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On Shed

The Journal of the 8E Railway Association



£1

Summer 2019

Welcome

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

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[Front Cover: National Collection owned former Southern Railway T9 Class 4-4-0 locomotive number 120 seen at Bodmin General Station soon after arrival in 2008. (Photo: Mike Lenz)

This page: LMS Jubilee 4-6-0 locomotive 5690 Leander seen on the old turntable road at Northwich during the March 1992 Open Day. (Photo: Garry Brookes)

From the Editor. Mike Lenz

Welcome to the summer issue of 'On Shed'. I would like to thank the various contributors to this issue for their excellent articles and photos. Our new season of events is now complete and promises a varied and interesting selection of presentations. As always contributions to the next issue are always welcome and should reach the editor by December 21st.

Chairman's Report. Mike Lenz

Our 2018-19 meetings season ended with an excellent slide presentation by Les Nixon and thanks go to Jon Penn for putting together another superb selection of film and slide shows.

We were saddened to learn during the spring of the passing away of Alan France, one of our Life Members and a keen volunteer in our early years of steam activities on Northwich Shed.

Our June social evening at the Goshawk in Mouldsworth saw a number of members enjoy the relaxed atmosphere despite the weather being the least like summer!

Membership Report. Brian Burgess

Membership remains stable with renewals due at the beginning of September.

Photo Spot.

A pair of Devon & Cornwall Railway Class 56 locomotives seen passing Crewe North Junction signal box on the 20th May 2019. (Photo: Mike Lenz)



Fixtures Programme 2019-2020. Jon Penn

Tuesday 10th September - Dennis Flood - My 49 Plus years on the railway and more.

Tuesday 8th October - Phil Braithwaite - Steam in the North West.

Tuesday 12th November - Stephen Gay - Cornwall (Part 2).

Tuesday 10th December - Mike Lenz - The History of the Crewe Heritage Centre.

Tuesday 14th January - AGM followed by Jon Penn Film Presentation.

Tuesday 11th February - Peter Dixon - Preservation through my eyes.

Tuesday 10th March - Gordon Davies - American Wanderings - Heading West

Tuesday 14th April - Slide Presentation - Les Nixon.

Tuesday 12th May - John Cowlshaw - Termini (Part 2).

Tuesday 9th June - Social Evening - Location to be confirmed

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 this building and it's location in this photograph. Answer on page 14.
(Photo: Mike Lenz)



The Changing Face of Northwich Shed. Dave Hawkes

I moved to Sale in January 1968, not long before the end of mainline steam on British Rail. I visited Heaton Mersey shed on several occasions and had expeditions further north, but of Northwich, I was completely unaware at the time. I vaguely recall seeing the shed in the 1970s and 80s en route to Chester or Delamere and recall a smattering of class 25s. It was only in later years after our move to Middlewich in 1987 that I became aware of the chemical works, the limestone hopper trains and the salt industry. So my baseline for writing about Northwich shed and its changing allocations is virtually zero. However, there are several excellent books which have helped to fill some of the gaps and to correct some of my misconceptions. The principal amongst these must be Alan Wilkinson's "Railways across Mid-Cheshire".

The table below was gleaned from assorted books of locomotive shed allocations and covers the period from 1948 to 1965. For simplicity I have used the LMSR and LNER classes, and the BR numbering to put them into order.

DATE	JAN 1948	JUN 1952	DEC 1956	APR 1960	JUL 1962	OCT 1965
SHED CODE	NTH	9G	9G	8E	8E	8E
LOCO TYPE						
2-6-4T LMS	0	0	2	7	0	0
0-6-0 LMS 3F	0	0	2	0	0	0
0-6-0 LMS 4F	0	1	3	3	3	0
2-8-0 LMS 8F	0	9	15	20	19	14
0-8-0 LMS 7F	0	2	1	0	0	0
4-4-0 LNE D10	3	3	0	0	0	0
4-4-0 LNE D11	0	1	5	0	0	0
0-6-0 LNE J11	0	2	0	0	0	0
0-6-0 LNE J39	0	2	0	0	0	0
0-6-0 LNE J10	19	17	5	0	0	0
2-6-4T LNE L3	2	1	0	0	0	0
0-6-2T LNE N5	4	1	0	0	0	0
2-6-0 BR 2MT	0	0	0	2	4	0

At Nationalisation in 1948 the stock was supplied completely by ex-Great Central (GC) locomotive types, elderly to say the least! However, this reflected the operation of the

Cheshire Lines Committee (CLC) as a joint company between the GC, Great Northern and Midland Railways. It had little stock of its own and hired locomotives, with the GC providing much of the power locally. The ubiquitous J10s did most of the work, being employed on pickup goods, local passenger trains and shunting. Their low axle load was particularly useful on the three, somewhat sinuous and lightly laid, salt branches. The D10s, and later the D11s, operated faster passenger trains to Chester Northgate and Manchester Central. The L3s were employed largely on banking the empty hoppers out of Winnington works and up to the main line, together with trip workings from Hartford. The remaining occupants were the N5s. These were designed as shunting engines and were used in the yards in Northwich. However, those fitted with steam heating were often pressed into service on passenger trains.

However, I have seen, in common with most of us, numerous photographs of 8Fs in LMS livery on the hoppers and was surprised to see none allocated to Northwich at this time. Wrong! Apparently, several were out-stationed from Heaton Mersey shed to work the hoppers. In addition the shed was divided, with two roads reserved for visiting LMSR locomotives. This was quite a frustrating operating inconvenience for a small shed.



Here we see an 8F number 48462 passing the Middlewich platform at Northwich in the early 1960s. (Photo courtesy of Garry Brookes)

Because of the position and connections of Northwich there were around 60 freight trains a day passing through in each direction. A proportion of these were associated with the ICI works, with limestone and coal coming in and chemical products going out, and with salt production, again using copious amounts of coal. Other trains went to Dee Marsh, Saltney and the Wirral, to Helsby, to Warrington, to Godley and thence to Sheffield and the Midlands, or were able to avoid Crewe using the North Staffordshire line to go south. But

the lightweight power available to the shed restricted the scope of the crews to trip workings, local freights to Skelton Junction, to Winsford, to Helsby and to Chester, and to passenger over all or part of the route from Chester to Manchester.

Now that the CLC had ceased to exist and Northwich was firmly under the control of the London Midland Region, by 1952 we can see that the steady growth in the allocation of ex-LMS types has already begun, as has the decline in ex-GC power. In recognition of the longevity of the J10s, three other classes of 0-6-0 have appeared, the ex-LMS 4F and the ex-LNE J11 and J39. In addition there are now two 7F 0-8-0s. These were intended as replacements for the L3s on banking duties, but were not liked by the crews and eventually transferred away. The final solution to the problem was to use the 8Fs, which were increasing steadily in number, partly because the responsibility for the limestone trains had now passed to Northwich. By this time the N5s were in the process of being replaced by diesel shunters supplied by Crewe South shed.

By 1956 only the D11 "Directors" and a handful of J10s remained from the "Old Guard". The 8F fleet had expanded to 15, the 4Fs had settled on three, there were two 3Fs and the 2-6-4 tanks were beginning to arrive to take over the work of the D11s. To increase the flexibility of workings the south to west chord at Sandbach Junction was eventually opened in 1957. This had been planned in the LNWR Bill of 1865!



Here we see a War Department 2-8-0 number 90207 on shed at Northwich in 1961. (Photo: Philip Braithwaite)

1960 shows that the remaining D11s and J10s have gone and the 8Fs have reached their peak of 20. There are now seven 2-6-4 tanks, but their reign on the passenger trains would be relatively short-lived due to an influx of DMUs to operate the Manchester-Chester services. Two BR class 2 2-6-0s have arrived, presumably as pilots, at Knutsford and Winsford, for example, for light trip workings and for the remaining traffic on the salt branches. (Other classes of 2-6-0 came and went around this time.)

The modernisation plan is clearly having an effect by 1962, with the elimination of the tank engines, the DMUs having taken over, as mentioned above. However, there is still a good number of 8Fs and the 2-6-0s have doubled in number. (It may be interesting to note that when I came to Sale in 1968 the DMUs were allowed 13 minutes between Manchester Oxford Road and Altrincham and the ex-LMSR EMUs 20 minutes, both timings being much faster than currently achievable.)

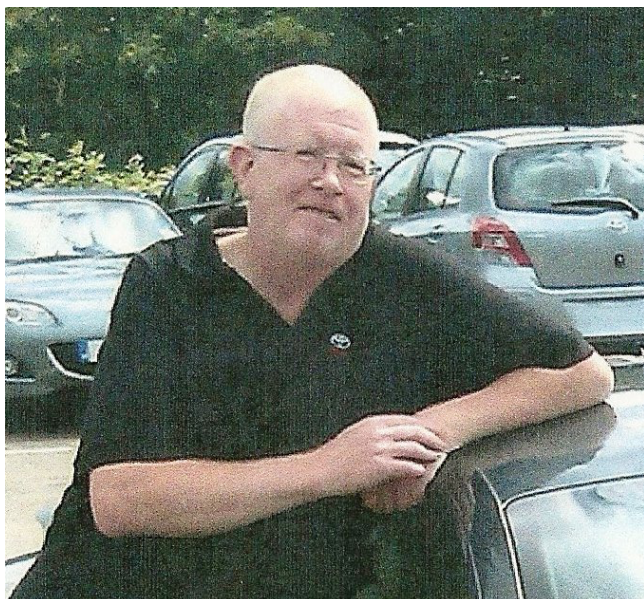
By 1965 the allocation is restricted to a diminishing number of 8Fs, the Class 25 diesels provided by Longsight shed having taken over the limestone trains. However, the remaining freight was still being handled by steam, although, as we know, there was now a dramatic decline in freight traffic.

The shed closed to steam on 4th March 1968. Although I have not seen any evidence of diesel locomotives being allocated to the shed, they were certainly present and being serviced there. It eventually closed in 1984 and stood abandoned before being demolished in 1991 and the land occupied by the insatiable demand for housing.

This is only a selection of snapshots over the years. Other classes of locomotive were allocated for relatively short periods, eg. Ivatt 2MT 2-6-0s, but have fallen through the cracks! Ideally, a monthly digest would tell us everything and would capture the ephemera, but I have no doubt that the editor and you, the reader, would certainly find that many steps too far!

Obituary - Alan France Brian Burgess

Alan passed away this spring following a long illness. He was a life member and, until recently, a regular attendee at 8E meetings. He was there in the early days of the Association helping with the servicing of steam locos at the old Northwich shed. He was fanatical about railways, aircraft, ships, Dr Who, and so on. His learning difficulties allowed him to focus all his attention on these pastimes. Four 8E members attended his funeral. Alan will be fondly remembered.



Railway Capacity Improvements in Cornwall.

Dennis Flood

(Editors Note: This article was first written in 2018 for members of the Cornwall Railway Society)

Some 8E Railway Association members will no doubt be aware of the proposals to increase line capacity in Cornwall by the end of 2018.

Currently the main line from Plymouth into Cornwall is controlled from Plymouth signal box as far as St.Germans, which is then followed by a long block section to Liskeard. Liskeard retains mechanical signalling in the general station area but the signalling between St.Germans and Lostwithiel is worked under Track Circuit Block regulations with train detection by the use of axle counters. Liskeard serves as a `fringe` box for Plymouth signal box. The following signal section from Liskeard is then to Largin, which is controlled from Lostwithiel signal box through a short single line section over St.Pinnock and East Largin viaducts. This section of line continues forward to Bodmin Parkway and then onto Lostwithiel. Lostwithiel signal box has a lever frame for control of mechanical signals and point work in the general station area and also a small `NX` Panel fitted which is remotely linked to solid state interlocking equipment (SSI) at Par. This enables control of the signal sections between Liskeard and Lostwithiel. The letters `NX` are quite straight forward in terms of a railway signalling panel - Entrance (`N`) and Exit (`X`). A train is `passed` from one panel to another using this method of signalling. NX Panels were used throughout the former BR Western Region in the now closed Cardiff, Newport, Swindon, Reading, Slough and Old Oak Common power signal boxes.

Swindon Panel was purchased by the Swindon Panel Society upon closure of Swindon PSB and will be `re-commissioned` in June of this year within a specially constructed building at the Great Western Society Centre in Didcot and will be operated by use of a simulator. I recommend to 8E members, if the opportunity arises, to pay a visit to Didcot and have a go at operating the panel if you have not operated an `NX` panel previously.!

The line from Lostwithiel to Penzance is worked under Absolute Block regulations by the use of the normal block instruments and bells. Mechanical signalling remains in use at Par for the general station area but Par signal box has a small panel fitted to control the signal section to Truro, with intermediate signals provided at St.Austell, Burngullow and Probus. This followed re-doubling of the line between Burngullow and Probus in 2005. Truro, like Lostwithiel and Par, retains mechanical signalling and, following the passing loop being installed at Penrhyn, controls this area via the use of signal levers in the signal box by way of a `time-division multiplex` arrangement to a remote relay room at Penrhyn. This arrangement is quite unique in Cornwall. `Time Division Multiplex` is a method of transmitting and receiving independent signals via a common signal path by means of synchronised switches at each end of the line of transmission so that each signal appears on the transmission line for only a fraction of time. Cables are used for power operated point and signal operation. The TDM system was widely used when Class 86/87 A/C electric locomotives were used in conjunction with a Driving Van Trailer, initially on the West Coast Main Line some years ago, and the train was being driven from the Driving

Van Trailer (DVT). The TDM transmission lines were passed through the coach lighting ducts between the locomotive and the DVT and vice versa, and individual control jumper cables were provided between the adjacent coach and either the DVT or locomotive.

Roskear Junction controls colour light signals by the operation of switches, by the controlling signaller, on the signal box block shelf. St.Erth Signal Box retains mechanical signalling in the general station area and for the control of the junction to St.Ives. The final block section is then between St.Erth and Penzance. There is an entirety of colour light signalling at Penzance, which is controlled from Penzance signal box. Signal PZ70 is interesting in that it is fitted with a repeater signal below the main aspect to assist signal sighting for a driver starting a train from platform 4. This is particularly helpful if the driving cab is directly adjacent to signal PZ70.

There are no mechanical distant signals left on the main lines in Cornwall, all of them now being colour light signals. There are some intermediate block signal sections currently and they utilise two-aspect distant and home colour light signals.

The current arrangement in Cornwall, with some lengthy block signal sections, is not workable for the proposed half hourly train service between Plymouth and Penzance and Penzance and Plymouth. Some sort of capacity improvement is needed to achieve this, hence the work which is now currently underway. Originally, it was proposed to re-signal the Cornish main line with control of it carried out from the current Exeter power signal box. However, this proposal has been shelved (or 'paused' to use the official term) and is being replaced by a smaller capacity improvement scheme. There will be a number of new intermediate signal sections provided as part of this scheme and the opportunity will also be taken to renew some of the existing signalling equipment as part of the project. There will be a new intermediate signal section located at Menheniot, which will comprise a home and distant signal on both the up and down lines. Axle counters will be provided for train detection and the opportunity will be taken to replace some axle counters currently in use as part of the new design. The new signals at Menheniot will be controlled from Plymouth signal box. There will be an intermediate signal section at Bodmin Parkway, with signals provided on the up and down lines, located on either side of the station itself. These new signals will be controlled from Lostwithiel signal box by the provision of a new 'NX' panel at this location. The current panel at Lostwithiel does not have the capacity to include this new signalling arrangement, so it is to be replaced. To assist station staff at Bodmin Parkway, two 'OFF' indicators will be provided for the safe despatch of trains. There will also be a white and green 'banner' signal provided on the down line to improve signal sighting for train drivers. White and green banner signals are now becoming the norm where signal sighting needs to be improved on the national railway network. The first two to be installed on the national railway network were provided on the up fast line between Crewe and Norton Bridge (near Stafford) and on the up slow line near Watford Tunnel, some years ago, as part of the West Coast Main Line (WCML) enhancement project. When the signal to which the banner repeater signal applies to displays a 'green' aspect, then the banner repeater will also display a green indication. This has improved train performance and timekeeping.

The section between Par and Truro has sufficient intermediate signal sections currently and therefore, no additional capacity improvements are needed between these two locations. However, from Truro to St.Erth, no fewer than three new intermediate signal sections will be provided. These will be at Chacewater, Redruth and Gwinear Road. All three of these locations will be provided with up and down line colour light distant and home signals. These will all be controlled from Roskear Junction signal box, using a new design of a `One Switch Control` panel. All current existing signals controlled from Roskear Junction will also be controlled from this new `OSC` panel. There are no signalling alterations required between St.Erth and Penzance as part of the Cornwall capacity enhancement scheme. However, the provision of new intermediate signal sections at both Chacewater and Redruth will mean that the section from Truro to St.Erth will convert from Absolute block working to Track Circuit block working, with train detection carried out by the use of axle counters.

The work now underway in Cornwall to deliver these capacity enhancement improvements involves only signalling and level crossing upgrades. There will be no track alterations needed as part of this scheme. There will be six `user worked` level crossings upgraded to `miniature stop light`, which will provide additional protection for the users of these crossings. The current automatic half barrier (AHB) level crossing at Dolcoath, just north of Camborne, will be converted to a four barrier obstacle detection crossing, using a ground based radar to detect obstacles at the level crossing. This type of obstacle detection crossing arrangement was first used on several level crossings between Shrewsbury and Crewe some five years ago, when the controlling mechanical signal boxes were abolished. Numerous technical problems occurred at the outset, causing severe delay to road users, particularly at Wem level crossing (the busiest on the line) but these problems have now been addressed and the system now functions very well. The current four-barrier level crossing at Camborne, which is controlled by closed circuit television (CCTV) from Roskear Junction signal box, will remain with no change to the method of operation of it.

The new timetable to include this Cornwall capacity enhancement is currently planned for December 2018 and the work now underway needs to be completed by this date. The Cornwall capacity enhancement project is in two halves; east and west. The eastern project covers the Plymouth signal box `fringe` area at St.Germans to Lostwithiel – and the western project covers the route from Par to St.Erth. The Eastern section is a three-stage commissioning project. Plymouth signal box panel alterations were due to be completed by February 2018, then the Bodmin area by March 2018 and the remainder of the Eastern scheme by April 2018. The Western section is due for completion in a three day period from 13-15 October 2018. If all goes well, Cornwall will see the benefits of this capacity enhancement scheme during the Summer of 2018. Once the scheme has been completed and is fully commissioned and operational, it will give a headway of no more than 10 minutes on the main line throughout Cornwall. This will be a major improvement on what is currently available for rail users in the County. I look forward to the proposed 2x4 HST train formations making best use of these major capacity enhancement improvements in Cornwall, in the near future!

Cornwall's Semaphore Signals. All Photos by Mike Lenz



Above we see an unidentified Class 37 passing the semaphores at Par and taking the branch for St. Blazey and Newquay. Below is another Railfreight Red Stripe liveried Class 37 passing Lostwithiel before running round its train and heading for Carne Point, Fowey.





Above we see a First Great Western HST passing the semaphores at Lostwithiel. The left arm is for the branch to Fowey.

Below we see Class 66 number 66127 collecting the token from the Lostwithiel signalman for the branch to Carne Point, Fowey with a load of CDA China Clay hoppers.



DVD Review. Mike Lenz

The latest release from Nick Dodson's Railfilms stable of DVDs is one which should be of great interest to 8E members, covering the story of the movement of limestone from the quarries in Derbyshire to the various chemical works of Imperial Chemical Industries in the Northwich area.

Entitled 'The Hoppers - Moving Derbyshire into Cheshire - The Story of the Tunstead to Northwich Limestone Trains', the DVD has a running time of approximately 60 minutes and covers the history of this particular traffic flow from its initial inception by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway, through the steam era of both the LMS and British Railways, to the trials with various early diesels and through to the present day operation with Class 60s and 66s. There is excellent film of the original hoppers as well as the more modern air-braked replacements.

There is some superb film of 8Fs in the Peak District as well as some of the more familiar diesels that were associated with these trains such as the Class 25s, 40s, 20s, 37s, 60s and the more recent US/Canadian built Class 66s.

Footage is in both colour and black and white and includes footage supplied by 8E Life Member, Trevor Booth. Available from Telerail (www.telerail.co.uk) at a price of £20 this is a worthy addition to 8E member's collections.

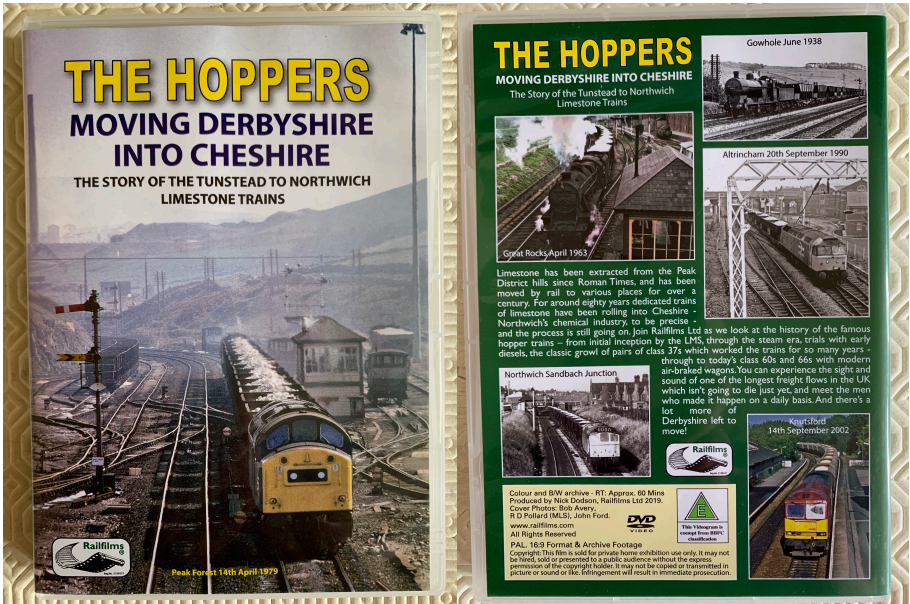
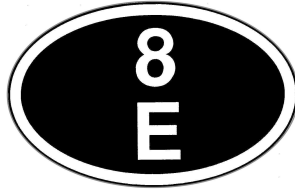


PHOTO PUZZLE: The location is the former Mayfield Station in Manchester. (Photo: Mike Lenz)



The 8E Railway Association

Founded 1981

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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.

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[Rear Cover: Tanat Valley Leland Tiger Cub bus seen here at Oswestry station on the Cambrian Railway during the 8E day out in May 2018.
Photo: Mike Lenz]

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