

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



President

Les Dawson
0118 969 4654

Vice President

John Sargeant
01491 681520

Secretary

Peter Harrison
07920 833546

Editor

John Billard
0118 9340381
07834 998971
john@jegbillard.plus.
com

The Prospectus

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Enginemen at work at Bogaczewo. See p7. Photo WP

**DAWSON'S DIARY
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MAIN LINE LOCO REPAIR AT THE STATION**

DAWSON'S DIARY

kept by the President

August Bank Holiday was good for the RSME. A steady flow of visitors came for a ride, as usual the members coping well in all that heat.

Last working Wednesday if the month was rather wet once again holding up work on the ballasting of the ground level track. With the club room we now have all the lights working once again. Thanks to Nigel and Mike doing their bit George and his gang braved the wet around the Parks and Gardens, not forgetting Ash and Marcus who gave the workshop a good tidy up. The club loco was also given a good clean. Well done to all these dedicated members.

A very wet public running day but the public still came out for a ride, we were busy all day. The younger members gave good support throughout. I must thank the bar ladies for keeping everybody supplied with tea etc inside and out. Without their back up it would be hard to cope!

We all wish Marcus Bailey who starts work on 4.9.2017 all the very best for the future at the start of his career at Aldermaston.

Rob Denton had on show his fine two diesel outline 5" locos with John Billard's 5" Manor at the Old Oak Common Open Day. There was a collection of diesel locomotives for those who are keen on them had a field day with many of the earlier designs on display with six Class 50s also six steam locos five in steam with the steam railcar giving rides to the public. The interest shown in these locos shows that train spotting is not dead. Young Jamie managed to get into six or more cabs of the diesels. He was very happy. Its good to see the same keenness as we old ones have about steam when we were young! It was good to see the interest shown in Rob and John's locos young and old alike by members of the public.

So Reading SME was flying the flag for model engineering and model making. By the way we have some very talented model makers in our Society. It shows that hand skills are still going strong despite of "new technology"! Long may it last!

PONDERINGS

by 61249

I tried to run a railway Part 3

(Continued from August)

For our customers running the railway was the most important thing we did. For their future, we wanted to improve it. For BR it was important that the franchising was completed, so selling it was important, for the team, we felt our our jobs depended on successfully winning the franchise competition.

Just running it was not without challenges. Railways are interesting and fun because they demand significant co-operation between completely different skill sets whose efforts all need to be co-ordinated for the service to succeed. Marketing success can easily turn into operational failure. I remember a good example of this was the week-end when we offered a super reduced rate week-end in Brighton, with kids

go free, (or similar – I cannot remember the details). We sold thousands of extra tickets. Folk flowed into the South Coast from Friday evening through all-day Saturday and were joined by the Sunday day trippers. What we partly overlooked was the fact that a lot of these folk would want to come back to London, Luton and points north between 20.00 and 22.00 on Sunday evening, during which our scheduled service was just 4x4-car trains! To say that the Southern Railway staff at Brighton were overwhelmed is something of an understatement. We did react, but we should have planned better. Our co-ordinated effort was great for the railway conceptually, but failure to properly manage all the detail killed the overall success. To be fair, our ticketing system and the preference of the travelling public to turn up and go meant that it was Sunday lunch time before we even knew we had a sales success on our hands, and that was from anecdote and verbal report. Today, the ticketing system would have picked the pattern up as it happened.

Then there were the challenges that were imposed upon us, - not our fault.

The first of these taught me an important management lesson, do not ever lower expectations. I did this on my first day by reacting without considering the impact of my reaction. Walking round the office to meet everyone I spent some time with the Performance section – the folk who monitor the operation of the railway and provide solutions to unreliability that were under our control, and influence those which were not. They proudly showed me the results of their efforts which was a steadily rising graph of the punctuality measure (Time to five minutes delay at destination). This was well into the 90% region, say around 93%. Probably the best in BR at the time, reflecting the relative simplicity of our service, the level of detail management possible in a small franchise, and the efforts of skilled and dedicated folk. My reaction was understandable, partly in jest, but wrong.

“Oh S**t I said, it can only go down from here”. This immediately lodged a senior management expectation that it would get worse, and sure enough it did. Even here, we were hit by outside influences. Under John Major’s “Customer Charter” there was a 5% refund on season tickets if punctuality fell below a threshold value, in our case 90%. We were well clear of this when I joined, but there was press criticism of the railway that some of the trains were in fact nearly 6 minutes late as the definition of 5 minutes went up to 5 mins. 59 seconds. John Welsby, the Chief Executive of the BRB at the time did the right thing for the railway and conceded that this was wrong, and it should be 4 minutes 59 seconds. This was applied with immediate effect. It so happened that 2.5% of Thameslink trains were between 4 and 5 minutes late on the old definition. So our record performance was in fact only 0.5% above the threshold for giving back the customers a considerable sum of money. And the boss expected us to get worse! At the end of 12 months operation of the new criterion we hung on by the skin of our teeth on the last day of the financial year, achieving 90.001% and just three trains over the threshold for the peak service

of the final evening. This was achieved by getting nearly all the management team on the case, and all of the operators out on the railway urging trains through. Phew! One unit failure, one passenger taken ill on the train and we would have been the first TOC to give our customers a discount! Definitely not what the new boy needed.

“Outside influences” as stated in the above paragraph included, from our Train Operating perspective, Infrastructure failures. I will cover these more fully next article along with their impact on “our” performance. The fact is that our passengers do not really care whose fault the delay is, they just want to get home on time. The challenge therefore for the train operator is to get the Infrastructure Manager (EU Jargon) currently Network Rail, to take the customer as seriously as those who depend on selling tickets for their jobs and business security. Even though they were part of BR and Network South East, this did not happen to Thameslink in my day. I take the TOC’s share of the blame for this, the fact is that we did not spend anything like enough effort and time talking to each other, and to be frank, we did not trust “them”. This is in inverted commas because it was not clear to us who “they” were. Local maintainers? (Three separate teams for Thameslink), HQ Engineers? HQ Planners? Major Projects department? What about Renewals – another section?. All of these parts of the Infrastructure organisation had the capacity to screw up the train service completely, and some were better at it than others.

As an aside I am writing this in a South West Railway train less than one month into the new Franchise of First and MTR. I happen to know that already there have been 122,000 delay minutes to the service, of which 110,000 are allocated to the Infrastructure Manager, so things have not improved despite lots of efforts, Alliances and Area Boards etc.. In 1996 the legitimate reason was that the system was designed to be cheap, not reliable. This is not valid today.

One genuine outside influence was security, and this was in the days before 9/11 and the London bombings. But one idiot in Japan used Sarin to attack commuters in the Tokyo system, with devastating results. I was in a meeting when my pager buzzed (pagers of course being state of the art at the time) – “Gas Attack, King’s Cross”, it said. Needless to say I was out of the room smartish to find out what was going on, fearful of some copycat attack. In fact it was just part of ordinary life on the streets of London. Two gangs, fighting over control of ladies working in the area, had a disagreement, and ran down the Pentonville Road looking for a space to square up to each other. They chose the booking office of our Thameslink station, where one of the groups sprayed the other with gas from CS canisters, as we later found out. The folk worst affected by this were innocent bystanders, ticket barrier staff and those in our booking office. Trains did not stop at King’s Cross for several hours afterwards, to the annoyance of several hundred if not a thousand or two people. Definitely not our fault, but if I missed my connection to Edinburgh (No International at St. Pancras then), I just blamed another late Thameslnk train.

Speed of reaction, good decision making, and effective communications between staff and to the customer are the defences for the operator in this scenario, we should have reviewed them all in the aftermath, not sure we did. *(To be continued)*



A prototype Siemens-desirocity Class 700 at Farringdon.

Photo courtesy 61249

TRUSTEES MEETING, SEPTEMBER

The trustees discussed the following at their meeting on 11 September.

- A wi-fi system is to be installed in the clubhouse to provide a secure internet connection.
- A response is still awaited from Reading Council about the club lease.
- The August financial report was satisfactory.
- The Capital Programme for 2017/8 was agreed.
- Members should be reminded that formal representation of RSME at outside events should be at the discretion of the trustees.
- Birthday parties remained heavily booked.
- Preparation for the ground level track extension was continuing.
- New rules for club running on the raised track would be consulted.
- The Christmas Party would take place on Wednesday 13 December. At the Reading Moat House at £16.95 per head.
- Consideration was given to advance planning of track events for 2018.

CLUB RUNNING DAYS - CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS

The trustees wish to consult with members who wish to use the raised track on the following proposals.

At its meeting on 11 September the trustees were concerned that following some recent serious near misses on the raised track new rules are becoming necessary for the safety of those taking part and others. The problem is mainly caused by too many trains on the track at the same time.

Accordingly, the trustees wish to consult with users of the track on the following proposals.

The signalling system is to be used.

The number of trains on the track at any one time is to be limited to five.

If RSME trollies are not used personal trollies shall have a signal activation magnet fitted.

This system to be self-governing by those present.

Before any changes are made the trustees would be pleased to receive any comments from track users so these can be considered before any changes are introduced.

Please comment to the editor by 31 October 2017.

WRONG LINES

Page 22 September issue, Old Oak report. The two diesel models are owned by Rob Denton and consist of a Swindon-built Warship, and a Western, not two Warships as stated.

WORK REPORT by Mike Manners

The two ground level carriage removable ends have been modified so that they both have the same fixings and don't foul the coupling pins. The missing fixing bolts have been replaced and the ends have been repainted.

The intermittent signal RG-4 was investigated and a loose connection rectified. The rather dim Signal RG-3 has been serviced and cleaned and is now back to full brightness. The very dim call on light in signal RG-6 was repaired. It was another victim of corrosion caused by ants.

Ground level track regrading was carried out on the recently replaced uphill section. This will need to be done fairly frequently until the track settles down and beds in. Also on the ground level track, a level crossing for the ride on mower has been created just before the bottom bend.

The raised track carriage brake levers have been modifications to stop the brake levers pulling out.

A vacuum gauge has been fitted to the club Baldwin tender.

The recently vandal damaged pipe feeding the water but has been repaired.

The faulty floodlight that had water trapped in the bottom of the transparent cover has been drained but the lamp still does not work so it will need replacing.

Two replacement fluorescent light fittings have been installed in the clubhouse.

One of the raised track carriage seat covers has been replaced. It looks good and has a much better and firmer filling. A second one is now being worked on.

An inspection of the site has identified a new batch of dead trees that need removal. They are all semi mature elms that have suffered from Dutch elm disease. They have all been marked and will be removed later in the year.

The Class 58 bogies have now been repaired and were refitted to the locomotive. A test run around the track proved all was well. It is not easy to pull away smoothly with this locomotive as the speed control is rather aggressive. This needs investigation and possible replacement with a soft start speed controller. Some work was carried out on the Little Pete locomotive. This is also now in full working order.

HAROLD EADIE

It is with sadness that I inform you of the death of Harold Eadie yesterday (21 September). I have spoken to Harold's wife today and she will let me know the details of the funeral when that has been arranged.

Harold was the first RSME member I met one Boxing Day steam up and he made me and my family feel most welcome.

Harold will be greatly missed by us all and especially those of you that knew him from long ago.

WOLVERTON PUG

The Danzig Corridor and how to repair a steam engine in a main line station

Continued from last month

From Malbork we follow the Ostbahn to Tczew where we leave it and run north to Gdańsk, on past the famous shipyard of Lech Walésa fame. A brief stop at Gdynia Główny. In order to avoid the loco needing to run round we set off through Gdynia Docks. Turning right after passing through Gdynia Chylonia we headed through the yards of Gdynia Port. Most of the sidings are full of stored wagons a large number being cement tanks, aggregates box cars and covered vans. They have obviously resided there some time as nature was reclaiming them and most were covered well above sole bar level with an invasive green weed. Suddenly as we clanked slowly along the freight only through line a cenotaph loco coaling

plant came in view visible over the tops of the wagons. Obviously no longer used. We eventually pull up adjacent to a large wagon works and the newly painted (blue) box wagons are alongside us giving off that unmistakable fresh paint aroma found at railway works. We are awaiting the signal to clear for us to continue up out of the port complex and into Gdynia Główny main station facing the opposite way of course for our return. Several of the works staff emerged from behind the wagons to see what we were.

It should be remembered that a live steam engine has not been seen on most of the lines we went over during the four days for nearly thirty years. The novelty was such that at every stop, even those of only a minute, huge crowds of locals all with their children and babes in arms came out to see and wave at this unusual spectacle at their stations. People in period outfits, top hats, tails you name it. On the way to Braniewo, at a place called Dobre Miasto the local militia in full 18th Century uniform lined the platform and fired their muskets in salute as we passed!

On Sunday 23rd we headed further east this time towards the border with Belarus. It was a later start than hitherto and we left Olsztyn at 09.49 (9 late) and via Korsze we passed through Kętrzyn. This was Rastenberg the site of Hitler's bunker where the assassination attempt took place. We arrived at Giżucko, which is on Lake Niegocin. It is connected to Lake Kisajno by a canal. Being a Sunday and warm with hazy sunshine it was very busy with families and boats plying between the two lakes. The train did a shuttle trip back up the line to Kętrzyn and back for the locals, but we took lunch and a beer overlooking the canal.

We then continued on via Elk from where headed south then west via Pisz. Just before Elk we stopped at Stare Juchy on the old through route from Königsberg to the Ukraine. One of the party pointed out to me on the stone lintel of the station buildings the following barely legible lettering " Königsberg-161.3km Prostken 33.8 km". Prostken (now called Prostki) was the border between East Prussia and what was then the start of Poland.

I might tell you the history of Poland is so complicated and it's borders have changed that often in the last 200 years, that whenever we go I am armed with maps ancient and modern and still get confused about who had what when!

At Elk we stop for water. There is an old half roundhouse surrounded by weeds and the hulk of O149-80 2-6-2 minus a tender on an abandoned siding. Beyond which appears to be a collection of narrow gauge locos and coaches. On investigating further through the undergrowth, I find the site is fenced off, but lo and behold the intrepid members of our party have found a way in. On shouting "how do I get in?" Nick Ralph points and shouts " Main gate". I duly find this, it's a museum but there is nobody at the gate so I walk in to find two standard gauge O149 2-6-0s and Ty2-1285 standard gauge 2-10-0, plus a selection of narrow gauge carriages railbuses, diesels plus two narrow gauge 0-6-0Ts a Tz and a Ty plus Px 48 -1752-narrow gauge 2-8-0. I take photographs and duly depart. According to the Polish 2014 Rail Atlas the narrow

-gauge line formerly ran nearly 38 miles to Turowo with a 6 mile branch to Zwady Torki but all that remains today is the first 9 miles to Sypitki.

Monday 24th is the last day of our 1,150 miles of Polish steam haulage. We start from Osztyn as normal and head north east to join the Ostbahn at Bogaczewo. At Malbork we decide to spend time looking at the magnificent red brick castle dating from the 14th century and built by the Teutonic Knights on the banks of the River Nogat. It was badly damaged during the war as the Russians advanced west.

Arriving back at Malbork station the train arrives back only about 8 minutes late. However there is then feverish activity around the engine, particularly the motion. It seems that a large bolt about a foot long which enables a tapered spacing block to be tightened to hold the crank boss on the axle of the third right hand driver, had broken. This is fairly catastrophic and makes the loco a complete failure. So what happens? The loco crew 'phone Wolsztyn, where the Pt is based, 200 miles away. The depot dig out the drawings. They telephone a steel supplier and give them the details of the bolt they need. They organise a car. A new bolt is manufactured and the car delivers the bolt which is fitted at the platform in a fully operational main line station, all within an hour, and the train leaves 72 minutes after arriving with the broken bolt!

Amazing. Can you imagine the scene here? Terminate the train, haul the engine off (when somebody can find a spare diesel) with adjacent lines closed. Dump it in a siding. Hold an enquiry as to why the bolt broke. Insist all similar locos are examined to check the fault is not endemic. Some of that is good sense, but to repair the loco like that in situ just would not happen.

At Tczew we continue on the Ostbahn instead of heading north to Gdańsk as we did on Saturday. The train remains just over an hour late we leave the Ostbahn at Chojnice running north west to Szczecinek (formerly Neustettin in Prussian days-much easier to a) remember and b) pronounce!). Here we head south crossing the Ostbahn at Pila Główna. We arrive at Poznan at 22.10 one hour and eighteen minutes late. A lot of the party disembark prior to flying home the following day.

Four of us are staying on to go to Wolsztyn and then on to Stralsund to do the Rugan narrow gauge steam line. The Pt and four coaches will now run down the Ostbahn from Poznan to Zbąszyń. However the need to take water etc means we lose nearly another hour and arrive at Zbąszyń at 00.29, two hours twenty one minutes late. We now need to get a bus to Wolsztyn because the line is closed due to engineering work.

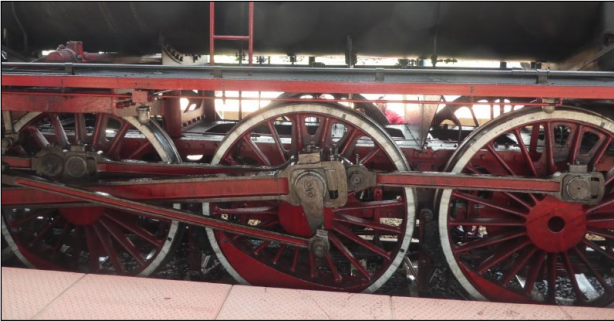
Very wearily we check into the Kaukaska hotel.

The following morning Tuesday 25th we are aiming to catch the 11.04 Wolsztyn to Zbąszynek, so it was a leisurely start to the day, or rather it should have been! I had discovered that my maps and itinerary of the 1,150 miles of steam haulage were missing. It remains a mystery as they were last seen just before leaving the train at Zbąszyn the previous evening.

The empty stock from our special plus Pt47-65 had worked empty from Zbąszyń to

Wolsztyn in the early morning. So I decided to make my way to the shed and sidings where it would be found in order to check the compartment we had used, to see if my papers were behind a seat or whatever. It was over half a mile to the depot from the hotel. I had forgotten that climbing from the ballast into a railway carriage, including opening the in-swinging continental door was far from easy, particularly as I had advanced somewhat in years since I last did this! Needless to say, even though all the empty beer bottles and crisp packets (not ours) were still strewn throughout the compartments there was no sign of the mysteriously vanished papers.

(To be continued)



The repair at Malbork. The bolt locating the tapered big end wedge had broken on the other side of the loco.

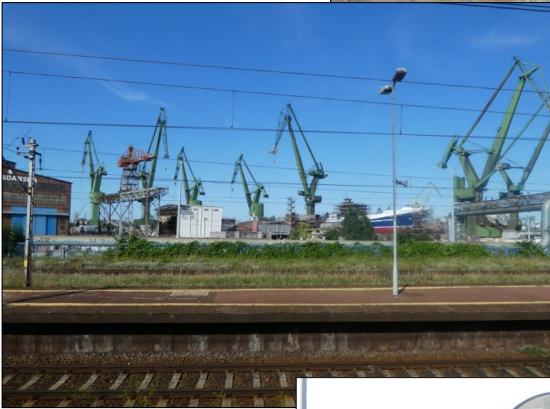
All photos WP.

750mm gauge 0-6-0 at Elk Wask.





Abandoned hulk at Elk -O149-80.



Gdansk shipyard where in 1980, led by Lech Welesa, negotiations began to end communism in Poland thus leading directly to the Cold War in 1989.

Julian oiling round at Gdynia Chylonia on 22nd July.



Diary

OCTOBER 2017

Sunday 1 st	Public Running	13:30 to 17:00
Tuesday 3 rd	OO Gauge	
Saturday 7 th	Club Running	11:00 onwards
Sunday 8 th	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
	Birthday Party	14:30 to 17:00
Monday 9 th	Trustees Meeting	19:30
Saturday 14 th	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
	Birthday Party	14:30 to 17:00
Sunday 15 th	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
	Birthday Party	14:30 to 17:00
Tuesday 17 th	OO Gauge DCC	
Friday 20 th	Young Engineers	18:00
Saturday 21 st	Young Engineers	11:00
	Club Running	13:00 onwards
Sunday 22 nd	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
	Birthday Party	14:30 to 17:00
Monday 23 rd	Special Needs	13:30 to 16:00
Saturday 28 th	Birthday Party	14:30 to 17:00
Sunday 29 th	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30

NOVEMBER 2017

Wednesday 1 st	Birthday Party	10:00 to 12:30
Sunday 5 th	Public Running	13:30 to 17:00
Tuesday 7 th	OO gauge	
Saturday 11 th	Club Running	11:00 onwards
Monday 13 th	Trustees Meeting	19:30
Saturday 18 th	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
Tuesday 21 st	OO gauge DCC	
Friday 24 th	Young Engineers	18:00
Saturday 25 th	Young Engineers	11:00
	Club Running	13:00 onwards

**The usual editorial disclaimers apply to this October issue
COPY DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER IS 18 OCTOBER.....
DONT MISS IT!**