

Reading Society of Model
Engineers
www.prospectpark
railway.co.uk
Charity Number 1163244

The Prospectus

June 2017



President

Les Dawson
0118 969 4654

Vice President

John Sargeant
01491 681520

Treasurer

Jim Brown
0118 958 7247

Secretary

Editor

John Billard
0118 9340381
john@jegbillard.plus
.com

Free to members

JB/134



Driving wheel of LSWR T9 4-4-0 at Quainton on
1 May 2017. Photo John Billard

**PRESIDENT'S DIARY
I TRIED TO RUN A RAILWAY
BOILER INSPECTION RULES
FROM YOUR CHINA CORRESPONDENT
THE BERLIN MILITARY TRAIN
2017 AGM REPORT**

DAWSON'S DIARY

kept by the President

Peter Harrison came up trumps with a very prompt retest to my boiler test gauge which I had dropped while testing a member's boiler, he took it home and I got it back the next day, that's what I call good service.

Marcus Bailey has completed an overhaul of his Polly Two 0-4-0 tender loco. The chassis runs very well both ways; he cannot wait to get this loco back on the track. The good news is that Marcus starts work in September with the help of a reference from the RSME Young Engineers Scheme which proves that given the chance these younger members can do well.

The relaying of the 7¼" track in July – plans have been drawn up and a gang of the membership will do the job and hope to finish by the next public running Sunday!

Our member John Evans has been a great help to a certain member* who was refitting the water pumps that had been reworked ready for Sunday running and John never used his spade at all!

The swing bridge outside the club house now has got a very nice brick track for the wheels to run when it is opened for access. Thanks to Mike Manners and his team.

Nice to see Harold Eadie and Fred Few back in business coming to the club after a spell in hospital.

I paid a visit to the Rivermead Centre where the O Gauge Guild hold the large-scale exhibition. A good show once again with some very good kits. How they have come on over the past few years. Members of the O Gauge section put on a nice selection of their work. They operated one of the club's layouts that complemented the many layouts in the main hall. Fred Few's 3½" 0-6-0 with steam tender was looking very smart all painted with nice wood cladding.

With the club Baldwin back in service with the pumps mentioned above working well, with many drivers using the engine on Sunday with both tracks busy made it a good day for the RSME not forgetting the tea bar ladies once again who kept the teapot on the boil. Many thanks.

*Les. Ed

Ponderings

by 61249

I tried to run a railway

This title is that used by Gerald Fiennes for his book on his time a senior BR manager, I believe he was General Manager of the Eastern Region. The nature of the book was to describe the multiple frustrations he endured as part of a unionised, nationalised, organisation, influenced by all the political influence that comes with large sums of public money. Hence the word "tried". I was to spend the next two years in the same endeavour, but in a very different environment.

I note two things from current affairs and news that are relevant to that environment. Firstly one party has just announced its manifesto for the June 8th election, including a commitment to re-nationalise the part of the organisation (The Train Operators, TOCs) that is not now in public ownership. Having spent 30 years managing decline under government ownership, I am firmly of the opinion that this is a very bad idea, yet it is apparently popular with the public.

When interviewed they express opinions such as “German railways are better” despite the fact that our customers rate our railways more highly than DB’s customers rate DB, that our railway is growing faster and also, just by the way, has been 10-15 times safer than German railways for at least the last 5 years on official EU data. One of the underlying reasons we have become safer is that at the award of each franchise at usually 7-10 year intervals the incoming operator’s safety regime goes through a complete reappraisal process by the ORR (Office of Railway Regulation) to make sure that the safety plans are all in line with current best practice. No such requirement can be placed on the government when there is no alternative operator, the threat of licence to operate being withdrawn becomes completely hollow.

As an indication of the effect of such disciplines, in 2009 three countries were seen by the EU Commission to have opened their markets to private operators, and genuinely separated the Infrastructure management from train operations as required by the 2004 European legislation. In 2017 these three nations (UK, Netherlands, Denmark) were the safest in the EU. Coincidence? Unlikely! On the current published European facts, the big nationalised railways do not have a great record and in a future article (with the editor’s permission) I will trace a number of causal links in this emerging fact including the decisions made by BR that contributed to the big, early Privatised accidents at Hatfield, Ladbroke Grove and Potters Bar.

Another view is that the TOCs are taking huge sums out of the industry through profits. The fact is that one of them makes more money out of school buses in America than it does out of its UK franchises, as the margins for TOCs are now so small as to be unattractive for transport businesses. My related conclusion is that our media have failed to convey to the great British public some key facts about our railways, and that the industry’s PR efforts are part of the failure. Crossrail is probably the exception and it is not even open yet (Although the new train should start carrying passengers next week).

The second item comes from a letter in today’s Times - I am writing this just before the Editor’s 18th May Deadline and parts of the NHS are still recovering from their IT systems being comprehensively hacked into. A former chief executive of a Health Trust points out in his letter that all IT spend by the NHS is subject to government procurement rules. These are of course completely necessary and are there to protect the idle waste of taxpayer’s

(yours and mine) money on vanity projects. He makes the point that given budgetary pressures on the NHS, it is then easier to employ more staff than spend money fixing the IT. This leaves the IT systems lagging in a fast moving industry where the big companies make overnight announcements on which systems they will support in a few weeks time. The result is operational unreliability and vulnerability.

This reminded me that the same rules apply to railways and I have seen them in action. I am currently working with another EU country in which the state railway's plans for buying new trains allows 18 months for train delivery from the order, but 2 years to get the procurement right and another year to get the State to approve it, making the use of the train at least 5 years away. The result is just that the overcrowding on that railway will continue. By way of contrast, the private provision of rolling stock in the UK free from such restrictions is largely responsible for the largest flow of new trains that the railway has ever seen. Over 4000 vehicles are currently on order or being built for Great Eastern, South West Trains, Trans Pennine, Merseyrail, GWR, Virgin East Coast, Scotrail, Caledonian sleepers, not to mention freight locos for DRS including the new exciting bi-mode class 88. To be fair, big orders such as Thameslink and Crossrail are in this number, both of which have been long term project investments subject to government buying rules.

In general terms, there are three ways to cut overcrowding on the railways, invest a lot in capacity (takes decades), buy new trains (2-5 years), or put up the fares to drive the people away. The current UK railway success story is facing a congestion, overcrowding and reliability crisis, despite record levels of investment in new lines and in some views, very high fares.

Back to Thameslink in 1995 and its brand-new MD. By leaving Angel I was of course turning my back on the chance to make a lot of money out of the sale of the leasing companies, nevertheless I am proud of my role in setting up the most successful of the three RosCos. In my opinion they could all be even better if the government had stayed out of the business and not tried to pretend it could do better than the private sector in buying trains. Trains last a long time, and getting the best out of them over their life comes from taking a long-term view. Government horizons are firmly fixed on the next election with the understandable attitude that new trains are helpful and politically acceptable, but spending money on old trains is just a cost that can be avoided. The best illustration of this principle comes not from the UK but from New York Metro, where in the 1960s a complete new fleet of stainless steel bodied trains was built to last 50 years. However, the money to maintain them was not forthcoming and their dilapidated and graffiti ridden condition entered into many films and contributed to a worsening safety performance with several significant train fires. Not fun in a tunnel! They were all scrapped in the 1990s at roughly half life. Where are they now? Sunken

off the coast to form an artificial reef for the fish. Another brilliant government initiative!

The relevance of all these thoughts to the environment for Train Operators in 1995 was that we were about to be freed from the blight of government's dead hand on our safety, our employment practice, and our cost structure. Privatisation would deliver operators focussed on making successful businesses by doing what good companies do – making their customers happy. In making that focus the Operating managements would be freed from the completely different set of skills and priorities that go with managing the infrastructure, and Thameslink was BR's experimental entry into the use of this model. When I went to Thameslink in 1995 it was solely an Operator, with no responsibility for the infrastructure, its trains were owned by the leasing company and maintained by another TOC under contract. Our job was clearly to operate the railway, and get bums on seats. Wonderful!

The next few articles will be about how we got on.

Views from other members would be interesting—Ed



Some of the 4,000. Class 345 destined for Crossrail.

Photo 61249

NEWS FROM OUR COUPLE IN CHINA

by David Scott

We are still in China and finding things to interest us. Last month we went down in 3 hours to our local steam railway. This was by regular bus that sets off every afternoon to the nearest big town. Lily chatted to someone in the next seat and she directed us to a small electric bus out to the coal mining town. We getting there in time to watch the local train rattle in. Steam hauled of course.

Later in the evening we got upgraded to a spare apartment for the next two days. The local hotel is not to be recommended. Our bodies were ready for the 7.15 the next morning but not quick enough to get a seat in the con-

verted bogie coach, Luxury. We did the whole round trip and caught up on breakfast. This was with the crew in the primitive station building at Shibaxi. Dofu rice and vegetables. Dofu has the consistency of cold custard and too tight a grip with the chopsticks and you get two lumps and so on, Delicate and it is not yet 9.00. Yes of course they charged us but only a pound.

Now it is raining and we set off towards the running shed, Yes even a Certain Green top with a Gold locomotive wheel is not going to get me close enough to view? Lily help! Lily entertains and Certain local accent gets us closer. Then I have to bluff the last 50 yards to see two more locomotives in light steam. Blast the camera off and hope for the best. We returned to the Station for a bit of relief. Yes this is my number 5 visit and you never get acclimatised to Chinese toilets. Number 19 is superbly positioned for all round shots and big smiles from the driver tells of his approval. Lily says that they do not get many Western tourists these days not like before. All Chinese and just out for a ride in the special carriages with glass windows.

Our next day is sunny and hotter. We get to the end of the line and walk back to the other now old town which once had several mines. You can visit a mine if you like but we just explored the Eastern Bloc inspired buildings. At this point the two sides of the valley are sheer and a chance view of a tiny sign gets us climbing an ancient track up and out. Now we are getting great views and I am sure that we have seen this one in a film. Great to see the next train come out of her tunnel and scream down the valley on the other side at the same height.

They have a Coal Museum so this is next on our list after lunch. Now I find out just why 7 years ago the train was belching out an unbreathable mix. They were using coal from the wrong level. Easy! There are vast reserves and on the level under the whole area. We walk back carefully through two lit and fitted with warning tunnels get more photos and join in with the wait for the last train back. We blow the pound saved on some cakes and drinks.

They have set up a small museum at the second station up so this time we get the bogie coach with me assisting with the load for a local store up the line. Yes, all in a great cause as most of the boxes contain beer and the train is panting to start so we have to be quick. I get some lovely shots of the run round and blast up the hill. The museum is soon done and we have breakfast. A wander finds a very cheap hostel and a newer book is purchased about the line from him.

I do another round of photos of number 9 and we get ready to grab the best coach. Never! Packed?

I will C 2 It that if anyone needs details of the Locomotives I have plenty!
Very bad C 2 Class joke!

The Boston Lodge Boys have one they are rebuilding for use on the West Highland Railway which will be very nice. I think she is 21 this year and of

course Chinese.

Back in Yaan Lily's home town we have now found about 4 interesting small workshops with some impressive but slightly old lathes, mills shapers and processes. Every eight shops is a metal fabricators the same for motor re winds and bearings.

I have reached my limit of 30 Kilos so have given up tool shopping! We have 60 years of photos to bring back. Yes we came out with two empty cases and a supply of cereal!

FROM THE CLUB'S APPOINTED BOILER TESTERS

Commercially built boilers

After the appointed club boiler inspectors attended a seminar at Taunton club given by both the Southern and North Federation of Model Engineers the following was highlighted to those attending. It has been noted that model engineers these days are tending to purchase their boiler from a manufacture rather than build it themselves or buy a loco kit with a commercially made boiler, The following rules clearly state the procedure boiler inspectors MUST take.

From the boiler testing Green book 2012 edition

8.1 Purchasers of commercially built boilers should make sure that their order states that the boiler is to be tested under this code and the boiler has been built in accordance with the Pressure Equipment Regulations 1999 (PER) and carries the appropriate CE marking and the documentation has been endorsed by the Notified Body.

NOTE: Commercial boiler makers should note that their products are likely to be tested under this code and should therefore be constructed in such a way that they can safely withstand an initial test at TWICE working pressure. (2 x Pw)

8:2 The certificates supplied by a commercial boiler maker can only be regarded as evidence of a satisfactory hydraulic shell test. Before the boiler can be operated it must undergo a further hydraulic shell test at 1.5 times working pressure (1.5 x Pw) and steam test to be carried out by the inspector.

Note from the club inspectors. This last hydraulic test should be carried out with all the boiler fittings in place, this to make sure the fittings are installed correctly with fastenings/ threads of equate strength to be safe. Scale bolts and fitting will just not do. This again was pointed out at the seminar always safety first.

8:4 states that any repair/ modification undertaken to the boiler shell necessitates a re-examination at TWICE working pressure (2 x WP).

WOLVERTON PUG

The Berlin Military Train and other adventures.

On Friday 11th May 2012 your editor and I took ourselves off to Berlin in order to travel on the re-run of the British Military Train, known as the Berliner, which ran daily between Hannover in West Germany and Berlin from 1945 until 1991. It was in effect a sealed train and only stopped at Marienborn and Helmstedt to carry out border formalities between East and West Germany. Two trains were run on 12th and 13th May to commemorate the Cold War era train. It was organised by a former colleague of mine.

We duly boarded the 07.10 HEX service from Paddington to Heathrow Airport in time to catch the 09.05 Lufthansa flight to Berlin Tegel airport. As there is no rail link to Tegel (The airport was due to close - but still has not) we caught the 109 bus to Charlottenberg. We then checked into the Art Hotel Charlottenburger Hof in order to be handy for the Sunday departure at 07.48 of the Berliner. The temperature was 26 deg c and very humid.

The first part of the weekend commemorations was a reception at the Allied Museum in Clayallee where various dignitaries were to say a few words. Also on offer was the chance to go inside an RAF Hastings aircraft which was used during the Berlin Airlift in 1948. As these formalities were winding down the inky black sky was now depositing a torrential downpour. Far too wet to even walk the short distance back to Oskar-Helene-Heim U-Bahn station. So we caught a bus to the S-Bahn at Hohenzollerndam and still got soaked between the bus shelter and the bus! We went to the Brauhaus at Hackescher Markt for dinner. Actually in the arches beneath the main line to and from the Hauptbahnhof and the S-Bahn inner ring (it's really the circle line).

The next day Saturday 12th we decided to watch the Berliner depart before going exploring. The stock came into Charlottenberg station hauled by a Russian built class 231 no 012. They are known as 'Ludmillas'. The train consisted of vintage rolling stock including a Mitropa dining car. At the other end was DR 03-1010 4-6.2 in excellent order with hardly a wisp of steam. The participants duly boarded and it departed for it's first run to Hannover.

First of all John and I went to Unterwelten Museum at Gesundbrunnen. This was built as an air-raid shelter in the Second World War. It is in fact beneath Gesundbrunnen U-Bahn station and goes down several levels. After the war it was filled with rubble from the bombed buildings above. The conducted tour included some of the rooms painted with luminous paint to help in case of loss of power. We were advised not to lick the walls due to the radioactive nature of the paint! Your editor felt we should not stay down there too long! (*We were okay, but I was concerned about the guide Ed*)

Having heard of a mysterious hill at Grunewald on the outskirts of Berlin we decided to investigate further. We purchased S-Bahn zone tickets for the journey and duly alighted at Grunewald. The hill is covered in trees with a

number of footpaths leading up it. So we set off. As the climb steepened it became apparent that this was no ordinary hill. The trees were perfectly normal as was the general weed and scrub undergrowth. However where there were gaps in the ground level foliage the ground was strewn with broken bricks, tiles, concrete, and other building detritus. We discovered that this huge hill consisted of the rubble from the destroyed buildings of the city of Berlin, dumped there (*largely by women, Ed*) after the second world war. As if this was not enough, emerging from the trees as we neared the top, some white domes appeared and a complex of derelict buildings. The whole site being surrounded by high barbed wire. On reaching the top we found the main gates to this obviously abandoned complex.

Two of the two of steel uprights of these gates had been forced apart enough for people to get through. So devil take the hindmost we both squeezed through. Needless to say, I had more difficulty than John. I could not do it now!

On entering, the place exuded a very eerie feeling, even in broad daylight on a sunny day. The whole place had been trashed and generally daubed with graffiti. There were one or two young people wandering about and some inquisitive people like us armed with cameras. They did not bother us and a 'guten abend' generally got a nod.

It turned out that it was the secret Teufelsberg Allied Listening Station, which until the end of the Cold War had been tuning in to, not only the DDR's transmissions but as far east as the Soviet Union itself. It remained a total secret throughout due to its remote location hidden in the trees.

We returned to Grunewald S-Bahn Station and decided to make our way to a restaurant in Potsdam. On boarding the next train a couple of ticket examiners got on also. There are five stops to Potsdam-on line S7-Nikolassee, Wannsee, Greibnitzsee, Babelsberg and Potsdam-the end of the line. after leaving Wannsee one of the examiners reached John and I and started to question our tickets validity. In order to complete his questioning, we were deposited at the next station Greibnitzsee, whereupon he explained that we had zone B tickets only valid as far as Wannsee. The three stations beyond there are in zone C. Two 40 euro fines later we are left to catch the next train. I seem to recall that we were concerned that we had paid the fine but not the zone C bit. Anyway nothing further transpired.

Sunday 13th was our turn to travel on the Berliner. The train was again on time with 231-012 on the empty carriages and 03-1010 as train engine. After taking the mandatory 'photos we all board the train and find our allocated seats.

The main line route via Potsdam was closed at Wannsee for bridgeworks so we were diverted via Wustermark and the Ringbahn to Golm where we re-joined the main line onwards via Brandenburg and Magdeburg. All this was included in the timings. During this perambulation we were served breakfast

in one of the dining cars. The run to Marienborn is uneventful and we arrive on time at 10.23. On alighting to the platform we all foregathered beside the 03 locomotive, whilst Major General David Burden (formerly Assistant Chief of Staff British Army of the Rhine) delivered a speech in commemoration of this, the 21st Anniversary of the end of the Cold War and the need to run the Berliner. Marienborn was where the Berliner stopped on every run to exchange paperwork with the Soviet authorities, before being allowed to proceed into the West at Helmstedt. There were frequent stories from those on board, who made the run regularly, that the Soviet troops would find any excuse or missed full stop to delay the formalities at the border. I seem to recall there was one incident when the Soviets would not let the DB steam loco proceed any further and insisted on providing one of their own, which of course was not readily available!

We departed on time at 10.51 and then rolled to a stop one minute late at Helmstedt at 11.02. Here we were received by the portly Burgomeister and his entourage, plus what seemed like half the population of Helmstedt. It was a warm sunny Sunday. Major General Burden thanked the Burgomeister for receiving us and the Burgomeister delivered his very warm and welcoming speech, to the extent those of us travelling on the train felt like royalty.

We spent some time there as there is a small museum and a number of model railway layouts including a very extensive N-gauge layout. After some coffee and sandwiches we returned to the train, the loco having taken water and duly departed on time at 12.21.

There was a short stop at Braunschweig 12.50 to 13.02 and then off to Hannover where we arrived at platform 10 seven minutes late at 13.45, mainly due to slow approach through the network of lines from Lehrte.

After spending time in Hannover sightseeing we returned to the station and departed at 16.08. As the train had not been turned the 'Ludmilla' 231-012 hauled us out to Lehrte a remote yard on the line to Celle, where there is a triangle and we reversed with steam now leading back onto the main line back to Berlin. There was a crew change at Genthin 19.40-19.42 and we arrived back in Berlin Charlottenberg at 20.25 after a fine dinner and plenty of wine and beer!

The Editor adds, this was a great trip and thanks to WP for the invitation. In the 1960s and 70s I had a fairly lowly role at the Ministry of Defence in an organisation which was not far from intelligence gathering. Now I was surrounded by Colonels, Wing Cos and Generals of that era. However I had little difficulty in promoting myself six or seven times up to make the most of the situation! In that earlier time it would have been impossible for me to have made a journey into the East, and there I was.



Deutsche Reichsbahn 03 Pacific 1010 at Charlottenburg. It was named “Royal Engineer” for the occasion.

Photos WP and John Billard



Above
Pacific 1010 and Speisewagon (Restaurant Car) at Charlottenburg



Left
Handley Page Hastings at Clayallee

Right
Wall remains at
Norweg Strasse



Remains at the
“Devils
Mountain”,
Teufelsberg, and
scenes at the
abandoned Allied
listening station.





Teufelsberg listening station.



Looking the part at Helmstedt.



Left
Inside the
Speisewagon

Below
At Helmstedt

Bottom
“Ludmilla”
231 012 and the
train.





RSME AGM 25 MAY 2017

Mike Manners and Nigel Penfold jointly receive the President's Cup from Les Dawson, President

Photos John Billard



The AGM took place on a warm and balmy evening on 25 May. Les Dawson was re-elected, as President, as were all the trustees re-elected. All the reports were approved and there were interesting debates on subscriptions, the raised track extension and eventual plans for a replacement club house. Report by John Billard

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.
John Billard Old Station House Twyford Reading RG10 9NA
01189 340381 john@jegbillard.plus.com

DIARY

June 2017

Saturday	3rd	Birthday party	11.00-13.30
		Birthday party	14.30-17.00
Sunday	4th	Public running	13.30-16.30
Tuesday	6th	00 gauge	
Thursday	8th	Churchend Nursery	11.00-14.00
Saturday	10th	Club running	11.00 onwards
Monday	12th	Trustees meeting	19.30
Saturday	17th	Open weekend	
Sunday	18th	Open weekend	
Tuesday	20th	00 gauge DCC	
Friday	23rd	Young Engineers	
Saturday	24th	Young Engineers	11.00
		Birthday party (y/e)	14.30-17.00
Sunday	25th	Birthday party	11.00-13.30
		Rainbows visit	14.30-17.00
Tuesday	27th	Park Lane infants	11.30-14.00

July 2017

Saturday	1st	Birthday party	11.00-13.30
			14.00-17.00
Sunday	2nd	Public running	13.30-16.00
Saturday	8th	Club running	11.00 onwards
Sunday	9th	Birthday party	11.00-13.30
			14.30-17.00
Friday	14th	Ranikhet Nursery	10.15-12.30
Sunday	16th	2 1/2" rally	
Friday	21st	Young Engineers	18.00-20.00
Saturday	22nd	Young Engineers	11.00
		Club running	13.30
Sunday	23rd	Autistic Pride Day	
Saturday	29th	Birthday party	11.00-13.30
Sunday	30th	Birthday party	14.30-17.00