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On Shed

The Journal of the 8E Railway Association



£1

Winter 2018

Welcome

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

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[Front Cover: Ian Riley's Black Five locomotive 45407 (the former 'Paddy's engine') seen arriving at Northwich with one of the Mid Cheshire line specials in May 2005. Not sure as to whom the headboard referred.

This page: Exeter Middle signal box and road crossing seen from the north end of the platform at Exeter St David's station taken on one of the 8E Tours in the early 1980s. Sadly this fine structure is no longer extant having been removed when the Exeter resignalling took place during 1985. Both photos: Mike Lenz]

From the Editor. Mike Lenz

I would like to wish all our members and readers a Happy New Year and welcome you all to the Winter issue of 'On Shed'. I hope you enjoy the selection of articles and photographs reflecting our past activities as well as other railway related articles. If you feel you would like to contribute to the Summer journal then please let me have your article/photographs by June 21st 2018.

Chairman's Report. Mike Lenz

The following is the report I gave to those members who attended our December AGM.

"2017 has been another good year for the Association. We have continued to have an excellent selection of presentations at our monthly meetings with the programme now in place up to May. Thanks go to Wayne and Jon for their work on this aspect of our activities.

The resurrecting of the Association's Magazine 'On Shed' at the beginning of 2017 has been well received and has also been a means of keeping our name in the public eye. Copies of the magazine are now distributed at Weaver Hall Museum, Lion Salt Works, and Crewe Heritage Centre and more recently in the booking office at Northwich Station, where we also now have one of our banners on permanent display courtesy of Northern Rail which emphasises our role as the Station Adoption Group for Northwich. Hopefully this will result in some new members in the coming months.

On the publicity side of our activities, As well as the website, the Association now has a Facebook page where details of fixtures and events can also be posted.

Our finances remain healthy and our membership numbers remains fairly constant. Thanks to both Paul and Brian for looking after these aspects of the group's operation.

I would like to finish by thanking my fellow committee members for their work over the past year and to you, our members, for your continued support for the Association.

I look forward to serving you again in 2018."

Membership Report. Brian Burgess

Membership renewals were sent out in September and the response has again been excellent with just six members renewals outstanding at the AGM date. We have also had three new members join in 2017. The current status is as follows;

Honorary Life Members - 12

Life Members - 9

Full Members - 32

Total overall - 53

Fixtures Programme 2018. Wayne Jones

Tuesday 9th January - John Cashen - West Country memories of the 1960s and 1970s.

Tuesday 13th February - Mark Shacklock - A Railway Miscellany

Tuesday 13th March - Barry Shore - Had Bike - Did Travel!

Tuesday 10th April - Stephen Gay - Railways in the Cornish Landscape

Tuesday 8th May - Adrian Bodlander - Cuban Railway Adventure

All the above at the Gladstone Club, Station Road, Northwich, CW9 5RB

Commencing at 7.45pm. Admission for first-time guests is FREE, subsequent meeting entrance fee is £3. Sandwiches provided free of charge.

Photo Puzzle.

Can you identify the location of this photograph taken on one of our annual summer outings? Answer on page 14.

(Photo: Mike Lenz)



A History of the 8E Association-Part 3 Mike Lenz

By the early 1990s we had established our base of operations at Crewe with both our 8E Shop and our continued involvement with steam operations on the North Wales Coast. It was during these years that the name had changed from Crewe Heritage Centre to the Railway Age, which I felt was not really ideal and gave the impression it was merely another railway centre.

It was around this time that two saddle tank locomotives arrived at the Centre from the Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum. These were the former Bold Colliery locomotives 'Robert' & 'Joseph' which were in need of restoration. The agreement with the Heritage Centre was such that the best condition locomotive of the pair ('Joseph') would be restored to operating condition by the Heritage Centre paid staff and as payment for the work the Centre would be allowed to keep the other locomotive ('Robert') for its own collection for use on brake van rides once restored to working order. The Centre staff duly restored 'Joseph' to working order and the locomotive was handed back to Chatterley Whitfield in a ceremony at the museum. Some work such as asbestos removal had been undertaken on both locos initially and some stripping down had been done on 'Robert' but once the work on 'Joseph' was completed the Centre staff did not continue with the restoration of 'Robert' which then comprised a chassis and various other components spread around the site. It was at this point that our then Chairman, Colin Worrall, suggested at one of our monthly committee meetings that the restoration of this locomotive might prove a good project for our members to be involved with. The committee response was positive and the proposal was put before the membership and the response was in favour of undertaking the work provided it did not impact the group's finances. To this end we set up a separate bank account and raised funds through sales and the proceeds on alternate months from our meetings raffle. An agreement was duly drawn up between Crewe Heritage Trust and the 8E as to the nature of the work we would undertake and finance with the final boiler restoration cost being covered by the Heritage Centre and we were asked to provide a representative to go on the Heritage Centre Trust council of management, a role taken by the chairman.

A small group of working members, including Colin Worrall, Tom Walton, Phil Clayton, Ian Haselgrove, Chris Simon, Mike Lenz and Steve Worrall regularly worked on the locomotive starting with the chassis and then progressing to the bodywork with the aim of getting the chassis back to rolling condition at which point we would hand the locomotive over to the Trust who would then have the boiler overhauled. Unfortunately when this point was reached and the Trust approached with regard to the boiler work, there was no funds available to repair the boiler and as the sums involved were beyond the Association's resources we could progress no further. It is sad to report that the loco then remained unfinished until the Heritage Trust subsequently sold the locomotive to a member of the Great Central Railway at Loughborough, where the locomotive has only recently been finally restored to working order, albeit not in original NCB livery but as a British Railways J94 with a fictitious number.

My own attendance at the Heritage Centre declined in the late 1990s due to work commitments and so my visits were few and far between but on those occasions when I did call in I was not impressed by the way the site had become more like a locomotive and carriage scrap yard due to the presence on site of the LNWR operation which by then was occupying a substantial area including the running shed and a considerable part of the main exhibition hall.

It was during a visit in the summer of 2006 when I had called in at the Centre to drop off some old magazines for the Princess Elizabeth locomotive group and, whilst in conversation with Colin Worrall, learned that the Trust were looking for a new part time manager. As I had finished full time employment earlier that year I offered my services and was duly asked to start at the end of January 2007. I had expressed to the Trust my desire to try and get the Centre back on its feet after a steady decline in its fortunes during the last decade of the 20th Century and into the early

part of the new millenium. The Trust were keen to see this happen but this has proved a long and often frustrating process, which many of you are probably aware of and which I will not detail further other than to say that one of my first proposals was to return to the Centre's original name to more widely reflect the nature of the site and its contents and intentions for the future. I am pleased to say that the Centre has finally turned round its fortunes and in the last financial year it posted the best results since the early 1990s when it was first formed. This has been down to a combination of a new Trust Council and a hardworking band of volunteers, 8E members included.

There have been other areas in which the 8E have had an involvement, one of which was the request from Andrew Fielding, who was then the manager at the Lion Salt Works, to assist in restoring the stationery steam pumping engine to working order in the 1990s when the site was under the control of Vale Royal Borough Council and the Groundwork Trust. Once involved we realised at that time that the original boiler was beyond restoration, however with sponsorship from Atlas Copco a suitable compressor was provided and the engine returned to working order using compressed air. This work was undertaken by Tom Walton, Colin Worrall, and Mike Lenz and help was received from Llangollen Railway and the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry during the course of the restoration work. The restored engine can be seen in the photographs below. (Photos: Mike Lenz)



Subsequently several of our members assisted with demonstrating the engine to the public at specific times at the weekends when the site was open to visitors . Sadly, a bit like the situation with the locomotive 'Robert' that we were involved with at Crewe, the changing fortunes at the Lion Salt Works saw the engine again fall in to disrepair in the early millenium and although the Salt Works has now been restored with the help of funding from the National Lottery, the engine itself remains out of use but open for display. However during recent visits to the Salt Works in connection with other 8E matters I have learned that both the Lion Salt Works Trust and Cheshire West & Chester Council (the site owners since the demise of Vale Royal Borough Council) would like to see the engine restored to working condition but this time using steam provided by a small

gas fired boiler, similar to what has been done by the National Trust at the Levant Mine in Cornwall as seen in the photo below. (Photos: Mike Lenz)



In conversation with the Chairman of the Lion Salt Works Trust I have suggested that several of our members would be interested in being involved with the restoration subject to the required funds being available from the Cheshire West & Chester Council. Hopefully this could be a local project with which we can again be associated.

Although we still have members active both at Crewe and one or more of the preserved railways, as the new millenium progressed our activities have leaned more towards the social side with our regular season of meetings and the summer trips providing the main emphasis for our members. In our early days the trips were organised by Allan Bennett but following his death, the role has been taken by Alan Ashurst who has planned and organised many day and evening trips during our summer recess which have all been well supported and enjoyed by members as can be seen here with some images from our 2009 day out to Stockport and our 2014 Merseyside day out. Alan is already planning another Merseyside outing for summer 2018. (Photos: Mike Lenz)



With the recent changes to the franchise holder for the Mid Cheshire Line, the new Northern company has been looking for groups to act as adopters for their various stations and to this end the Association is now the formal group for Northwich station. We now have a banner and current membership forms and Journals available in the booking office at the station and hopefully this will result in some new members as time goes on. So with our membership numbers in the mid 50s the group has a bright future ahead of it and this now brings the 8E story up to date.

West Country Wanderings Mike Lenz

As you will see from our fixtures list we have a couple of evenings with a West Country flavour so I thought you might enjoy a selection of images to wet the appetite. (Photos: Mike Lenz)



Above left: Beattie Well Tank 30587 stands at the buffers at Bodmin General station. June 2010.
Above right: GWR 2-8-0 Tank number 4247 alongside the rebuilt Bodmin signal box. July 2007.



Above left: Class 47 47628 'Sir Daniel Gooch' in GWR150 livery at Newton Abbot. July 1985.
Above right: Class 50 50003 'Temaire' awaits the off from Exeter St. Davids. August 1986.



Above left and right: Clay trains old and new with unidentified Class 37 and EWS Class 66 66127.

More from the bottom left hand corner Dave Hawkes

Laira. Now that is a name to stir the blood. There is still a large depot there, adjacent to the site of the steam shed. In fact it occupies the former marshalling yard. After all an HST set is a bit longer than a King! It is interesting that we now have depots rather than sheds. This is understandable, perhaps, for places which deal with Multiple Units and require lots of space and modern technology, but some, like Toton, deal exclusively with locomotives. Comments on a postcard!



(Photo: Dave Hawkes)

The steam shed seen in the photo above looking across the Laira exchange sidings was situated within a triangle of lines, which still exist. There were two sheds: a roundhouse with a turntable; and a straight shed. Access was very easy, there being a path running down the side of the roundhouse and alongside the coaling stage. As I remember the prime positions for viewing were at the top of some steps by the entrance to the roundhouse, and at the end of the coaling stage. These seemed to be tolerated by the staff. There were no Draconian measures preventing access to the sheds, although I was advised on one occasion to take care, since an engineman had been injured the previous week by coal falling from a tender. This probably had more effect than being forcibly ejected!

The pointwork around the sheds was operated by simple levers, as was, and is, common practice. However, when I first saw an engine approach with the points set against it I was a bit

apprehensive as to what would happen. Of course it simply pushed them across and passed through safely. However, the points stayed in the new position, i.e. they did not spring back to the original position. So the hidden mechanism below the lever is more sophisticated than it appears

The coaling stage was a typically Great Western affair, being brick-built, with a water tank on top and two tipping points from which to unload the tubs into the tenders or bunkers of the engines waiting below. Each tub could hold up to 10 cwt of coal and the whole operation was quite labour intensive. However, the viewpoint at the end of the coaling stage was ideal for one of the most stirring of sights. Periodically the pannier tank on the coaling stage would descend down the ramp, which was quite steep (1 in 15 perhaps?) with a string of empty wagons. It would deposit these in some sidings on the edge of Laira yard and return with another string of about six loaded with loco coal. A rapid acceleration was required to push these up the ramp. The result was a lot of smoke, steam, sparks and noise. Equally important of course was the need to be able to stop in the right place. I am not aware that they ever pushed any wagons over the end, but..... It was an excellent demonstration of skilful driving, especially when the rails were wet. Because this system of coaling was relatively slow Summer Saturday evenings would see enormous queues of locos, stretching out onto the relief lines.

In the 1950s there was an allocation of about 100 engines, ranging from the 1361 class dock tanks to Kings. I still have my 1956 locoshed book (is that sad?), which shows the following: 10XX (County) (3); 1361 (3); 14XX (2); 16XX (1); 28XX (2); 31XX (Large prairie) (6); 4073 (Castle) (11); 43XX (6); 45XX (Small prairie) (9); 49XX (Hall) (14); 57XX (15); 60XX (King) (9); 64XX (6); 68XX (Grange) (7); 78XX (Manor) (3); 94XX (5). This mix reflected the wide range of duties Laira had to fulfil.

The small number of heavy goods engines (28XX) and the relatively large number of bankers (large prairies) was because most of the goods trains, and engines, came in from the East, turned round and went home, but the range of the tank engines was restricted primarily to helping to get the trains up Hemerdon Bank. At weekends there would often be a Stanier 8F from St. Philips Marsh (Bristol) or Shrewsbury on shed. Occasionally a WD 2-8-0 would appear on the coaling line. The fitted freights were generally the province of the Halls and Granges, with frequent appearances of the 47XX class of 2-8-0s built for fast freight haulage. Whilst the freights had bankers the South Devon banks resulted in a lot of passenger trains being double-headed, mainly by the Manors and Granges, but virtually anything could turn up.

The 64XX auto tanks provided an intensive service to Saltash, with occasional forays further into Cornwall. At that time the only ways road traffic could cross the Tamar were by a chain ferry or a very long detour, so the train service was the simplest means of travel. Across the main line from the shed was a set of sidings containing the trailer coaches. There was a ladder of double slips allowing the tank to collect from two to four coaches, with a maximum of two on either side of the engine. From a bridge nearby it was fascinating to watch these trains being assembled - a bit like the shunting puzzles beloved of railway modellers. Also from the bridge the Lee Moor tramway was quite visible as it traversed the whole of the formation. It had closed by this time, but was still intact. There were boards between the rails in this section to help the horses cross the tracks safely.

Laira had a small allocation of Britannias and of BR Class 4 4-6-0s, but these had all gone by 1957, the former being concentrated on Cardiff Canton and the latter being dispersed around the region. In a similar vein Newton Abbot soon disposed of its collection of BR Class 3 2-6-2Ts. It sounds as though the Standards were not liked in the South-West!

Of the five 1361 class dock tanks Laira always had at least three and all the class appeared at some time. I had always thought they were confined to working Millbay Docks. However, the District Controller's View book of operations between Plymouth and Penzance indicates that they ran out as far as Liskeard. When they got there or returned is not clear, but the prospect of a slow

moving engine occupying a reasonably busy main line for a considerable period of time must have required excellent planning.

The main branch line operated by Laira was that to Launceston. Of course, I never ventured onto it. After all I had seen all the locos on shed! However, I was aware of its existence since it ran close to the Southern line to Exeter to the East of Tavistock. Another branch ran from this one to Princetown and Dartmoor Prison. It closed in 1956. I believe it was operated largely by 44XX 2-6-2T, older and smaller than the small prairies. They had all been withdrawn by this time.

The Kings were restricted to the expresses to Paddington. It seems ironic that they are now allowed into Cornwall over the Royal Albert bridge, which had to be strengthened for the main line diesels. These started to arrive in 1958, my last year there. They came in the form of the North British Warships (D6XX). I thought they were quite attractive locomotives, but, as history tells us, unreliable and short-lived. The other diesels which arrived at this time were the 350hp shunters (later class 08). I cannot recall seeing them at work, probably because the yards were less visible, and most were soon dispersed to other parts of the division. This was clearly a sign of things to come, but, at the end of 1958, we moved to the Shetland Isles (not exactly awash with railways) and missed it!

The photo below shows BR(W) King Class locomotive number 6010 'King Charles I' on the coaling stage at Laira in June 1961. (Photo: Copyright Mike Roach/Cornwall Railway Society)



Last Days on Northwich Shed Mark Roughsedge

The following images were taken in 1984 and reflect the final year of operations at Northwich Shed. They include a photo of the former Northwich Breakdown Riding Van which had been given to the Association by the local area management for use as our support coach when visiting steam locomotives were present. There is also a photo of the old fuel tanks, the chassis from which were obtained by the Birmingham Railway Museum at Tyseley for use under the tender of the 'Bloomer' locomotive replica that they were constructing. (All photos: Mark Roughsedge)





What great times were had in those first four years.

Member Profile - Graham Roughsedge

My interest in railways started as a youngster watching steam along the Sandbach to Northwich branch then to Northwich Shed, and then later on the West Coast Main Line at Hartford. We used to catch 'The Dodger' [auto fitted 2 coach usually hauled by 41229] occasionally from Northwich to Crewe and of course there were holidays to North Wales and other holiday resorts.

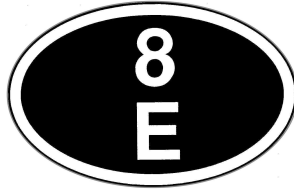
My family all worked at ICI and eventually I started as an apprentice electrician and with college work, marriage and motorbikes my interest faded until my son got interested with a group from school and I got re-interested. We toured around all the various steam and museum sites with a view to getting involved at a hands-on level. We eventually settled on Llangollen Railway in 1978 and began track laying and cleaning, firing, signalling etc. I was also secretary of the Sea Cadet Corps in Northwich and was helping them to find a new headquarters. At that moment ICI stepped in and handed over the 'James Jackson Grundy', a redundant ICI coaster, and my job was done.

It was at that time steam locos were about to return to Northwich shed on an irregular basis and a volunteer group was needed to service them. We got a small team together and with the help of David Macintosh, the area manager, formed the 8E Association and got ourselves insured. I was elected Chairman and meetings, posters, open days and trips out were organised. We serviced many locos and entertained visiting crews generally at the Lion and Railway. We were given the old breakdown support coach and our membership grew rapidly.

I was then elected General Manager at Llangollen Railway. I found that I could not do justice to both jobs so I stepped down from the committee of the 8E but was still very involved in it. I still attended all of our meetings and functions. By this time, as well as being General Manager, I was a cleaner, fireman and eventually driver on the Llangollen Railway as well as guard, permanent way and general labourer. The railway was 200 yards long at this time with one working loco and 3 coaches. Now it is 10 miles long with 30 or so paid employees, a number of working locos, dozens of coaches and railcars and even new rebuild locos.



PHOTO PUZZLE: Seen from within the buffet bar at Stalybridge Station a Class 142 DMU awaits it's passengers during an 8E summer outing in July 2011. A favourite 8E summer evening venue.



The 8E Railway Association

Founded 1981

President
Vice President

Graham Roughsedge
Alan Ashurst

Committee Members

Chairman
Vice Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Membership
Fixtures Officer
Publicity/Webmaster
Additional members

Mike Lenz
Wayne Jones
David Hawkes
Paul Tench
Brian Burgess
Wayne Jones
Jon Penn
Roger Morris

On Shed Journal

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

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[Rear Cover: Freightliner Class 66 locomotive 66555 awaits the signal in the former Middlewich platform face at Northwich with the Greater Manchester waste train. Photo: Mike Lenz]

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