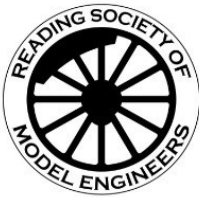


Reading Society of Model  
Engineers  
www.prospectpark  
railway.co.uk

# The Prospectus

Charity Number 1163244

June 2020



**President**

**Les Dawson**

0118 969 4654

**Trustees Chair**

**John Billard**

01189 340381

07834 998971

**Secretary**

**Peter Harrison**

07920 833546

**Editor**

**John Billard**

john@jegbillard

.plus.com



This is one of my earliest railway photos taken with a Brownie 127 borrowed from my sister. It was taken sixty years ago (that I *can't* believe) at Liverpool Street showing N7 class 0-6-2T 69647 on a train to Chingford that I would have taken to my aunt's at Highams Park. The electrification gantries are up and steam ended a few months later in November 1960. John Billard

**TWO STEPS FORWARD ....  
A STORY OF STEAM ON THE FARM  
RAILWAY TIME  
A LIFETIME INTEREST  
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT  
A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE  
TRUSTEES**

Free to members

## A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

by John Billard

The trustees have discussed how they might manage the near future for RSME and its members. They were pleased to hear that Alf Cusworth and others have been keeping a close idea on the site and that George and Charles have been attending to the vegetation that is doing its best to give a very rural aspect to our tracks.

We shall make use of this very quiet period by undertaking a maintenance programme including the delayed rewiring the club house and to have an external refurbishment of the building. Other work will include cleaning and painting of the bridges and fences and a general smarten up all round.



With little prospect of any public running or birthday parties in the foreseeable future the trustees consider that some club running might happen as soon as government rules allow it. Specific rules would apply and some limited opportunities for boiler testing may be possible. In the meantime we hope that the Wednesday Warriors can resume as the rules allow.

With regret we are not going ahead with the Southern Fed Rally in September but hope that this will just be a postponement.

Wishing good health to all our members.

*This view only emphasises the debt we owe to our Parks and Gardens Dept in keeping our tracks clear in normal times. 23 May 2020.*

## TWO STEPS FORWARD BUT ONE

by David and Lily Scott

### BACK

#### More work on Jessie.

Often the closer you look the more problems appear out of the assembly as bits come off. My first idea was to just clean up the buffer beams for attaching the hook surrounds. Lily enjoyed the nuts and bolts challenge and soon had a little pile of them complete with encrusted paint. I had previously cleaned up their faces while held securely, getting rid of the turning marks and centre pips. They could have been home made!

The step back had been known about where the steel had somehow been rolled too tightly. Possibly by someone trying to get a slight curve out of it. 3/16 inch plate is quite a handful. I continued to clean and thankful that I did as the red primer flaked in places and stuck in others as usual. On the other side rust had set in under the various angles but it was the much better face.

Coming back fresh for another day saw much activity with sanding it

down... We get to the original marking out but find another hour of filing to get over to it. There is nothing like trying to get a nice square hole on a cold day to warm you up! Typical, but where this has let us down the marking out and drilling of the 4 BA holes has been perfect. Yes, all the bits can now go on the damaged face. We have a late lunch of produce from our Naughty Cupboard around 2.00 so as Lily heads off to make tea and organise. I do a mix of Super Steel and leave it setting flat in the vice.

It was almost 5.30 by the time I had got it sanded to match the rest of the plate. Had another half hour on the other side. Carefully measured, marked and sat the hook surround in place on a smear of old Loctite. Double checked... And double checked and finally left to squelch homewards up the lawn.

The morning saw four 1/8 inch holes being drilled in the hook surround. A centre drill from the back. And the rivets being banged into place. More filing at the back. Blow the expense but what often happens is that during a build oil gets trapped behind things like steps which I have seen badly attached when they get drilled and riveted and things go for a wander. Even with bolts! Everything lines up perfectly but once tightened goes on the move. Another tip is to make sure that the rivets and bolts are clean of oil before inserting.

There is a top angle which I stick on next having tweaked some of the holes. This is left to set and I go and do a couple of slots on the White lathe for the two radius rods. Vertical slides are still ever so useful even with a milling machine ready and waiting. Saddle stop clamps in place and the second comes out to match perfectly. Yes the rear bed is flat like the Myford and Raglan and make superb places to put clamp stops with a little protection under the jaws.

Also waiting were 28 bolts and nuts to clean. A file and sore fingers but we do get a rougher surface for our eventual paint. Yes for anyone still awake six files per unit and the nuts in place does help. An impending Run Out of Tea-bags sees a flurry of plans. During the Summer, this expedition could be walked, and a return along the river factored in. Her wheels had already been painted so we take a set to get matched at the local paint place.

We go for green again almost matching the wheels as painted. And cellulose as long as I do not use it on the car? HINT get a litre mixed up and then ask for some to be decanted into spray cans as this works out cheaper and you have some spare.

Clean up the inner plate drag beam bit. Again so easy to say but again some damage to this side of the plate got me turning it over and removing the two 3/8 thick spacers. These it turns out will not line up with the 3 holes on the other side. I make a new pair but leave them as rectangles. I love my Heavy Metal. Again splash of the Loctite and leave overnight once double checked as it sets. A step back? This time it does not set so a mix of Super Steel soon

sees it in place. All I am looking for is to stop the build-up of rust and the leak out onto the lovely paint not intended for cars. A more careful check on the holes sees some three up three down filing and all is well.

One thing missing from most drawings (apart from Peter Rich (Taff) with his superb Star, Castle and Saint and Trevor Shortland's Prairie and 7 1/4" King) is the sequence of painting. In my book it is fine to say paint in the impossible corners while they wait to be assembled. Then bung them together the paint of course preventing rust and acting like glue. Breakable if needed in the future.

I then drill out all the 12 holes and tap the six for the cover plate. Having excessively set up the drill and small mill with a tapping and clearance drill each. A note on each to remind of course! I line everything up using the frames and buffer beam and drill through for 6 newly lined up holes into the new spacers. I honestly think the staff at Hawthorn Leslie got paid per bolt inserted.

Lily gets to tackle the front buffer beam and its 28 bolts. The sun is out so I jump onto the milling machine and with some home brewed power carve out a pair of radius rods. These I have decided to leave with lumps or bosses and forks at both ends so that the bearing surfaces are bigger. Another reason is that instead of going into a tiny slot and having miniature ends. It is now at the side. The valve rod being located in the middle more like the Australian example I found of Jessie. Save the photo to a folder and then you can enlarge it. Simplex suffers the same fate with the rod going into the corner of the slide valve until I got at the drawings and put it central. Doing new valve chests also helps.

I fit in another milling job which is in the middle of the smoke box door ring. This forms two pockets or recesses for the crossbars. Carefully lined up and the four stops set. One at a time otherwise it is a constant winding from side to side. I clean up the drag box cover plate and bung an assortment in the bag to show the assembled Thursday Night Gang. The rear hook with a long bar gets nicely centred in the 4 jaw but we run out of day!

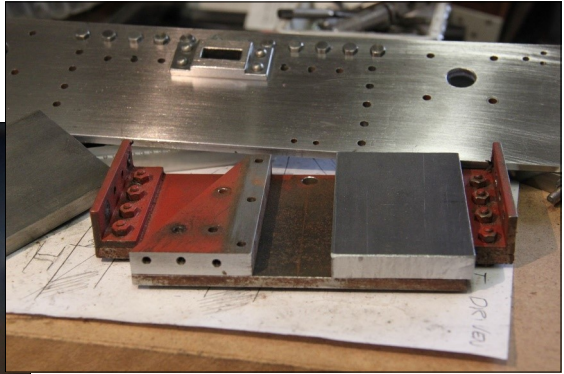
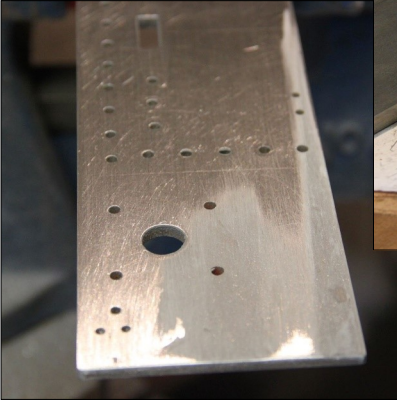
Friday the Thirteenth and I seriously get Hooked on hooks. With the short one for the front there was always a which bit do I do first? Problem with it. Yes I need to hold it while I file it round and polish... But still need to turn the bar behind and thread it for the spring and nut. Ideal to do this with a block of metal then carve out the hook! There is however 3/8 of an inch of the bar which can be extended with mini blocks to engage with the jaws. No damage to the hours of getting both sides even and superbly polished.

Just so many times we plan things meticulously, think about several sequences, set up and do the job in moments! Then wonder what all the fuss was about...

Unless you buy a part-built project that has hung about since 1997 and uncover all sorts of steps back.

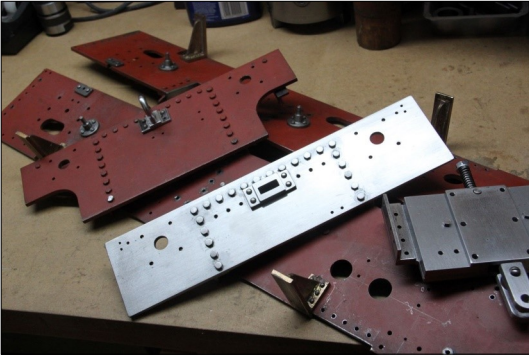
*Below Filled in end*

Photos and captions D Scott



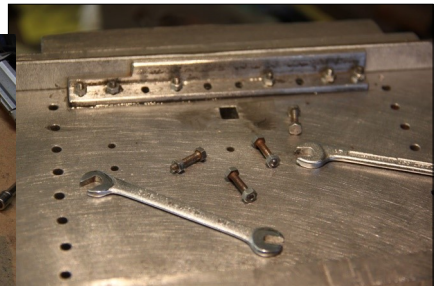
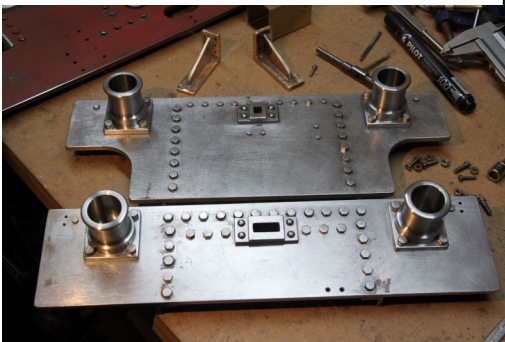
*Above Modified drag plate. Note the going off holes!*

*Below right Hooks or OO KS!*



*Above IKEA flat pack*

*Below A wonderful moment with shiny buffer beams*



*Above Even the smallest angle gets stuck down and it helps alignment*

## **A note by John Billard, Editor**

Members might be interested in this piece that will be covered in a series of articles. This is a story of country steam which is just a vital part of our social history as the railways. It centres on Joseph Griffin and his son Robert; always known as Bob. When my dad retired, my dad and mum moved to the Cotswolds, near Burford, from Wembley Park in north west London. I stayed behind at work and week ended with them (of course taking all my washing with me).

This was 1969 and steam railways had ceased outside the preservationists. I was starved. But while at the local pub my dad met local farmer Mervyn who said, "If John's steam mad he'd better come up and see my brother Bob, then". This started a lasting friendship with the Griffin family. With Bob and his friend Michael we restored to working order two Fowler ploughing engines and I learned to operate them. Having little technical background other than an A level I learned all my engineering skills from Bob. His workshop was right out of the Victorian era with old lathes and drills run from line shafting. It was magical for me and these were happy times.

The story starts with an introduction from Bob's daughter Joy, a noted local historian, so let us proceed....

## **The Griffin Family of Bruern Grange and their Steam Engines**

### *Part 1*

*This abridged article, with the kind permission of Michael Thexton, is from his The Steam Threshing Trade, chapter VII, published in 1997, with an introduction by Joy Timms, granddaughter of Joseph Griffin.*

### **Introduction**

In the years leading up to 1900 farming had been, and would continue to be, a very hard industry in which to make a living. Due to many factors, farmers were being forced into bankruptcy and the tenant of Bruern Grange was no exception. The farm had become a complete wilderness, everything reduced to 'rack and ruin'.

It was now that Lord Buckhurst put his trust in James Griffin by offering him the tenancy of Bruern Grange Farm, rent free for the first year, to see if it were possible to bring the land into some sort of good order. This he did, through sheer hard work and determination, helped by his wife Mary Georgina and their children.

James died suddenly in 1910, leaving nineteen-year-old Joseph to go it alone, which he did very successfully. In 1916 Joseph married Ada Letticia Cooper of Ascott Mill and they had three children, Dorothy, Robert (Bob), and Mervyn. Bob, who was sent away to school at the age of four years, 'hated every minute of it', absconding or getting suspended at every opportunity in order to pursue his life-long love of 'steam'. In 1926 Joseph had the chance to buy Grange Farm. He had the £7000 asking price, but on reflection decided against doing so.

‘After all’, he mused, ‘why do I need to own all this land?’ So he bought a fleet of traction engines instead and the dream began.

The season for steam thrashing usually ran from early August to late April/May while the season for steam ploughing started in April/May and continued until October/November. The traction engine hauled the thrashing machine, baler and other machinery from farm to farm, sometimes over many miles in different counties, in order to thrash the crop. During the months from May to August other work was found for the traction engines, as diverse as hauling sand, stone, coal and hauling boilers to forestry work and land clearance. The winch was used for loading trailers before the traction engine hauled the load of timber to the mill or to the railway station. Saws were driven by traction engines on site. Cable ploughing engines were used for dredging work during and after the season. Areas of land were cleared, trees, scrub, stumps and anything where great power was required. Traction engines were used extensively during the First and Second World Wars.

The main users of steam plough engines in England were the contractors. This was partly due to the price of a set of tackle that in 1918 cost around £5,000. The hours worked by the steam plough gangs were long, hard and dirty. The day started for them at dawn and continued until dusk, even beyond if the moon was bright. The double engine sets usually consisted of a plough, cultivator, living van and water cart. A five-man team was required to operate each set of engines. In March, the steam plough tackle would probably have left the yard and trundled off in convoy, looking something like a travelling circus enroute, working a set round of jobs, returning to home base in November, where major repairs could be carried out.

Joseph Griffin died in the early 1950s. At the farm sale the much-loved engines were sold for only scrap value. The highly important and much-prized steam traction engine had been long superseded by the arrival of the internal combustion engine.

### **Contracting**

*The Implement and Machinery Review* points out that before the First World War, it was not uncommon for contractors to purchase four-fifths of the thrashing machines which were sold for use in the U.K., whereas farmers purchased one-fifth. In other words, ownership of a thrashing machine, and the engine to drive it, was regarded as an uneconomic proposition by a large section of the farming community. That this should be so need not surprise us when it is remembered that the cost of an engine and thrasher represented a considerable expenditure for the limited working season which was available. Hiring a contractor provided the usual alternative under the prevailing conditions of the time.

From the contractor’s standpoint, the move into contracting sometimes arose from established links with farming, typically a farmer with his own thrashing set ‘filling out the season’ by working for his neighbours. He might



*Bruern Grange Farm in 1917  
Joseph Griffin in panama hat standing  
in the centre of the photograph by the wheel*

combine this with engine work ‘out of season’ or, not to mince matters, with whatever engine work could be found.

Bob Griffin recalled that his father Joseph bought the first thrashing set with which he established his business in 1916. This was a second-hand Ransomes steam tractor and Humphries thrashing machine from Rowell's of Chipping Norton. Although the tackle was primarily for use on his three large farms, Joseph began to thrash for others. The outfit was completed with a wagon, built by a local wheelwright, and after tea each day Joseph hauled the sacks of grain to Matthew's Mill at Shipton railway station. Truly a ‘maid-of-all-work’, the Ransomes was used at other times for direct-traction ploughing, and it was by no means uncommon for twenty-eight acre fields to be worked in this manner.

During these wartime years there was a large demand for pressed hay for feeding the horses in service with the British Army in France. A baler was acquired, and in 1918 an old Fowler traction engine and thrasher were purchased. Joseph also supplied baled hay and cut chaff for Birmingham Co-operative Society's van horses. This was a trade which persisted for a number of years and proved to be highly popular, providing an outlet for the farm and work for the thrashing engines.

The war over, Joseph decided to buy a set of steam ploughing tackle. This was not a step to be taken lightly: there were several well-established concerns in the region, such as the Oxfordshire Steam Ploughing Company, and the high capital cost tended to favour the concentration of ploughing sets in the hand of the larger contractors. For £4,999, Joseph purchased two brand-new ploughing engines and their implements from John Fowler and Company of Leeds. After receiving the ‘full treatment’ at the Steam Plough Works, they were sent to the Royal Show at Cardiff before delivery to the Fifield farm where the engines were kept. As was usual on these occasions, one of Fowler's men travelled down to train the thrashing drivers and supervise the



handling of the tackle.

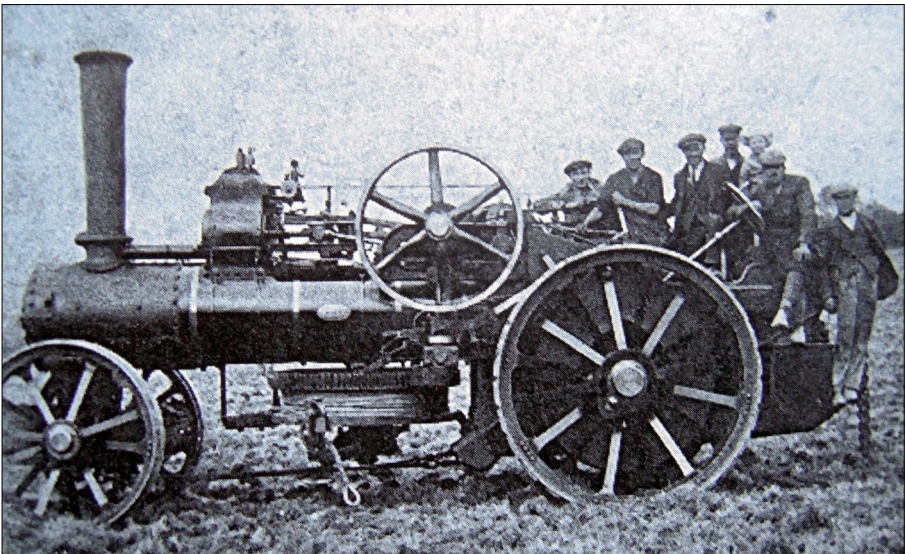
The introduction of steam ploughing augured well for the thrashing engine drivers. The perennial problem which plagued many thrashing businesses - that of providing work during the summer months - was now eased as Joseph could now provide continuous employment for a number of the thrashing engine drivers at the end of their season, thereby keeping the skilled team together.

At its peak, Joseph Griffin's farming and contracting employed twenty five men and boys with a stable of twenty-six horses. Although a certain amount of steam ploughing was carried out at the home farms, which now totalled some 920 acres, the tackle was mostly out on contract, and here Joseph's acquaintance with the local farmers stood him in good stead. Work for the ploughing and thrashing engines very often resulted from his weekly meetings at Kingham market and in this way Joseph kept in touch with the local scene and built up a useful round in the neighbourhood.

On through the 1920s, which were, surprisingly, a time of growth for Joseph Griffin despite the depression of the post-war years. Once a circle of customers had been established for the ploughing tackle, Joseph turned again to thrashing, which was always his principal activity, and began to expand with a Fowler traction engine and a thrashing machine in 1925. The following year he acquired a Wantage traction engine and Clayton and Shuttleworth thrashing machine from Mr Woolcock's sale at nearby Chadlington.

*(to be continued)*

*The just-delivered Fowler K7 ploughing engine, one of a pair, in 1919.  
Joseph Griffin is right end.*



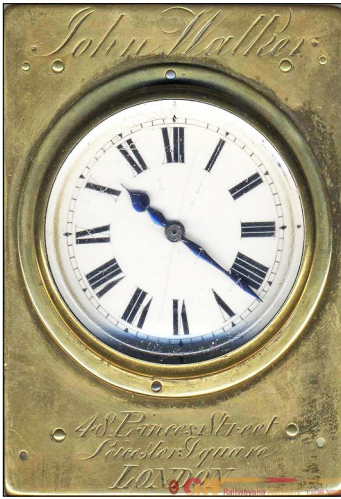
## Railway Time

by John Spokes

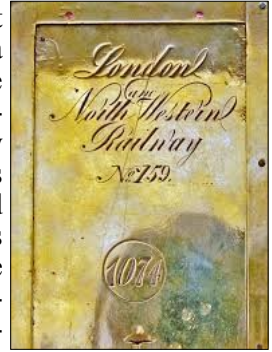
Up until the First World War I it was unusual for the average person in the street or working in a mill or labouring on the land to have any individual means of telling the time of day. The aristocracy and upper classes would have had time pieces in their homes and in Victorian and Edwardian England richer men in society used pocket watches which were normally kept and protected in a fob inside a waistcoat; wristwatches, which were exposed and prone to unreliability, because of the ingress of foreign matter, were worn primarily by ladies. During WW1 more durable wristwatches evolved and were de rigueur issue to army officers for synchronising detailed attacks, such as those involving “creeping artillery barrages”. The worker in the factory generally continued to rely on the factory hooter and the labourers in the field would normally be within earshot of the clock bell of the parish church – in those days “noise pollution” was unheard of. (Sorry, I could not resist that.)

From where I live, between Tilehurst and Pangbourne, I can see quite clearly a half mile stretch of Brunel’s railway. Some might say this is a bane, the noise and the unsightly catenary system, or a boon if you like watching trains, especially now as the galvanised structures are beginning to be less obtrusive, although they certainly haven’t blended into the landscape. During the period of COVID-19 lockdown, with its clement weather, I spent significant hours outside and, in the context of very restricted physical horizons, began to think more about where the passing trains were going to and coming from. Places, which I could not legitimately travel to, even if I were prepared to risk a journey by rail. Places, where other people were living and equally restricted. Over a period, I noticed a pattern to these trains and especially the passing of the Class 220s, which were originally known as the Virgin Voyagers and now operated by Cross Country Trains. These have a particularly identifiable “sound signature”, and the ear becomes attuned to this and eventually the characteristic sounds of the Class 800 (IEP) 5-car EMUs, Class 800 (IEP) 9-car EMUs, the Class 387 8-car EMUs and the old Class 165 3- and 2-car DMUs.

Both Cross Country and GWR have rationalised their trains in the light of the significantly reduced demand. (In fact, I wonder, if, apart from the driver and guard/ticket inspector, there are any passengers on some of these journeys.) The “long-distance” working timetable on this stretch of railway has been reduced to London-Bristol, London-Swansea, London-Worcester and Bournemouth-Manchester Piccadilly and through the day these trains run hourly at fixed departure times and because of the general dearth of traffic, run “like clockwork”. Certain patterns of trains are easily recognisable, particularly those which include a Voyager. I cannot hear the local church clock bell, but I can hear the trains. So, in these unhurried times I feel no need for a watch. I have Railway Time.



Of course, as many readers will know, time is an illusion, most cerebrally described by Albert Einstein. At a more mundane level the REAL time in Bristol is 10 minutes earlier than that in London and Swansea 16 minutes earlier. As the railway network expanded throughout the early Victorian period various systems were introduced to avoid chaos due to this disparity and promote time uniformity on regionally connected railways. I attach two photo-



graphs of an item I saw at a railwayana auction some years ago, which I considered bidding for, but at the time was unable to inspect the actual watch before the auction. It is a surviving London North Western Railway Guards watch made by John Walker of Leicester Square, London in the late 1840s. This timepiece would have travelled with the senior train guard and used to check the progress of the train in accordance with the working timetable and station clocks en route. It would have been set using a master clock at Euston and then locked in a wooden case. This allowed the dial to be visible but prevent subsequent tampering.

In 1847, in a typical Victorian approach, the Railway Clearing House was established and implemented rationalised, uniform time throughout the UK railway system. This became known as Railway Time.

## **A LIFETIME INTEREST IN RAILWAYS Part 1 by Mike Jones**

My first recollection of railways was being taken to Marlow Station in 1936 by my Grandfather he worked for the GWR as Head Ganger responsible for the Marlow branch Line. I spent many happy hours with him on his GWR allotment opposite the Station Platform watching "The Marlow Donkey" arrive and depart. In between times I could watch the steam operated crane working in the adjacent sawmill.

In 1939 at the outbreak of war my father got a job as a lorry driver in Wooburn Green this meant moving house so started travelling frequently from Wooburn to Marlow by train to see my Grandparents. This involved catching the Paddington bound Suburban train from High Wycombe on the Wycombe Maidenhead branch line invariably hauled by a 61XX Prairie Tank to Bourne End and then the 14XX Tank on The Marlow Donkey Push and Pull.



Bourne End  
Station

Photo Mike Jones

In 1944 I won a Scholarship to Sir William Borlase Grammar School in Marlow so I had to travel on the Marlow Donkey every day. I was issued with a very ornate season ticket orange coloured

about 3"x4" embossed with the GWR coat of arms. Sadly I did not keep an example. One day we were sitting in the train and we heard a huge explosion. The following day we were told that it was a Doodlebug (Flying Bomb) that had exploded on a house in the town and that a class mate had been injured rescuing his Grandmother from the ruins. It was several weeks before Jimmy Platt returned to school. This was war time so the Paddington train consisted of a wide variety of stock Suburban, First Class Corridor or old Clerestory carriages. I had to change trains to the Marlow Donkey at Bourne End. The Donkey carriages were two old brown painted coaches fitted for Push and Pull operation.

They had gas lighting and had very ineffective steam heating in those very cold nineteen forties this was made worse by having to wait in an unheated waiting room while the gas tanks were filled from an adjacent gas tank wagon. We were not allowed on the train during the filling process in case there was an explosion. There were some Health and Safety requirements in those days!

In 1945 I started to learn to play the violin. One day me and my mates walked down the platform after school watched by the driver and got into the compartment next to the engine carrying my violin. As I shut the door the driver asked if he could have a go on my instrument. We all thought this would be great fun so I gave him my violin. He then proceeded to play some very complicated classical music! When he finished he explained that he was the leader of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and was an engine driver as part of the war effort.

The journey from Marlow to Bourne End was 7 minutes except when there was a rabbit killed on the line. The driver stopped the train near the sewage works where there was a rabbit warren. The fireman would pick up any killed by the train to supplement the war ration. The 10 minutes past 3 train the

daily mixed train was allowed 15 minutes. This was usually a very heavy working and could take up to 25 minutes. Cattle were often carried by the mixed train from Bourne End unloaded at Marlow Cattle Dock and driven through the streets to the abattoir behind the butcher's in the high street. The animals frequently sensing their fate would panic and charge into the nearest shop!

The branch line was flooded every winter but only on one occasion when the water was so deep the train had to be cancelled because the water came up to the firebars!

Towards the end of the 1940s the old gas lit compartment carriages were scrapped and replaced by a single open railcar. A second railcar was stored in the head shunt at Bourne End for use in busy periods such as Marlow Regatta. This Regatta was the second biggest rowing event and was used as a curtain raiser for Henley. During this event the engine was sandwiched in the middle between the two Railcars.

The only other trains on the branch line were the occasional excursion trains operated in conjunction with Salters River Steamers. These were eight coach trains worked by 61 xx Prairie Tanks.

The Loudwater, Wooburn Green, Bourne End section of the High Wycombe Branch was an interesting operation with many sidings serving a number of paper mills originally built here because of the availability of water from the River Wye. These included Fords Blotting Paper, Glory Mill making Photographic paper, Jacksons Millboard and Soho Mill making parchment paper for legal documents. Glory Mill was by far the largest user of the railway with lorries continuously transporting coal and wood pulp between the station and mill. These sidings were operated by a wide variety of locomotives including Pannier Tanks, Bulldogs and "Dukedogs".

Soho Mill had an interesting operation they used a Traction Engine to tow a heavy trailer of waste slurry to dump at a site ten miles away. The Engine had to work very hard climbing those Chiltern Hills!

When travelling to

Wooburn Green Level  
Crossing

Photo Mike Jones





Wooburn Green  
Station  
Photo Mike Jones

school in the wartime winters the 61 xx Prairies were often late and we had permission to return home if the train was more than one and a half hours late. In those cold winters there would be several heavy snow falls each year. On these days

off we would return home collect our toboggans and spend the day in the Chiltern Hills.

Wooburn Green station was much better than Marlow on cold days the Station Master would have the coal stove going full blast. Unfortunately one year going back to school after the Christmas holidays I was sitting by the stove waiting for a late train wearing an expensive new coat that I had as a present from an uncle when I dozed off. I was woken up by the shouts of Fire! I had set my new coat on fire! This was a double disaster my parents could not afford a new one and as it was wartime we had no clothing coupons left. My mother found some similar material and cut out the damaged areas and hand sewed in the patches it looked terrible but kept me warm.

As I said earlier the Wycombe Branch was worked mainly by 61XX locomotives the exceptions were two Hall class engines one the through train to Oxford at 9-00AM and a heavy freight at 9-00PM. These we called the nine o'clock namers. In the summer evenings I used to watch the Hall struggle between Wooburn and Loudwater taking 30 minutes to cover two miles.

## **A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**Les Dawson**

I would like to say thanks to the Parks and Gardens Dept keeping our site nice and tidy and cutting the grass. We as members owe you a great debt and gratitude for all the effort you put in to get the job done!

Before the shut down the RSME was to my mind doing very well and was in the best state that it has ever been in. Let's hope it won't be too long before we get back to normal. I would like to thank our worthy editor John Billard for keeping the Prospectus going with copy from the members and elsewhere.

On receiving May's Prospectus I really liked John Spokes's Gone For A Burton on reading the part where John mentions the skittle board. I was young once I was doing contract work at Reasby in Leicestershire at the Aus-

ter aircraft works. I was living in a village by the name of Frisby on the Wreake off the A607 road to Melton Mowbray in a pub called the Black Horse. There was exactly the same skittle board! It is the first time I have ever heard anyone mention this type of game before.

Thank you John, it brought back memories for me in the late 60s. John is right this game is peculiar to Leicestershire!

One thing about our hobby we all have many things to make. No worries about getting bored. I do miss going to the club. When we get back to what we call normal and doing things together again will make life good!

**Comments by RSME members on any subject appearing in Prospectus are welcomed by the editor.**

## **DIARY**

**All events have been cancelled for the duration of the health emergency.**

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 issue is 18 June. This is the final date.**

Contributions 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](mailto:john@jegbillard.plus.com)

## A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSTEES

*Someone has very kindly donated a large number of nails and screws to the club however they left them on the driveway up to the gate to our site. Please bear this in mind if you intend visiting the site. Thanks to Alf for clearing this items away. The police have been informed.*

**The trustees had a meeting at the club whilst observing social distancing on Saturday 23 May to discuss how we can get the club back to some sort of normality.**

**Maintenance:** these activities will resume as soon as possible. Entry into the clubhouse will be restricted to 3 members at any time and the containers and workshop will be restricted to 1 member unless heavy lifting is required. Anyone visiting the site to carry out maintenance. Members showing signs of Coronavirus symptoms are asked to stay away as are members that are in the at risk group. We will need sometime to get the site back to a running state and as such club running will be resumed after a period of maintenance. Maintenance activities will be permitted as long as social distancing can be observed.

**Use of the tracks:** From a future date, when the regulations allow, to ensure that numbers using the tracks are kept to permitted levels to ensure social distancing a booking system will be used. Members will be asked to book a morning (11.00 to 14.00) session or an afternoon (14.30-17.30) session. Four slots will be allocated to the raised track and two slots per session for the ground level. We will let members know when this can commence.

Boiler testing is to be booked with the boiler inspectors on a first come first served basis. Boilers will need to be tested at home before bringing to site as the inspectors will refuse to test any boiler that has not been suitably prepared. Please see the item in the March's edition of the Prospectus.

**Boiler certificates:** The Southern Federation has received communications from the insurers stating that there will be no "holiday" on boiler certificates.

**Public Running and Birthday Parties:** there will be no Public Running or Birthday Party activities for the foreseeable future.

**Southern Federation Rally:** The Southern Federation rally booked for September this year has been cancelled and a provisional date of the 25/26<sup>th</sup> September pencilled into the diary next year.

**AGM:** the legal position regarding postponing the AGM to be looked at until the current restriction will allow us to conduct the AGM. In the meantime financial and annual reports are to be distributed amongst members.

**As soon as restrictions allow, we would like to get the club back to some sort of normality.**