8E

On Shed

Celebrating 40 Years 1981-2021

£1

Winter 2022

Welcome

to On Shed, the official journal of the 8E Railway Association.

In This Issue

From the Editor
Chairman's Report
Membership Report
Fixtures Programme
Photo Puzzle
Memories of Birkenhead Mollington Street MPD, The Men and the Area. Part 4.
Then and Now (Photo feature)
The Severn Tunnel
Contact Information

[Front Cover: Graham Roughsedge, Colin Worrall, Alan France and yours truly on the footplate of Southern Railway 4-6-0 locomotive #850 'Lord Nelson' at Northwich shed in the early 1980s during one of its layovers whilst on route to Bulmer's at Hereford. (Photo: Mike Lenz)
This page: Freightliner Class 66 #66506 'Crewe Regeneration' seen on Basford Hall yard in August 2003 during a visit by 8E members. (Photo: Mike Lenz)

From the Editor. Mike Lenz

Another year ends and 2021 has seen us unable to celebrate our fortieth anniversary in any meaningful way due to the ongoing uncertainties arising from the pandemic. We can only hope that 2022 proves to be more conducive to our returning to something approaching normality. Hopefully we will be able to arrange a suitable event for the late spring/early summer to celebrate the Associations 40 years.

I must apologise for omitting the answer to the Photo Puzzle in the previous issue as I had not noticed that it had been squeezed out when I proof read the magazine. The answer to the location is Wolverhampton Low Level station seen during an 8E summer outing.

All contributions for the summer issue to reach me by June 21st 2022.

Chairman's Report. Mike Lenz

By virtue of the fact that we have had no 8E meetings in the past year this report will be brief, to say the least!

At the time of writing your committee has held its first meeting in almost two years at the end of November. A decision was taken to hold our AGM in January at the Gladstone Club and start our meetings again from the new year, however this is now in doubt due too the ongoing issues with the virus situation and may well see meetings on hold until the spring.

An annual report will be sent to members although there is little to report as we have had no meetings or income during the 2020-2021 year only expenditure on the magazine, postage and the website. A decision was taken to suspend membership renewals until September 2022 in light of the lack of meetings and other activities as our finances remain healthy at the present time. That said, members are more than welcome to make donations if they wish to, they will be gladly received.

Membership Report. Brian Burgess

As mentioned in the Chairman's Report the committee took the decision to suspend the 2021 membership renewals until September 2022 and the following is the current breakdown of numbers;

Life/Honorary Life Members: 21. Full members: 37.

Fixtures Programme 2022. Jon Penn

Due to the current uncertainties at the present time it is hoped to be able to start meetings in the Spring of 2022 and details will appear on the website, Facebook page and will be circulated to those members that we have email addresses for.

Photo Puzzle.

Can you identify the location of the derelict station in this photograph. (Photo: Mike Lenz)

Answer at the bottom of page 14.

Memories of Birkenhead Mollington Street MPD, the Men and the Area. Part 4. By Dennis Flood

I mentioned at the end of Part 3 of these articles the tank train service from Stanlow to Whittington (between Gobowen and Shrewsbury) and the interesting operational procedure which was undertaken to berth the loaded train and then remove the empty tank train from Whittington for return to Stanlow. The time taken to carry out this work involving train work and shunting was normally about seven hours, and we were never more than 50 miles away from Stanlow at any one time! In those days we worked an eight hour day and for the Whittington job we booked on at 1300 and booked off at 2100. If everything went well during the day then it was always quite straightforward to arrive back with the locomotive at Mollington Street about 2000. However, there were times when several drivers arrived back at Mollington Street later than 2100 – these individuals were always intent on making overtime and, as a result of this, the job itself was 'split' between

Birkenhead men and Croes Newydd (Wrexham) men, in the mid-1970s. Birkenhead men would be relieved at Wrexham South Fork Junction by Croes Newydd men, who then worked the train forward to Stanlow, the Birkenhead men then travelling back ‘on the cushions’ as passengers on a service train via Chester. This situation was clearly uneconomical and did not last very long. As a result of a change in provision of fuel trains from Stanlow to Whittington, the work was eventually lost completely to both depots in the late 1970s.

Whittington Depot was then supplied with fuel trains from the BP refinery at Llandarcy near Swansea until the early 1980s when the traffic ceased completely. Even BP Llandarcy has now closed. It is indeed ironic that I ended up working in Swansea in a railway management position between 1982 and 1984 and I was involved managerially with BP Llandarcy during that time.

There is no doubt that Stanlow would have ultimately ceased providing fuel trains for Whittington as a programme of pipeline networks was starting to get underway but I remain convinced that the greed of a few drivers at Mollington Street in making overtime on this particular job hastened the end of this traffic from Stanlow to Whittington earlier than it should have done.

Now to go back to a remarkable ‘character’ at Mollington Street. There was a guard called Les Thompson, a jovial West Indian who worked at Mollington Street and what he got himself involved in at times was nothing short of hilarious, quite absurd and at times totally incompetent! However, it takes ‘two to tango’ and in the case of this particular incident it was three!

There was one occasion when he was working a train back from Grange Sidings, near Stoke-on-Trent, to Dee Marsh with a Birkenhead driver and he became involved in something which could be expected to be seen only in a Will Hay film! Upon arrival of the train at Middlewich, on the single line between Sandbach and Northwich Sandbach Junction, the train was signalled into the down Middlewich ‘loop' whilst another was on the way from Northwich Sandbach Junction that was required to pass. The driver stopped his train at the down ‘loop' starting signal and waited for the ‘up’ train to pass. The method of working between Northwich Sandbach Junction and Middlewich was by use of a signalling system known as ‘Electric Token’ working. This was a simple yet very safe and effective way of allowing only one train at a time to pass over the single line safely from either direction. This required a driver to obtain a ‘Token' via an electro-mechanical token instrument (magazine).This was a metal key with the line nomenclature to which it applied stamped on it and in the case of this particular single line of railway it would read 'Middlewich to Northwich’. The ‘Token’ was normally handed to a driver by the controlling signalman before being allowed to pass over the portion of line concerned if it was clear of trains. However, as the driver had drawn his train forward over the down ‘loop’ to the starting signal he would need to remove a ‘Token’ from the auxiliary token instrument (magazine) located near to the starting signal, when required, prior to departing towards Northwich Sandbach Junction. It was important for the driver to make sure his train was drawn ‘in clear’ upon arrival in the down ‘loop’ to allow another train to pass on the ‘up’ line. This was done and the auxiliary token instrument (magazine) was located where it was for just such circumstances.

Whilst waiting for the ‘up’ train to pass, which was a service from the Shellstar plant near Helsby, West Cheshire Junction, for Carmarthen, Les decided to alight from his brake van and make a ‘brew’ in Middlewich signal box…so far, so good! Whilst Les was in the signal

box, the ‘up’ train then arrived at Middlewich and the driver handed in the ‘Token’ for the portion of line between Northwich Sandbach Junction and Middlewich. He then continued on his way towards Sandbach and the single line between these two points was now clear.

Middlewich Signal Box (Photo: Courtesy the David Ingham collection)

The signalman at Middlewich now rang the driver, who was waiting by the auxiliary token instrument (magazine) and authorised him to remove a ‘Token’ for the Middlewich to Northwich Sandbach Junction section. The driver did this and returned to his locomotive and this is where the first mistake was made; the Middlewich signalman cleared the ‘down’ loop section signal and down line starting signal for the train to proceed, with guard Les Thompson still in the signal box! All was not lost though, because the driver was required to exchange hand signals with his guard prior to departure from Middlewich after taking possession of the ‘Token’ from the auxiliary token instrument (magazine). This is where mistake number two was made; The driver failed to do this and drew forward slowly, Les thought he was dropping the train down so that his brake van would be opposite the signal box to allow him to re-join it, but the driver was drawing his train out of the down ‘loop’ slowly to observe the 15mph permanent speed restriction from the ‘loop’ and onto the down & up branch line. Les left the signal box with his can of tea, all his other possessions being inside the brake van, including his lamp, and stood by the now rapidly moving train, ready to get back into his brake van. It was clear to Les that he wasn`t going to get back into his brake van because of the increasing speed of the train so he just stood back and watched, sipping his nice cup of tea! The brake van went rattling past him, the driver had clearly not exchanged hand signals with Les prior to departure and was now on his way towards Northwich Sandbach Junction, blissfully unaware that he had left his guard behind at Middlewich! It was late evening when this happened and the Middlewich signalman assumed that Les had rejoined his brake van and when he saw the tail lamps of the brake van pass his down section signal, he duly replaced the signal to ‘danger’ and he then sat

down himself to enjoy his own cup of tea! At this point Les walked into the signal box and said something quite blasphemous about the driver…and the signalman quickly realised his driver had left him behind, oh dear! Had he waited to clear his signals on the down 'loop' line and the down & up branch line, after Les had walked back to rejoin his brake van, then this fiasco would not have happened, even so, even after clearing the signals for the driver, had the driver himself exchanged hand signals with his guard prior to departure then this event would have not occurred. It takes two to tango, does it not? Or can it be three?

The Middlewich signalman could only advise the signalman at Northwich Sandbach Junction signal box to advise the driver upon arrival there that he had left his guard behind at Middlewich! He was now thinking what to do for the best before having to report this fiasco to the Regional Control Office at Crewe. Oh, dear! Now comes the third person to tango in this matter – which was guard Les Thompson himself. Whilst the Middlewich signalman was eventually reporting this matter to the Regional Control Office at Crewe, Les decided to take matters into his own hands, or should I say his feet! He left the signal box, without the Middlewich signalman having noticed his departure, and decided to WALK from there to Northwich, a distance of some four and a half miles, in total darkness, and with no hand lamp to guide his way! It can only be imagined what the Middlewich signalman was thinking when he realised Les was no longer in the signal box… He shouted from his signal box window, when he saw a ghostly figure disappearing into the darkness, to come back, and just heard a muted voice saying "I'm walking to Northwich to have a word with that bloody driver!" I think it is safe to say that was the polite version of events as related by the Middlewich signalman afterwards. What a fiasco this now was, both the driver and signalman having made mistakes which had either been more observant would not have happened, and now the guard of the train decided on his own initiative to WALK from Middlewich to Northwich… Will Hay eat your heart out!

When the train eventually arrived at Northwich Sandbach Junction the driver entered the auxiliary token instrument hut there to replace the 'Token' and was told by the signalman that he had left his guard behind at Middlewich, oh dear! Furthermore, his guard was last seen walking from Middlewich to Northwich, in total darkness! The driver knew he had made a serious mistake in not exchanging hand signals with his guard, he now had plenty of time to think of an excuse to tell Mr. Jack Barford, Assistant Area Manager (Train Crews), when he eventually arrived back at Birkenhead Mollington Street.

Meanwhile back at Middlewich, a permanent way gang vehicle driver was summoned to drive along the route by road to see if he could see any sign of Les Thompson. He wasn`t successful. Any driver who has worked over the line between Northwich and Middlewich, including myself many times, will tell you that the route is 'black' in other words, there is very little visibility of local landmarks to focus on. It was no surprise that the permanent way man couldn't find Les, since most of this route does not follow the contour of the road. It can only be imagined what he was thinking when he accessed the line by various access points and was shouting "Guard where are you?" in the darkness! The driver who I have not named as he is, thankfully, still alive to this day, was left awaiting developments at Northwich Sandbach Junction, as were the signalmen there and at Middlewich, not to mention the permanent way man, now likely suffering from a hoarse voice from all that shouting looking for Les.

In the meantime, unaware of the further problems he had caused in this fiasco, Les was busy tripping over foliage and ballast stone on his railway hike between Middlewich and

Northwich and using his box of Swan Vestas matches at a rapid rate to light up his way as he went! After some two and a half hours of walking tripping and cursing, the gallant Les, having had arrived at Northwich Sandbach Junction and now stood at the side of the locomotive (a Type 2 diesel) and banged as hard as he could on the bottom of the door to wake the driver up. The driver woke up with a start and opened the window, and there was the gallant Les who immediately said to him “Man, ma boots sure is hot!”. A hilarious comment under the circumstances!

The upshot of this fiasco was that all three individuals involved, the driver, the Middlewich signalman and the intrepid guard Les Thompson were given ‘suitable conversations’ about what they should and should not have done. Mr.Jack Barford, our first class boss at Birkenhead, said he would ‘dine out’ on this comedy of errors for years! I can assure the reader that we who had the good fortune to work at Birkenhead Mollington Street have been doing just that for a good many years!

Another of Les` fiascos involved the fuel depot at Haydock, in Lancashire; and what a fiasco that one turned out to be, this one caused a full scale emergency to be declared!

We had a job at Birkenhead in which we would work a tank train from Stanlow to Haydock at 1426 each weekday. This train was normally routed via Warrington, Earlestown, St.Helens Junction, St.Helens Shaw Street (as it was known then), Garswood, Bamfurlong Junction and then access the Haydock Branch Junction from the up slow line near Golborne Junction. An alternative route for this service was via Warrington, Winwick Junction, Golborne Junction, Bamfurlong Junction and then Wigan Springs Branch, where the train would ‘run round’ via the up and down goods lines at Springs Branch and then via the up slow line to Haydock Branch Junction for Haydock. If this train was routed via Warrington and St.Helens Junction then it was occasionally rostered 2 x Type 4 locomotives (Class 40s), if 2 x Type 2s (Class 25s) were not available. This was the only diagrammed turn I ever worked with 2 x Type 4 (Class 40) locomotives, they would certainly make a racket on the climb up to Garswood from Carr Mill Dam, they could probably be heard in St.Helens Town Centre!

A Class 40 departs the Northwich Yard with empties for Stanlow. (Photo: Barrie Hughes)

Les worked this job one day with a driver who was an ex Stafford man and he was a ‘character’ in his own way. He had an imagination which would rival and better any ‘tall story’ told by any driver at Birkenhead, and anywhere else for that matter!

There were only two discharging roads at Haydock and one had to be clear before a loaded train could be berthed, Preston men worked a tank train from Heysham to Haydock and were usually leaving just prior to the arrival of the 1426 service from Stanlow. This train would be held on the up slow line at Haydock Branch Junction whilst the departing Heysham service accessed the down slow line there and continued on towards Bamfurlong Junction. The move at Haydock involved drawing forward on the few hundred yards of what remained of the former line to the original St.Helens Central Station and then ‘setting back’ to berth the train of 10 x 100 tonne tank vehicles inside the fuel discharge compound. The guard was required to correctly berth the train with the wagon fuel discharge valves directly opposite the fixed position depot fuel discharge pipes. Les and the driver did this and the train was secured. The locomotive was always detached and stabled outside the compound, it was never left inside the compound still attached to the train. It took about four hours to fully place the fuel discharge pipes onto the vehicles, discharge the fuel into the depot holding tanks and then remove the pipes from the vehicles ready for return journey to Stanlow.

This work was always carried out by Haydock Depot staff and whilst this was taking place, both the driver and guard would be allowed to use the subsidised canteen on the site, which was provided for road tanker drivers use, and enjoy a nice cooked meal in a tin foil tray, for the princely sum of 10p in the early 1970s. I still find what happened with these two at Haydock, after all the years which have passed since, to be a combination of Fred Carno`s railway and total lunacy, it is difficult to appreciate just what came first!

The train which they both worked to Haydock had been fully discharged on No.2 siding with the pipework fully removed and secured, or so they had believed. It was thus ready to move out of the terminal and be returned to Stanlow. However, Preston men had arrived whilst they were having their break and had secured a loaded train of another 10 x 100 tonne tank wagons on No.1 siding, and the returned ‘light engine’ to Wigan Springs Branch depot to await the train being discharged. For some reason, we didn't see too many Springs Branch men in the subsidised canteen at Haydock, maybe it was the cost of the 10p meals which put them off! There were now two trains within the Haydock compound and both the driver and Les were told by the Haydock Depot staff that their train was ready to move. They both left the canteen and walked outside, the driver having walked around the security fence to access his locomotive, away from the berthed train, and Les chose to walk through the compound which was usual for the train guard. However, all was not what it appeared in the compound that day. The Haydock depot staff thought that the driver and Les were the Preston men, and as there had been a shift changeover involving Haydock depot staff, after they had berthed their own train from Stanlow, the scene was now set for a fiasco of the highest order, which should never have happened at all!

Haydock depot staff had discharged the Heysham tank train first because it was required to leave in road tankers as soon as this was completed, and work had not yet started on the train from Stanlow, which contained heavy duty fuel oil. The Birkenhead driver had by now started the engine of his locomotive and was waiting instructions from Les, but the driver was sat in the wrong driving cab. He should have been sat in the leading driving cab so that he could drive the locomotive directly onto the waiting vehicles, had he done this then he would have been aware of one obvious thing, that the fuel pipes were still

attached to the tank vehicles and that discharging was underway. To make matters even worse than this, Les had actually stepped over twenty discharge pipes (two to each vehicle) as he walked towards the locomotive outside the compound. For reasons only he could ever understand, he failed to appreciate the real significance of this. He signalled the driver to move his locomotive towards the compound to attach it to the vehicles which were being discharged, and with the driver in the wrong driving cab the scene was set for the finest fiasco ever seen at Haydock!

The locomotive was coupled up to the train and then Les signalled the driver to move the locomotive forward to commence the shunting move and as he did so most of the fuel pipes were pulled off the berthed vehicles resulting in a very large heavy fuel spillage at Haydock, oh dear! The entire fuel discharging site had to be covered with foam by the fire emergency team at Haydock, it can only be imagined what bill was presented to BR after this fiasco! Neither Les nor the driver were dismissed from railway service as a result of this incident. They were very fortunate indeed.

I mentioned in an earlier article that upon the arrival of Edge Hill men at Birkenhead the route knowledge there became expansive and it included the Carlisle route, which meant that the Hooton to Bathgate car train could be worked to Carlisle by Birkenhead men, albeit by those who had transferred to Birkenhead from Edge Hill. Les had another 'glorious' occasion when working one of these trains with a former Edge Hill man, driver John Kay, who was a first class railway man and quite hilarious to work with. Relief was effected at Carlisle No.12 signal box on this particular job, by Carlisle or Polmadie men, and Les had fallen asleep in the rear cab of the Brush Sulzer Type 4 locomotive which driver Kay had worked to Carlisle and this was an occasion when they were relieved by Polmadie men. The Polmadie guard could not wake Les up so he ended up in Mossend Yard, near Glasgow! This was much to the amusement of driver Kay, but not to the long-suffering Mr. Jack Barford, our boss at Mollington Street!

I had my day with Les, as all drivers at Birkenhead inevitably did, and it involved us working a train of Class 502 EMU ECS from Birkenhead North TMD to Hall Road Carriage Shed, situated between Liverpool and Southport as seen here. (Photo: Ron P. Smith) This was a very interesting journey, I always enjoyed working this train, when required. It was routed via Heswall Hills, Dee Marsh, Mickle Trafford, Helsby, Frodsham Junction, Runcorn, Allerton, Wavertree Junction, Edge Hill Circular Goods Line, Exhibition Junction, Waterloo Sidings (to 'run-around') and then via Tuebrook Sidings to Edge Lane Junction and then via the Bootle Branch to Bootle Junction and then Hall Road. It ended with Les being slightly injured whilst we were 'loose' shunting his brake van upon arrival at Hall Road, which was entirely his own fault. This led to him a few weeks later turning up at Mollington Street looking like George Raft, but that is another story!

To be continued…

Then and now - Bodmin General Station

Class 22 D6314 arrives with a train from Bodmin Road, April 1962. (Photo: Colour Rail)

Class 121 DMU stands at almost the same spot in June 2018. (Photo: Mike Lenz)

The Severn Tunnel - Part 1. Dennis Flood

The Great Western Railway Company decided in 1863 to construct a bridge to span the River Severn between England and Wales. The bridge itself was going to be some two and a half miles in length with the central span built at such a height to allow ships with a full height of 120 feet from the keel to the top of the mast to allow them to pass safely beneath it. The decision to construct such a bridge was eventually dropped due to the extremely difficult engineering challenges presented by building a bridge of such length at that time and across such an inhospitable river as the Severn. The cost of the bridge, estimated to be in excess of £1 million at that time, was another factor in the decision to abandon the idea.

In 1872, when the finances of the Great Western Railway Company were of sufficient robustness to fund such a major undertaking, the decision was taken to build a tunnel beneath the River Severn. However this was to present immense civil engineering challenges of its own and it took 13 years to construct the tunnel following numerous setbacks.

An Act of Parliament to grant construction powers was applied for to build a tunnel beneath the River Severn in 1872. Work commenced in 1873 and was finally completed in 1886. The tunnel itself needed to be 140 feet below the River Severn at its deepest point to avoid a natural gulley known as 'The Shoots' which is located on the Welsh side of the River Severn at a descent 50 feet lower than the level of the river on the English side. The presence of 'The Shoots' necessitated that the maximum gradient of the railway line on both the English and Welsh sides of the Severn Tunnel be 1-100. This was to be a substantial gradient for the locomotives of the day.

To enable the reader to appreciate where 'The Shoots' are located then the second Severn Road bridge provides the answer. 'The Shoots' bridge (as it is known) is that portion of the road deck directly between the supporting towers of the bridge itself. The supporting towers of the bridge are known as 'The Shoots Towers' although the entire road bridge itself was subsequently name 'The Prince of Wales Bridge'.

The Severn Tunnel passes beneath the River Severn a short distance away from 'The Shoots Towers' but at a greater depth and during construction of the second Severn Road bridge seismic sensors were fitted at strategic locations within the Severn Tunnel to ensure the integrity of the Victorian engineering masterpiece.

When I worked for British Railways in Cardiff Divisional Headquarters at Brunel House in Cardiff in 1981 it gave me the opportunity to understand and appreciate just how important this great civil engineering undertaking really is and how significant it is to the flow of freight and passenger train services between England and Wales.

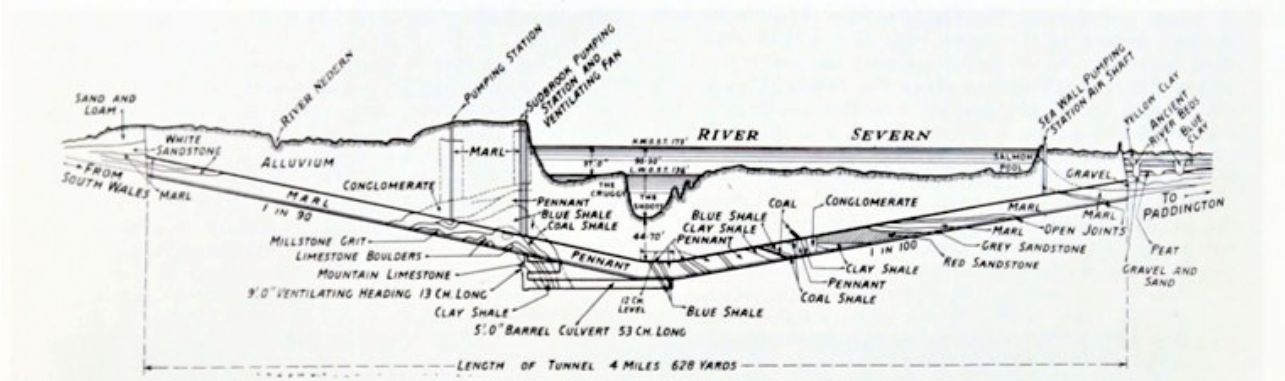
The detailed building of the Severn Tunnel has been thoroughly documented elsewhere and the purpose of this and future articles is to give an insight into some of the problems encountered during the period of construction.

When I left Bristol for Cardiff in 1981, the Cardiff Divisional Traction & Train crew Superintendent John Chaplain, who was a no-nonsense Yorkshireman, gave me an interesting project. He wanted me to write an article about the Severn Tunnel which could

be used as a handout for driving cab visitors, and others, and which would be of general interest to any individual who has travelled through the Severn Tunnel or who wished to know a little more about it.

I still have a copy of the article I wrote at that time and, with a few additional items added, this has formed the basis of my article for 8E Association members for their interest.

The figures quoted regarding the volume of water pumped out of the Severn Tunnel when I wrote my original article in 1981 have not, I believe, been exceeded at any time since.



Sectional diagram of the Severn tunnel

THE BUILDING OF THE SEVERN TUNNEL.

The greatest menace ever encountered from water, where tunnelling is concerned involved in the building of the railways of Great Britain, was faced by those men who were involved in the construction of the Severn Tunnel. This menace was only exceeded over 100 years later during the construction of the Channel Tunnel between 1988 and 1994. However, given the differences in engineering techniques during the building of the Severn Tunnel and Channel Tunnel the risks to those in building the tunnel beneath the Severn was far greater.

The tremendous undertaking of the building of the Severn Tunnel can be summed up in terms of water. The tunnel passes beneath the estuary of the River Severn and joins Monmouthshire with Gloucestershire. The idea of building a tunnel connecting England with Wales came into being through a desire of the Great Western Railway Company for a shorter route between London and South Wales. The amount of freight traffic could be increased considerably once the tunnel was opened. It would provide better facilities for a larger volume of coal traffic between South Wales, Southampton and Portsmouth. However, no one concerned with the planning and labour required to move this traffic could possibly visualise just how important this link would be. The Severn Tunnel is as commercially important now as it was when it first opened.

Only 2 and a quarter miles of its entire length of four miles 620 yards actually lay beneath the Severn Estuary but that length would consume a great part of the 13 years it took to build the Severn Tunnel. At the deepest point below the estuary the roof of the tunnel is only separated from the River Severn by 30 feet. The level of the rails on either side of the tunnel is 140 feet higher than the tunnel itself. It remains the lowest point below sea level on the railways of Britain.

The Severn Tunnel is 26 feet wide and 24 and a half feet in height from the top of the ballast formation directly below the rails to the roof of the tunnel. The masonry linings are 27 inches thick and in the construction of the tunnel and that of the approaches on both the English and Welsh sides 76,400,000 ‘blue engineering’ bricks and 36,794 tonnes of Portland Cement were used.

I remember in 1982 taking The Right. Hon Michael Foot, who was MP for Tredegar in South Wales and Leader of the Opposition at that time, for an HST cab ride from Newport to London Paddington and as we entered the Severn Tunnel he asked me an interesting question. “Dennis” he said. “How many bricks were used in the building of the Severn Tunnel?” I paused for a moment and replied “There was just enough!”. He laughed at that and said to me “You should be a politician”. Michael Foot was a real gentleman. He was not like his public persona at that time at all. He was also very good company.

Pumping at Sudbrook goes on day and night to keep the Severn Tunnel as dry as it can be. The greatest amount of water ever pumped out of the Severn Tunnel in one day was 36,556,218 gallons. Today the quantity varies between 16,000,000 and 25,000,000 gallons per day depending on the severity of local rainfall.

A lot of water being pumped out by Sudbrook pumping station from the Severn Tunnel was used by the nearby Paper Mill at Sudbrook for use in the manufacture of paper and paper products. The Paper Mill has long since closed. However, water is pumped from Sudbrook to a nearby brewery at Magor, a few miles west of Severn Tunnel Junction, for use in beer and lager production.

Where the Severn Tunnel now is, a steam ferry once operated and that was the position when civil engineer Charles Richardson was approached by the directors of the Great Western Railway Company to construct a new tunnel and railway route beneath the River Severn. Richardson, who was once a pupil of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, took up the challenge. Thomas Walker was the contractor. For six long years his men laboured from the Welsh side of the estuary but were constantly defeated by a large spring of water continually bursting in through the workings, which flooded their work. The spring, afterwards to be called 'The Great Spring’ was so large that the pumps in use at the time were powerless to deal with the constant inflow of water. This resulted in Charles Richardson being replaced by another civil engineer, Sir John Hawkshaw. Hawkshaw was a consulting engineer for the Great Western Railway Company during construction of the Severn Tunnel when he took over from Richardson, who became his assistant. Hawkshaw was, along with a French engineer named de Gamond, the first to produce practical notes and detailed drawings for the building of a tunnel beneath the English Channel in 1869.

To be continued…

PHOTO PUZZLE: The location is the former Marazion station on the Western Region main line through Cornwall. As seen here with Class 55 #55022 ‘Royal Scots Grey’ on a Pathfinder Tours excursion returning from Penzance in June 2008. (Photo: Mike Lenz)

The 8E Railway Association

Founded 1981

President	Graham Roughsedge
Vice President	Alan Ashurst
Vice President	Colin Worrall

Committee Members

Chairman	Mike Lenz
Vice Chairman	Dennis Flood
Vice Chairman	Roger Morris
Secretary	David Hawkes
Treasurer	Roger Morris
Membership	Brian Burgess
Fixtures Officer	Jon Penn
Publicity/Webmaster	Mike Lenz
Additional members	Steve Blakemore
	Paul Tench

On Shed Journal

Contributions for future issues are welcomed. Please submit these to the editor at the monthly meeting or by email to the address below.

Editor	Mike Lenz
Email:	michael.lenz8e@btinternet.com

[Rear Cover: The latest addition to the Crewe Heritage Centre roster is Class 43 HST Power Car number 43081 which is the 8000th locomotive built in Crewe Works and was donated by Porterbrook Leasing Seen here after unloading on September 13th 2021. (Photo: Mike Lenz]

This journal is published by the
8E Railway Association

Printed by Johnsons Printers
Oat Market, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5AP
01270 625207