to cutting tools and from second hand to new. This is a very big undertaking and we need your support both before and during the show, so if you can help or have a good idea to enhance the proceedings, then please let me know.

Please photocopy the poster included or see me for more and spread around on your journeys to other club functions. The more people we get to come, hopefully, the more money the club will benefit from.

So enjoy.

Jon Poulter

The Viables Christmas Fair.

This event, organised by unit holders at Viables Craft Centre, was held on Sunday 28th November.

B&DMES were asked to provide train rides which was to be combined with a visit to Santa's Grotto. provided by Viables who also sold the tickets with a donation to B&DMES for each ticket sold. In addition to this we could give extra rides, as required, at our normal public running rate. The clubhouse was to be used for the grotto and the event organisers undertook to decorate

the clubhouse in a suitable manner. In the end they decorated not just the clubhouse but also the station platform and tunnel. The day dawned dry and bright but very cold. Start time was 10am, an hour earlier than our usual start time of 11am. Steam power was provided by Steve Newell with his B1, Neil and Darren Davis with their Black Five and Steve ?, a member of Southampton and Fareham model engineering clubs, with his Gresley 2-8-0. The steam power was later added to with the arrival of Mick Lowe and Jersey Lil. As usual the initial motive power was to be the club's Class 66 diesel and Tom Burgess's class 37. It soon became apparent that we were to have problems with adhesion due to ice forming on the track (just like full size). After some feverish work with any abrasive articles to hand such as bricks and files the surface ice was cleared. The situation



improved but it still needed the combined efforts of both locos to get the train under way. When the steam power was ready they too ran double headed, with exception of the Southampton member who ran solo with two passenger trolleys for most of the day, and at times a combination of both forms of power were run together. Two trains ran throughout most of the day and even then we had queues waiting for their turn. Around 3.30pm the ice started to cause problems again and we had to run until nearly 4.30pm before the last of the

passengers were cleared.

On the whole an excellent day was had by all, members and passengers alike. Thank you to all those that turned out to help on such a cold day. I think a special "Thank You" is due to Ivor Padley who manned his post, taking and issuing tickets, throughout the whole day without a break.

John Taviner

**A Very Merry Christmas And A
Happy And Prosperous New
Year To All Members.
From The Editor**

**Basingstoke & District
Model Engineering
Society**

Miniature Steam Rally

Craft Units
Raffle Prizes
Train Rides
New Garden Railway

16th & 17th April 2011

**Viables Craft Centre
Basingstoke Hampshire RG22 4BJ**

Admission By Donation

Leading Model Engineering Suppliers

Licensed Bar

Catering from 07.30am

Organiser: J. Poulter - Tel:01256 463884. e-mail: j.poulter@middlesex.co.uk

SPONSORS: TO BE ADVISED.

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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.

Jon Evans

Treasurer

Who's Who.

Chairman

Terry Hobbs

Vice Chairman

Tom Burgess

Secretary

Brian Hogg

Treasurer

Jon Evans

Committee Members.

Bob Lovett

Member

Graham Blissett

Member

Barry Spender

Member

Project Leaders.

Catering manager

Eric Widdowson

Electrical Work

Vacant

Library

Ken Jones

Painting/Decorating

David Andrews

Publicity

Eric Widdowson

Assistant needed

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