

July 2006

Steaming Ahead



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For those that did not manage the visit to Bratch or Stafford have a look at the articles in this issue. My thanks to Neal and Bill for writing them. For the visit on July the 15th by Sutton Coldfield Railway Society we will also have a BBQ and weather permitting

run in to evening for any members that would like to steam up. Due to the very hot weather we have some remedial track repairs to carry out so if you can help please come on Sunday mornings. We need some help with side

stalls for the garden party any one who would like to run a stall please contact Steve or Carol on 01543 675852 or email steve@casprint.co.uk Thanks to those who responded to my request in May's issue I will use as space permits.

Our **Saturday steam up** in June saw seven locos on site and a very pleasant afternoon was enjoyed by all. Were you there? If not, why not come to the next—bring a picnic, bring a loco, bring the family— enjoy your club's facilities.

Club News in Brief:

- Tues 22nd August steam up and social— with a BBQ as well.
- Watch out for another stationary engine night
- Would you like any other theme for a night

Events This Month—July

July 15th Sutton Coldfield Railway Society Visit
(Balleny Green)

July 25th Tuesday evening steam up and social

New Members

The following application for membership has been approved by the board on Tuesday 4th July

Full member **Ray Oakley**

Dates for Your Diary

July 15th Visit by Sutton Coldfield Railway Society
Balleny Green

Aug 6th 2½ Rally -Balleny Green

Aug 13th Garden Party - Balleny Green

Nov 11th Bonfire night—Balleny Green

Dec 3rd Santa Special 1— Balleny Green

Dec 10th Santa Special 2— Balleny Green

This news letter will only work with your input

Visit to THE BRATCH Pumping Station 16th June 2006.

This was arranged by member, Bill Colman; for a group of his personal friends. A party of Society members were invited to join the group to see, at first hand this splendid example of Victorian engineering and building skills.

The station is located on the west side of Wombourne close to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and locks.

The building was completed by Bilston Urban District Council Waterworks Company in 1895, the cost of the building was, at that time £ 6,133 and was built by Henry Wilcock and Co of Wolverhampton.

The building is constructed of Ruabon red brick with blue brick banding and a stepped pattern of red, buff and blue bricks decorating the panel above and between the window openings. Ornamental turrets are built onto each of the four corners of the building.

The two engines, for driving the pumps, were of the vertical triple expansion type of steam engines. The first one erected (No 1) is called "Victoria" due to being formally opened in Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee year and No 2 is called "Alexandra". The original castings, for the engines, were manufactured by James Watt and Co. but, halfway through the operation, they went into liquidation and the engines were then completed by Thornhill and Warham of Burton on Trent. Each engine drove pumps capable of raising one million gallons of water in a period of twenty hours. They were only ran one at a time.

The water was raised from two wells each 150 feet deep with diverging boreholes passing down further into sandstone beds below.

The engines are a mirrored pair comprising left and right hand. Each engine weighs approximately 404 tons and are 55 feet high from the base plate. The base footprint is 36 by 15 feet. Victoria now operates at 130 lbs/sq inch although originally designed for 150 lbs/sq inch and now rotates at 24 R.P.M. on open days. Steam is currently supplied from an oil fired boiler.

Only "Victoria" is fully restored, "Alexandra" to follow. Each engine has three cylinders each of 16", 26" and 40" bore diameter, stroke is 36". Due to the steps in cylinder sizes the engines can

take advantage of the expansive nature of steam. The flow being first in the smallest cylinder, high pressure, passing then to the intermediate cylinder and finally to the largest, or low pressure cylinder. The steam flow is controlled by Corliss, Trip Type, Valve gear.

The pumps to lift the water from the wells are mounted beneath the engines in a separate housing.

The engines were finally shut down in 1960 and fell into disrepair. Refurbishment of "Victoria" commenced in 1991 to 1996 along with major repair to the building all was commissioned by "Severn Trent Water".

The original restoration, of the engine, "Victoria" was carried out Mr Len Crane of Wolverhampton.

During the latter part of 1980 the engines were given Grade 2 listing and in 2003 protection was increased to Grade 2 Star by the department of Culture, Media and Sport.

Neal Harrison



Boiler Inspectors

Colin Davis
0121 351 4681

Peter McMillan
0121 308 2957

Stan Jones
01827 63983

Barry Kefford
0121 350 5743

Richard (Dick) Smith
01827 12758

Neal Harrison
0121 378 3992

N.B. Should you require the services of a boiler inspector, please contact one beforehand. Please do not simply arrive at the ground and assume that there will be one available.

Subscriptions for the year April 2006-April 2007

Full Member	£52.00
OAP Member	£40.00
Associate Member	£15.00
Junior Member	£11.00

Please note subscriptions were due by 31st March 2006

Membership Secretary
Mark Bradley,
224 Westwood Road, Sutton
Coldfield West Midlands
B73 6UQ
Phone 0121 353 4673

Copy dates for future news letters:-

Tuesday 25th July for Aug
Tuesday 29th Aug for Sept
Tuesday 26th Sept for Oct
Tuesday 31st Oct for Nov

This Months Quote:

Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance

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Have you sent any comment or requests ????

JUNE 2006 TUESDAY "HORT" TEAM

Looking back over the last six months reports, the weather seems to have featured in every opening paragraph, e.g. wet, windy, cold, wet, cold etc. Well, no change this month but what a change from the Bank Holiday onwards with the temperature on some days getting into the mid 20's; basically a nice month that encouraged a surge in growth all around the site.

In April I said – *"Yes, the front hedge looks a little thin"* and that a couple of members had commented on the laurel and boundary hedges being a bit low. What a difference on the weekend of the first two Birthday Parties (Sunday June 25th), I had four members telling me the boundary and laurel hedges needed cutting!!!

We've had to hold back on hedging work to avoid disturbing nesting birds and wildlife; many birds have two or even three lots of young to rear. However, it can't be put off much longer as the laurels are now beginning to affect running and the boundary hedges need cutting back to encourage further thickening up. I've had quite a lot of criticism about hedges, trees, various areas and how I and the team tackled the work. However, I hope you can now begin to appreciate what was started just over three years ago is looking good, justifies what we did, what we do and the effort put in. I would be first to admit that we don't get everything right first time and there is a bit of 'on the job' learning. Nothing stands still in nature and as I walk round the site it's not difficult to see things which need attention or will in the near future.

A start has been made in the south east corner on our neighbour's side of the 'goat hedge'. This has not been tackled for a couple of years and the weeds, nettles and grass are growing higher than the hedge itself. Bill Coleman and I spoke to Mr Mike Neal, the owner of the 'goat field', about access to clear the weeds and cutting the hedge. He readily agreed but that was as

far as it went. Now, if anyone would like a grotty job cutting a very thorny hedge whilst working in nettles and getting seeds stuck in some inconvenient places, then please see me on a Tuesday morning.

I used to think one of the best jobs on a sunny day was sitting on a mower mowing golf links but after 2-3 hours going round and round Balleny Green it's no longer top of my list. Seriously though, the team would welcome you joining us on a Tuesday. There is lots to do and while sitting having a break with a drink you can enjoy the peace and quiet of this lovely site.

Work on the lottery project is going well and in the carriage shed there are lots of bits, bogie frames, body frames etc., all awaiting assembly. The team working on them are doing a great job and the carriages will look splendid when complete. Two of our existing carriages already have new bodies and their first coats of paint. They were in use for the two birthday parties on Sunday 25th June supporting blue painted bodies and the chassis coated in rust preventative paint, to be top coated in black in due course.

There will be 14 carriages in all when complete, 8 lottery, 4 added by the Board and 2 refitted existing ones. They will look superb when rolled out for events in the future rather than the assortment of carriages we currently have to work with. If you're the curious type then ask about 'guarding' on the trains.

On Tuesday 27th June we concentrated on getting the site looking it's best for the Diesel Weekend. Although wet mowing was the priority and ensuring everywhere was as tidy as possible for the weekend. After an early cup of coffee Grenville disappeared into the undergrowth with a spray pack of weed killer on his back and that was the last I saw of him. Did the weeds get him or will he be back next Tuesday? Ron did a good job on the fire barrels and buckets while I ran the lawn tractor round.

When we left, at around 3.00pm, Graham Jones was doing his best to pretty up the steaming bay with 33 new carriage panels painted with cream undercoat and spread out to dry. I can almost hear some saying 33 panels, how does he get that bearing in mind the numbers above. Simple, two existing refurbished and the prototype new one leave 11 under construction, each having two side and one top panel.

Finally, I make no excuse for reminding you again that you have a wonderful asset in Balleny Green and that a relatively small number of members strive continuously to maintain and improve it. Tuesdays can be quite special and I encourage you to come and share in the humour, social atmosphere and if nothing else, 'have a cup of tea or coffee and watch time go bye' – why not try it?

Eric Davies

27th June 2006

For Sale

As there was no interest from members the club is advertising the 31/2" Britannia elsewhere.

5" Girt 060 Tank loco at the request of the membership will be retained for future display in the clubhouse

For more details please contact Neil Harrison on 0121-378-3992 or any club board member.

SCMES GOES TO POT



Few of us knew what to expect when 25 members signed up to go to the Stafford Barn Farm Railway on Saturday 24th June. It was a wonderful day full of interest and diversity. On the one hand it is the largest legal Cannabis growing farm in England but it also has one of the longest 2ft. and 2ft. 6in. gauge private railway layouts in the country.

Graham Lee has built up this business and three generations of his family are now involved in running it.

Over the last twenty years Graham has developed his 1000 acre farm into a major producer of seed oil. The oil is extracted by compressing seeds in a continuous screw press operation under high pressure. His largest crop is a mild narcotic variety of Hemp from which Hemp Oil is made. His best customer is The Body Shop and he now knows the founder, Anita Roddick, quite well as he made two innovative breakthroughs that helped her business significantly. First he improved the design of the extractor presses so the yield increased and secondly he developed a scrubber that removed the narcotics from the seed. This reduced the drug content below the stringent requirements of the American Customs Authorities so The Body Shop could export Hemp Oil to the USA.

The family are engineers as well as

farmers and they clearly love steam, trains and traction engines. The scale of their operation is larger than most of us are used to. There were plenty of narrow gauge locomotives and a full size traction engine being rebuilt in a very well equipped workshop full of large machines.



They are one of the very few organisations that actually build from scratch narrow gauge steam locomotives and you can buy one from them for £135,000 plus VAT. To prove it "Statford", built in 2005, was in steam, but not for sale.

We had several rides on the 3 mile narrow gauge track round the farm. I had not ridden on a loco footplate before so I was particularly pleased to have a trip on the back of "Trangkil No 4", the last old Hunslet engine made in 1971. Luckily I was not asked to do anything!

The track had been laid by contractors in the last two years and

was impressive. At present it ends at a balloon loop and an ingenious track design sorts out the double gauge problem at the junction without requiring moving parts.



I believe it is intended to extend the track right round the farm so it becomes a continuous circle.

There was also a garden railway track laid in an extensive landscaped garden. We were able to wander round the garden but "Charley" the resident engine was not operational.

This site is not open to the public and we were very privileged to be invited along. I am quite sure everyone that attended was very grateful to Graham and his team for the trouble they took to make our day so enjoyable.

Bill Colman

29.06.06



DIESEL GALA REPORT

Preparations for the event started at lunch time on Friday, with a few members preparing the club house to cater for the 'Balleny Café.'

As well as setting up the signing in booth and roping off certain areas.

Eric kindly mowed the entire area, so that when the first of the trade stands arrived – Dan Jeavons from Steam and Diesel Castings – the site looked at its best.

At around 15:30, Barry Miller from Compass House arrived with his stand and a new 7.1/4" Hymek diesel for George.

This was soon tested by all present, and given a seal of approval for the weekend!

Saturday saw the arrival of our third trade stand, Engineers Emporium, who quickly set up ready for the crowds.

However, due largely to the fact that England were playing in the World Cup in the afternoon, we were relatively quiet, and easily coped with the visitors, many of whom wished to try their hand at driving the locomotives.

Sunday was a very different story, with visitors arriving as soon as we opened. We had the misfortune initially of having both George's Hymek, and the demonstration Hymek from Compass House out of operation due to a combination of a derailment causing damage to the control circuit on the one locomotive, and a battery failing to charge up overnight.

Chris Greene was called upon to drive the club diesel initially to get passengers moving, but shortly afterwards a Western diesel started operating, followed by the writer's class 45.



A particular joy to see, and a locomotive that generated a lot of interest, was Eric's new electrically driven GWR 2-6-2 Prairie. This had to be seen - and heard - to be believed.

Additionally, a visitor, Paul Allen from Leicester, enjoyed himself so much on Saturday with his 5" G 0-4-0 Hunslet diesel, that he returned on Sunday with a 5" G class 90 and spent the entire day driving, or being driven, by our visitors.



Even our Secretary got roped in to take the youngsters round, as did one of our lady drivers, Ann Barsley.

By the end of the event at 5.00 on Sunday, we had entertained over 180 people, consumed all that was available from the café, and made a contribution to Society funds of just under £800.00. Not a bad weekend's

work, and most enjoyable for all those who took part.

Thanks to all the members who supported the event and worked so hard to make it a success – the weather helped, but without you, it would not have happened.

It was also nice to see our President, Geof. Nicholson, in attendance after his recent visit to the 'works'.

Special thanks to the two Steves – Whitson for the publicity and back up, and Hodgetts for the organisation of the staff and general setting up.

Perhaps we will do it again – who knows?

Garry Tyso.

Eds Note

Thanks for Publicity goes to Carol Whitson who wrote the articles, sent to the papers and did the follow up work.

DIESEL DRIVING LICENCE DAY

It has been proposed that, as a result of the Diesel Gala, a day sometime in August, be set aside for conducting Driving Tests for all those who wish to drive diesels and pull the general public.

The date will be announced in the next issue of Steaming Ahead.

Garry Tyso.

For Sale

250ft Aluminium Track in 10ft panels and 88ft new rail in 8ft lengths

Contact :Bill Hall on 01600 719600

(All Tuesday Evening meetings start at 7:45pm unless otherwise indicated)

Sat 15th Jul 2006	Sutton Coldfield Railway Society visit to Balleny Green (Change of date & time)	(2.00pm onwards)	BG
Tues 25th Jul	Steam up and social	(6.30 pm onwards)	BG
Sun 6th Aug 2006	National 2½" Gauge Association Rally		BG
Sun 13th Aug 2006	Garden Party		BG
Sat 19th Aug 2006	Steam up & Visit by The Birmingham Astronomical Society	(2.00pm onwards)	BG
Sun 20th Aug 2006	Birthday Party		BG
Tue 22nd Aug 2006	Steam up and social (and BBQ)	(6.30 pm onwards)	BG
Mon 28th Aug 2006	Bank Holiday Steam Up	(10:00am onwards)	BG
Sun 3rd Sep 2006	Kids West Midlands		BG
Sun 17th Sep 2006	Birthday Party		BG
Sat 23rd Sep 2006	Steam up	(2.00pm onwards)	BG
Tue 26th Sept 2006	Steam up and social	(6.30 pm onwards)	BG
Sun 1st Oct 2006	First Sunday of the month Steam-Up	(10:00am onwards)	BG
Sun 8th Oct 2006	Birthday Party		BG
Sat 21 Oct 2006	Steam up	(2.00pm onwards)	BG
Tue 24th Oct 2006	Steam up and social	(6.30 pm onwards)	BG
Sat 11th Nov 2006	Bonfire Night		BG
Tue 28th Nov 2006	Meeting TBA		BG
Sun 3rd Dec 2006	Santa Special I		BG
Sun 10th Dec 2006	Santa Special II		BG
Tue 12th Dec 2006	Christmas Social		TBA
Tue 26th Dec 2006	Boxing Day Steam-Up	(10:00am onwards)	BG
Mon 1st Jan 2007	New Year's Day Steam-Up	(10:00am onwards)	BG