

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

The Prospectus

July 2016



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Free to members



Peter Harrison checks over Marcus Bailey's Polly after a successful steam test while Eddie speeds by with the club 08 on 19 June 2016. Photo John Billard

**DAWSON'S DIARY
TRAIN LEASING
THE ODYSSEY PART 2
FREIGHTLINER HEAVY HAUL
THE GREAT CENTRAL IN 1966**

DAWSON'S DIARY

kept by the President

The club's 5" Baldwin has had its steam brake cylinder removed and new seals replaced. We hope this will cure this snag for good.

The AGM once again was well supported by the members well organised as well. Our secretary Peter Harrison did a good job of the paperwork. All his hard work over the past months is appreciated by us all. Not forgetting all the members of the committee who worked hard over the past year to keep this club up and running for us the membership to enjoy. Well done everyone! As far as I can see the RSME is in the best position for the future for a long time.

Nigel Penford, Pete Martin and I made the trip up to Doncaster this year at the race course. We were up with the larks and two and a half hours later we arrived to find a very long queue waiting for the show to open! A good exhibition once again with many fine models and a good number of traders as well, a little bit tight on space rather hard to move around at times. We were very lucky with the traffic no hold ups both ways. Sometimes the motorways do work, we did see one other member of the RSME a certain David Wilkinson also Steve Harland manning the Leeds stand who put on some nice exhibits for us to look at.

Club running 28th May with nice weather Chris Cory ran his new 5" GWR 1400 0-4-2 tank for the first time at the track, the engine ran for most of the day, Chris was happy with his loco. Nigel ran his own Baldwin 0-6-0 for most of the day with many members trying their hand at driving an engine. Mike Burke's Princess Marina ran well with no snags this time; once again other members were seen having a drive. I gave my Tich an outing. It was very pleasant just sitting back doing a few laps in sunny weather with a cup of tea on board. Also Ralph Appleford ran his 5" 0-8-0 on the ground level track till the batteries ran out of juice. He did many laps good to see him out on the track. In all a good day's steam up.

The RSME had a visit from the Mayor of Reading, he came to open the Autistic Pride Day. A very busy day for the loco drivers trains running all the time. Well done every one for making it a good day. Our visitors who came to support the cause!

I paid a visit to the Stoke Row steam rally held at Bottom Hill Whitchurch Hill. It was good to see Geoff Wingfield driving his Aveling and Porter Shay also Mark Wingfield who had a very rare "Iroquois" Shay tandem steam roller. It was made in the USA, Buffalo, NY. They only made a few of these machines. When I arrived young Luke was cooking breakfast on the shovel (Lovely!) Both these engines ran and sounded very good when on the move. It made it worth a visit to this show.

Train Leasing

Last month we had just got to establishing the three train leasing companies. Their original names were Porterbrook, which is Derby based, Eversholt, allocated BR offices in Euston, and by far the most exciting, Angel Train Contracts (the original name – “Train Contracts” has subsequently been dropped, the aim being to emphasise the contractual nature of the agreements to lease). Angel was based in a smart but smallish office quite close to Angel station. We did try naming them all after rivers, and Angel would then have been called “Fleet Leasing” – a pun on the name of the river that runs through Islington. Unfortunately, this name was so brilliant that Companies House already had a road fleet leasing company listed under that name, so we could not have it and settled for Angel.

One fine day we gathered together – the three Engineering Directors, to be given a brown envelope by the central project team containing the exciting news of which vehicles had been allocated to each Rolling Stock Company (ROSCo for short). Not many times in the history of railways has anyone been GIVEN about 4000 railway vehicles, so it was quite exciting. The fleets were allocated on a good mix of types and ages, so as not to favour one company or undermine the competition that would guarantee that the franchised operators would not be ripped off. Eversholt got an almost all electric fleet, Porterbrook got a lot of locomotives, Angel the bulk of the HST fleet – with Porterbrook, and all the 165/6s. The engineering logic was to keep similar types together where possible, as the ROSCo activity would be dominated by the engineering of keeping the trains in good order, and the number of people who knew each fleet inside out was quite limited.

We did, of course have to set up all the trading arrangements both for the overhaul of trains and components, as well as the Master Lease with each Operator. In addition, we had to reflect that the aim was to sell the companies by auction within a year or two, so raising interest in the City and particularly in the banks, was an early task. We also spent a lot of time explaining to folk how it should work, and why the leases had some of the clauses they did, like the right to inspect our trains anywhere anytime, and the insistence that the maintenance record was kept on the mainframe “RAVERS” system so that we had full transparency of the way the vehicles were being looked after. Collaboration between the ROSCos and the Operators was built into the Leases to a way that made sure they kept talking to each other on a regular basis, and that only good trains went out of the depot. The ROSCo reputation could be ruined by a dodgy operator, was the way we saw it, and the maintenance plans that emerged have become in time good safety assurance regimes as well. In fact, the quality of train maintenance has been generally driven up by the arrangements, I am sure we got a lot right.

And we did not get a lot of knowledgeable help. I remember vividly

going into banks at a senior level and finding them worried about all sorts of risks that we had been successfully managing for years. Then there were the insurance arrangements, a brand new market for the insurance industry which you would expect they would embrace with open arms. To be fair they did ask some pertinent questions, but the first offerings of policies were more appropriate for my house than a train. Next were the train manufacturers, used to dealing with governments and the politics of factories, orders and employment in marginal constituencies. Dealing with real customers was a nasty shock for them, and took a while. The component and train repairers were much better, understood what customers were, but even there did not really embrace the degree of commercial interest and control that would be taken by the engineering strength of the ROSCos. How would the ROSCos make money? Two ways – one was to drive efficiency and cost reduction into the maintenance of the trains, particularly the overhaul cycles and the components – engines, gearboxes and the like. The lease made the costs pretty transparent (but not the contracts with the repairers). Any changes had to be agreed, and this mechanism was designed to drive sharing of benefit and collaboration between the ROSCo and the operator.

The other way that leasing companies make money is to carry on leasing a depreciated asset (posh word for Old Train). The costs of these would be low, but the leasing charge would not decline in the same way. The actual charge for each type was fixed with the Department for Transport at a level designed so that the new operating companies would not all rush off and buy new trains, nor would they resist the replacement of worn out stock either. It was called “indifference pricing” and lease charges included a capital element that reflected the cost of replacing the train when it was worn out. This was not easily understood and was of course entirely new to operators as the government, until now, bought the new trains or provided the cash for them. It made the trains and the lease charges look expensive, but in a positive way it much more accurately reflected the real cost of running and replacing a train than had previously been in the railway accounts. The money to replace them would then be in the industry – rather than having to go to government only to find that their priorities this year were the NHS, or the police. The railway subsidies had to go up to reflect this, at a stroke destroying many of the comparisons that are made between BR’s subsidies and those of the early years in the private sector. In the lease the operators were insulated by the lease terms from having to find a lot of money to put right defects with the vehicles that already existed, or might be about to be revealed. Corrosion is an obvious example – it usually surfaces at big overhauls, in the same way that the 10 year boiler exam for a steam engine reveals cracks in the foundation ring, and tube corrosion, not to mention firebox stays that are wasting away. All of these types of defect and their diesel equivalents such as fatigue failures of the crankshaft, were the responsibility of the ROSCo.

The Operator had, of course, to keep the oil topped up and do the routine maintenance tasks, filters and the like, in accordance with a schedule which had existed under BR ownership for some time, so was familiar to all.

I believe history now tells us that many of these arrangement have stood the test of time, and if there was a risk that private operators and owners would cut corners and screw up the railway reliability, or worse, safety, have not come to pass.

(To be continued)

THE ODYSSEY and HSE - well not quite!

John Spokes

This month I conclude with some details of the route of the 750mm narrow gauge railway which climbs 22.4 km through the Vouraikas Gorge from Diakofto on the north Peloponnese coast to the mountain village of Kalavryta, at 720m (2480ft) asl.

The major renovation of the route was completed in 2010 resulting in a very modern and efficient railway. Diakofto station has been rebuilt, enhancing local facilities for the heavy tourist trade and even though the station has its own catering facilities it is in the very centre of the town and is surrounded by many other eating and drinking venues. So one can literally take the ouzo and watch the trains go by! Displayed on the platform is one of the three existing 0-6-2T rack locomotives, which is cosmetically preserved and the nearby goods shed has been renovated with the objective of converting it to a museum. Some old Decauville DEMU and works train stock stands in sidings near the station, but the bulk of old and new stock is kept in the nearby depot. The exception is the working rack locomotive, which is stored at Kalavryta. The narrow gauge station also stands adjacent the standard gauge railway which is under re-construction and when completed this newly-electrified line will run approximately 200km from Athens via Corinth along the north coast of the Peloponnese peninsular to Patris, where the Rio-Antirrio road bridge, the world's second longest cable stayed bridge (2880m), links the peninsular with the Greek mainland.

From Diakofto the narrow gauge runs east for about 300 yards past the depot and works and then turns sharply south running along the centre of a road for about 1km before entering agricultural land at the entrance to the Vouraikas Gorge. The mountains soon begin to dwarf the railway, which sits precariously on a narrow ledge on the right-hand side of the gorge. The river, a series of rapids, waterfalls and deep pools is on the left of the line; sometimes only a few feet below and then suddenly a drop of 70m. For most of the route the railway operates on adhesion, but there are three separate sections, totaling 3.8 km, with gradients up to 1 in 6, which require assistance using the Abt rack system. The beginnings of the rack section, in both directions use a

flexible coupling for the first few metres of rack to facilitate a smooth take-up. The allowable speed on the rack is 12km/h compared to 40km/h on the adhesion sections.

There are numerous tunnels on the route and the clearance in these is very limited, often as little as 500mm. At one point, approximately midway in the Gorge there is a “tunnel” which has only three sides. This location is called The Courts, a name which derives from a cave on the opposite side of the gorge which has stalagmites that resemble figures in a courtroom - the judge, the lawyers, etc. Not long after The Courts the railway reaches The Doors where it crosses a narrow ravine, through a curving tunnel, a second ravine, another tunnel and exiting over a third ravine. This alignment is new from the recent renovation, but the original tunnels and somewhat dilapidated bridges remain. The railway has now crossed to the opposite side of the gorge.

At the top of the gorge the line traverses undulating pastureland before arriving at Kalvaryta. There are a number of request halts en route, the most notable of which is Mega Spileo where one can alight and walk to a nearby monastery. There are four passing places in total, although on the day we travelled only one DEMU was in use. In the summer these passing places are important when all four of the new Stadler sets are pressed into service.

Often in WW2 railways in Europe had an association with some civilian disaster or atrocity, e.g. the transports to the extermination camps in Poland, and Kalvaryta, at the head of the line, is one such place that has a grisly history. On 13 December 1943, in retribution for the killing of captured German soldiers by the Greek Resistance, all male residents, aged 14 years and over, were executed. Only 13 survived from a total 706. The town was then razed. Today I am pleased to report that Kalvaryta is a beautiful thriving tourist resort, but as a memorial to that day in 1943 there is a very interesting, but moving museum. The clock on the church in the market square is set at 2:33 p.m. The time these executions began.

On a lighter note, I conclude with some observations on Health and Safety on the railway. Even though the lineside clearances are very tight, there is nothing to prevent anyone opening a window and putting out one's head. There are no restrictions on walking on the line. This entails crossing bridges that are no more than narrow beams, walking through tunnels with limited clearance and no refuges. Even outside of the tunnels and in the gorge the footpath at the side of the railway, if one exists at all, is often only a metre wide with a sheer drop below. It is accepted that people will walk the track and the horn on the train is in constant use in the more hazardous sections. At one point on our descent the train had to make an emergency stop at the entrance to a tunnel when a couple appeared pushing a buggy. Just to confirm this approach, two weeks after our visit there was an organised walk down the track - so why all this hassle over trespassers and the Flying Scotsman - Get Real!



Diakofto Yard and Works showing (from left to right) two 2009 Stadler sets and two 1969 Decauville sets with a lone DEMU 0-4-0 driver unit between.

The three-sided tunnel at the section known as ‘The Courts’



The second bridge in ‘The Doors’ - original alignment from the new alignment.

All photos John Spokes

Some “sheep” on the line!
The northern entrance to ‘The Doors’. Original alignment on the left.



WOLVERTON PUG

Life gets interesting-Enter Freightliner Heavy Haul

The intermodal business sails very close to the wind. It is easy to see why. A container ship arrives at a port and it is unloaded usually to the quayside from where a straddle carrier (see WP in the May Prospectus) will move the boxes to either road or rail loading points. The rail option is obviously planned well in advance to allow booking the freight paths with Network Rail. Train crew need to be available to bring in and take out the train. Rail's main advantage is the capacity of a 24 wagon train. A road haulier, a lot of whom are owner drivers, can receive a 'phone call and get his lorry to the port at very short notice. The pricing is very cut throat and the road haulier's overheads are much less, particularly his access to the national road network. He can also drive straight from the port into his customer's factory or supermarket warehouse. Margins of about 2% are the norm in this game.

So the Freightliner Board decided to diversify. A subsidiary company was set up known as Freightliner Heavy Haul Ltd. One of their first contracts in 2000 was providing class 66 locos for hauling materials in connection with the construction of the then High Speed Rail Link (now HS1). This was quickly followed by a contract for the movement of the whole portfolio of Lafarge Cement products (formerly Blue Circle). With the signing of the contract came the transfer of the cement terminal leases to Freightliner Heavy Haul. The fun for me then started in earnest. Hitherto the intermodal portfolio was fairly stable the requirement for movement of containers between ports and inland distribution points did not change a lot apart from the transfer of the Cardiff operation from Pengam to the new facility at Wentlog and the constant need to look for opportunities to expand the container market.

The Lafarge cement terminal leases had in the main been drawn up and signed back in the BR era, some as far back as the steam age. The rules of property law mean that you cannot change an existing and valid lease except as stated in the document or by Deed of Amendment signed by both parties; even though both parties had changed since the original agreements were signed. They had become the successors in Title. We had won the new haulage agreement from English Welsh and Scottish Railways, at that time the only other freight operator on the network apart from DRS who were just handling the nuclear traffic, therefore a Transfer Deed was required from Railtrack as it was then, naming Freightliner Heavy Haul as the new holder of the head lease (Railtrack Yards and Sidings Lease). This was necessary as the sidings on which the terminals sat had been transferred from BR to Railtrack, which brought with it the under lease from us to Lefarge. Before we get absolutely bogged down in property law I will move on! There were three terminals in this situation stretching from Inverness and Aberdeen in the north to

Dewsbury, the rent from which added to the value of the deal. I set out to get to the sites as quickly as possible to understand local issues etc. EWS of course had no incentive whatsoever to speedily arrange the transfer of both the documents and the rental income.

The first bit of fun started at Dewsbury. I had been there and had a look round whilst visiting family in the area. The Lefarge terminal at Dewsbury sits on the old Lancashire and Yorkshire branch to Dewsbury Market Place, in the former triangle of lines between the Calder Valley Line and the old line to Market Place. To access the terminal by rail involves taking the east side of the triangle and at the apex backing into the facility, having crossed a branch of the Calder and Hebble navigation on a girder bridge, which I noticed as I walked underneath it along the tow path had recently had substantial repairs. This became a sticking point with EWS as they wanted payment from us towards the outstanding value of the repair. Fortunately, I was aware that EWS were still running an aggregates train to a site further down the branch. The lease indicated that in my view we were not liable for any payment. I took legal advice, which as usual could not guarantee our success in a court. It dragged on for some time and in the end I did a deal involving unpaid rent to us which I waived.

At about this time EWS appointed a new property manager, who I got on with very well. To the extent that we would meet periodically for lunch, unbeknown to our masters and sort property issues between our companies over food and some wine! We took turns at hosting these. Naturally as drinking on duty was totally forbidden we chose not to return to our respective offices!

Following the success of this deal Heavy Haul were expanding and won contracts to haul coal from various mines and open cast sites to the power stations in the Aire and Valleys. These contracts involved ordering bogie coal hoppers from Greenbrier made in Poland. They run in 19 wagon sets and the number of sets continued to rise as more contracts were won. I was under considerable pressure to find places to stable these sets when not out earning. This being mainly weekends. I trawled the network maps and other sources of information. In fact, myself and the Heavy Haul Director of Ops plus the coal business manager and a New Zealander who at that point was still working for EWS, but was about to leave them to join Heavy Haul. One of problems was all the obvious yards in Yorkshire were leased or owned by EWS. (Sudforth Lane, Gascoigne Wood, South Milford -all big yards on the coal haul routes). Our New Zealander who had the usual Southern Hemisphere blunt down to earth outspoken approach to most things went down very well in Yorkshire! He did not want to be seen by any of his soon to be ex colleagues, so the sight of him creeping along bent down on the footbridge overlooking Knottingley sidings and the station was a sight to behold and felt like something out of the Keystone cops or Laurel and Hardy!

We walked round Pontefract Monkhill Sidings, Crofton Strategic Freight

Site, and other little used bolt holes that might be useful. We ended up leasing sidings at Gascoigne Wood Colliery and the old coal disposal site at Winterset between Wakefield and Doncaster from UK Coal, plus the sidings south of York Station at Hexthorpe.

Our operating boys were nicknamed the gypsies of Yorkshire for using whatever sites they could to stable coal wagon sets.

Another obvious location was just outside Leeds at Hunslet. The down goods yard was still intact but had been subject to compulsory purchase order from the BRB some years previously as a site for the depot for the Leeds Tram project. Well I knew this was more or less dead in the water, so arranged a meeting with Leeds City Council to get an update. The yard had remained with the BRB (Residuary Limited) as at then was, but the two reception roads had gone to Railtrack. The Leeds Council confirmed that the tram project had run out of time for it's planning consents and it looked very unlikely they would be revived. The BRB(R) were happy to offer a reasonable lease term. All that remained was to obtain a lease from Railtrack for the two reception roads. This should be possible was the reply but they would need to check the costs of reactivating them. I pointed out that not only was all the track infrastructure and connections still in place the signals and ground position lights were all there and fully lit! After a long wait they came up with a figure of £750,000! Well just to stable wagons and no new income stream I could not take such a figure to the Heavy Haul Board. Why so expensive, I asked Railtrack to be told "Well, the new York IECC solid state signal box did not have the necessary tv screen for that section of infrastructure plus of course our mandatory 60% mark up for contingencies!"

Before I retired in 2005 we had got their figure down to about £450,000, still too much. Eventually I believe the Heavy Haul MD got some sense out of the relevant Director at Railtrack and a much lower figure was agreed. More contracts followed for aggregates, infrastructure, automotive, petroleum, waste (these are known as 'binliners'). The first of the new 'binliner' contracts was with Shanks and involved handling the Bristol area waste. They had three loading depots. One at Bath, one at Bristol and one at Westerleigh near Bristol Parkway. When Heavy Haul won the contract the site at Westerleigh was not being used apart from the storage of old refrigerators. This was the period when nobody knew what to do with the old ones because releasing the CFG gas into the atmosphere during scrapping is illegal.

So the trains only served Bath and Bristol. The one at Bristol was on the site of the old LMS steam shed at Bristol Barrow Road and the one at Bath was adjacent to the main line to Bristol west of Bath Station. The waste in containers was sent to the old brick works pits at Calvert in Buckinghamshire and ran via Swindon, Didcot Curve, Oxford and the Line through Bicester. Neither site is now in use as I believe Bristol has new incinerators and recycling arrangements. (*to be continued*)



Above Heavy Haul coal train on the York goods avoiding line 24 May 2001

Right Calvert waste transfer station in the old GC London Extension March 2002



Left The closed diesel depot at Shirebrook West



All photos WP



Withdrawn
Class 25 at
Dewsbury
cement
works
2 February
2001

The contro-
versial EWS
bridge over the
Calder and
Hebble naviga-
tion at Dews-
bury



Dewsbury– the
former branch
to Dewsbury
Market Place
now the
headshunt.



FIFTY YEARS AGO

Photos by
John Billard

**Scenes on the
former Great
Central line
near Harrow in
June 1966**

Left Class 5
44941 crosses the
LNW main line
at Northwick
Park with a down
Nottingham semi
-fast.

Above Class 5 45426 pauses at Harrow-on-the-Hill with an up Nottingham train . Note the immaculate appearance of the permanent way, surely unattainable today.





While the engine barks away the fireman puts his back into it as 45426 departs under the Station Road bridge. A contemporary slogan is chalked on the tender "Mod girls are with it".



Same train, another day. The departure was about 8 pm but on this occasion I waited and waited and instead of the usual Class 5 was rewarded by the appearance of 9F No 92231. By then it was almost too late for photography but I managed this shot.



Another rarity. With time running out for the class Britannia 70054 “Dornoch Firth” was tried out on the GC. However they were found to be uneconomical on such light trains and only ran for a few weeks. 70054 was withdrawn in November 1966 and seen here passing Northwick Park.

FOR SALE

7 1/4” BOGIES

There are eight 7 1/4” bogies available for sale, ex-ground level track. Sealed bids should go to the secretary by 18 July. These are the club’s old set that are now being replaced.

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 August PROSPECTUS is
18 July This is the final date.**

Contributions from all members are greatly welcomed
They may be submitted in hard or soft copy to the editor.
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July 2016

Tuesday	5th	Park Lane Infants	11.30-15.00
Tuesday	5th	00 gauge	
Saturday	9th	Club running	
Sunday	10th	Birthday parties	11.00-13.30 14.30-17.00
Monday	11th	Trustees meeting	
Tuesday	12th	English Martyrs	10.00-15.00
Friday	15th	Ranikhet Nursery	10.00-12.30
Saturday	16th	Birthday parties	11.00-13.30 14.30-17.00
Sunday	17th	2 1/2" rally	
Monday	18th	Ranikhet Academy	10.15-12.30
Tuesday	19th	00 gauge DCC	
Friday	22nd	Coley Park School	11.00-14.00
Saturday	23rd	Birthday parties	11.00-13.30 14.30-17.00
Sunday	24th	Birthday parties	11.00-13.30 14.30-17.00
Monday	25th	Special needs	13.30-16.00
Friday	29th	Young Engineers	18.00-20.00
Saturday	30th	Young Engineers Club running	11.00-13.30 13.30-17.00

August 2016

Tuesday	2nd	00 gauge	
Friday	5th	Prospect Park Fun Day	11.00
Saturday	6th	Birthday parties	11.00-13.30 14.30-17.00
Sunday	7th	Public running	13.30-17.00
Monday	8th	Special needs	13.30-16.00
Saturday	13th	Club running	
Sunday	14th	Birthday parties	11.00-13.30 14.30-17.00
Monday	15th	Trustees meeting	
Tuesday	16th	00 gauge DCC	
Saturday	20th	Birthday parties	11.00-13.30 14.30-17.00
Sunday	21st	Birthday parties	11.00-13.30 14.30-17.00
Monday	22nd	Special needs	13.30-14.00
Friday	26th	Young Engineers	18.00-20.00
Saturday	27th	Young Engineers Club running	10.00-13.30 13.30-17.00
Monday	29th	Public running	13.30-17.00