

EXPANSION LINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE B&DMES

EDITOR JOHN TAVINER-VOLUME Six Issue 3. SEPT. 2012



Editorial

Welcome to this, the third issue of Expansion Link for 2012.

My opening comments at the start of the June issue related to the sad news of the passing of the club Chairman Terry. This issue follows similar lines with the equally sad news that Fred Pheby passed away on Friday August 31st.

Fred was a familiar face to all but the newest members of the club being a founder member way back in 1976.

Club Secretary Brian has asked for your thoughts on a couple of items to be discussed at the AGM next month. If any member has any ideas on these items please let Brian or any committee know ASAP.

Mick Lowe relates some more of his experiences as a main line Fireman and Driver.

Fred Cooper has written a very interesting article on his involvement with steam and all things mechanical. Would any other member like to bare their soul and tell of their interest in model engineering and related subjects? I think this could make for a good occasional series for future publication.

Graham Blissett tells of fund raising at two school fetes. Although not B&DMES events he took the opportunity to advertise our public runs.

Finally I intend to stand down as Editor. I have been doing the job for almost six years and feel that it is time for fresh ideas. I will

complete the December issue which will complete the six years. So all those interested put your names forward before the AGM. No special skills are needed. When I started I had no idea what the job entailed but learnt as I went along.

John Tavinor Editor.

Forthcoming Events.

October

- 2 Meeting Night
- 7 Public Running
- 14 Members Running Day (Sun)
- 16 Bits and Pieces Evening
- 27 Halloween Public Running (Afternoon and Evening)
- 30 Meeting Night

November

- 13 Bring and Buy Evening
- 18 Members Running Day (Sun)
- 19-23 AGM (Date to be decided)
- 27 Meeting night

December

- 2 Public Running
- 11 Meeting Night
- 27 Members Christmas Run

Fred Pheby

The funeral of Fred took place at Basingstoke Crematorium on Wednesday 12th September. Nine of our club members and four from the Basingstoke Model Railway Club attended. As most of you know Fred was a founder member and in the early days was always there to help in the construction of the original track and the subsequent extensions to the track and buildings.



In the next edition of this publication (December) there should be a fuller story on Fred with reminiscences of some of the years he spent with the club.

I have included a few photos from the club archives that show Fred doing what he loved to do.

John Taviner

Visitors Day.

Visitors day held on Saturday 12th September proved to be very successful. Not only did we have a good number of members from other clubs, with a varied selection of models, the weather was kind to us with bright sunshine for most of the day. Visitors came from a number of clubs in the south including Reading, Southampton, Beech-Hurst, Fareham and Portsmouth. I'm sorry if I have omitted anyone. Some faces

were familiar from previous visitor days but there were also some that I had never met before. Likewise the models, some returning from previous visits and some new to us. The Viables site also seemed to be busier than usual. This resulted in a good number of the public showing interest. Of those that I spoke to, many expressed surprise at knowing we existed in spite of being local. This has come up on several occasions in the past so maybe we should try, somehow, to make the general public more aware of our activities.

I handed out a number of leaflets of our public running dates so hopefully we may get a few more passengers. One chap I spoke to owns a 3.5 inch Juliet which he inherited. I gave him a run down on club activities and I am pretty sure we will have a new member.



Thank you to all B&DMES members that helped out at the event with special mention and appreciation to Pat Lowe for the excellent spread of food on the day. Thanks also to Susan Lewis for the superb sponges and to Dave Mattingly for the fruit pies and cakes.

John Taviner

Secretary's Notes, September 2012

Well, the evenings are drawing in and the kids are back at school. It can only mean one thing, it's not long now until the AGM.

As you will all be aware the post of Chairman will have to be filled at the AGM. Current Vice Chairman, Tom, Burgess will not be standing. Volunteers or nominations to the Secretary please.

The Committee is seeking member feedback on a couple of issues prior to finalising proposals to be put to the AGM in November.

The first concerns the settlement of the track supports through the station area. This makes it extra difficult to pull away with a full train load when track conditions are less than perfect. We are looking for outline design suggestions for supporting the track to achieve an even, regular gradient between the pedestrian underpass (from the car park to the station) and the footbridge at the other end of the station. There is a 3" difference (climbing) between these two points which must be regarded as fixed. The situation is currently made worse by various dips and rises in the station caused by subsidence of the supports into the raised bank created when the track was first installed. If possible we would like to build in height adjustment of the supports to allow for further settlement. Practicable suggestions are welcome (to me or any other Committee member) but please bear in mind cost, construction timespan and manhour requirements when putting forward your ideas. Two or three most likely solutions will be developed in more detail for discussion at the AGM.

The second matter is Public Running on a Saturday. At last year's AGM it was decided to hold some sessions on a Saturday in 2012 on the basis that some of the other Viabes

units are open, and people are more likely to be in town that day rather than on a Sunday. Results have been very poor. This has not been helped by the weather, but the anticipated additional 'footfall' has not materialised. In addition we have found that those members who support Public Running are more likely to have a clashing activity on Saturdays and therefore it is suggested that in 2013 we revert to Public Running on Sundays only (with the exception of Halloween). Please let me know if you have any views on this.

Brian Hogg Secretary

Spreading the Word

Over the weekend of 30th June/1st July I took my 0-4-0 saddle tank, rolling stock and 50m (164ft) of track to provide chargeable passenger hauling for 4 hours on each day. On the Saturday I supported my local Kempshott Schools Fete and on the Sunday I supported the Basing School Fete, both of which are regular entries on my home



Kempshott School Fete calendar. Over the weekend my saddle tank hauled over 500 passengers at 50p a ride, with most of the passengers being a single ride only. Although monies raised went to the respective school funds, less a very small running cost, I primarily used this opportunity to publicise the B&DMES

Miniature Railway at Viables, as the age groups of the children who attend the schools are the same as those who generally visit us, parents in tow, on a Sunday Public running day. Over the weekend I handed out in the region of 150 flyers, so here's hoping that some of those flyers turned in to new and regular visitors (Customers) on a Sunday Public running day. Next year's calendar already contains four bookings, two of which are for my complete oval of track totalling around 300ft.

Graham Blissett

The Footplate Career of Mick Lowe No. 13

Well now I have been thinking (painful!) of any more incidents that happened during my career and guess that a few more have come to light

I did say that the last one no.12 would be the last but as this is unlucky no.13 I shall have wrack my brain for some more stories!
- Many of you will say thank goodness for that!

So here goes - one of my favourite locos was the 7000 numbered Hymek Diesel Hydraulic machines, a bit noisy but a very nice ride rather like the Southern Electro Diesels

We had several turns on them both passenger work from Reading to Wareham and return

And freight work to Hither Green and Norwood and return.

We also had Warship Class locos on these freight duties.

An incident occurred when the workings were altered.

We had to go with empty coaching stock to Branksome Depot and go through the washer.

We used to bypass the washer, drop down on the stop blocks and then propel backwards through the washer when given the tip - so far so good

When we emerged from the said washer there was a loud hissing noise from the engine room. Looking into the engine room a fog was visible and all the fire bottles were covered in frost.

Now the flails on the washer consisted of strips of canvas like material and rotate quite fast, as we were only going 3 MPH through the machine one of them had flicked into an open engine room window, picked up the chain on the firing pin, pulled



it out and set off the extinguishers

This doesn't (didn't) stop the engine so we were able to berth the train and get another engine to work our return service (this happened to be a Class 33)

Now the stores at Basingstoke were like most loco stores, you could not get much extra from the Store man (even tighter on WR Stores)

One of the coveted items were the white cloths issued (known as dishcloths)

Every home had them in their kitchens!!!! They were really of good quality.

On the Western Region the men were issued with a ball of cotton waste to use on their hands, boiler fronts, and mop up spillages when oiling up

These balls of waste were quite lethal as often there were bits of sharp metal in them – ouch!

Whenever we worked onto the WR and being relieved by their loco men they always asked if we would part with a cloth or two for them. Being nice Southern Gentlemen we obliged so we had to keep plenty of spare ones in our lockers.

How do you get a spare supply you may ask?

Well, with careful use and rinsing in paraffin and soapy water it was possible to extend the life of these clothes considerably and therefore build up a small stock. Enough to keep our WR crews happy!!

Back in the steam days we had several turns across the line from Portsmouth and Southsea to Northam yard and Southampton. One turn was with a van train; we used to set back into the yard at Swanwick for about 15 minutes whilst the local fruit growers loaded up with their fresh strawberries.

With my regular driver on arrival at Swanwick (early evening) he bailed out and went for a pint in the pub nearby

I would set back into the yard for the train to be loaded, when they had finished I would sound the whistle (long blow) – pull into the station and my driver would return and give me a bottle of beer- that's the way to work together – Cheers.

One week on the same turn when my regular driver was off duty the driver I had saw the strawberries being loaded and asked if it would be possible to have a punnet for his wife as a treat (I wonder what guilty conscience he had)

Yes no problem they said and would bring some the next day.

Well the next evening he was given the strawberries but was asked to pay 10

shillings!!

That was a lot of money then but maybe the price was reflected by the time of year being winter and nearing Christmas. He paid up like a gentleman

Pat says she didn't get any strawberries (tight arse)

Over the years working over this portion of line it was sad to see the gradual destruction of the Princess Flying Boats which were moored in the shipyard at Woolston as it was deemed unprofitable – due no doubt to faster aircraft

It was heartbreaking to see these beautiful beasts being gradually stripped down.

I only saw two there – I often wondered how many were built.

In 1987 a Gala Event was held at Basingstoke – with visiting locos (preserved ones) being stabled in the down yard and a steam service being run from Andover to Basingstoke – with visiting locos (preserved ones) being stabled in the down yard and a steam service being run from Andover to Ludgershall and Salisbury.

Also preserved Electric Suburban units and a Class 508 Electric unit (no.4732) running a shuttle service from Basingstoke to Woking and return

The down yard had a display of road vehicles

The event was a huge success all round and was a credit to the team of organizers and the Area Manager

I was fortunate to work on the shuttle service on the two types of Electric Units that was very enjoyable.

The icing on the cake for me was a day on the ex Somerset and Dorset Steam Loco no.53809 culminating in working the service from Andover to Salisbury on the Saturday evening

I also managed to get my hands on Burton

Agnes Hall No. 6998 for one trial trip on the runs from Andover to Ludgershall - unfortunately on the Saturday the Hall failed and the runs had to be cancelled.

Well there we are, I have dried up again for now.

No doubt as I said this is no.13 so I cant stop here so I will have to put my thinking cap on again for no. 14!!

Lots of boring mundane daily work and its hard after so many episodes to make it interesting

I've been there, done it got the T shirt and gold watch after 50 years on the job!

Time to book off

Kind regards

Mick Lowe

Picture by James Taviner

. With ref. to the Princess flying boats, I saw these when I was in the RAF and on a training course at Gosport. This was back in about 1954. They were built by Saunders-Roe at Cowes on the IOW. Only three were built of which only one ever flew and this was for a total of about 100 hrs including an appearance at The Farnborough Air Show in 1953. I believe they were made for BOAC, which merged with BEA to become the British Airways we know today. I do not know the reason they never came into use, possibly because of the improvement of airport runways and facilities for land based aircraft.

They were powered by ten Bristol Proteus Turbo-prop engines in six engine nacelles. The inner four had two coupled engines driving contra rotating propellers and the outer two had single engines and propellers.

They were cocooned for storage awaiting their fate but when the cocooning was removed they were found to badly corroded and were scrapped, the last one finished in 1967.

Whilst on the afore mentioned course I had a couple of trips on an Air Sea Rescue launch. Small but very fast and they did a sterling job rescuing downed air crew from the sea during WW2. Beats any speed boat trips at the seaside.

Editor

An Interest in Model Engineering

By Fred (David Cooper) with kind thanks to my long suffering wife and family.

I think it is quite safe to blame my father for my interest in all things mechanical. He spent all his working life in engineering, on the shop floor. He dabbled in model engineering, worked on the original restoration of the Crofton Beam Engines, and fully supported my exploits with full size steam eventually, purchasing and restoring his Brown and May Portable. It's fair to say he lived for engineering, and all the projects carried out in our yard benefited from his knowledge. One of my first toys was plastic Meccano, from which I soon graduated to Meccano proper, inheriting his collection which I added to. For my fifth Christmas he made a toy steam crane to the LBSC design. I can remember steaming it in the living room Christmas afternoon. In order to get a longer lift it was placed on a box on the table, and of course being new father was very liberal with the steam oil. In the evening we were all sat there and Granddad who lived with us looked up and said "what's wrong with the ceiling" as a round brown patch had appeared just above where the crane had been running. 40 years later to the day, my children, along with Simon Hutson, Dad, and myself ran the crane on the dining table in my bungalow, which was fathers last Christmas with us. Perhaps one of the best tributes to him, is the fact some of the most eminent and experienced steam men I know, have all been happy to spend an odd hour lifting a variety of loads about with a toy crane. Half the fun being finding suitable loads up to about 3lbs. in weight.

Through our involvement at Crofton we met Ralph Brown, who was one of the last true eccentrics. He had retired from working in

an insurance office, and became a volunteer at Crofton. Each Sunday he would cycle from Pangbourne down to Crofton, do a days work, often stoking if we were in steam, then cycle home again. A round trip of about 70 miles, completed five or six days on the trot over a long steaming weekend. He's dress code was straight out of the Edwardian times and he always wore two wrist watches, carried a pocket watch, a sheath knife and a compass. At home he only had electric in half of his house the remainder being gas lit. He also had a great collection of Stuart Turner stationary engines, but more importantly a 3.5" Juliet, and a 30 yard straight up and down track in the back garden. Despite being basic the track had a bit of a cutting, was all properly ballasted, and had a coal stage, and water tower made out of a 5 gallon drum. At the age of 8 or 9 he was my hero. I spent many happy days over there playing with all his toys while his long suffering wife kept us fed and watered. Little was I to realise that 30 years later his Grandson Ben, would end up keeping a Traction Engine with us at home.

Time moved on and I decided not to follow my dad and my sister into engineering. I had already set up a small workshop of my own, at home the centre piece being a 3.5" swing Drummond treadle lathe. But instead I did an apprenticeship in Carpentry and Joinery at the Atomic Research Establishment at Harwell. This is not a decision I regret, as a quick side step into the grater MOD and some night school, has taken me into the management of all sorts of building works. From maintaining an estate of 1500 houses, to runway repairs, hanger maintenance, through to sea defence, and dredging works. Although Dad had been a keen motor cyclist, he and mother were

adamant I was not to have a moped. To this end they struck a deal. I had developed an interest in Vintage Tractors, so they financed a very derelict Fordson E27N Major, if I promised not to have a moped. Under Dads guidance this was restored, and as I started earning it was soon followed by a second, then a BMB President. What use are tractors, on their own? So we soon had a good collection of implements and even dabbled in contract hay making.

By the mid 80s the steam bug was really biting. My grounding at Crofton, and being around steam when I attended rallies with my tractors, was not helping. As I came to the end of my apprenticeship everything fell into place. Through a few chance conversations, and as the rest of the boys I was at college with bought their first nearly new cars, I made do with a old 2A Land Rover, and became the proud owner of a 1915 Aveling and Porter 8 ton Steam Roller. Like the tractors it doesn't stop there. You soon want all the bits that go with it, living van, water cart, road signs, tar boiler, and eventually a lorry to move it all about. I have the greatest respect for all things steam. From the simplest mass produced toys through to power stations. If you watch a Mamod trundling around on a patio, you can see a full size engine out on the road. Well I say steam but anything mechanical, and preferably old, clocks, oil engines, tractors and plant.

I had long been friends with Derek Marder, who gave me endless encouragement and assistance, with my roller in the early days. Through him I got to know the Davis Family and especially Alan. Along that time we started to have a bit of a get together on Easter Mondays in our yard. Unfortunately security and lack of insurance became a worry as we were getting up to 10 full size

engines, and countless models attending, as well as several hundred visitors. It was at one of the last of these I first met Simon Hutson. I walked around the corner between two of our sheds and almost tripped over a 2" Clayton wagon taking on water. "This is a great do isn't it" the driver said, oblivious to who I was. "yes" I replied wondering who he was!!! Of course Alan had invited him along. I was to get to know Simon and John when the Elliot boys bought their roller and stabled it with us for a few years. It was of course Simon and John that really rekindled my interest in Model Engineering, which lead me to join the B&DMES.

Despite everyone's advice, don't get a railway engine because you need a track, don't go to small it will be a job to steam, I set my heart on a Juliet, just like Ralph's. I did ask for first refusal when Ralph's estate was dispersed, however the family made the right decision to hang on to it. Hopefully I will be able to assist Ben with its planned restoration, in the near future. Through Simon and the club I was able to purchase the one I have now. It turned out to be really well made, and had not been used to any extent. Like so many live steam models it lacked that last bit of fine tuning, to make it perform well. I was able to put my mark on it, carrying out this work, which has given me great satisfaction, but more importantly, and unknown at the time, it lead me to spending precious time with my father in the workshop environment we both love. Like the tractors and the roller, it doesn't stop there. I down sized the vintage tractor fleet disposing of a classic John Deere. I had tidied it up, and it served us well for 10 years but was in need of some serous TLC. I knew the money would disappear if I did not reinvest it, so brought a 5" gauge American 4-4-0. I went in with my eyes open, and even the dealer asked me twice if I was sure I wanted

it. It was not particularly well made, and had had quite a hard life, but it was cheap. It was initially put in store how ever it saved my sanity when Ill health curtailed all heavy work, for a few months. I'm now back to full health and on the big stuff, but still managing to do a bit to it in fits and starts. Well that's me and perhaps if our esteemed editor gets no better offer, I'll tap out some of my views on Model Engineering. In the mean time safe steaming, and most importantly keep making swarf.

Fred Cooper



This one of Fred is from the very early days with some young but recognisable current members.



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Jon Evans

Treasurer

Who's Who.

Chairman

Vacant

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