



The 8E Railway Association Newsletter Winter 2011

Welcome to this edition of your newsletter...

As the year nears its end, we can look back and consider it to be a success. We have been very well entertained by our meeting speakers. Also many members have enjoyed the outings organised by Alan Ashurst (see below). We are now preparing for our AGM and would encourage all members to attend. No pressure will be applied to members to join the committee but anyone prepared to help will be most welcome.

Peter Dixon - Chairman

Forthcoming Fixtures – All start at 7.45 prompt

<u>November 8th</u>	- Bill Andrews : Life as an Engine Driver	
<u>December 13th</u>	- AGM. This is followed by Jon Penn: Chester B&W Part 3	
<u>January 10th</u>	- Karl Jauncey & Dave Richards (PSOV): Mainline Steam 2011	www.mainlinesteam.net
<u>February 14th</u>	- Colin White (B&R Video): Archive Cine Film from the 50's & 60's	www.bandrvideos.co.uk
<u>March 13th</u>	- Geoff Coward: Back to the 60's	
<u>April 10th</u>	- Stephen Gay: Walking the line – Discovering Lost Railways	
<u>May 8th</u>	- Les Nixon: A to Z of Railways Around the World	

Agenda for the Annual General Meeting on 12th December 2010

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Chairman's Report
4. Secretary's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Membership Report
7. Publicity Report
8. Election of Officers
9. AOB

2011 Trips and Outings

Once again a great time has been had by all 8E members & friends who managed to join in with our outdoor activities this summer. On Saturday 23rd July we explored the western end of the 'Fallowfield Loop Line Path', part of which has now seen a revival of rail transport on the new Chorlton Metrolink extension. After enjoying lunch at The 'Great Central' pub in Fallowfield we rejoined the rail network at Mauldeth Road to return to the city centre to examine the Ashton tram extension underneath Piccadilly, thence having a run out to Stalybridge.

Then on Tuesday 9th August we were privileged indeed to have a 'behind the scenes' conducted tour of Crewe Heritage Centre with site manager Milke Lenz as our guide for the evening.

Before these two events however it was nice to toast the good health of the 8E at Wetherspoon's 'Penny Black' in Northwich, to celebrate 30 years of the Association. Three truly memorable events, conducted in proper 8E fashion. Plans are already afoot for more of the same during 2012!

Alan Ashurst ('Hon 8E Tour Guide')



Other Railway Association Meetings (from September to April)

<u>GWS (Warrington)</u>	- Meet at St Hildas, Slater Street, Latchford at 7:30pm on last Friday each month. Further information from Alan Ashurst
<u>AERPS (Altrincham)</u>	- Meet at Altrincham Methodist Church, Barrington Road, Altrincham at 7:30pm on the second Friday of each month. Further information at www.altrincham-electric.org.uk
<u>RCTS (Chester)</u>	- Meet at The Town Crier, City Road, Chester at 7:30 pm on third Monday each month. Further information at www.rcts.org.uk

www.8erailwayassociation.org.uk

Our website publicises our meetings and provides links to other railway related groups. All members are invited to regularly review the site for latest club news. Contact for the association is via the8erailwayassociation@hotmail.co.uk

SHED



Eddie Bellass meets the men of Northwich, and learns that they do more than just service locos.

DURING the year of 'Rocket 150' – 1980 – the still extant BR steam motive power depot at Northwich in Cheshire was used to stable various steam locomotives which took part in the Rainhill cavalcade and associated 'Steam 150' rail tours, a splendid Open Day being held on the depot just before the main event at Rainhill.

The sight and sounds of the many and varied steam locomotives on their doorstep fired the imagination of several local steam enthusiasts, including some professional railwaymen, and an ad hoc group was formed in the Northwich area to assist with the cleaning and preparation of steam locomotives visiting the site.

All too soon 1980 and its great event passed into history, but when some SLOA steam-hauled rail tours were routed via Northwich again in 1981 – 46229 Duchess of Hamilton leading the field – the old enthusiasm was rekindled and a properly constituted organisation set up under the guidance of the then BR Area Manager at Northwich, David McIntosh, himself a former BR fireman at the old Wrexham GC depot. The group took its name from the former steam MPD shed code and the '8E Association' was born.

The primary aim of the 8E Association is to provide manpower for the multitude of tasks involved in running a preserved steam locomotive on present day BR tracks. These include cleaning, servicing and maintaining the locomotives which lie

over at Northwich between stints on SLOA's 'Trans-Pennine Pullman' rail tours. However, the enthusiasm does not stop there, for its members also travel away from Northwich to assist at other steam centres with locomotive preparation – a recent example being provided by a small group which travelled to the Severn Valley Railway to help prepare the two Ivatt Moguls which hauled the LCGW North West 'Sevensider' up the line, as reported in the April issue of Steam Railway.

As with most other railfan bodies, the 8E Association holds regular indoor meetings and outdoor fixtures and visits – some for leisure and entertainment, others for practical work on preservation or maintenance projects – and also engages in various fund-raising activities. Monthly indoor meetings are held in the British Rail Staff Association club adjacent to Northwich station, whilst working parties meet at the MPD or at other sites as required.

The most recent project follows the acquisition of a former LMS coach, which

Members of the 8E Association pose proudly with 5690 Leander at the Northwich Open Day.

the Association intends to restore, as far as possible, to a typical 1920's appearance. The vehicle was first built in the 1920s as a Period 1, 1st/3rd corridor composite to LMS Diagram 1894, believed to be No.3523. During World War II it was converted for use in an Ambulance Train and after the war rebuilt into a riding coach for use in brakedown trains, with a brake end and tool van replacing the 1st Class compartments at one end.

In this form, as BR No.DM395470, it saw service in breakdown trains at Sowerby Bridge, Accrington, Agecroft and, finally, Northwich itself, before being recently declared as surplus to BR requirements. It was formally handed over to the 8E Association on the morning of Sunday, March 7 last, prior to another, but much more modest 'Open Day' at Northwich. Just before the public were admitted, the new BR Area Manager, Ted Merryweather, formally presented the coach to Graham Roughsedge, Chairman of the 8E Association, in the short bay at

the East end of Northwich's Manchester-bound platform.

Inside the coach itself, the ladies of the association were already working flat-out preparing tons of sandwiches and cakes and gallons of tea and coffee for the anticipated demand by visitors to the depot and station for the Open Day. They were not to be disappointed, for over 4000 visitors turned up for the single afternoon's display, where they were treated to the sight of LMS 4-6-0 No.5690 Leander simmering in-light steam on the former turntable road, plus specially cleaned BR Class 56, 40, 08 and 03 diesel locomotives (all of which had benefited from 8E Association sweat and tears, if not blood). For part of the day, the 08 shunter hauled a train of brake vans up and down a protected siding, giving free rides to the public, whilst two miniature live-steam model locomotives also operated a passenger service on a length of track adjacent to Leander, whose footplate was also available for inspection.

Being a working depot, Northwich was also able to provide some main line action, as the huge ICI hopper trains from Tunstoad to Oakleigh Sidings arrived in station limits, took on a banking engine, then roared away to the ICI reception sidings a couple of miles away, their Class 40 and 25 diesel locomotives coming and going on and off the depot for fuelling and crew changes.

Although now promoted to the post of Rail Express Parcels manager at Crewe, former Northwich Area Manager David McIntosh maintains his keen interest in the 8E Association and remains as President. David told me that the Association's coach restoration project would be of some benefit to the local community, for as well as the obvious volunteer effort needed, some work would be contracted out to the 'Serves Cheshire Workshops' established by the Manpower Services Commission. There, using modern woodworking machinery, many of the missing wooden parts of the coach would be reproduced by otherwise unemployed youngsters, using patterns and timber provided by the 8E Association.

With virtually all of the former 1st Class compartments and fittings removed, and a van end and handbrake pedestal in situ, the Northwich team has decided to aim for what amounts to a further conversion, rather than a true restoration, rebuilding DM395470 to the external style of a typical LMS Period 1 Brake/3rd of 1925 vintage.

In this form, with three or four compartments available for seating accommodation and the rest of the space used for spares, tools, and guard's brake area, the rebuilt coach would make an ideal support vehicle for visiting steam locomotives, being able to accompany them between a stabling point and the starting station for a tour etc.

Looking at Northwich Motive Power Depot, hardly changed in 20 years except for the removal of the coaling plant and the turntable (and with not one, but two triangles available to turn engines), it is so easy to close one's eyes and dream of its almost instant restoration to a working steam shed. However, for as long as ICI Ltd keep digging up Derbyshire and transporting it to Cheshire, the depot will need to keep those Sulzer and English Electric diesels trobbing away on, or very near to the present site.

For the moment, the 8E Association has much more modest aims, and Steam Railway would like to thank President David McIntosh, Chairman Graham Roughsedge and PRO Alan Ashurst for their kind invitation to attend the Association's indoor meetings and Open Day.

Details of membership of the 8E Association can be had by sending a see to the Secretary, Andrew Johnson, 3 Ferndon Close, Cuddington, Northwich, Cheshire.



Coach 395470 in use as a refreshment vehicle in East End Dock