

EXPANSION LINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE B&DMES

EDITOR JOHN TAVINER--VOLUME Five--ISSUE four
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Editorial

Hi to all members.

Welcome to this, the final edition, of the society's newsletter for 2011.

Along with the usual public running the year has seen two very successful events, namely the two day steam rally in April and the Halloween public run in November. The rally in April was good for the club with several new members joining. I would like, on behalf of all members, to say a big "Thank You" to those members that took the time and effort in the organisation of these two events and to those that helped on the days. A report on the rally appeared in the June edition of "Expansion Link" and a couple of pictures from the Halloween event are on this page.

In this issue Mick Lowe continues with his reminisces of his years as a professional railway man, Philip Edney concludes the article on the building of his 2 inch scale Fowler traction engine and Ken Jones tells of a visit to a museum on another continent. I will end this Editorial by wishing all readers

A Merry Christmas and A Happy and successful New Year.

John Taviner Editor

Forthcoming Events

December

27 Members Christmas run (Tues)

January

1 Members New Year run (Sun)

10 Meeting Night

21/22 Maintenance Weekend

24 Bits and Pieces

February

7 Meeting Night

12 Members Day

18/19 Maintenance Weekend

21 Meeting Night

March

3/4 Maintenance Weekend

6 Meeting Night

18 Members Day

20 Meeting Night



Chairman's Chat

Hi, Members, Well that's another AGM done and dusted, hopefully you all got the answers you wanted, if not I hope you will have the good grace to go along with the wishes of the majority.

I was pleasantly surprised to see that two of our younger members were willing to come onto the committee and have a go at least for one year anyway, who knows they may enjoy it and to round it off another of the club stalwarts offered his services also, three volunteers at one AGM must be some sort of record for any club let alone ours, so I say welcome Steve, Darren and Dave and I hope you don't regret your decision by this time next year.

For those of you unable to attend the AGM, I would like to let you know that Mike Lowe is giving up the mowing and strimming at the club at the end of the year, I don't know whether he means end of 2011 or the club year in March 2012 but if anyone is prepared to take over from him please let us know, and whilst on the subject My thanks Mike for all your effort and say you did a good job mate.

And now to the happy season, I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year and many happy hours in your workshops and of course many happy hours steaming.

I will see you all raring to go in the new year.

Terry Hobbs Chairman.

Treasures notes.

May I start by wishing everyone a very Merry Xmas and all the best for 2012.

It was decided at the AGM to keep the subs at the present level of £36.00, which I feel represents good value for money, considering our costs are

increasing every year; even though we have increased the membership to 62 this year.

However the subs may still have to be revised next year if the level of income from public running deteriorates more than it has done this year.

I also have the following items for sale:

Clothing left to clear:

Polo Shirts. 3 x Medium, 2 x Small

Sweat shirts. 1 x Medium, 1 x Large, 1 x XL, 2 x XXL

The prices are £11.00 for the Polo Shirts and £13.00 for the Sweat shirts.

Club enamel Badges: @ £2.00 each.

Jon Evans Treasurer

Building a Fowler Continued.

Incidentally, I bought the Mill from A J Atkins at No Mans Land and when I went to look at it and did the deal I said we would fetch it. We had at that time a Ford Escort Estate Car and when his worker asked what kind of vehicle we had and was told, he hoped we wouldn't turn up with a Wicks Trailer as it obviously wouldn't be man enough for the job, the mill weighing 8 cwt. The relief on his face when we arrived with a Landrover pulling a substantial trailer was a sight to see.

Gradually the engine was coming together and we would still visit shows to look at the only full size engine I had found which was a Fowler 8 and was very similar. I would then study the part I was making to ensure that what I saw was correct. I made many parts by this method.

For about a year I had no enthusiasm for the engine and never touched it. Then the day before my 19th wedding anniversary I had a heart attack and was whisked into hospital where I eventually had 3 stents inserted. When I fully recovered I went back to the

engine with renewed interest.

I still had the same problems I had had all along but finally the day came when I was able to run it on compressed air and it worked a treat. I had to tweak it here and there of course but was so pleased to be able to run it and thought; well if it runs on compressed air it should run on steam. It was a bit longer before I was able to steam it and it was lovely. Of course I still didn't have the lagging on and all the refinements. It had taken around 8 years to get to this stage and as soon as it was able to go to shows and I continued to work on it and finish the parts still necessary to complete it. I'm



nearly there and only have the footplate where the steers-man stands and the name plate to do now but of course parts need renewing or renovating at times and there is always some parts I am not happy with so therefore make a new one.

The engine was taken to Braemore for a few years while it was still in the process of being made and its first steaming outing was at Amberley, can't remember which year.

I was very nervous using it at first but am now getting used to it, even to the extent that I went in the ring at the Weald and Downland show recently and that was a first!

Fortunately both myself and Sue love steam

so we both enjoy the engine. I often light up (on the pretext sometimes of trying something out) and drive round the garden. I couldn't get the whistle to work until John Poulter suggested I restrict the flow and this was good advice as it's a lot better now as long as the steam pressure is high. I have also made many tools for the workshop some of them from George Thomas books and read LBSC books when making steam fittings, I return frequently to these books.

We looked around for a club to join and



found that all the ones we looked at were either not our types (being a little toffee nosed) or they weren't interested in steam engines, being mainly or wholly dedicated to steam trains. We had spoken at the various steam shows we attended to John Hutson and he suggested we try the Basingstoke club as they had a number of steam engine people as well as the train buffs. We found that here were a bunch of people who were (our kind of people) and we duly joined. We are glad we did as although it is a distance for us to go it is worth it.

I sometimes wish I had a bigger engine from the point of view of using it as this one is rather back breaking. Who knows, someday I may find a part build to finish as I don't think making one from the beginning is an

option. Still, we get lots of fun using this one and meet a lot of funny old men (and some ladies). We got talked into going to the Bishop's Waltham carnival and while we were happily trundling round the Big End oil cap flew off and dropped inside the gear guard and split the final drive gear pinion ring. I then had to go back to gear cutting again and as it had been a long time I had partly forgotten how to make them. It gradually came back to me and I was able to make another and put it back together.



Sue

managed to find a source of cast iron on the internet which was of infinitely better quality than the scale weights I was using having cadged some from friend's who collected such things, (in case they should come in handy)!

We have been to more shows this year (2011) than before and we are enjoying using the engine.

Phillip Edney

The Footplate Career of Mick Lowe (No. 12)

OK, we have the road and we are off again!! Now what to write about this time, most of the interesting scenarios I have been involved in have been aired but I am sure I can still find some more!

Train /Loco on fire, well this only happened to me once.

We had a car train that started from Eastleigh marshalling yard; it always consisted of a Class 47 with a train of 20 carflats loaded with Ford Transit Vans, which had been built in the Southampton factory.

I relieved the Eastleigh men at Basingstoke (I was single manned).

The train was destined for Birmingham and I was booked relief at Banbury.

As always we trundled across the branch at Reading (behind the 22.30 stopping passenger service), round West Junction and then opened up (75mph train).

As we rolled along the smell of diesel fumes in the cab got more pungent than usual!

Putting on the cab light I could hardly see across the cab, so thick was the smoke/fumes.

Shutting off power and reaching across for the engine room door with my foot still on the 'deadmans treadle' I opened it and was dismayed to see the area around the triple pump ablaze (triple pump = Fuel, Oil and water). The fire bells had not activated or the engine room fire bottles had not activated either.

Action, well I coasted to Cholsey station, stopped clear of the road under the bridge so that a Fire Brigade would have easy access.

I shut down the engine and called the Fire Brigade who attended within 10 minutes, by which time I had used the fire extinguisher

from the cab and with the engine shut down it was no longer being fed by fuel and oil Shortly after the Fire Brigade arrived a Footplate Inspector arrived and after accessing the situation asked me to start the engine and take the train to Didcot Yard I asked if he was taking responsibility if the Loco caught fire again and perhaps was destroyed

He replied that yes it should be all right but he would authorise 4 Firemen to ride with me in the cab with some equipment just in case!!

So off we went and berthed the train in Didcot Yard

There were no spare Locos for me to continue on to Banbury so I came home 'on the cushions' (travel passenger)

One memory I have as a young Fireman was one of the first times I went into the Brooklands Arms, a public house outside the gates to the 9 Elms Loco Depot

My Driver said that we had time for a pint or two and as it was our grub break we would eat our food (sandwiches) with our beer! Wouldn't get away with it today!!

Ok so far, but once inside my ears 'started to burn as the women in there swore as hard as the men. This was a culture shock to me at first but I soon got used to it but I never thought it nice to hear females use the everyday kind of language that men use at work.

But still that's life. It's even worse these days!!

At Reading we had an hourly semi-fast service to Gatwick airport, usually the service ran well – in fact about 95% of the time.

One morning on the 08.30 service that arrived back at Reading and was always full of commuters – on arrival at Blackwater the signal was red. So on phoning the signalman

at Wokingham I was informed that due to an electrical problem in the signal box we were likely to be delayed for a while as required I informed the passengers over the PA system at 5-10 minute intervals.

After about 30 minutes passengers began to knock on the internal cab door

We were not standing in the station and they wanted to know how much longer we were going to stand there?

So I took the bull by the horns and decided to walk back into the train (lions den!) and answer and queries they might have and explain the situation.

It went well, I told them that if they had any complaints to write to the Area Manager of Rail Track, as it was not the fault of Thames Trains, the signalling equipment belongs to Rail Track.

Eventually we left and on arrival at Reading two smartly dressed gentlemen knocked on my cab window and asked my name.

I asked what was the problem only to be thanked by them.

They were Thames Trains Directors!! They appreciated the way I had dealt with the situation by approaching the passengers personally

They especially liked the bit don't blame Thames Trains blame Rail Track!!

Once more my head was above water and I was in the clear!

Long hours on duty, well we all have at times had to do overtime when we really didn't want to

My longest day in steam days was a trip from Basingstoke to Oxford and back with a freight train.

We booked on at 20.50 pm and that night snow fell and passenger trains were given priority we were shunted into every loop there and back resulting in arrival back at Basingstoke and booking off at 13.45 (17

hours and 30 minutes on duty!!!

That was a very long cold and hungry stint
The reason it was so cold was we had a WR
Hall Class Engine, typical of this class loco
with a very large cab that made it very cold.
We had to huddle up in the cab corner with
our jackets on to keep warm, Very cosy if
you like cuddling your workmate!!

One other long duty was on an engineering
train in Diesel days. This was working in
the Fleet area of Hampshire on a Saturday
night – Sunday morning.

This was also a 17 hour job due to a diagram
oversight – no relief had been organized – as
we were in a nice warm diesel cab we didn't
mind too much so we just went with the job
and with money in the bank at Sunday rate
who were we to complain!! Bring it on
Time to book off again

I am afraid after 12 episodes I am beginning
to come to the end of my stories but may be
able to muster up another one sometime
Oh goodness that will be unlucky 13 so I
will have to do two more short ones!!!!

A very Merry Christmas to all my readers
Kind Regards

Mick Lowe

Outeniqua Transport Museum, South Africa

I have recently returned from a 3 week
holiday in South Africa and part of the tour
included a visit to the Outeniqua Transport
Museum at George. I have attached a few
photo's for your interest. Part of the deal
included a ride in what was described as the
'power van' which travelled from the
museum up into one of the mountain passes.
This is a poor replacement for the Outeniqua
Choo Tjoe, a steam hauled train which used
to run along the coast from George to
Knysna but this has now been stopped due
to landslides which have washed out the

track, and funds are no
longer available to rebuild it. However the
power van ride was interesting (if a little



cramped) and I have added a couple of
photos taken at the top. The power van
consisted of two motor units connected back
to back and as we were a large party (about
40) a small 'pod' was added between them
in which travelled a tour guide who a tried
to describe details of the route and its
special features as we passed along. At the
top of the pass we were invited to get out
and have a look around and I have included
a couple of photo's taken there. The seats in
the van are reversible by folding the backs
across and when this was completed we all
climbed back on board for the return trip.
We were lucky in that the weather was fine



clear and sunny. *Ken Jones Sept. 2011.*

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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

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Who's Who.

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Terry Hobbs

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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