

### 8E Railway Association – December 2013 meeting in Northwich

As always the December meeting of the 8E Railway Association took the form of the AGM, followed this year by a quiz. The AGM was a relatively calm affair, with the usual reports and elections. However, there were two major changes to the Committee. The Chairman, Peter Dixon, stepped down and his place has been taken by Wayne Jones. Roger Morris has relinquished the post of Membership Secretary, with Mike Lenz returning to the Committee to take on this task. The other posts are unchanged, but the position of Vice-Chairman remains vacant. Both Peter and Roger remain on the Committee to assist in the transition.

Alan Ashurst produced a quiz in the form of 30 multiple choice questions covering a wide range of railway related topics. Although most participants were in teams of two, Andrew MacFarlane managed to win it by himself!

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“British Steam from 1958 to 1968” sounded a fairly standard title for a talk. But what Phil Braithwaite delivered to members of the 8E Railway Association was extraordinary. He acquired his first “serious” camera in 1958. This allowed him to embark upon what has become a life time of railway photography, amassing a vast quantity of slides, which are now digitised and safely stored.

He hailed from Warrington so we were treated to scenes in black and white and in colour of many aspects and parts of the railways in that area, reached on foot or by bicycle. It was altogether a slower age! Monochrome pictures of the steam railway always exude character, be it an apocryphal sky full of smoke and steam or a scene of grime and decay. The detail was stunning.

He went to work for Metropolitan Vickers at Trafford Park and this gave him another host of locations within easy reach, such as Manchester Victoria station and Old Trafford, with a background of the stadium in its old form. More money led to broader horizons. However, with the end of British Railways steam in 1968 came the end of an absorbing talk.

### 8E Railway Association – October 2013 meeting in Northwich

Chris Banks continued his exploration of Engine Sheds at the October meeting of the 8E Railway Association. Last year he gave us Part 1. This time we had Part 2. Since the series is already well into double figures we may never get to the end!

This presentation ranged alphabetically from Bournemouth to Carnforth. Other locations included Bradford, Brecon, Bridlington, Brighton, Bristol, Bromsgrove and Carlisle, with snippets of historical background and lots of fascinating photographs. The only one to remain relatively unchanged from the days of steam is Carnforth, which regularly supplies locomotives for rail tours. Other sites, such as Brighton and Carlisle Kingmoor remain as major depots on the modern railway.

Of particular interest were the large villas overlooking Bournemouth shed. Virtually all the others (Brecon shed appeared to have been built in a field) were surrounded by terraced housing, so it seems odd that anyone would choose to live in relative opulence in such a grimy environment. Bromsgrove is at the foot of the Lickey incline and provided banking engines for heavy trains. After “Big Bertha” was withdrawn the giant LNER Garrett locomotive was moved there, with a conspicuous lack of success, not helped by being sent the wrong way round!

### 8E Railway Association – September 2013 meeting in Northwich

The 2013 – 2014 winter season of meetings of the 8E Railway Association began with the intriguingly entitled “Coal to Chocolate”, an exploration of industrial railway systems. The format turned out to be rather different from what might have been expected and the audience had to work quite hard.

The speaker, Russell Hatt, had acquired a collection of about 3500 slides. Many of these were unlabelled. For the talk he had selected about 160 and the challenge then was to try to identify the locations and any other useful information. Many were of collieries and their associated railway systems. Others were from major, and minor, industrial complexes most of which had, and some still have, internal railway networks, e.g. steel works, breweries, gas works and dockyards. The audience got involved, with some success and it turned into a most enjoyable evening. The “Chocolate” connection was not too difficult. It had to be Bournville and Cadburys and was dealt with in some depth – firm ground after the preceding quagmire!

### 8E Railway Association – May 2013 meeting in Northwich

The May meeting of the 8E Railway Association was a fascinating presentation entitled “Engines on Shed”, given by Wayne Jones. Wayne gave a flavour of what could have been seen in the days of British Railways steam, restricting the selection to locomotives built before 1948. Even this gave plenty of scope, since there were still many engines active which were constructed in the nineteenth century!

He started by looking at the London Midland Region and locations such as Camden and Willesden (both London), Edge Hill (Liverpool) and Rose Grove (Burnley). The functions of the various sheds – passenger, freight, shunting, trip working, etc. – determined what was to be seen and this theme was developed for the other regions. For the Scottish Region Polmadie (Glasgow) had a similar function to both Camden and Willesden.

The Eastern and North Eastern Regions were covered with reference to sheds such as York, Whitby and Kings Cross (London), and the Western Region by Old Oak Common (London), Southall and Swindon. The talk concluded with a look at the Southern Region. Again there were London sheds (Nine Elms and Stewarts Lane, of Golden Arrow fame) and also Eastleigh, Guildford, Reading and Ryde St. Johns (Isle of Wight), with its ancient tank engines.

### 8E Railway Association – April 2013 meeting in Northwich

The April meeting of the 8E Railway Association was one of the most absorbing of the season. Graham Nicholas is the Quality Engineering Director of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust and in an excellent position to talk about the project to build and operate “Tornado”, the first main line steam locomotive to be constructed for Britain’s railways since 1960.

The LNER produced four classes of Pacific type locomotives (A1, A2, A3 and A4). Examples of three of these have been preserved, but not a single A1. Ironically this was the most modern design. So the Trust was established in 1990 to build one to fill this gap. The complexity of the project is illustrated by the fact that 1300 original drawings had to be scanned, cleaned, updated and perhaps even recreated. So far this huge project has consumed over £3 million pounds, raised through donations, covenants, sponsorship and sales of merchandise, with more needed to ensure its continued success.

The locomotive was completed in 2008 and officially named “Tornado” by Prince Charles in 2009. Since then it has hauled many specials on the main line, including one for “Top Gear”, and produced some spectacular performances. It has also visited many heritage railways.

### 8E Railway Association – March 2013 meeting in Northwich

Tony Icke is always a fascinating speaker, but his talk to the 8E Railway Association last October had to be abandoned for technical reasons. Fortunately, he was able to return this month to continue his talk about “Decades of Change”, and did not disappoint us.

As a civil engineer with British Rail he travelled the network extensively over a long period of time and was able to observe at first hand the dramatic changes which have taken place over the last fifty years. The talk was divided into six sections, representing the regions existing in the 1960s: Western, Southern, London Midland, Eastern, North Eastern and Scottish. Within each section there were views of traction, rolling stock and infrastructure typical of the 1960s and representative decades thereafter.

So we were shown locomotives (steam, diesels with assorted transmissions, and electric), coaching stock from pre-war to Pendolino, stations of various ages and states, lines now defunct, such as the Great Central, or having been reprieved, such as the Settle and Carlisle. As you can imagine it proved to be another absorbing evening.

### 8E Railway Association – February 2013 meeting in Northwich

The now established tradition for the February meeting of the 8E Railway Association is a presentation by Colin White of B and R Videos. As ever the audience was enthralled by a wide variety of cine film, much of which has never had a public screening.

The first half was devoted to selections from around the country in the 1950s and 60s. On the Southern Region there were scenes from the station at Brookwood, home of the London Necropolis, to which special trains were run from Waterloo station. In the North-West there were a number of sequences at Northwich and other parts of the Cheshire Lines system.

With continuing demise of main line steam in the 1960s many special trains were run, and several were featured, with iconic locomotives such as “Clun Castle”, “Oliver Cromwell” and “Flying Scotsman”. However, this all came to end in 1968 and the last section of film showed the operation of some of the scrapyards which broke up the vast numbers of locomotives now redundant. Quite a poignant end to the show. All being well Colin will make a return visit next year with another from his seemingly inexhaustible collection of gems. We can hardly wait for that.

### 8E Railway Association – January 2013 meeting in Northwich

For the last few years the January meeting the 8E Railway Association has been a presentation by Karl Jauncey and Dave Richards from PSOV with their review of steam on the main line last year. Continuing this tradition Karl and Dave gave us a taste of what happened in 2012.

As you might expect we were treated to the sights of locomotives racing by, plodding steadily and occasionally slipping to an undignified halt. The quality of filming was excellent, with frequent use of long lenses to put the scene into context. This was particularly effective on the Settle and Carlisle, where the difficult nature of the line could be appreciated, and in Scotland, where the sheer grandeur of the mountains and lochs was breath-taking.

A number of iconic locomotives such as “Tornado”, “Oliver Crowell”, “Princess Elizabeth” and “Duke of Gloucester” were featured, together with many others, both large and small, including the two pannier tank engines based at Tyseley, Birmingham, which make occasional forays around the Midlands.