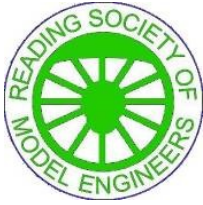


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The Prospectus

December 2015



Cab view of the Joneses new Collett 0-6-0 in 7 1/4" gauge
seen at the 7 November 2015 club running day.
Photo John Spokes

**DAWSON'S DIARY
DOWN THE DRAIN WITH 61249
TRUSTEE NOTES
ADDING AN ASH PIT
A SIGNALBOX LAD
LAND CRUISE TALES ...and more**

DAWSON'S DIARY

kept by the President

Thursday 22 October club night we were pleased to see David Wilkinson back after his knee operation walking well once again. He even made the tea for the members. Thanks David! Chris Cory showed us his well-made chassis of an LBSC Rainhill design, in 3 ½" gauge. He has done some very nice workmanship so far and it will be a nice loco when finished. Alistair Milne brought along his inside cylinder block for 7 ¼" gauge GNS Railway 4-4-0 also some very nice workmanship. Alistair seems to make rapid progress when he's making a locomotive I wish I could do the same! Alan Thatcher one again has shown what can be made in the home workshop. This time he's made a dovetail cutter with an indexable tip for cutting the V ways for a quick change tool holder. All home-made well done Alan.

Despite the rain the members got stuck in and finished the new pit for the hydraulic pump to be flitted for the loco lift, a job well done. The number of members coming to the Wednesday work gang is getting bigger about twenty-five this time. All the projects are being carried out over these days, 2015 has been a good year for RSME. So much has been achieved by the committee and members a big thank you to you all.

November public running again was very busy with good takings for the club, we had the three Baldwins for the first time running together. Having the locos standing together around the turntable the steaming area looked like an American depot with all three whistles blowing with lots of photos taken. It sounded great! Not forgetting John Spokes had his North Eastern S class running as well with plenty of engines on the raised track made it a very good day.

The club's running day was rather wet at first despite this the members came to the track in the hope it would dry and it did later in the day and some steaming took place. Marcus Bailey's Polly loco needs some work on the timing. We got it running on air once again. He also learned how to do it himself. It needs some re bushing round the valve gear area a job to sort out when we find time!

A few of the jobs that have been ongoing over the past few months are coming to an end. The 7 ¼" loading ramp is just about done thanks to Chris Symond and his helpers. It will make getting locos moved on the track easier. The new toilet container again is almost finished, sinks, water heaters etc. Painting, power is all finished. Nigel Penford, Mike Manners and Pete Culham and many other members have given a hand in doing a very good job. Many thanks from all the members of the RSME.

ooOOOooooo

PONDERINGS

by 61249

New Trains for All – NSE -1992

Chris Green, who was in charge at NSE, always had a knack for getting his hands on any capital investment going, and had done so in some style with the stock programme developed for him by my predecessor. They were all specified, and ordered, with clear projects set up to deliver them. Inheriting their introduction was always going to be an interesting process, and I can remember a few happenings from the time. Did they all work out of the box? Er, no. Are they all still successful and in service? – yes. The gap between these two statements was bridged by a lot of engineering and hard work by lots of troops of all grades.

Let's start with one that was a bit different. The replacement of the "Drain" fleet (Waterloo and City Line to most). This line was shortly to be transferred to LUL, and the old stock was of 1930s vintage, (Am I correct?) When I was at Selhurst 10 years before we had finished a programme of stripping every car to bare metal and getting rid of the blue asbestos which was all over them. I am not sure what made their replacement so soon afterwards such a good business case, but five 4 car train sets had been ordered as part of the new Central Line stock build for LUL. Buying a train that fitted the drain was a much better idea than designing something bespoke for the job, and to make sure we got a decent tested train that would work out of the box, we were down for train sets 12 – 16 in the build programme. The plan was that the first ten trains would all be in service with LUL and the bugs well and truly fixed before we started. This was a great idea, but in its normal way real life intruded to make sure it remained an idea. Firstly, the LUL build ran late, not a problem for them, but a problem for the Drain as part of the plan was a significant refurbishment of the infrastructure to go with the new trains, including new signalling to replace old and failing kit. This required a complete system shut down for 6 weeks which was scheduled for the summer months, when the ridership numbers were down. If we missed the slot we would have to wait a year, and by this time we had ceased to maintain the old fleet on the basis that it was being replaced. They were all due heavy repair, and extending their run was not really on any more.

The plan was that the upgrade would be completed in 5 weeks with a whole week to run in the new trains. Delivering them to the drain is of course a special exercise, each car having to be lowered into the completely separate system down a hoist at Waterloo. Once the old trains were out and the line closure had started there was no way back. That part of the plan just had to work.

With more crossed fingers than confidence the blockade started and the old trains were taken out. What was lowered in had never run, neither had the first of the fleet for LUL entered passenger service, but had just had proving

and trial runs. We were in uncharted territory and the risk was that when the City came back from its holiday, we were going to let down a significant and powerful group of punters. The Evening Standard would have a field day with us on toast. The first five weeks of the blockade went amazingly well, and we assembled the trains and did all the continuity and functional testing that you could do without a railway. Then the moment came to take one out of the depot at Waterloo. By the time the train reached the platform it was a complete failure, with three broken couplers and all electrical function lost down the train. The most worried person in all this was the Derby based ABB Project Manager, as it was clearly his train that was going to be in the firing line. After a desperate phone conversation, we met on the stairway just above the depot, after surveying the damage. The problem was fundamental, despite all the assurances and calculations, the train could just not cope with the point curvature between the berthing sidings and the platform. In service, every train reversing at Waterloo used the same points, which clearly were tighter than anything on the Central line, for the very good reason there was no room to lay anything of greater radius. It was easy to see from the damage what was happening, the coupler was striking its support brackets, which was wrenching it from its mountings, and in the process breaking the casting round the electrical head, destroying the control circuits down the train. What the train builder realised was that he needed a redesign of the coupler/mounting assembly, which would have to go through a significant degree of risk analysis and testing once we had established the precise track geometry that was causing the problem. Weeks of delay with no trains loomed large, the headlines were predictable, and the derision unpalatable. He, poor man, was in a very hard place, to say he was losing sleep was somewhat of an understatement.

Nevertheless, we were both Mechanical Engineers by training. We had what looked like a working train in every other respect, if only we could test it, and we now had less than a week to do so. The coupler assembly and its support bracket was a key component in keeping the train upright and in line in any mishap, and built like part of a tank to make sure it worked throughout the 30 or 40 year life of the train. What emerged from our discussion was to do something rarely done on a new train a week before it ran fully loaded. We got a good welder and took a burner to the bracket, making it half thickness in its side members. The extra 1" each side gave us the clearance we needed, and the builders surprise that his customer would run the train in that condition was obvious, along with his relief when the modified (!) train eased its way out of the depot, barely a couple of hours after our meeting. He went away to do the redesign properly and delivered new proper brackets a couple of months into the service, which opened on the due date. Phew!

On the first morning of the new service we discovered a second difference between the Central Line and the Drain. Central Line trains generally start

lightly loaded, are crush laden in the middle of their journeys, and then empty station by station as they head away from the busy central stretch. Not the Drain, where a fully laden train starts at Waterloo in the morning (Bank in the evening) and then empties all at once when it reaches Bank. Being London commuters, there is not much waiting around done either, to say it is a scramble to get to the platform and beyond is something of an understatement, and the train is unloaded in a time that passenger flow modelling probably says is impossible. What difference does this make? I hear you asking. Well, as the service built on the first morning we had no problem at all until it got really busy, then two consecutive trains ran into Bank station and refused to budge back to Waterloo. Alarms were flashing but you had to know what they meant to appreciate that the over height sensor had gone off. Each train was convinced it was too big for the tunnel, and the sensors were a requirement of the air suspension. As the load reduced, so air was vented to maintain the vehicle ride height, but the City slickers were too quick for the chokes fitted in the suspension. Like the couplers, they were fine for the Central Line, but not for the Drain.

I cannot remember how we got out of this one, it probably involved isolating something or other, running without the warning and risking hitting the tunnel roof until we got the air discharge rate settled. The time honoured process of solving reliability issues worked again, - understand the problem, devise a way round (operational or engineering) keep the service going, enhance the inspection routine, then redesign and modify in a structured and controlled way. Stopping the service was never really an option. Next month I will describe this process applied to an existing fleet – class 319, before going on to other introduction issues for the other new fleets, classes 159, 165, 166, 465. *(to be continued)*



Left - The Old



Right— The New
Photos 61249

NOTES FROM THE TRUSTEES

by Peter Culham

Raised Track Extension

Discussions and planning continue and already the large container has an insulated ceiling involving lifting, placing and fixing insulation boards and 5 ply board. This is in readiness for moving some of the equipment back from the smaller container at the rear of the site to enable storage of track materials when purchased. Initially, though, the large container is needed for setting up Santa's Grotto ready for December 13th.

New Event Day Toilets

Everyone on site will have seen progress; a lot of work has been done on getting a top class job done and the toilets are expected to be in use before the end of November. It will mean that we can designate the existing toilet for the use of members only as well as providing facilities for the disabled. No more waiting for drivers who need to make a visit quickly! Arrangements are in place for the existing toilet floor and the floor in the entrance lobby to be 'modernised' and replacement cupboards and doors will follow on. It should make a real welcome to the clubhouse.

CIO and Renewal of Club Lease

At the trustees meeting on 9th November, much time was spent on adoption of the aims, values, and goals together with associated matters in setting the way ahead within the charitable status of our organization. The paperwork relating to the club lease within the charitable status has been reviewed, involving some minor amendments, and is being returned to Reading Council for their final agreement.

Club Finances

A splendid start has been shown for the finances since the club status changed on 18th September with excellent turn outs from the public on both the October and November Running days. Demand for our popular birthday parties continues; the value to us cannot be understated as the income supports the many capital improvements around the site. A number of bookings are already made spreading over the first few months of 2016.

Young Engineers

The one monthly Friday evenings are now very important to the club in bringing along new young members to the club. Progress continues to be made on the engine build which can be seen on display inside the clubhouse.

Works and Projects Record

The on-going record is always available to our Wednesday Warriors to pick and choose what job can be done next. It's proving to be very useful as an information point, and while things keep being added, there is no shortage of work. We have been fortunate weather wise over recent times allowing for plenty of outside work to be done, and it shows.

A welcome to the following new members

Luke Heaslewood of Newbury
Anshul Saini of Reading



At the last and final AGM of the RSME (as a Club) held on Thursday 25th October Stuart Kidd is presented with the President's Cup in recognition of his work on the positioning of the RSME as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Stuart modestly informed the meeting that it was "a team effort". Photo John Spokes

ADDING AN ASH PIT TO YOUR LAYOUT OR ENGINEERS TRACK

by David C Scott

Over several weekends this year Lily my lovely wife has taken me to various model exhibitions for the smaller scales. This is mostly for inspiration for the family's Otter Valley Railway in OO. So we have Otter a country Station, Much Otter which is a seaside Station passing over two world famous pubs The Arch Bishop and The Arch Duke. Anyone familiar with the South Bank in London may have had a tippie in the latter? This is after the train on our proposed model has gone under the chalk cliffs based on the ones at Dover, or the south of Guildford Station. This splits the layout in half, hides the fiddle yard complex track-work and give us the superior residential area above of Even or Even Otter! Yes, I do love The Madder Valley Model in Pendon Museum! This is where we lost Katie then 7 years, and found that she had gate-crashed a modelling session run by Gordon and Maggie Gravett.

It was while looking at yet another too perfect Protofour layout where the trains do

seem to come off the rails all too frequently. 18.83 mm and all that. Though to be fair their layout melted into well-rehearsed pieces at the end of the show and was the first off the floor. That the problem struck me. A total lack of ash. This had me going back to the first hall and buying a small pot of brown C1169A. This according to the instructions can be mixed or sprinkled with the pot of grey C1180 which was already in my bag. Actually made from ash with something called a B7 kit with things called chairs roughly the size between 8 and 10 B.A. nuts in large quantities and instructions that goes into several pages? And here is me getting scared over reading the Rob Roy book which seems to have been written in a too small a font for the average age group of Model Engineers!

The B7 kit seemed to have three sleepers spare, so these I thought would be nice for the wall of the ash pit. Up till now the only glue I had used apart from Grip Fill, which round the house I seem to be addicted to and the odd drop of Super Was 601 or 603 for sticking wheels on axles. Plastic weld was recommended? You know the one that they can't send through the post anymore? Yes, and before you ask when I replaced our front door it did come with a letterbox for such items to be sent... OK now I have to admit it was second hand out of a skip but it does save weathering it the next time I have the spray gun out!! Talking of weathering the four paving slabs or the squares of plasticard recommended for the ash pit do look better weathered. I do have Martyn Welch's book on the dark art but this was mainly for the lovely colour pictures of a large Prairie tank towards the back and of course on the front. I often dream of the five-inch gauge version being finished one day.

No where to build it? Now years ago coal had been delivered to the rear of the platform at Much Otter. That was before they dug slots in many feet of concrete to lay North Sea gas pipes. (Or was it to take the sewage from the new blue toilet block out into the ocean) Well the area was now a dumping ground for a local outfit with dumpy bags full of small stones and empty ones which I am sure with a little imagination could be turned into wind breaks or non-stripy deck chair covers for the beach advertising the local Builders Merchants for free?

Instructions at last: Take half a teaspoon of C1169A and a dab of PVA (Which we are not sure can be sent by post) and paint in a corner. Dump the, oh yes it's called ballast until it seems to be level. Take two paving slabs and put them in place on the oozing glue. Yes, I have just read at full arm's length that PVA can also stick plastic? I thought it said timber and paper? Glasses may help! Two of red wine and you can read anything. But cutting with scalpel comes to a halt!

Next comes the sleepers and you may need some help from a fellow modeller equipped with tweezers or long nosed pliers having read the warning on the plastic weld. Plus, my last encounter with grip-fill is just about to rub off the fingers after a week. More dabs of PVA two slabs in place and you can relax. The bell goes for tea so you can ask what others have used for ash or where on the site. Sorry Layout! they have dumped it in the past. Oh the fiddle yard seems to be a usual place. Sorry the Steaming Bays!

Collect a quarter teaspoon out of each pot and mix to represent ash and bits of coal. Yes, you can get a little bag of these but someone mentioned Poppy seeds offer a less messy alternative but do take an age to scrape off the loaf of bread.

Oh just before we go I must give you the metric equivalents as we can't buy in dabs, sprinkles and dumps anymore?

One teaspoon.....One wheelbarrow full 900 mm X 800 mm X 400 mm.
 Half teaspoon.....Half the above.
 One sprinkle.....Quarter the above.
 Dab.....Big can of spray foam sold in Litres of course.
 Paving slabs.....600 mm X 600 mm X 40 mm.
 Railway sleepers.....2.6 meters or 2600 mm X 250 mm X 150 mm.
 Dump.....A collection or a buy one get one free 20 KG bags of Ballast mix.



Photos Author



THE ADVENTURES OF A SIGNALBOX LAD

Part 4 By Mike Burke

Monday morning 05.30am and it was raining again so I was thankful that my mum owned a spare umbrella so at least most of me was keeping dry. I could hear the railway but was blown if I could see it as the whole area was blacked out by thick clouds of acrid black smoke that raced along empty streets to greet my first day at Brewery Sidings. On climbing the wooden steps that took me from street level to the signalbox I could at least now see the cause of the fog.

She was an extremely scruffy looking austerity 2-8-0 locomotive attempting to leave the sidings with about 60 empty coal wagons destined for the Yorkshire coalfields. Due to the rain she was slipping on the wet rails with great eruptions of smoke and sparks that had red hot sparks and cinders raining down like hailstones on my umbrella that had now become a useful shield as I fumbled to open the signalbox door. It was as I did this I realised with horror that I now owed my mum a new umbrella as I could see light shining through

numerous holes that had appeared in the fabric due to many cinders still being hot when they landed. Smoke swirled around me as I entered the box so I must have appeared like some apparition out of the mist as I closed the door and the box interior slowly cleared.

The signalman looked up from his lever pulling whilst the box lad grinned and said “Hey, look what the cats dragged in” as I stood dripping water and flakes of ash onto the box clean floor. They both waited expectantly as I cleared my throat and said “Sorry about the mess I’ve been sent from Miles Platting to learn the job”.

“Say no more” said the lad handing me the broom. “Hey let the lad take his coat off first and then give him the broom” said the signalman “and, whilst he’s doing that he can tell us something about himself. I could do with a laugh.” I didn’t know what to make of this pair but I was to soon learn they were born practical jokers. Eager to make a good impression I got to work with the broom and tidied up the mess I’d made at which the signalman said “I think he deserves a cup of tea for that”. “Good idea” said the lad. “He can fill the kettle”.

It was then I found this was no ordinary 3 pinter but a monster cast iron jobby and a king amongst water boilers. With a capacity of about three gallons and weighing a good half hundred weight it carried the name Mathew Swain (who were an iron foundry some 200 yards up the line with a rail connection).

Fill it with water? I couldn’t even lift it off the stove and got redder and redder in the face as I tried. Whilst the signalman and lad howled with laughter. Finally, the signal man wiped his streaming eyes and said “This is obviously the first job you need to learn if you are to work here” and said to the boy “Put him out of his misery and show him how it’s done”. “Right, watch me very carefully and learn because I won’t show you twice”. He then went to a wooden cupboard and took out a large saucepan which he then filled from the tap and poured into the kettle. I felt a first class twit for not working that out.

It seemed that this kettle was never taken off the stove and was tipped forward whenever hot water was needed. This kettle was in use 24 hours a day and was never allowed to run dry or go cold. For my penance I had to supply the tea, sugar and milk for them to enjoy the cuppa that they had promised me.

This was a very busy box and the lad assisted pulling levers as they drank their tea. I looked around as this box was not as big as the previous boxes I’d been in. A multi coloured 56 lever frame controlled train movements except for two unusual levers coloured brown and green. These were the releases and bell for the ground frame operated by the yard Inspector. Unusually this 9 lever frame was built by the London North Western Railway as most ground frames were made at Horwich for the L&Y system. (I was pleased to learn that because of its rarity this frame is to be preserved).

On pulling the brown lever in our box this little frame then allowed the yard to shunt without asking our permission. But when we had a movement to make crossing from the main to the goods loops we pulled the green lever which rang a loud bell and an indicator in the box showed when the yard inspector had restored his frame to normal. We could then return the brown lever into the frame and this unlocked our points and signals allowing trains to cross safely.

Above the levers was the block shelf with 7 instruments to control train movements and above this was a large diagram showing the track layout controlled and the position of all points and signals with their lever numbers.

The box boy had a wooden desk and chair with a large bank of telephones screwed to the back wall and so worked with his back to the levers. Being situated on the other end of the triangle this box was about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Miles Platting station and controlled the routes to Oldham, or Leeds via Halifax and via the triangle (known as The Fork) the line to connect with Stalybridge and routes to the Eastern Region. Opposite the box were the structures that gave it its name, namely a large brewery complex.

The smell of brewing beer was constant and if the wind was in the right direction could be a bit overpowering. None the less the shunters told me this was the best place on earth to work, and no wonder. For as each fresh brew was bottled the brewery stacked the crates of golden ale against the railway retaining wall. This quickly became high enough that the shunters could use a shunting pole to hook a full crate of ale up and into their cabin to be shared out. I am told they returned the empties the same way and it seemed the brewery turned a blind eye to this practice. The signaller never shared in this booty and said "If they get caught, they can't blame us". They also made sure that none of us lads were tempted as such theft was a sackable offence.

The actual Brewery Sidings was a marshalling yard with a throughput of about 800 wagons a day so was very busy. The difference between a Goods Yard and a Marshalling Yard is that a goods yard loads and unloads traffic whilst a Marshalling Yard sorts the wagons into trains by type and destination. The best trains for spectacle were those heading for Healey Mills or Crofton in Yorkshire. These always conveyed between 55 and 65 wagons which invariably had the old fat box lubrication so the colder the weather the thicker the grease got and so moving the load was difficult. The main locomotives allocated to this work were the extremely powerful but ugly Austerity 2-8-0 types. Distinctive because of their solid disc pony wheels they had cylinders as big as their tiny driving wheels. They were masters of the job and would pull anything the shunters cared to hang on the back.

To stand at the signalbox window and see one depart from the yard was rather like watching the launch of an ocean liner as the staff fussed around the engine and train. A large plume of black smoke would fill the air turning the sky a mucky grey and, suddenly this would be mixed with steam as the safety

valves lifted. Up in the box I would receive a telephone call from the Yard Inspector saying “ Brewery to Crofton ready to depart down No2 loop with 60 on” I would relay this to the signalman who would set the points and signals and obtain permission for the train to depart to Thorpes Bridge Lunction (the next box). The inspector could be seen frantically waving his arms and blowing his whistle to wake up the guard in the brake van. The guard would indicate to the driver that he was ready and the driver who would then sound the hooter type whistle and open the regulator.

All talking now became virtually impossible as the locomotive drain cocks roared loudly blasting up bits of ballast with the force of steam and water being blown out. Billowing steam quickly blotted out the locomotive and staff as the first loud CHUFF CHUFF< CHUFF erupted from the chimney. More and more Chuffs and the engine slowly emerged from the mist as the wheels began to turn. The bright glow of a white hot fire burst from the cab as the fireman opened the firedoors and began to feed the ever hungry mouth of that huge firebox. By the time she passed our box the train was well on the move but due to the twisting and turning through the points could not accelerate the load. A thick swirling trail of black smoke marked her passage as the wagons squealed and rattled past the box with the last vehicle being the guards van which was now leaving its own trail of smoke as the guard stoked up his fire for the long journey ahead.

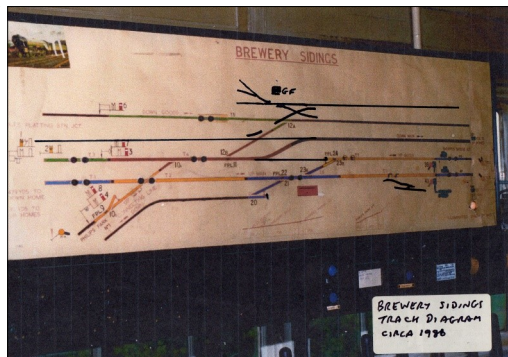
I had been told I had one week to learn my new box with three days on each shift then I would take over as relief box boy working at the three signalboxes I had been trained at. During my time here we had the pleasure of signalling a Royal Train which was conveying our queen to Oldham. We stood proudly at the box windows as she passed and noticed a shunter stood to attention at the lineside. He was smartly dressed with polished shoes and a shunting pole decorated with red white and blue crepe paper. It later transpired that he had been conned into believing he had been selected to detach a coach off the Royal Train due to the heavy gradients up to Oldham. He was forever afterwards referred to as the Royal Shunter by his mates. The Yard Inspector even had a letter typed purporting to come from the queen and apologising for not stopping to let him shunt her train.

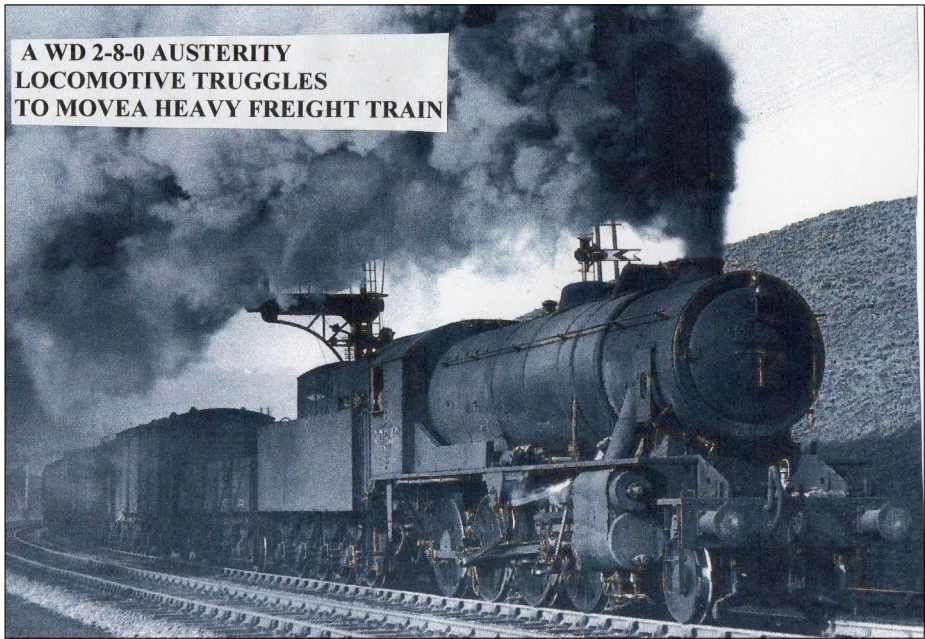
Yes, signalbox life was never dull. But that’s another story.

To be continued

Right, Brewery Sidings track diagram circa 1986

Photos courtesy Author





WOLVERTON PUG

- INTERCITY CHARTER TRAIN UNIT

As the investment in the InterCity brand continued, every activity was scrutinised in an effort to drive down costs. Under sectorisation the other four businesses were doing exactly the same. This meant that the hitherto "big pot" approach to costs under the global BR had gone, and every pound spent had to be on behalf of one business or another. "Not ours" was a frequently heard mantra! It created some rather silly situations. For instance, the overnight sleeper services from Euston to Scotland which went beyond the Central Belt ran via Mossend to reach the far north. This meant InterCity picked up the maintenance costs between Motherwell and Larbert. In order to avoid these extra costs, the Inverness and Fort William Sleepers were diverted at Carstairs to run via Edinburgh. This had the effect of turning the whole train. No problem for the sleeping cars but the Motorail vans were all loaded at platforms 17 and 18 at Euston by driving the cars in via the rear Motorail van. This meant they were now all in reverse and on the front of the train at Edinburgh Inverness and Fort William!

I was tasked with finding a solution and in conjunction with the InterCity Design Team at Derby we came up with a side loading vehicle converted from a bogie well wagon. We had 4 'weltrols' converted at Glasgow Springburn works for use as follows - two at Euston, one at Carlisle, one at Inverness and a spare. Since privatisation and cessation of Motorail services I know not their current whereabouts.

As InterCity was sub-divided into individual Routes with their own budgets and Route Directors it was becoming increasingly obvious that the government were not going to allow InterCity to remain as one. The privatisation process revved up following the passing of the 1993 Railways Act, and the Headquarters function at the Board began to become increasingly irrelevant. The InterCity Fleet Team shrank to the technical arm at Derby. At this point my boss retired and I joined David Ward at Paddington as the VIP and First Class Charter Manager with Paul Blowfield handling the steam charters, Nigel Hayman handling the resources and standard class charters and Joan Crosland helping David Ward and Margaret, his secretary, sort out the Land Cruises, and Luxury Days Out. A whole new chapter of my railway career then began.

It was a fairly steep learning curve for me, now deep in the commercial world and handling the public face of selling charters, having been with Operations for 13 years. My customers included the Venice Simplon Orient Express (VSOE), the Royal Scotsman, the Tote Credit Club, Hertfordshire Rail-tours, and any companies and businesses wishing to run first class charters. I had in fact helped David Ward sort out the vehicles for the InterCity Charter Train Unit as it was now called, during my time with the InterCity Fleet Team, so I was well up to speed with what we had to offer the market. Once I had got to know my contacts with the various customers I began to enjoy the job enormously. Obviously I was able to travel on some of the trains, such as the VSOE.

As part of the team work we all shared responsibility for acting as Train Managers on the InterCity Land Cruises and Luxury Days Out. The Land Cruises ran to the scenic routes in Scotland viz :- The Monarch of the Glen-Kings Cross depart Friday evening to Fort William, Mallaig and Oban, returning Sunday evening to Kings Cross. The Cock of the North-Kings Cross depart Friday evening to Inverness, Wick, Kyle of Lochalsh, return Monday morning to Kings Cross. The Salopian-Paddington to Penzance, helicopter to the Scilly Isles.

There were various Saturday Luxury Days Out to places of interest like Bodnant Gardens and Chatsworth House, with coach travel from and to the nearest suitable station. We had a big interface with the InterCity On Board Catering Team, as food and booze was a big part of VIP travel. Our contact was a chap called Tom Plaice a large lugubrious fellow with a booming voice. The catering boys were generally larger than life and healthily cynical to boot!

The Land Cruises were vast trains consisting of 5 day coaches (3x 42 seat open firsts, one kitchen car and a first class brake vehicle containing the Train manager's office complete with the public address microphone), plus 9 sleepers, and a Generator Car (converted Mark 1 brake second) making 15 vehicles in all. The trains would leave Kings Cross behind a class 90 electric

changing at either Newcastle or Edinburgh to two class 37s. On the Monarch of the Glen the 9 sleepers plus Generator Car (brake vehicle) would be detached at Fort William and proceed behind one of two class 37s. empty to Oban. The 5 day coaches would then do the trip to Mallaig and back and then to Fort William to join the sleepers for the trip south. This would require one of the two class 37s to be ETH fitted (class 37/4) to heat the train, whilst the Genny Car was not there.

I used to like doing the Land Cruises there was more to do and see, and if you had problems on Friday evening for instance there was time to recover without disrupting the whole tour. We had some fun on these trips sorting out problems on the hoof.

The first area of risk was at Newcastle or Edinburgh when changing from electric to diesel. On more than one occasion the class 90 departed from the front with the ETH cables still attached! This of course usually pulled the jumper connection box off the front leading Mark 1 vehicle. The Genny Car was not using fuel whilst we had the class 90. The technicians then had to make the circuitry safe to power up the Genny Car. Providing the circuitry could be made safe the return trip would be ok from Edinburgh when we picked up the cl 90 as the connections at the other end of the train would be fine.

Another area of risk was the reliability of the class 37s. They were based at Motherwell and although InterCity had a nominated fleet of four or five painted in InterCity livery, often they weren't all available and one, sometimes two would be provided from their Civil Engineer's Pool painted in grey and yellow. This did not guarantee success by any means. My record was to get through eleven different ones over four days!

A further complication was the aged nature of some of the passengers and their limited manoeuvrability. We had with us on these trips a stewardess who looked after the passengers particularly the 'off train' arrangements. So we arrive at Glenfinnan with the day coaches and one class 37. We are already 10 mins late. The reason for the Glenfinnan stop is for the punters to visit the Glenfinnan Monument to Bonnie Prince Charlie at the head of Loch Shiel. The train was allowed 40 minutes for this which was tight by any body's estimation as the road down to it from the station was fairly steep and a good half a mile. So there we have the stewardess and the 75 punters (or most of them) detraining with their Zimmer frames etc., at an inordinately slow pace, another 10 minutes has gone before all those alighting were off. I decide to go and speak to the driver. This section of railway was controlled by electronic token, i.e. radio from Banavie just outside Fort William.

I tell him I have asked the stewardess to politely hurry them along and try and persuade the more mobility impaired of them that they don't want to struggle all that. way down and back. The driver's response is "Well Ba-

navie have already been on to me to say the Sprinter (class 158) is in danger of being delayed and can we get going?" I return to the station approach by which time the fitter ones are already nearly back to the train. We are now about 5 or 6 minutes after the departure time. I set off down the road to help encourage the return. The clock ticks on. We are soon 15 minutes overdue departure, with still a handful of the slow ones now seriously affected by the rising gradient. Back to the driver to assure him they are nearly all onboard. At which point the loco radio crackles into life from Banavie. The driver twiddles the button on the front and says to me "Aye well they cannae always hear me up here".

(To be continued)

Right The weather at Kyle was not always like this! WP

All photos WP



Left Specially designed side loading vehicle. See text on page 13.

Right The 2 x 37s at Perth had just failed and we had two more. This was the occasion when I got through 11 different ones in a weekend! WP





The three Baldwins at the November public running. Another successful day says Mike Manners particularly as all engines were together in steam at the same time



Photos
Mike Manners

Further picture on
page 18 Ed



Left- A little boys dream comes true during Club Running in November. The future of the club has a go at driving the clubs class 58.

Right- good to see Nigel Braund and his loco Ben enjoying the track during Club Running.





CLUB RUNNING 7 NOVEMBER 2015

On a cold and wet Saturday no fewer than 32 members turned out to enjoy the facilities that the RSME has to offer. As soon as the rain stopped many of those members ventured outside and “played trains” .

The Jones’s firing up their newly acquired Collet.



Anthony Culham getting to grips with his Maid of Kent.

DIARY

December 2015

Tuesday	1st	00 gauge layout	
Sunday	6th	Public running	13.30 to dusk
Saturday	12th	Club running	11.00
Sunday	13th	Santa Special	Setting up from 10.00
Monday	14th	Trustees meeting	
Tuesday	15th	00 gauge DCC	
Thursday	17th	Christmas dinner	
	17th	Presentation Night	19.30
Sunday	20th	Birthday party	11.00-13.30
Saturday	26th	Boxing Day running	11.00

January 2016

Sunday	3rd	Public running	13.30 till dusk
Tuesday	5th	00 gauge layout	
Saturday	9th	Club running	11.00
Monday	11th	Trustees meeting	
Tuesday	19th	00 gauge DCC	
Friday	22nd	Young Engineers	18.00-20.00
Saturday	23rd	Young Engineers	11.00-14.00

Opinions expressed in PROSPECTUS are the personal views of the contributor and cannot be taken as reflecting the views of the club committee or editor.

**The deadline for the January PROSPECTUS is
18 December. This is the final date.**

Contributions from all members are greatly welcomed
They may be submitted in hard or soft copy to the editor.
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