

EXPANSION LINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE B&DMES

EDITOR JOHN TAVINER-VOLUME FIVE-ISSUE TWO

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Editorial

June already and time for the second issue of "Expansion Link" for 2011.

I feel I must start by saying what a huge success the Miniature Steam Rally turned out to be. I am sure all members will join me in saying a big THANKYOU to all the members involved in the organization of the event.

A report on how this event came about and the work behind the scenes is given by Neil Davis in this issue.

As you will see from The Chairman's page we have had some more trouble from the vandals. So far this has not been as serious as in the past but it does cause us expense which we can ill afford.

Club Secretary, Brian Hogg, Gives an update on the Garden Railway. It has been quite a long time since we had to abandon this project due to vandalism. It has been rebuilt on a much sturdier base with the track covered when not in use. It means more work to remove and refit the covers for a running session but if it is going to deter the vandals then it is more than worth the extra effort.

Graham Blisset gives an update on the operation of the signals and Mick Lowe is taking a well earned break from recounting his experiences on the main line.

John Taviner. Editor.

Forthcoming events.

July

- 3 Public Running
- 9 Members Running Day (Sat)
- 12 Meeting Night
- 17 Public Running
- 26 Meeting Night

Aug

- 7 Public Running
- 9 Bring & Buy Evening
- 14 Public Running
- 23 Meeting Night

Sept

- 4 Public Running
- 6 Meeting Night
- 11 Cats Protection League Craft Fair ????
- 18 Members Running Day (Sun)
- 20 Meeting Night



Chairman's Chat.

I have learned today, 28th May, that some low life has taken it upon themselves to Graffiti the station buildings and paving slabs on the platform.

No doubt by the time you read this article it will general knowledge among the membership. Also earlier this month other low life tried to break into the carriage shed and Dave Blaza and myself have effected a temporary repair.



As you will all be aware the club show week end was a great success and I must thank John Poulter and his team for a job well done and also thank all those members who assisted over that week end .

The clubs visitors day last Sunday the 22nd was another success with visitors from Reading, Fareham, Southampton and Bournemouth clubs. Our thanks to Pat Lowe and Eric for keeping us in tea and biscuits and a lovely Ploughman's Lunch. Everyone went home at the end of the day happy.

The garden railway is almost complete, we await the new crossover and then the steaming bay sidings can be put in and the job completed. Next on the agenda will be the gate under the bridge and the old tunnel roof and then we will take stock before deciding on the next project.

There is also some track work that needs to

be done to try and get the signalling to work more efficiently, this will be done in conjunction with Graham, you will see his article on the subject in this issue of the magazine.



Most of you know of the problems with the clubs class 66 loco. Hopefully this will soon be repaired as we have now received the new controller from Parkside and hopefully Tom and Graham will soon have it up and running once more.

Those of you that are into computers and visit our website will have seen Stevens report on our show week end, it makes good reading thanks Steve for a job well done.

Happy Steaming.

Terry Hobbs.

The Rally April 16th/17th 2011.

There is a lot of truth in the old saying about small acorns and large oak trees; well that is how it happened with the Rally.....

It all started at the Steam Rally at Amberley Chalk Pits Museum. A small group of us were soaking up the atmosphere with engines of all types and sizes. The smell of coal smoke and hot oil was in abundance and we should not have inhaled as much, and then maybe we would not have dropped ourselves in at the deep end.

With a passing comment from Jon (he's the one to blame), "we could do something like

this back at the club", that was our acorn so to speak.

Over the next few weeks we would build on Jon's original comment and so it was decided to hold Rally Committee meetings on Wednesday evenings. Before this really got going the idea was thrown open to all club members at a Tuesday meeting, so that any like minded members could join us



Then it was down to business. The weeks seemed to fly past, no sooner had we taken on a project for the coming week, it was another meeting and yet another project. We found that we had to enrol the help of others with particular skills. Computer expert, Ken, for poster design and Malcolm with his advertising skills did us proud in magazines such as Old Glory and Vintage Spirit. Soon the weeks changed to days and time was running short with still a lot to do. Table repairs and cleaning, signs (lots of them), painted plywood with letters filled in with Magic marker pens (We don't want to see another Magic Marker for a very long time). The coal had to be transported to site and signs had to be put out (at a silly o'clock of the morning). Then the Rally was upon us.....

Around midday on the Friday our first visitors started to arrive, then more and more. The worry then was would they all fit

on the field as we had the day visitors to cater for as well. We need not have worried, it's amazing, you *can* get a quart into a pint pot! The field was full and the exhibition tables were a sight to behold! Friday evening came and it was time to call it a day. Security was next on the agenda and three of the more burly members donned their sleeping bags and slept in 3 star luxury on the hall floor, or at least it felt like it after a glass of port or two!

Morning broke and the big day was here. A few more arrivals on Saturday morning completed the list of exhibitors, the paperwork was checked and it was on with the show. The weather was kind to us on both days (an old member must have been doing his bit in that department). A few more members of the public over the two days would have been nice and improving the advertising for next year will be a must. All that took part gave good reports like "what's the dates for next year?" "this is a really nice venue". Very pleasing comments for a first attempt.

Meanwhile Terry had been doing sterling work getting the troops rallied for manning the railway. Double heading with four trolleys and two trains was the order of the day.



The event also had a raffle. Prizes were donated by a large number of local and not

so local firms and many thanks go to them all. We must not forget the ladies who manned the stall (I'm sure there must be a better way to say that). No-one survived unscathed whether they were members of the public or the club. A raffle ticket was as good as a gate pass and not many escaped. From all members of the Rally Committee, many thanks for all the time and assistance given to make the event such an enjoyable success.

Neil Davis

Pictures by The Editor

Signals Update

As a number of members have recently asked what is happening to the signals, the Signal Monkey has decided to take pen to paper, or is that fingers to keys ?. To start off with the Monkey would like to dispel a number of comments from some members that the current signalling system has never worked since being installed. As far as the Monkey is aware, all of the previous signalling systems, except possibly the two semaphore signals that were used to protect the tunnel and traverser, have been a bit temperamental. Despite the Monkey's best efforts the current signalling system does occasionally throw a wobbly for no apparent reason, with signals remaining at Red or Green. This usually results in the Disaster Recovery plan being implemented, otherwise known as the Signal Master Reset button. More often than not though, the signals do work fine during public running, so long as they are not abused. Abuse that results in the signals being upset includes:-

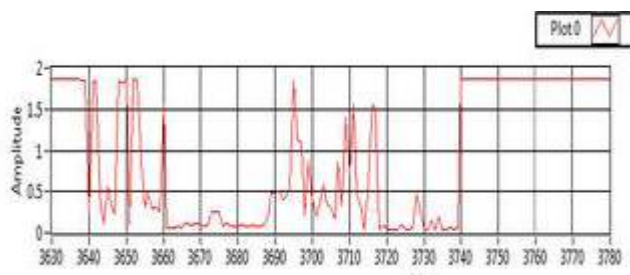
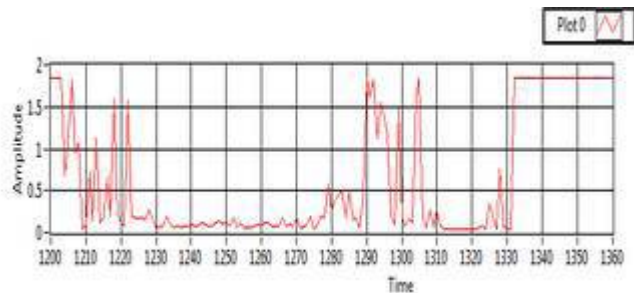
- Trains passing signals at Red, when the next section is occupied;
- Trains travelling at "Speed" over the signal pads;
- Locomotives & rolling stock having "Glued"

- axle & wheels rather than welded ones;
- Diesel pulled passenger rolling stock;
- Rust, leaves, oil and ice on the track;
- People fiddling with signal parts they are not familiar with;
- Swearing at the signals;
- Complaining about or to the Signal Monkey.

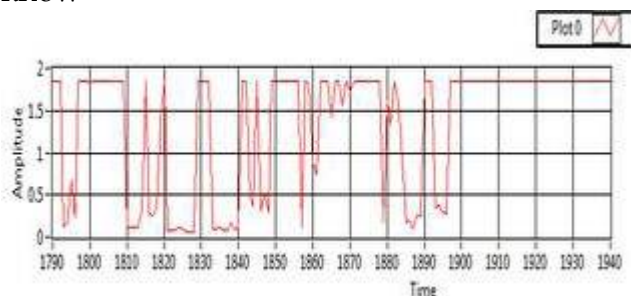
Some of the above abuse can easily be resolved. However, the Monkey, not deterred by this abuse, decided to bring along his trusty laptop (A portable confuser rather than a desk based confuser) and some very expensive Engineering software to try and get to the bottom of the problem. On Easter Monday, the Monkey connected up a bird's nest of wires from the Signal Control box in the shed to a Magical box that plugged into his laptop. Every time a train containing passengers left the station, which unfortunately was not that often, the Monkey's laptop recorded the wiggly volts being measured by the Magical box. When the train, which was Diesel hauled, went over a signal pad the wiggly volts measured by the Magical box changed rapidly giving Monkey lots of interesting numbers. After a day spent doing this, the Monkey went off to ponder long and hard about the wiggly volts, as short pondering does not lead to a lasting solution. After Monkey found that Microsoft Excel became rather unhappy dealing with all the wiggly volts, Monkey turned once again to his very expensive Engineering software and wrote a special program to interpret the wiggly volts.

At this point for ease of explanation please ignore the numbers on the bottom of the graphs, as their explanation will probably result in more confusion all round !!. The first two graphs show the wiggly volts for the Lamp-Post and the Back Straight signal

pads.



The peaks and troughs are the result of the train running over the signal pad. The low wiggly volt level in the 2nd and 4th quarters is when the first passenger trolley and the guard's trolley are running over the signal pad. The undecided (high and low) wiggly volts bits in the 1st and 3rd quarters are when the diesel and the second passenger trolley pass over the signal pad. Despite the variation in the wiggly volts, the signals responded to the train passing over the signal pad, as at least one good axle from either first passenger trolley or the guard's trolley, was in contact with the signal pad long enough for the signal to react. Now compare these graphs with the next graph for the Tunnel Entrance signal pad. This graph shows that the signal pad was rather unsure of what to make of these wiggly volts, and consequently did not know



whether to set the signals or not. After seeing this graph the Monkey went and checked the signal pad at the Tunnel Entrance and realised that it was actually less than a third of the size of most of the other signal pads. Consequently, when the train passed over the signal pad, most of the time there was no axle in contact with the pad, so the required low wiggly volts were not present long enough, which resulted in the signal not responding to the train.

Although not as severe as those obtained at the Tunnel Entrance, similar wiggly volts results were also measured at the Tunnel Exit and on the Station. The Signal Monkey also looked at these signal pads and found they were less than two-thirds the size of the other signal pads. Monkey concluded that the size of the signal pads on the Tunnel Entrance and Exit could, with very minimal effort, be increased in size to fall into line with the rest of the signal pads. However, little or no change could be made to the size of the pad in the Station.

The Signal Monkey believes that making changes to the signal pads at the Tunnel Entrance and Exit should make a significant difference to the operating performance and reliability of the signals, so long as the level of abuse is kept to a minimum. After these changes are made, the Signal Monkey will repeat the measurements with his trusty laptop and Magical box to see what improvements have been made.

The next phase of the signalling system investigation is a tale of two halves. Firstly to look at the axles and wheels on all of the guard and passenger rolling stock, as the wiggly volts results indicate that some of the wheels and axles may not be in metallic harmony with one another, and the track. Secondly, to look at the noise filtering that is used to prevent inadvertent signal triggering

and to protect the electronics in the Signal Control box from excessive wiggly volts damage. The Signal Monkey is leaving this bit until last as this entails the biggest amount of work for the Signal Monkey, and some of the problems could be resolved by altering the size of the two signal pads. And finally, the Signal Monkey has now identified and ordered a new limit switch for the traverser, which depending on those nice delivery people may actually have been fitted by the time you read this article, but don't hold me to that !!
To be continued...
The Signal Monkey

Garden Railway

Well, we have now completed two successful public running sessions on the Garden Railway and it appears to be



attracting a high degree of interest from the visitors, just as we had hoped.

A loop of 32mm track was completed in time for the Steam Rally in April, enabling trains to be run for the first time. This was followed by the 45mm loop in May which first saw operation at the Public Running session on 15 May. The steam-up sidings have not yet been laid; this is for two reasons. We have used all the usable plywood from the old Garden Railway in making the new protective covers, and a

bespoke two gauge crossover (with two different rail profiles) is required to link the inner, 32mm loop, to the sidings across the 45mm main line. The latter cannot be delivered by its maker until the autumn, and so there is no rush to complete the covers, thereby allowing us to spread expenditure over the summer period, and in addition giving the very small number of people who have worked through the winter and spring on the Garden Railway a bit of a rest. We already have the steel straps and securing rods fabricated for the covers for the sidings. Some adjustment and 'fettling' of the track will be necessary through the year, as the flexible track tries to straighten itself out again giving rise to noticeable kinks at the joins. Additionally, we are aware that some packing under the track is needed in places where there are slight dips in the top of the concrete block wall. These are barely visible until a train runs over them.

After a long wait (owing to the only reasonably priced supplier being out of stock) the padlocks have now been fitted to the securing rods for the protective covers. All are operated with a single key. A key has been added to the club's main ring of keys, but if any Garden Railway user would like a key of his own he should contact the writer. I should stress at this point that the removal of the covers is a two man job, since they are both heavy and rather unwieldy due to the steel strap legs. If they are not lifted vertically and hoisted clear of the track there is a high risk that the track could be damaged by inadvertent contact. Similarly, when replacing the covers care must be taken not to drop them on the track. A few moments is all that is needed to check that the edge strips are clear of the track and that the holes in the strap legs are in line with the hole through the wall.

A very limited number of operators have driven their trains on the Garden Railway so far. I hope that many more will now start to use it, both in support of Public Running days and on private or club sessions.

Brian Hogg

Treasures Notes.

Thank you to all the members that have renewed their subscriptions for the coming year.

So far only 2 members have not.

We have also, mainly due to the Steam Rally and the opening of the Garden Railway, recruited 9 new members.

This brings the current membership up to a total of 59.

The Steam Rally in April was, thanks to John Poulter and the team, a great success and generated a lot of publicity for the club.

It also made a small surplus, just enough for them to do it all over again next year!!

I now have a supply of club pin badges. All new members receive one on joining. If you have lost yours or require another one they are available at cost. Please contact me.

Jon Evans Treasurer



A selection of pictures from April's steam rally.



All are by the club's Librarian Ken Jones.

NB. Ken has a large collection of back issues of Model Engineer for disposal. If you require any to complete your own collection, contact Ken for a list of those that are available. Ken can be contacted on club nights or telephone at 01252 875773. Ed.

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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