

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

The Prospectus

September 2019



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Free to members



In a big effort to have the track ready for Bank Holiday running Dave Cole, Chris Jones, Charles Benham and David Scott working on the laying of another four ground level track panels on 21st August. See page 11. Photo Mike Manners

61249 REVEALED

DAWSON'S DIARY

from the President

On reading "A View from the Chair" by our worthy editor I agree with him on the outstanding efforts by the trustees and the team of members who get the jobs done. Our club has never been in such good shape despite some members fears of the opposite!

I like George Saffrey's "In the Garden at RSME". I know now why my lawns are not growing grass. Thank you George!"

With one LED street lamp light working now its made a big difference locking up at night. The other lamps are all wired up ready when, time permitting, this job will be done. Ground level track panel replacement is a big job speeded up by the need to make room for Father Christmas's Grotto for when he comes at Christmas!

Club running saw a good lot of engines and steam test were carried out this time. A rather unique steam test, Karl Trussler made a Windermere Kettle for his steam plant. It was tested and tea was made. It worked very well!

A very wet Wednesday saw Mike, Nigel and all the team get a good soaking. Well done all of you to lay so many track panels in such wet conditions. This is what the editor meant in his "View from the Chair".

PONDERINGS

by 61249

This contribution is valedictory in nature, it will reveal a minor mystery for Prospectus readers, review ten years' worth of articles for worthy journal and set out a way forward if editor so wishes.

As for the mystery, it was in response to an appeal from John Billard in December 2008 that I made my first written contribution to Prospectus in the January 2009 issue. 61249 was the B1 class loco called "Fitzherbert Wright" a name my brother used when he gave up in an argument, there was no loco called "Never Wrong". I needed a *nom de plume* as if I was to write about my career I could quite easily mention names of living colleagues and seeking their approval would not be part of the process. Since most if not all of them have now gone to that great railway in the sky and my career, and its summary for Prospectus are both finished, it is no longer necessary.

Therefore I can reveal what colleagues at the club know already - my real name is Cliff Perry and I was brought to the club by my very early non-expert ownership of a 5" Maid of Kent configured as a 4-4-2 "Tilbury Tank". I have since its purchase in



2005 received the warmest of welcomes, and mostly through the help of our super President among others, been given enough advice to keep her on the road and functioning, learning lots of steam and other engineering in the process. Directly though the club I got into 71/4” and then an enlarged allocation. Well done the RMES and all the folk who work hard to make it what it is, officers, and colleague members. Family circumstances still stop me joining the Wednesday warriors etc. but I can write for Prospectus, and enjoy it.

The January 2009 article from 61249 as follows:-

“Engineering ponderings

If I get this right, there should be more where it comes from. The basic idea is that I might share with Prospectus readers some of my engineering related experiences. These come from what I regard as a great railway career. Great in the sense that I enjoyed almost every minute of it. I did not make a fortune, neither will I be knighted, but I had fun.”

This summary remains the best I could come up with and is entirely accurate except in one important respect where it conveys the wrong impression. When I wrote the last sentence, I had absolutely no concept that any award or honour might attach to me, hence the “neither will I be knighted” comment. The honours system generally does not seem to work well for railway folk, very few get to meet her Majesty, and there is certainly no routine award for doing the job itself however well executed. Then in late 2017 a letter dropped through our letterbox that was a complete gob-smacking surprise and delight, - would I accept an MBE for “Services to Railways”. Not a knighthood, but only two grades away! (OBE and CBE are senior awards).

The Queen herself gave me the medal in February 2018 in a super day for the whole family at Windsor Castle, and it is clear that the extra- mural activities which have not figured much in these articles are a major part of the evaluation for the award. Finding out that I was nominated by a bunch of my peers was humbling, and support for the “Railway Mission” – a charity that provides Chaplains for railway folk, was just my way of putting something back to a great industry, but clearly had an impact too. So I am now slightly embarrassed to be not 61249, but Cliff Perry MBE.

I did not become a railway millionaire, but I was given an honour, and certainly had fun!

As for my career and the articles, as some of you may know by being regular readers, it was a lot about Railways, mostly engineering related, but hardly ever technical. I still stand in amazement at the technical skills with hands and machinery that go into making a model live steam engine, and at the time, effort and knowledge that folk put into the hobby and the club.

Overall my big message is that railways still have magic and are entering a new golden age due to their ability to move huge volumes and big loads with minimal impact on the environment. Their continuing success is still dependent on great engineering and I would thoroughly recommend the industry for a career to the young

among any readers or their family. If the 150,000 words or so since these articles started have helped or can help in this direction, then great. I sincerely hope I have not turned anyone off, even if they disagree with some of the things I have said.

As for the future, subject to the Editor's co-operation, I will from time to time write something about a current topical issue. This will keep the column going for a while, until it becomes clear that I know very little about what is going on. Electrification may be the first such topic – bet you can't wait!



Cliff's lovely 7 1/4"
gauge rebuilt
Merchant Navy
4-6-2.
Photo C Perry

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

John Billard

I am sure that all readers will thank Cliff Perry, ex-61249, for his long standing series of articles produced without fail over some ten years—that is over 120 contributions. We look forward to hear more from him again soon. As editor it has been a privilege to put Cliff's story, his Ponderings, into print covering a great period of change on the railway.

Announced in this month's Prospectus is a series of talks by members at the club house starting in the autumn. This looks very exciting and just the focus we need. Dates for your diary!

If any member wishes to make a presentation in the future please do not hesitate to contact me.

There were some interesting points from our last trustees meeting. Asda have offered to contribute to our tea bar in the club house and we are following up a previous suggestion from Network Rail that they may be able to assist us in some way. (I don't want any more suggestions as to what this might be!)

RSME TALKS

The Trustees are pleased to announce that there will be talks given by members on the fourth Thursday of the month during the autumn and winter. All commence at 20.00.

26 th September	Red for Danger Why we have the safest railways	Cliff Perry
24 th October	The Rail to Wheel Interface Rail breaks and derailments	John Spokes
28 th November	Machining at the largest scale The origin of our machine tools	Alasdair Milne
23 rd January	TV Studio Engineering The pre digital age	Alec Bray
27 th February	The RSME 00 Layout Its operation and history	Mike Sinclair
26 th March	The High Speed Train Memories of the HST	Mike Perry

The September Talk by Cliff Perry

Our long-established member and author of articles in Prospectus, Cliff will start the season's talks with 'Red for Danger' his intimate view of how the UK's railways are now the safest in Europe. Cliff had a long career in railway engineering management and the talk will be of general interest for all members. A quiz too!

A WEEKEND AT THE RUGBY CLUB

by DAVID SCOTT

Yes and knowing my passion for sports? Yes, I have been known to work out! Cutting metal by hand in the vice, Weights, lugging bits of lathe and mill up and down the garden! Digging holes on Wednesdays and mixing concrete. No, my first encounter was a meet up at Bristol years ago and an introduction to everyone... "Yes I am The Chairman of the Rugby Club!" said the man for the third time! He was in the right place as a Model Engineer. The joke helping to ease the heavy rain outside the billowing tent hired for the occasion. Some brave diesel electrics braving it.

This was to be our third visit and the opportunity to meet up with friends and get to know new ones all with a passion for everything Narrow Gauge. Also to see great progress on the track extensions and building of a new station out in the wilds. This now has 3 platforms, a lovely station garden and water cranes. Well the track is now

a mile long and a long run back to get a refill!

The raised track had got longer and a healthy stack of moulded concrete posts were stacked ready. Being Rugby they just had to do them in moulded concrete! The Town has a cement museum!

Over another mug of tea the boring story of the hole boring was told. These are at every five feet and there are many of them. "They got to do the second from last and the post boring unit behind the tractor burst a pipe. Covered! And it was warm!" Lily discovered that the site also had pebbles left by each hole, so adding to her collection.

Wearing our Hunslet Launceston Steam Railway tee shirts in red and blue we signed into the growing list of visitors which was to cover two pages by Sunday night. 7 1/4 Narrow Gauge locos are heavy lumps and their owners well versed in reversing and unloading by the lifting table. Vans and trailers taking turns to get into position. And yes, among the girls, two come dressed identically in matching blue from the Darjeeling Mountain Railway. Making it up later when they both stormed off together round the token section which has an impressive incline on a curve and in a cutting. Hence the token. Don't forget to hang it back on its post or hand it over to the next in line! While you wait there are many trees, neatly cut lawns to look at, and distant views to admire.

The smallest came in bits and was assembled. A lister where you sit sideways! This was battery operated. Then another! This one featured a Honda which slotted in and body which clipped together. Both very popular and running most of the time.

We defected to the 5 inch track and assisted the arrival of a Don Young Hunslet. Within moments we both had exchanged lists of problems and correct numbers of bolts round the weigh-shaft etc. He had got the cylinder drain lever perfect, but had missed out on the position of the handbrake. Oops. He had done one spring on the balanced valves. I have done four! But agreed on red as the best colour. A Conway in bright yellow brought out an even brighter sun.

Two beams are bolted either side of the post for the track which has supports either side and holes for bolts. Four slots cut in each sleeper which are hardwood. Mild steel rails are pushed into these and each one is screwed into the beams. A great advantage of being in a remote location miles from council estates! Wow the trolleys are heavy even in sections! Yes what a system we have at Reading even more appreciated now. As we go back to get the 2 sides and the seat. Marked A.A.A. And front to miss something. Brakes on the right and a slope by the traverser!

We got our part built Narrow Gauge out and assembled. Once all together she is getting very heavy. Of course we just had to take the Battery Drill Driver Loco to smiles when they saw it.

See Page 10 of the last Prospectus where they are in residence.

Severn pounds bought us a superb lunch between us pre ordered via the internet. The Clubhouse is about the same size as Reading's but has more room due not to having a layout up at one end. Two toilets and the kitchen is slightly bigger.

The trick is to get a ride behind every locomotive. But with so many this became impossible to do. Lily settled into many journeys while I went off in search of the perfect shot. Phil of Blackgates turned up with a BIG Sweet Pea! Named Jackie of course. Yes, they are called Sweet William in this size. I did a double take on one... "AH she is a Bagnall!" came the reply.

They sneaked in when I was out to grass in the field. Yes massive and "you can sleep in the cab" describes perfectly the size. One an American with a perfect hooter about the size of the two tables in our clubhouse. To get this just right must have taken longer than the build. The other usually found somewhere in Wales... Yes and you guessed it the crew conversed in the authentic language of the line. The Tank being 1 ½ table size.

We got two laps out of the older drill and three out of the new drill the same as at Oxford. The track is steeply graded and goes through a wooded part it being a squashed oval.

As it was going dark more and more carriages got loaded onto the tank, Yes the Yank was slumbering. Many superb runs and as many bodies as possible were loaded for the challenge. Yes there was a secret to the handling. He drives for the West Highland on his days doing something different!

On day two we emerged from the Car Hotel and joined the others to a wood fired breakfast with welcome mugs of tea. I got recognised by someone from the Model Engineers forum! And he began getting his new to him, loco ready. A stuck clack at this time of the morning was not a great start... But faith and on a Sunday prevailed and they were soon out enjoying.

A little neat overall arrived with a huge smile as she helped grandfather get his model ready. They stuck at it all day and eventually had to leave having squeezed ever drop of excitement out of driving. Oh just one more with the shunting of carriage back to the shed.

I got a guided tour of the container workshop with me imagining the longer green one of ours being kitted out with a Bridgeport and something larger! Their Bolly lathe is up for grabs but is very complex. There being two 40 foot side by side with the space between covered and gated.

Lunchtime arrived on time and everyone tucked in. Many eating outside. We sat by the Visiting Model Railway and watched the slate trucks shunt round! 7 mm scale narrow gauge appropriately on OO gauge track.

The afternoon wore on and slowly people came off and big clouds of blow-down emerged from the main station area. Just one more go round! Just one more chat! Just one more mug of tea?

Then we were away and heading north to collect a set of finished cylinders in gun-metal I had seen advertised. I avoided the M6 Toll and took the superb Old Road but later blew the money saved on a Chinese in Lichfield.

The model engineer selling gave us a tour of the workshop and introduced his

grandson. A proud owner of a superbly weathered 50! He told of getting employment with a race team in part due to his involvement with machinery for making models. What a superb end to a wonderful weekend away.



Scenes from the Rugby visit.

Photos from David Scott



WARRIORS REPORT

by Mike Manners

Above Kiosk, nearing completion by the ground level steaming bay, will house a new electrical distribution panel, the compressor, the hose reel and all the other bits and pieces currently cluttering up the front of the Baldwin bunker.

Right Speed bump installation. This should slow down the few individuals who insist on driving into the site at reckless speeds.



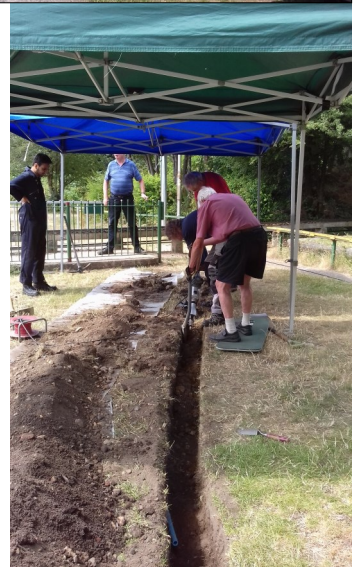


New fold over lamp standards being installed. These should make future maintenance a simple job. The base sections were lowered into place using an engine crane and then supported by guy ropes while the quick setting concrete went off. The top sections of the post were lifted into place using a block and tackle and a ladder as a derrick.



Right Hard work on a very hot day digging out trenches for the cable ducting to the new lamp standards.

All photos Mike Manners





A change of priority. Work has started on replacing the ground level track from the level crossing down to the bottom bend. This will give us proper rail section all the way from the level crossing to the top bend in the woods. We are getting on with this as it will not be very long before we will have to start sorting out the big green container ready for Santa grotto building. The replacement track panels were stacked up in the container and would have made grotto building impossible. It will probably take four or five Wednesdays to complete the track replacement and reinstate the switching for the signals and level crossing. This will take us up to mid September and we usually start grotto building in November. It would be nice to have all the new lamp standards working for the winter but time and resources are not on our side.

DIARY

SEPTEMBER 2019

Sunday	1st	Public Running	13:00
Saturday	7th	Club Running	11:00
Sunday	8th	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
		Birthday Party	14:30 to 17:00
Saturday	14th	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
Saturday	21st	Young Engineers and Club Running	11:00
		Spinney Railway visit*	
Sunday	22nd	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
		Birthday Party	14:30 to 17:00
Saturday	28th	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
		Birthday Party	14:30 to 17:00

OCTOBER 2019

Saturday	5th	Birthday Party	11:00 to 13:30
Sunday	6th	Public Running	13:00

*** All times subject to alteration

* For directions please call Cliff Perry on
07968 707006 or e mail Clifford.Perry@btopenworld.com

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

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 October issue is 18 September. This is the final date.

Contributions may be submitted in hard or soft copy to the editor.
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