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# The Prospectus

June 2015



## YOUNG ENGINEERS AT RSME

This issue reports on the inauguration of RSME Young Engineers. Secretary Peter Harrison says, "Many thanks to those members who took up their time to assist with our Young Engineers. Should this initiative continue we will be looking for members to mentor these youngsters and to help them develop into RSME's engineers of the future."

*Above Young Engineer Megan assists Alf with the making of his model church.*

## DAWSON'S DIARY

## kept by the President

There has been some fantastic efforts being put in by many of the membership over the past few working Wednesdays with the removal of the coal shed with a lot of work to get it taken down and the container and toilet block put in place, all done in a very short space of time by the members, a very good effort by those who got stuck in and finished the job.

Another project to complete was putting down shuttering for lengthening the club house station platform. With a good organised gang mixing the cement and laying it worked very well. The members just about got it finished by the time the rain came on and they put a cover over the site for it to set, it now looks a fine job.

First two birthday parties of the month were very well supported with eight engines in the steaming bays, the children had plenty of choice of trains to ride throughout the day

On the first Young Engineers Saturday morning Peter Harrison, Stuart Kidd, and Mike Burke had their locos ready for the young members to learn to drive and maintain a steam engine also the electrics as well, all had a good day. A small start but a promising start. Young Marcus had loco Polly Two running and was being driven by all the beginners to top that it was nice and sunny too!

One member in the afternoon tried out his latest loco for its first run on the track, it ran okay only some small snags to sort out. A number of members had a few laps and seemed pleased with its performance. All in all a good day for all concerned.

Once again three members wound their way up north to the Harrogate show. This year's very good, a very busy Friday, very long queues to get in. With plenty of traders and models to see made a good weekend, the stands had some very good exhibits on show, well worth the journey up north.

I understand that Alf's diorama of his church was well received at the Rivermead show. It was on our stand. I guess someone will put something in the Prospectus for us to read.

Some RSME members had a visit to Didcot on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. What a nice time we had we all got a footplate ride on the GWR 1501. Stuart Kidd was very pleased to ride on the real loco. Also we got a ride in the cab of the rail motor and had many trips on the cushions when it rained.

I had not been on the railway for many years and found rail travel so different from times of old. It was said to get back to Twyford station I would be painted GWR GREEN before I was allowed home! A big thank you to John Billard for getting the outing arranged.

*Editor's note. The visit by Les Dawson, Peter Harrison, Stuart Kidd and me was arranged in order to plan for a wider day out at Didcot for all RSME members. An announcement will be made shortly.*

## **PONDERINGS**

**by 61249**

### **Network South East Maintenance Engineer 1989**

To be brutally frank, some of the maintenance conditions of the fleet at the time was poor. Wheels, brakes and running gear were fine and well contained by a maintenance cycle that we would recognise today as being over – maintenance. So the trains were operationally safe, always a good start. However, within a fortnight of me taking over the job we had the exploding brake vans on the LT&S, related to the fact that we had lost control of the water in the 25kv transformer oil. This was due to a failure to properly control a desirable engineering change, but impacted directly on the customer when we had, for their safety, to deny access to one on four vehicles on crowded commuter services, helping to earn the soubriquet of the “misery line”.

The condition of bodies was, however, a big problem. Wheels and motors could be changed and repaired with relative ease, and the basic body designs were operationally robust, except as explained last month, the door system. Whatever had been happening at Eastleigh on the big body repairs, the 30 year old EPB, VEP and CIG bodies were in a pretty poor state, and corrosion was rampant. Metal at the time lasted about as long as it did on British Leyland products of the same era, with the added influence of parking them by the sea at the end of their working day. Ramsgate, Brighton, Eastbourne, Hastings, Portsmouth, Bournemouth all being substantial overnight stabling points and good places from which to start a commuter service to London. The salt air did wonders for the oxidation of poorly prepared surfaces. Something dramatic had to happen, and the Charing Cross accident had demonstrated how little protection these bodies afforded their occupants in

an incident. Part of my role became using our (guilty) knowledge of the fleet as an underlying reason for investing in new trains. This could have been done with long engineering explanations and reference to fatigue life etc. etc., which may have been accurate but might not have worked. We came up with two phrases that conveyed the issue and which I know had impact because they have been quoted over 30 years later by the policy makers they were designed to influence. EPBs were “garden sheds on wheels” offering the customer similar levels of comfort and security. Showing a slide of a rotting CIG, it was said to have “the structural integrity of a golfing umbrella”. This one struck a real chord with the audience, who probably could not wait to get out of the office and on to the greens.

The NSE commercial team added the business case, since new roofs for 3000 vehicles would cost a lot, and only last until the sides went the same way. The door issue was not irrelevant either, as pillar corrosion added to the elasticity of the system, leading to the phenomenon of door “bounce”. This is what happened when a slammed door springs back before the lock tongue has time to engage with the catch on the door pillar. It usually gets caught on the second, safety catch, but the door remains not in the fully closed position, - a hazard for the customer or a delay for the train while the guard sorts it out.

Not for the first time in my career I felt the right thing to do was something my boss disapproved of. He was rightly, if overly, concerned that any change to the door/train relationship had to be carefully worked out, and no additional risks added. However, I knew from working with my dad (a guard on the LT&S) how difficult it was to spot a door on the catch. We determined to put the reflective yellow tape down the door edge and make such doors stand out. Despite senior advice to the contrary we did the fitting, originally under controlled conditions at Main Works with the tape effectively painted in by painting the top coat after fitting, and sealing the edges. Within a couple of years we had fitted the fleet and in the way that some things surprise by the way they work, we had no recorded instances of door tapes coming off, and a considerable reduction in both door delays and door open incidents. I am sure that doing something useful about a known problem did help to convince the station and train staff that we, the management, were serious about folk not falling out. The main input to the improvement-

was from the staff, not the tapes, but they helped.

In a later article I will cover the changing view of passenger security, and the swing from allowing anyone to open a door when they chose, to making it very difficult to get out at all. In railway operations it has been a profound change, but the numbers point to it being one of the great safety successes. In the May “Ponderings” I left the question with my avid readers as to which safety change made the biggest contribution to saving life. The answer is, of course, not AWS, TPWS, or any fancy signalling system but the simple measure of central locking for slam doors. Upwards of 20 lives a year (mostly Inter-City) were lost this way, while the average for folk killed in train collisions was down to low single figures, making investment in signalling harder to justify.

The project to fit the Inter-City stock with Central Locking (Mostly MKIIs and MKIIIs) made a huge difference to the Inter-City passenger loss numbers. Our defensive (doors not at fault) position was detected for what it was, a silo based mechanism that ignored the bigger operational and safety issues. However, it left NSE in a rather awkward position, we had 10 times as many doors, and the chosen cheap solution for the InterCity stock was just not robust enough for the lightweight doors with virtually no strength above the waistline. Door reliability was critical for our service operation and some of the numbers are staggering. For instance, using a modern day example from the underground, every morning peak on the Victoria line there are over 1 million door leaf cycles. 99.9% reliability is just not good enough and would give 1000 door failures a morning! The actual figure being achieved is around 3 door failures a week – which must make Victoria Line doors one of the most reliable train components ever made. On NSE we had the operational problems with slam doors, and were also losing customers who either were intoxicated or jumped, - we had to do something. We initiated a project to see if we could deliver a locking system with the necessary reliability, and annoyed the neighbours of a small company in a German village with the constant noise of NSE doors slamming in a test rig. Some had an active striker plate as you might find on your petrol station shop door, others had a big electro-magnet.

In the end we got new trains, and the problem melted away as the MKI derivative vehicles all went to the scrap yard. Phew! *(to be continued)*



*Where to start with rust like this? EPB door pillar and lock*



Photos  
courtesy 61249

*Class 421 – semi detached  
door pillar  
Photo author*

*Class 421 Cantrail sec-  
tion over door completely  
detached. All the structur-  
al integrity of a golfing  
umbrella” Photo Author*



## A VISIT TO THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RAILWAY CENTRE

by John Spokes

I recently paid a visit to the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at Quainton Road Station a few miles north of Aylesbury. I had visited the centre before, but many years ago when I still had a conventional (non-digital) camera and in the intervening years much has changed.

Quainton Road is a station on what was the joint Metropolitan and Great Central Railway; the GCR's London extension joined at Calvert a few miles north of Quainton and was one of two alternative routes, this one via Aylesbury and Harrow-on-the-Hill, into Marylebone. The Metropolitan Railway also achieved its furthest point from London at Verney Junction, a few miles to the north-east. It was also the start of the tramway to Brill.

Part of the original trackbed is still operated by Network Rail and is single tracked through one platform. This is used to transport London rubbish to land-fill sites in disused clay pits in the Calvert area. While I was there, a couple of workings, hauled by EWS Class 66s, came through. The Centre covers a considerable area both sides of this line and the two parts are linked by footbridges. To the south is a modern steel span and at the north the original GCR lattice-work footbridge is in use at the station.

There is extensive parking and the first building one meets is the old LNWR Oxford Rewley Road Station building, which until 2002 stood nearby the existing Oxford station and latterly functioned as a tyre and exhaust centre. This has been repaired and added to and represents (allegedly) the only surviving example of work by Paxton, who designed the Crystal Palace. This houses the entrance, cafeteria and ubiquitous gift shop, but the main part of the building is constructed like a small station and Castle "Defiant" is on display in one platform, together with the VIP carriage used by Churchill and Eisenhower in the lead-up to D-Day. In the other platform is an LNWR dining carriage, built to compete with the Pullmans on other railways. The interior of this is a fantastic statement of opulence.

The whole site is impeccably maintained and presented. Even the old rusting stock, awaiting restoration, is neatly displayed. The day I went was a weekly work day for volunteers and there seems no shortage of willing hands. There were workshops to view, Quainton Road station and a museum which

again is beautifully created, and with tremendous attention to detail. The most impressive thing was the diversity of exhibits on display. This museum is housed in what was an old MAFF Wartime food store, which apparently was used to store sugar and raisins and surprisingly maintained that purpose until the end of the Cold War in the early nineties. In fact, I think one of the significant aspects of the Centre is that much of the renovated stock, etc is under cover and thus is safe from further deterioration.

Apart from the static “Defiant”, a “Hall” near completion and a large, but static, SAR loco, you won’t see much large steam; instead a Beattie well-tank, Metropolitan loco No. 1 and some industrial locos. But it is the variety of stuff that impresses most and the atmosphere of a pre-modernisation country station. The day I went, apart from the volunteers there were few visitors and this certainly added to the ambience.

I should also mention at the south of the site is located the miniature railway of the Vale of Aylesbury ME. This is a mixed 5” and 7 1/4” line approximately 1km in length. Again immaculate with a great attention to detail and with a very attractive canopied station. And, enclosed within this railway, is a large raised Garden Railway (45mm gauge).

So I would thoroughly recommend this for a Railway Day-Out. BUT pick a fine day as there is a lot of walking outdoors.



*Left* The interior of the former Rewley Road station. “Defiant” is on the left.  
Photos John Spokes.

*Right* Peckett OY-1 built for Cortaulds in 1948.





## COMMITTEE NOTES LATEST

from Peter Culham

### **Club Lease and Charitable Incorporated Organization**

Awaiting response from Charity Commissioners. Reading Council have now advised that they have to place an advert in the local paper regarding their proposal to grant us a secure lease.

### **Young Engineers / Modelling**

The first meeting on Friday 24 April was very promising and the committee discussed the continuing way forward to ensure that interest is maintained in conjunction with the construction of the Poly 1V . It may be that in due course, thought can be given to taking on a couple more young engineers if it is considered possible.

### **Public Running and Birthday Parties / other events**

Ongoing discussions regarding the excellent take up in all sections and ways we can ensure that all visitors with particular consideration for children are safe on site especially during the ongoing works. Reports being made continually on Facebook. Diaries discussed and updated with thoughts as well on the numbers of approaches from schools and organizations for visits to our railway. The Prospect Park Play Day has been set for Friday 7 August and this is always a BIG call on our help in providing train rides.

### **Event Toilet Block**

Plans are advancing on fitting first class toilet facilities in the front container for use during events ie Public Running Days and Birthday Parties / School visits. The heavy lockable doors need to be secured open during use and so fitted wooden doors and surrounds together with new toilet / sink suites are appropriate. Flooring which needs to be easily and effectively cleanable is also in the equation. The block needs to be plumbed, with water supply and out wastage, and power supplied. The eventual siting of the block will be further back from where it now stands with plans for a patio frontage.

### **Other Matters**

Reports on model railway sections received which indicate that some of the evenings are very well supported. Treasury reports brought up to date.

### **Maintenance and Projects**

Although a lot of heavy work reported in last issue, several members have been 'at it again' in extending the birthday platform to improve safety and to allow extra capacity of rolling stock. Work was completed over just two consecutive Wednesdays and has already seen plenty of use. Otherwise, committee reviewed the M & P worksheets again with most items of an ongoing nature.

## **RAISED TRACK EXTENSION LATEST**

As any visitors to the railway will have seen, two containers have been delivered to site; one has been cleared and cleaned for storage and the other ready for toilet upgrades. Considerations towards the type of rail to be used (examples provided), timings of work and ordering of supplies / delivery times under way.



*Left* The arrival of two containers on site on 22 April 2015

## WEDNESDAY DOINGS

Photos by Peter Culham



*Above* The unit and trailer is brilliantly reversed into the gap left by the demolished garage  
*Left* The 2nd container being unloaded



Concrete mixing is under way for the birthday [party] platform. And it was levelled in the rain with no time to stop!



## RSME Young Engineers—Peter Harrison reports

On Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> April the RSME launched its newest section, the RSME Young Engineers, YEs. The first meeting was attended by 6 of our younger members and 5 committee members. At that first meeting Paul Rylands gave a presentation regarding safety in and around the site and workshops and what was expected from the YEs and what they could expect from our members.

After the formalities the YEs opened up various packages containing new tools, purchased with a donation of £200 from RWE Didcot B Power Station and the first part of the Polly IV kit. After viewing the drawings, Polly parts and tools Alf distributed a number of plastic tank kits for the YEs to assemble. These were taken home by the YEs to be worked at their leisure.

After the YEs left for the evening many were going home to carry on building their model tanks. Makes a change from playing on mobile phoned or iPads! YEs attending for the this first meeting were Marcus, Megan, Harrison, James, Tom and Morgan.

*Young Engineers Marcus, James and Harrison with their new tools*



*On the following Saturday the track was available to all Yes to use which several young people did .*

*In the photo, left, we see YE James driving a 3 1/2" Black Five with his dad David. When James was finally prized off the loco he had a big grin on his face and was heard saying "I have just driven a steam engine"*

## THE ADVENTURES OF A SIGNALBOX LAD by Mike Burke

Before I left the engineering firm of Mather and Platt in Manchester I made my way to Newton Heath Locomotive shed (26A) to enquire about a job as an engine cleaner. My ambition being to work on the footplate and eventually become a driver. Newton Heath loco was a gigantic place with over 26 roads of steam engines plus several workshops and sidings with it all dominated by a huge concrete coaling tower.

Full of excitement I asked a departing engine driver about working here and he directed me to the shed foreman's office. A walk inside the smoky atmosphere of the shed with its lines of hissing steam engines eventually saw me arrive at a grimy office built as part of the shed wall. Here I met the foreman who when he heard me ask for a job he laughed and said "What job do you think you could do here lad? We've already got a cat" When I explained my hopes he asked me to stand against the door frame where I noticed a large painted mark. This I found to be his height gauge and was some 4'6ins off the floor and I was only 4'2ins at this time. He added "I'm sorry son but you're just too small for footplate work". Until that moment I never realised there was a height restriction and my high spirits took a tumble.

On seeing my obvious disappointment he said "Look son you will probably grow a lot taller so in the meantime why don't you see if they have any vacancies in the signalbox as a train recorder and then when you get bigger come back and see me and I will arrange a transfer for you.

This was better than nothing and at least I would be working for the railway. He made a telephone call and shortly afterwards said "The Station Master at Miles Platting Junction has a vacancy for a signalbox lad and wants to see you at 9 o'clock tomorrow for an interview". So with my hopes somewhat restored I realised I could at last be working for the railway.

After a restless night's sleep I arrived at Miles Platting Station bright and early, in fact so early that the office staff hadn't arrived. I decided to wait on the platform and watch the trains. It was whilst doing this that I became aware of a man at the end of the platform doing mysterious things with tiny oil lamps. He cleaned and filled them then lit them before lining some up on a short plank which he placed on his shoulder and climbed a long ladder up to the top of a high multi armed signal gantry. It was whilst he was doing this that disaster struck for in my efforts to see what he was doing I stepped back

and kicked over his can of paraffin which then decanted its contents over the other tiny lamps sitting on the platform. There was a loud 'whoosh' and the whole lot flared up. I did a runner thinking I had at least burnt the station down whilst the lamp man's yell brought station staff at a run and I was quickly caught and dragged back onto the platform.

At this moment a local train arrived hauled by a Stanier 2-6-4 tank and the fireman seeing my bonfire quickly put on the pep pipe to douse the flames. Unfortunately the force of the jet shot all the little lamps off the platform edge and onto the track. . This caused the lamp man to dance with rage and turn his anger away from me, and he began to berate the poor fireman and locomen in general.

"Here's the little toe rag" said the porter and handed me over to the lamp man who between swear words told me what he thought of my stupidity. I blurted out my story and he said "Signalbox lad eh. Well you're not making a very good start are you?" I couldn't help but notice his attire for they were almost in tatters and soaked in generations of paraffin oil. He positively reeked of the stuff and was nothing more than a walking wick. By this time the clerical staff had arrived so I was frogmarched to the offices to see The Station Master.

His office was dark, gloomy and, smelt very strongly of leaking gas. He seemed unaware of any danger and puffed away merrily on a large brown pipe as he looked me up and down." I take it you can read and write lad, but can you write in a hand that other people can read? " he asked. When I said yes he took me to see one of the clerks and told him to give me a written test. Then to take it in to him when I'd finished. The clerk looked nonplussed and looked around for something for me to copy. He finally decided that this should be the leading article in his Daily Express newspaper. I dutifully copied it out and took it in to the Station Master. "What the hell is this?" He bel-lowed "I meant something connected with railways not the Budget". At this tirade the clerk came in and said "Sorry Sir, but I couldn't find anything that wasn't confidential".

There was a deathly silence then the Station Master in a very quiet voice pointed at the clerk and said "Get out. I will deal with you later". Then to me he said "your writing is very good and I think you'll be alright as a signalbox lad. There are a few formalities to do so in the meantime I will get my clerk

to take you to the signalbox and you can spend the rest of the day there whilst I arrange a medical examination for you at Manchester Victoria”.

The now chastened clerk put on his trilby hat and coat then escorted me along the platform where we crossed the line to the signalbox but Instead of entering the box I was ushered into a brick hut at the base of the stairs. Here I was introduced to the Yard Master who explained that HE was in charge of all the things I was not allowed to do. At this the clerk said “Right young ‘un let’s go upstairs to the box.”

At the top he opened the door and shouted “New lad for you” and pushed me in then firmly closed the door behind me leaving me standing in a state of confusion and uncertainty. The box interior was long and narrow with two men busily pushing and pulling different coloured levers fitted in a long frame along one side and, ringing numerous bells bolted on a long wooden shelf over them. Above this were two track plans of the layout controlled by the signalmen.

On the opposite side were two armchairs near a roaring fire, a small gas cooker and a desk at which was sat a boy about my own age. He was manning a large collection of telephones, shouting messages to the signalmen and writing constantly in a large register. He had a small coal fired stove nearby with a large iron chimney which climbed up through the box roof. I had just taken this in when one of the men shouted “Don’t just stand there boy come and let’s take a look at you”. This was said by one Tommy Hill’, a stern disciplinarian who always called me BOY never anything else and I was subjected to a long stare. The other signalman I was to find was a complete opposite and quite gentle in nature, but with a wicked sense of humour. His name was ‘ Jimmy Bennett’. He had a wooden leg due to a shunting accident some years ago. He limped up and down the box with loud thuds from his wooden leg but he seemed able to pull the levers.

“Go over there, sit with Bloody Onions and, behave yourself” said Tommy Hill and pointed at the lad. I walked to the lad who said “Don’t mind him he’s always like that. By the way my name’s Harry, Harry Garlic” which at least explained his nick name. He then told me he was a relief lad covering a vacancy at the box until a replacement could be found (me). Between making phone calls and writing in the register he explained about the box, its workings and the duties of a signalbox lad. *To be continued*

## **WOLVERTON PUG - more tales from the Rolling Stock Section**

We were always referred to as the Rolling Stock Section, but don't ask me why the Scottish Region equivalent at Buchanan House, Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, (built on the site of Buchanan Street Station) was always called the Coaching Plant. The only other "plant" (apart from flora, specific engineering equipment and unknowingly being a conveyor of stolen property), that I know of is the Great Northern Railway Works complex at Doncaster.

When I was first in the Passenger Train Office I recall that, apart from W9135E (ex LNER RB) and the ex GWR General Manager's Saloon W9005W, also on the books were three LMS design Sleeping cars in the M6xxM series. I believe they came on loan to cover a shortage of our own vehicles, but don't think they were actually used except maybe once as additional vehicles at a Bank Holiday. There was a Thompson LNER design restaurant car as well E1706E which also came onto the WR for a special working I believe.

As a result of the requirement for electric train heating (ETH) on trains passing onto the West Coast Main Line and the Southern Region, Mark 1 rolling stock which was dual heated (electric and steam) was required in the WR fleet.

The Bristol to Glasgow and Edinburgh sleeping car train was electrically hauled north of Birmingham, and as the service was not required to travel above 90mph the seating vehicles were ex LMR transfers with BR1 90mph bogies. They were surplus to the LMR and had been on very low mileage diagrams (mainly seasonal). This meant they were on something like 24 month shopping periodicities. Old nags was not an exaggeration and at least one of them was still in maroon livery! The LMR had turfed out their oldest dual heated Mark 1 compartment seconds, brakes and composites (SKs BSKs and CKs,. The oldest being built in 1952/3. Some in fact were so shabby they never entered traffic on the WR. Because of their generally elderly condition and the long mileage diagrams, vehicles often needed to be replaced, resulting in them, once repaired, wandering off on Scottish internal diagrams. I once saw Brake Second no. W34666 and W24888 at Fort William.

The WR main line diesels, mainly hydraulics, were fitted with steam heating boilers and even the Brush Type 4s (class 47) had not been converted to ETH

back then, so that even some of the more modern Mark 1s with Commonwealth 100mph bogies owned by the WR which were built with ETH had run only steam heated. These vehicles required the ETH resuscitating when the WR took over provision of the rolling stock for the Waterloo to Exeter service. They were hauled by the Southern Region Crompton Type 3 diesels, which ousted the WR Warship class diesel hydraulics and SR rolling stock in 1971 and were based at Newton Abbot.

As time went on and the WR continued to receive new air-conditioned rolling stock, the older Mark 1s were gradually replaced. The compartment stock generally went for scrap or conversion for Departmental use (Chief Civil Engineer, Chief Mechanical and Electrical Engineer or the Research Department). Open stock was popular by the mid 70s and surplus open seconds (TSOs) were sent to the Scottish Region, who until devolution traditionally received everyone else's cast offs!

Approaching the end of the financial year during March, I would receive a visit from a dapper little gentleman who wore a dark suit, white shirt, dark tie and highly polished black brogue shoes. He came from the Chief Accountants and bore with him a printed list of various carriage numbers. A very earnest man, lacking any sort of humour whatever. He gravely informed me of the seriousness of his visit.

These vehicles were the outstanding transfers and condemnations which had not yet been removed from the WR fleet and either transferred or condemned. It was essential that this be achieved by the financial year end of 31st March. I assured him that the matter was in hand and it would receive my undivided attention. He went away, not happy but in the knowledge that the Chief Accountant's instructions had been conveyed to the WR HQ Rolling Stock Department. Suffice to say that had I carried out this instruction to the letter I would have received far worse, as a result of standing commuters on the 17.45 Paddington to Westbury.

The remedy was simple. A phone call to Old Oak Common and the W prefix was painted out and a stencilled SC painted in its place. Old Oak then advised the Shopping Control at Paddington of what had happened and they duly completed the necessary transfer forms and paperwork, copy to CM+EE Glasgow, Copy to the WR Chief Accountant, copy to the BRB, copy to file. Job done. My weekly telex message of Scottish Region vehicles on hand on



the WR to Buchanan House at Glasgow now included SC4198, SC4200, SC4206 and SC4210 etc. This continued until I had vehicles to replace them. The vehicles for condemnation were another matter, because no way could the paper work be undertaken, including painting a white circle and a cross on the side, and the vehicles remain in traffic, even if still mechanically sound.

Returning briefly to the Waterloo-Exeter trainsets, there were five sets of 8 coaches consisting of 4 x seconds/composites, 2 x brake seconds (BSKs) a buffet car and one open second. A regular feature on most loco-hauled trains was that every now and again someone would forget to unscrew the hand brake in the van, in this case the BSK, before departure, resulting in serious flat steel tyres on the wheels. The vehicles involved then had to be sent to a ground wheel lathe to turn out the flats. Newton Abbot did not have such a facility, the nearest lathe being at Laira Plymouth. This involved a slow movement there outside the busy operating periods on the main line.

The loss of one brake vehicle out of these sets meant you could still run the train with one brake vehicle, though there could be some delay handling mail at certain stations and times. I remember on one occasion all the diagrams were running with only one BSK due to a spate of handbrakes being left on. This meant there were only six BSKs in operation, so even allowing for two in main works, which was excessive, there were ten others not available. The inevitable happened and one of the six suffered the handbrake malaise. Quick thinking by Newton Abbot (you did not cancel class one trains back then!) meant each diagram after the failed brake was stepped up. Whilst this was going on one of the least damaged BSKs in Hackney yard was coupled to the 08 shunter and dragged up and down the yard with the handbrake partly screwed on, but just enough to knock out the flats! All highly irregular but no service to Waterloo was cancelled that day.

Talking of irregularities which would not be tolerated today. My normal train home was the 17.18 from Paddington to Oxford which I caught to Reading. One evening it departed on time, but a late commuter jumped onto the rear coach and did not shut the rearmost door properly. Consequently it came into side contact with the late running empty stock for the 17.21 Paddington to Henley Intercity DMU arriving at the adjacent platform as the 17.18 cleared the platform.

Our train stopped alongside Ranelagh Bridge loco sidings, the guard examined the slightly bent door, which would not close properly, moved the passengers into the rest of the train and proceeded to hold onto the bent door as the train ran at reduced speed to Old Oak Common Panel Signalbox, just past which was a refuge siding. The train reversed into the siding, the rear open second with bent door was detached the tail lamp moved forward to the new rear vehicle and we departed for Reading at line speed 25 minutes late.

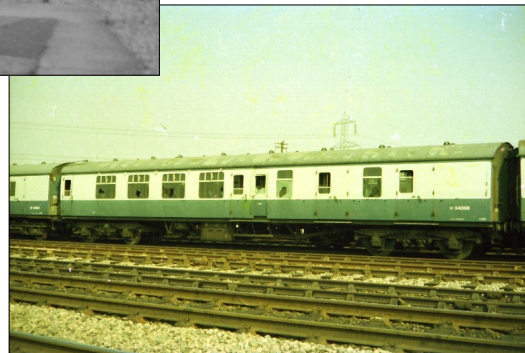
With the introduction of the new air-conditioned fleet and the continued use of Mark 1 restaurant cars, a problem arose with the heaters. On air conditioned vehicles the air flow is adjusted to suit the ambient outside temperature. This means that in summer the system cools and in winter it warms. However the dual heated Restaurant Buffets (RBRs) could only heat when the air conditioning was on. In the warmer weather therefore certain electrical linkages needed to be taken out to de-activate the ETH on the RBRs. When the colder weather arrived they needed to be put back. Obviously with our climate it was difficult in spring and autumn to get this right and there would regularly be complaints about the overheating or freezing nature of the catering vehicles. *(To be continued)*



*Left* An Intercity DMU at Pangbourne as used on the 17.21 Paddn to Henley.

Both photos Author

*Right* A picture of one of the ex LMR 90mph BSKs transferred to the WR for the Bristol-Glasgow/Edinburgh Sleeper. Condemned at Didcot and as far as WP knows never used on the WR.



## 00 GAUGE IN THE CLUB HOUSE



Not often viewed in its entirety John Spokes took these pictures recently when the complete layout was on show. "Well worth seeing ", said John.



## RSME CLOTHING

Reading Society of Model Engineers clothing is now available at Cavaliers in Weldale St, Reading, RG1 7BX. Prices are competitive with Polo shirts at £12:50, Sweat Shirts at £15:00, Fleece at £19:50. All of the above prices are dependant on the quality required. Other items are available, please see their web site [cavaliersT-shirts.co.uk](http://cavaliersT-shirts.co.uk) or visit their premises in [Weldale Street](#) opposite the entrance to [Iceland](#), or contact Tel 0118 9574885. Cavaliers are open until 17:00

# DIARY

2015

\*Setting up from 10 30  
tbc—to be confirmed

\* Setting up from 10.30 for a 13.30 start.  
tbc - to be confirmed

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 July PROSPECTUS is  
18 June. 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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