

# EXPANSION LINK

## NEWSLETTER OF THE B&DMES

EDITOR JOHN TAVINER-VOLUME SIX-ISSUE ONE

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### *Editorial*

Hello and welcome to this, the first issue of "Expansion Link" of 2012.

I know it is rather late to do so, but I would like to wish you all A Happy and Successful New Year.

As I write this, the first two of the scheduled maintenance weekends have taken place and as you will see much progress has been made in the clearance of overgrown trees and shrubs. Even the entrance to the original tunnel has been revealed. This was built before I was a club member but I understand that it was an exercise for apprentice brick layers undergoing training at Basingstoke Tech. College. The tunnel which has been used for storage over the last few years is in very poor condition and out of use now that we have the new storage facility behind the station. I do not know what the plans are for fate of the old tunnel but I think it would be nice to retain the brickwork as a memento to the early years of the club.

The first of the major events for 2012, namely the two day rally over the weekend of 14/15<sup>th</sup> of April, is only a few short weeks away. Jon Poulter gives an update to the planning of this event elsewhere in this issue. It looks to be bigger than last year and I am sure that it be even more than the huge success it was in 2011.

Before closing I make my usual request for material for this newsletter. Remember, it can be anything that you think may be of interest to the membership.

*John Taviner Editor*

### *Forthcoming Events*

April

- 1 **Public Running**
- 3 Meeting Night
- 7/8/9 **Easter Members Running**
- 14/15 **Miniature Steam Rally**
- 17 Bits and Pieces Evening

May

- 1 Bring and Buy Evening
- 6 **Public Running**
- 15 Stationary Engines
- 20 **Visitors Open Day**
- 29 Meeting Night

June

- 3 **Public Running**
- 12 Bits and Pieces Evening
- 16 **Public Running (Sat)**
- 23 **Efficiency Competition (Sat)**
- 26 Meeting Night

Note that the second public running day for June is on a Saturday. This is the first of three Saturday public runs to see if we can increase our passenger numbers when most of the units are open.



### *Chairman's Chat.*

Hello Members.

Well here we are again, spring is on us once more and a new season of public running is upon us, you will notice from your calendars that this year we are switching to Saturday running in the middle of the month during the summer, hopefully this will increase the number of passengers we carry due to the Viables site being a lot busier on Saturdays. Hopefully a few more of you will turn out to help the few regulars who usually help on these days.

I would like to thank all those that turned up on the work weekends and did such a good job, not only is the site much tidier but we also have a nice new lid on the coal bunker, guard's trolleys repaired and new sides for two of the club's passenger trolleys.

As you all know mid April sees the club steam rally and the organisers are looking for considerable amounts of help. So please let us see plenty of commitment from you all. We have been asked by the organising committee to public run as an attraction to the event and not as part of the event, so without locomotives and helpers we will struggle, if last years numbers are anything to go by, for this reason I will be asking people for definite commitment to the cause, hopefully experienced people from among our friends in other clubs will volunteer to help.

The observant ones among you will have noticed my absence from the club for over a month the reason being what started as a bad cold developed into something a lot more serious, I do seem to be getting a bit better now so hopefully I will be back before too long. So in the meantime I will wish you all well.

*Terry Hobbs Chairman.*

### *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 29<sup>th</sup> 2012 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.

Preparation for the Steam Rally on the 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> April is now in full swing and I would reiterate the need for volunteers on the day to help with marshalling the event and manning the Public Running.

Also, any donations for the Rally raffle will be gratefully received.

Many thanks,

*Jon Evans Treasurer.*

### *Miniature Steam Rally & Exhibition Update*

With the rally & exhibition only a matter of weeks away now, hopefully you're all looking forward to it. This years show has grown from the seeds of the last, so should be even better. The organising team and I thought it was going to get easier, we all know what thought can do.

This year we have added the old car track, which has now been mainly cleared of undergrowth. This area will be utilized for outside

traders, which include M.J.Engineering, J.B.Cutting tools and Whiz Ink, who sell a range of radio controlled planes, helicopters, etc. Leading on from here to the main field with near on 40 model traction engines in scales from 2 inch to 4.5 inch. It is also hope to have Hampshire museum services recently overhauled full size Tasker steam wagon, on show. This along with the bar and catering should make a show just on its own.

Again this year, both halls have been booked, with the main hall having been revamped; there is a little more floor space to fill. With the clubs good name at stake, I believe what we have to show will make good viewing. Traders situated in the halls are:- Tools 2000 selling a range of smaller craft and modelling equipment, Models U Drive with a selection of boat accessories, View Models trading second hand models and HPM Steam with castings for 3, 4, and 6 inch scale McLaren road locomotives. Support is being given by the Reading club and S.M.E.E giving a display of some of their member's creations. Other areas covered by individuals include Fairground, Aero engines, Stirling engines, Railway and part built Traction engines.

This year we tried to give the event a Hampshire theme, afraid to say it has not turned out to be a great success, but we do have a good collection of photographs of both road and rail covering the 3 main builders of steam in Hampshire. plus a few models.

Space has also been given to Hollycombe steam museum, Lavender line based in

Sussex and hoping, although not confirmed, the local group of war gamers.

Not forgetting our own club display, so start polishing those models, if you can let me have a list along with values for the insurance as soon as possible please.

Please spread the word of this year's show and look forward to another great success.

*The Organising Team*

*Crofton Steam Gala 2008 – Taking part.*

I first became involved with Crofton in the late 1960's when my parents joined the intrepid band of volunteers who carried out the original restoration. I drifted away from it in the late 80's, but will always be indebted to Crofton for the basic grounding in life skills I acquired there. I can well remember driving the 1812 engine, late one afternoon, bearing in mind I was only about 10 years old, so some one had to stay with me. I believe it was Chris Harvey, who asked one of the other crew to relieve him for a few moments. Before they could answer, a deep Wiltshire accent cut in "He'll be alright, I'll keep an eye on him" the tall imposing figure of Frank Wilmott, Crofton's last driver, appeared from the direction of the front door. Chris of course, made his call of nature last until we shut down that evening. No price can ever be put on these experiences.

I attended the 2007 Gala with my mate's Marshall Traction Engine, however this year, there was talk of some rolling work to be done so I agreed to attend with my Roller. With good crew, in the shape of Jonathon (Stiggy) Thompson available, I dispensed with the lorry and opted to drive the 18 miles from home, with the living van and trailer in tow.

We left home on the Thursday morning, and

following a good run down, arrived mid afternoon. We disposed of our rather un-photogenic trailer, in the car park, the living van being quickly shunted into the grounds by the blacksmith shop by one of the volunteers pick ups. With the happy home set up, I was able to kick back and cook an evening meal. The roller resting peacefully by the engine house.

Friday dawned bright and by eight breakfast was cooked. We were joined by Ben Brown who was on his way to collect his Traction Engine from Wilcot. Crofton then home was the last leg of an epic 150 mile round trip to the Great Dorset Steam Fair for him. I travelled down with them, then returned back with Ben's car. The next few hours were spent cleaning the roller up, which was then left un-sheeted, as Crofton was in steam that afternoon for invited guests. Repairs to the track, prior to us rolling it,



were well under way and needed no input from me. In any case I had another mission. The Canal had always been dry between Crofton top and bottom locks, when I was involved at Crofton. It was almost alien at the 2007 Gala to watch the boats passing, so the chance to assist a friend down the flight was not to be missed.

A brisk walk to the top lock reminded me I spend my working life pushing a pen. At the top lock I caught a faint whiff of coal smoke

mixed with the fresh straw, in the adjacent field. I instinctively, looked in the direction of Wolf Hall to see if it was Ben and Stiggy, but there was no sign of a traction engine, and I was not expecting them for another few hours. A quick check on the breeze and of course it was smoke drifting from Crofton. What an impact it must have been when all new, remembering most local people had never travelled or seen the likes of it before. The new canal, with strangers working the boats. A great three story pumping station made only from the best materials, with its tall chimney and ferocious appetite for coal. Terry and Pauline had just had time to brew a coffee, aboard Lucy their Narrow boat when I arrived. In the next two hours we worked down the flight, turned the boat below the bottom lock then moored up back above Crofton lock. As soon as Ben and Stiggy arrived we pushed his living van in next to mine to complete our camp. In view of my excessive exercise, we adjourned to the Swan at Wilton for supper and a few pints. Returning later, around Wilton water on foot, by oil lamp light.

Luckily I had prepared the roller of lighting up the previous day, as I awoke an hour later than planned. This of course, was completely un-connected with the trip to the Swan. We spent the day rolling, down by the canal, with Ben bring us down water behind his traction engine. Saturday evening we availed ourselves of the excellent hospitality of the Crofton Volunteers, and Wardens, at their barbeque.

Sunday I left Stiggy to complete the rolling works whilst I helped lock Lucy back up the flight ready for them to set off back to Devizes. We then assembled both engines up with their respective trailers in readiness to journey home. Sunday evening we travelled back to just below Little Bedwyn,

where there is a suitable lay-by next to the canal. Ben had cooked a stew, which was soon consumed, by the four who formed the engine crews. We were also joined by Boz Oram, who was heading home with his fair organ. Quite what the couple with the camper van made of their new neighbours, I do not know. However they had dined on American Cray fish thoughtfully removed from the canal that evening. Following a peaceful night, we lit up early and the engines still being warm from the previous day saw us on the road by eight thirty. As the miles wore on, so the task of clearing up living vans and putting engines away loomed. Not to mention work the next day. On reflection, no one could have made us more welcome than the Crofton crew, and by default they have one of the most picturesque areas to let us play in. Rail traffic had been light and the evenings cool and tranquil, so it's easy to look back through rose tinted spectacles, at days long gone. Then reality come in, the two hours working the flight, would have been a 12 hour trip with two loaded boats and a horse, all done on not a lot to eat, day after day. Our trip to the Swan, at two pints and no food, an absolute luxury. Working at Crofton, with no electric, no running water, and inspections from high ranking officials, to check all was in order, not quite the dream job. All we can do is try to keep history alive, tell it as it was, and then let those who listen draw their own conclusions.

In closing I would like to thank all those past and present who made the Gala possible. I for one will be pencilling it in for 2009.

*Picture by Tristan Leveret shows Fred leaving Crofton.*

*Fred Cooper*

*This article by Fred Cooper was originally written by him for the Kennett and Avon Canal magazine but not published by them.*

*With acknowledgement to the Kennett and Avon Canal magazine.*

*ED.*

Further to my request for articles on the Editorial page I would like remind you that they can be anything that you think may be of interest to other members.

Perhaps a project that you are currently working on.

A solution to a problem you may have had that could be of help to others.

A visit to another club or trip on a mainline steam hauled train.

Even something that may not be directly connected to our hobby but of mechanical or engineering interest.

Remember Ken Jones' articles on the derivation of spanner and the workings of Big Ben.

To those members that have contributed over the five years that I have been Editor I say "Thank You All Very Much" with special mention to Mick Lowe for his recollections of his years as a mainline Engineman.

*John Taviner Editor*

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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.**

Graham Blissett

Member

Barry Spender

Member

Dave Andrews

Member

Darren Davis

Member

Steve Newell

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/

John Neal

Traction Engine Track

Vacant

Webmaster

Stephen Newell

Newsletter

John Taviner