

# Expansion Link

## Newsletter of the B&DMES

Editor John Taviner - Volume Number One - Issue Number Four

Date: December 2007

[www.basingstoke-dmes.co.uk](http://www.basingstoke-dmes.co.uk)



### **Editorial**

Welcome to issue No 4. First let me clarify a couple of points that arose from the article on boiler testing in issue No 3. You will all have had an explanation, included with your AGM notification, on the need to have a valid boiler certificate when steaming any model that needs a boiler certificate at the club premises and when visiting other clubs. The second error, which was pointed out by a member, is that the adaptor that you will have made to connect the test equipment to your boiler should be threaded 1/8" gas and not 1/4" BSP as stated. Sorry for any confusion that may have occurred. By the time you read this the AGM. will have come and gone and you will be aware of any changes in the club officers and committee members that may have taken place. The draft programme for next years events should be well under way and if any member has any suggestions for new activities that may be included in the programme then let a committee member know.

We have had various events during 2007 all of which have been well enjoyed by those taking part. The most recent event for club members was the Halloween run and BBQ. This was combined with a shunting competition organised by John Hutson which called for fine and skilful regulator control. I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of all those that took part, Barbara Hutson and Pat Lowe for preparing and serving the excellent food in the evening. After a warm

and sunny day It was starting to get a little cool and the jacket potatoes, beans, chilli and hot dogs were most welcome.

Thank you once more ladies.

The result of the competition can be found on page 6.

In this issue we have the first in a series of articles by Mick Lowe telling of his career as a Footplateman on the railway.

*John Taviner Editor*

### **Forthcoming Events.**

#### **January.**

1<sup>st</sup> New year run.

15<sup>th</sup> Meeting night.

27<sup>th</sup> Maintenance day.

29<sup>th</sup> bits and pieces.

#### **February.**

12<sup>th</sup> Meeting night.

17<sup>th</sup> Members running day. (Sun).

24<sup>th</sup> Maintenance day.

26<sup>th</sup> Meeting night.

#### **March.**

8/9<sup>th</sup> Model railway show.

Richard Aldworth School.

**(Help required to man stand and loan of models to display).**

11<sup>th</sup> Bits and pieces.

23<sup>rd</sup> Members run. (Sun).

25<sup>th</sup> Meeting night.

Some of the above are provisional and may need to be changed.

## ***All Aboard for the Santa Special - St Nick Comes to Viables***

After foolishly agreeing to sort out a Santa Special, and with months of planning and panicking about where to find suitable presents, the B&DMES Santa Special pulled into Platform 1 at Viables on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2007.

Under darkened sky, lashing rain, cold and wind, the 2<sup>nd</sup> December did not get off to a good start. Despite a good team effort, we were unable to set up the club gazebo and keep it wind and water tight, even when using some of the donated concrete blocks to hold it down. Consequently, we resorted to Plan "B" and set up the grotto in the clubhouse. After a quick dismantling of the gazebo and festive decorations, and moving to the clubhouse, things started to come together. Although the clubhouse was about half the size of the gazebo, it worked out better for the grotto and was a lot cosier.

Having pre-sold (as agreed at the last year's AGM) 120 tickets, we were not sure how things were going to workout, as we had not previously attempted this sort of event. There was to a certain extent a lot of guesswork, and reliance on how not to do it from personal experiences of poor Santa Specials at other places. The concept adopted for the B&DMES event was to give good value for money, with happy children and happy parents. At a ticket cost of £4, the aim was to provide each child with two presents (Toy/Game and a book), a carton of squash, a sweet, a chat with Santa, and the obligatory two laps of the track. Each fare-paying adult received a large mince pie, a cup of mulled wine or a carton of squash, two laps of the track and a happy child or

children.

With the bad weather, which slowly began to clear by lunchtime, we were not sure how many parents would brave the weather and bring their children along. At 11am we had our first customers, and continued with a steady stream, picking up in the afternoon. By 3:30pm the last ticket holders had turned up. We also took the opportunity to publicise our Public Running for next year and were also lucky enough that some of our visitors wanted an additional train ride, charged at the usual rate.

Judging by the smiling faces on the children and happy parents, the day was very successful. On the day and subsequently since, we have had a fair number of parents saying how much they and their children had enjoyed themselves and were especially pleased that the children had received decent presents suitable for their age group and gender. Many also added that they hoped that this would become a regular event and intended to recommend it to their friends.



Although thanks goes to Santa (Nick Taviner), his three helpers (Alice Taviner, Thomas and Alex Blissett), the ladies

serving the mince pies, mulled wine and drinks (Lois Blissett, Sue Dowson and Louise Duckett), the real heroes on the day were those members out in the cold and wet, providing two double headed trains, which were certainly appreciated by the passengers. Hopefully I have not missed anyone out but thanks go to Tom Burgess, Terry & Andy Hobbs, Dave Dowson, John & James Taviner, Dave Mattingley, John Croker, Stephen Newell, Graham Sumner, Bob Lovett and Malcolm Duckett hot footing it from the airport.



All in all, I believe the first B&DMES Santa Special was a very successful and enjoyable event. Applications for volunteers to organise next year's event are now being accepted.

***Graham Blissett***  
***Treasurer***

On behalf of the club I would like to say a big thank you to Graham and his wife Lois for the organization of this event, the purchase and wrapping of the gifts for the children, the purchase and preparation of the wine and mince pies for the adults, the decorations for Santa's Grotto, with extra lights provided by Tom, and the Christmas music which added to the overall atmosphere of this very successful event.

The Santa outfit was supplied by Louise Duckett and if we do it again next year with the same Santa we will need a longer belt!!!

***John Taviner***  
***Editor***

### ***Committee and newsletter changes***

As those who attended the AGM in November will be aware, a number of changes to the club officers and committee took place. Terry Hobbs moved up to the position of Chairman, John Croker has taken on the post as Vice Chairman and Brian Hogg is replacing Malcolm Duckett who is standing down from his post as Secretary due to his business commitments. Some changes also took place to the committee members. Simon Hutson and Mike Lowe have stood down and Bob Lovett has come onto the committee.

You will have noticed that this edition of "Expansion Link" differs from the previous issues. Although the content follows the same format the presentation of both versions whether it comes to you via e-mail or Royal Mail has changed. This is due to the fact that although previous editions were put together by me it was distributed by Malcolm who had the facilities to convert it to booklet form for the members that receive their copy via the post and the PDF form for the e-mail version. I am currently unable to do this. Ray Coyle has given me a desktop publishing programme that may enable me to do these conversions but as yet I have not managed it. As the saying goes Watch this space.

***John Taviner Editor***

## ***The Footplate Career Of Mick Lowe (spanning 50 years).***

Aged 15 years in July 1952, it was time to leave school, an interview with the careers officer, where I and another lad expressed our wishes to go on the railway as potential footplate men.

This led to an interview by the Shed Master and Running Foreman at Hereford Motive Power Depot (85C head code) on The Great Western Railway.

We were duly questioned as to our reasons for wanting footplate careers and it was pointed out that that a footplate job was one of very unsocial and difficult hours of work. We then had to read passages from the rule book and the write out passages that were dictated to us. (I suppose to prove that we could read and write). Interview over we were accepted on the provision that we passed the medical examination.

A week later we received instructions and a free pass to attend The Medical Centre at Swindon.

A thorough examination physically and the rigorous eyesight test was done by identifying skeins of coloured wool from a book. (I doubt this test is used nowadays!!). At the end of all this we were thrilled to be told that we had been accepted as Footplate men.

We were taken to the stores and fitted out with two pairs of bib and brace overalls complete with jackets with the GWR logo on the lapels and of course a grease top cap. We contacted the Shed Master to arrange a starting date who handed us a piece of advice to us as potential loco men. " Think seriously that this is the career you want and take a holiday now as once you start on the job you will only get two weeks paid holiday a year". The working week was

eleven days every two weeks with one day off per fortnight (rest day).

This was not very good as you only got a long weekend every ten weeks. Rest days followed a pattern i.e. Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri. Sat. (Sundays were not worked by us Engine cleaners).

We agreed to join the railway and to start on August 11<sup>th</sup> 1952.

The great day arrived and we were read the riot act, all the do's and don'ts and had to read a large regulation notice as regards to loco movements in the confines of the loco shed, forbidden to us as cleaners.

Ted, my school leaving pal, was taken to the cleaners hut and was put to work there. I was put in the stores for a week and then the timekeepers office for a week.

This work consisted of booking Drivers and Firemen on and off duty, checking and sorting the Drivers' tickets into time order and putting the shed staff tokens in the slots as they booked on and off.

After two weeks of keeping clean the harsh dirty world of engine cleaning was here.

There were usually six cleaners to an engine doing six different jobs. Left boiler and brasses (name plate etc). Right boiler and brasses. Left tender frame and axle boxes. Right tender frame and axle boxes. Smokey (smoke box and copper top), cab, cab roof and frames. Wheels and motion including the underneath valve gear.

Materials used were cleaning oil (paraffin and oil mixed) on wheels and motion, tender sides, framing and cab sides.

The boiler and firebox and hot parts were cleaned with a solution of 50/50 water and a compound that resembled gravy that turned milky white when the water was added and did not dry out when used on hot surfaces.

The smoke box was cleaned with "jelly waste" this was a wad of cotton waste

**soaked in grease.**

**The brasses were treated with acid and brick dust.**

The number of locos cleaned each day was equivalent to one Hall Class per person. Other classes were one loco and one tank (shunting) or three tanks = one loco.

So all in all we were kept busy all day in this very dirty job.

Our cleaners cabin, a tin hut with a coal fired stove, was separate from everyone else. We had wooden lockers to sit on and a wash basin with just a cold tap. We had to get hot water in a bucket from an engine injector overflow, once we had learned to operate the injector. Sometimes we tried to get it from the Drivers room in the main block but if caught were told we were not allowed in there unless you are made up to Fireman on that day.

The next milestone was your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. This was when you were allowed to perform Fireman's duties.

The Loco Inspector would come for a few days to explain our duties as a Firemen, preparing a loco, basic instructions on the workings of injectors and a drilling on rules- as always emphasis on protection and Rule 55.

Once passed by the Inspector as able (not necessarily competent!) to perform Fireman's duties we were now classed as Passed Cleaners. This was great as when the daily alteration sheet for crews was posted, we would (in anticipation) eagerly scan it to see if we were booked out as Firemen the next day. Most times we were booked on preparation and shunting duties, but I did have the honour of as a Passed Cleaner to do a running job when the loco which my Driver and I were preparing as a standby was needed to take a dozen empty cattle wagons plus a brake van to Hay on Wye (about 17 miles each way and bring them back loaded- out tender first and back engine first. The loco was an 0-6-0 tender 2200 class No 3209.

It was an honour, I was so 'chuffed'! that the Driver had said he would take me even though I had never been on the main branch line before. It caused a stir as some of the Senior Passed Cleaners had never had a trip like that themselves and were miffed that they did not get the job.

Senior Passed Cleaners were classed as over 21 years of age and if there was a full compliment of Cleaners they were allowed to go ash loading and general shed duties.

In September 1953 (after just over a year on the railway at Hereford) my parents moved south. I had to transfer, with loss of seniority, to Bournemouth (I had requested Salisbury) where I stayed for two months and then got my transfer to Salisbury in November 1953. Here as a Passed Cleaner I was again in the money by doing regular Fireman's duties. Shunting in the yard, shovelling down duties where we would meet trains passing through from Waterloo to Exeter or Exeter to Waterloo with no loco change, shovelling coal from the back of the tender to the front. The procedure was, we shovelled down the coal and tipped a bucket of water treatment briquettes into the special compartment in the tender. The Fireman who was being relieved held the water column and filled the tender whilst the relief Fireman tended to his fire or helped to shovel down as the case may be.

In May 1954, having had enough of this, I applied on a vacancy list for a Fireman's job at several depots and got a job at Southampton Terminus on shunting duties on Southampton Town Quay.

In November 1954 my first preference for a job at Basingstoke came up to which I transferred and stayed for 39 years.

Work at Basingstoke was good. We had a yard shunting gang (link) and 4 running links of 12 crews.

During the next six months I managed to get into No4 link which had spare turns and local work i.e. Farnborough shunter, Andover shunter, Reading and Salisbury passenger trips.

In 1955 we had a strike over pay and conditions. It was during that time that I received my National Service call up papers so never returned to the railway until I was demobbed in June 1957, having spent 2 years in the RAF Regiment (Rock Apes) serving in Egypt, Aden and Cyprus.

*To be continued.*

## ***Garden Railway Report***

2007 has been a mixed year for the garden railway.

The year started off very well with some enjoyable running sessions at both members and public running days culminating in a 'Garden Railway Day' in July. A plentiful supply of tea and cakes kept the runners and visitors well fuelled whilst running and watching trains amble around the track on a nice summers day.

Unfortunately we then suffered a number of incidents of vandalism to the Garden Railway with plants being uprooted, damage to the bridge and track bed and eventually damage to the track itself. The decision was taken that in order to protect the investment in the Garden Railway the track should be removed for safe keeping. So, operations on the garden railway have been temporarily suspended however all is not lost. The club received a very generous donation of over 600 concrete blocks from Mansell Construction and it is hoped that the garden railway will rise 'phoenix like' from the ashes and the garden railway will be reborn, stronger than before.

A small team are currently working on proposals and we will publicise working party dates early in the New Year, all help is welcome.

### ***Results of shunting competition***

1<sup>st</sup> run

Mike Lowe	4 mins.
Terry Hobbs	2.5 mins.
Ian Roberts	3 mins.
James Taviner	4 mins.
Tom Burgess	3.5 mins
Andy Hobbs	6 mins. - 2 stops=4 mins.
Darren Davis	7 mins -1 stop= 6 mins

2<sup>nd</sup> run

Mike Lowe	5 mins - 1stop =4 mins
Terry Hobbs	4.5 mins.
Ian Roberts	2 mins.
James Taviner	6 mins - 2 stops = 4 mins
Tom Burgess	2.5 mins
Andy Hobbs	5 mins.
Darren Davis	6 mins.

Results. Slowest is the winner.

1 <sup>st</sup> Darren Davis	Total 12 mins.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Andy Hobbs	Total 9 mins.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Terry Hobbs	Total 7 mins.
4 <sup>th</sup> Mike L/James T	Total 8 mins.
5 <sup>th</sup> Tom Burgess	Total 6 mins.
6 <sup>th</sup> Ian Roberts	Total 5 mins.

***John Hutson.***

### ***Bring and buy Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> 2007***

What a fiasco the bring and buy evening was with so few items. Come on you members make it worth while. It raised the magnificent sum of 70 pence for the club. Here's hoping such a sum is not squandered.  
***Peter Horwood.***

I would like to remind you that I require material for future issues of this newsletter. It can be anything that reflects our hobby be it rail, road, stationary engines or any other aspect of model engineering.

Those of you who attended the AGM will recall my comments that without input from members "Expansion Link" will not survive. Items for inclusion can be sent by Royal Mail or e-mail (preferred). See contact address on back page.

***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 50p 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.

*Graham Blissett*  
*Treasurer*

## **Who's Who.**

Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Secretary  
Treasurer

Terry Hobbs  
John Croker  
Brian Hogg  
Graham Blissett

## **Committee Members.**

John Taviner  
Tom Burgess  
Bob Lovett

Newsletter  
Member  
Member

## **Project Leaders.**

Catering manager  
Electrical Work  
Library  
Painting/Decorating  
Publicity

Fred Pheby  
Simon Hutson  
Ken Jones  
Vacant  
John Dixon/  
Assistant  
required  
Graham Blissett

Signalling

Station Building/Contents  
Track/Site/Ground Maint.

Vacant  
Dave Blaza/  
Mick Lowe

Traction Engine Track  
Webmaster  
Newsletter

Vacant  
Stephen Newell  
John Taviner