

MANOR RAILWAY NEWS

NEWS FROM MANOR RAILWAY

SPRING 1997

Full steam ahead

I am delighted that the railway is experiencing something of a resurgence with a number of new people on the scene to help Mark and I by taking on some of the many and varied tasks that we just could not manage on our own. The railway is now, once again, echoing to the sounds of regular working groups.

While there are **very definitely no plans** to extend the public operations of the Manor Railway, I am very much looking forward to welcoming our many friends to the Ingfield School Fete Day on Sunday, June 8 when the railway will be running to full capacity.

Thanks to some very generous support, I am pleased to report that ALL the proceeds from the fete will go direct to the Friends of Ingfield Manor School who will also benefit from support from SEEBOARD plc which is joining forces with the Royal Mail this year to make the fete bigger and better.

One of the tasks that has been of concern to me has been the question of public liability insurance and while there are no plans to provide anything other than purely voluntary help, there are a number of points that we should be aware of to ensure the safety of our visitors (both on invited guests' days and fete day). Purely in the interests of all concerned, I list these points below:-

● I can confirm that the Manor Railway has third party insurance cover in place. This however is NOT a boiler insurance and locomotive owners are advised to arrange cover for their own protection if they so require.

● Although boiler insurance of both resident and visiting locomotives is purely at the owners' discretion, our own third party insurance does require me to have a copy of a boiler test certificate, the examination for which must have been carried out by an independent examiner (for example from a club or federation approved person).

● The revised operational rules which are displayed on the notice board in the Loco Shed at Haven Road, were originally compiled by Keith to ensure the safe operation of the line at all times. They are as relevant today as they were initially and **MUST** be adhered to for all our sakes.

Finally, I do hope that you will be able to come and see the railway during the year. Please let me know if you wish to visit other than on the regular work days of the first and third Sunday of each month so that I may ensure that no unauthorised workers are at the railway at any other times. While this may seem to some as unnecessary, the terrible tragedy at Dunblane has meant that all schools have to take an understandably tough line on security.

Lynn Stratton
General Manager

NEW HELP LEADS TO RAILWAY'S RESURGENCE



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BUILDING SUCCESS

- an infrastructure update

Since the last newsletter was published some ten years ago a lot has changed at the railway. The extension is now completed to the new terminus station of Hazel Bank End which is located at the farthest point from Haven Road, adjacent to the entrance to the school driveway. There is, however, no access to the line at this point as we feel that this would be both unwise and unnecessary.

In addition to the new station, which has its own platform built to Keith's designs, there are plans to build a 'pagoda' type shelter in the same style as those used on the Great Western Railway.

Battery

We also have a short siding at this station and operationally this will accommodate the stock (which will be hauled off the train engine by a battery loco waiting in the siding). The train engine then runs back down the line to a point clear of the junction, allowing the battery loco to propel the stock back into

the station.

Work is also well underway on the replacement of rotten sleepers on the stretch between Marsh Halt and Bramble Hill and by Easter it is hoped that most of this work will have been completed, together with other reballasting works as necessary along the whole length of the line. When these works have been finished there will still be plenty of tasks to occupy the twice monthly working parties, such as repainting of the Loco shed, similar work at other stations, the continuing maintenance of lineside equipment and the relaying of the platform surface at Haven Road.

Following the donation of a small portacabin by SEEBOARD plc, this welcome facility is now installed adjacent to the Manager's lawn behind the tall hedge, which forms the boundary between the school's formal gardens and the field. Now that an electricity supply has been installed between the Engine Shed and the new building, which is known as The Station Managers Cabin, the railway has somewhere to welcome invited guests and VIP's in case of

inclement weather.

As you will read elsewhere in this publication, the Manor Railway has at present TWO resident steam locomotives with John Terence sharing space in the Loco Shed with the red Black Five "Ayrshire Yeomanry". As a consequence space in the Shed is at something of a premium. We are looking at ways in which this can be increased without prejudicing Keith's original vision and plans.

Platform

Although far from settled, the present favoured option is for one or two additional 'shed' roads to be accommodated within an extension to the existing building on the furthest point from the platform. This would be in the style of a brick built (using the similar bricks) 'lean-to' addition which would also have the same roof line (and tiles) as the existing roof. While this will be quite low at its extremity, it will provide much needed safe and secure storage for both loco's and stock.

WELCOME TO SONIA

A short history of the 5156 Ayrshire Yeomanry

Many seaside resorts spawned miniature railways in the austere post-Second World War years in a bid to re-establish themselves and bring back the holidaymakers. The east coast town of Lowestoft was no exception.

In the late 1940s, Lowestoft Council decided to construct a 10.25 inch gauge push-pull miniature railway at the South Pier. At first the locomotive in charge was Bullock Pacific Tamar Queen but she was soon replaced in the early 1950s by Sonia (as 5156 was originally named).

Sonia was built by Trevor Guest of Stourbridge in 1950 and was delivered new to the Lilliput Railway in Rhyl where she hardly turned a wheel and was returned to Guest the same year. Thereafter, she went to Dudley Zoo and was regularly driven by Guest himself.

She arrived at Lowestoft in 1952, and after three years at the South Pier, Sonia and her rolling stock were moved to the Esplanade to a site adjacent to the Royal Hotel.

The railway and Sonia certainly earned their keep and proved to be a great attraction. She ran 10-12 hours a day, seven days a week from Whit Saturday to the last Sunday in September. In those years, her livery was mid-green, lined out in straw with straight nameplates 'Sonia' on the boiler sides and numbered '45059'. The tender sported out-of-scale Lowestoft Corporation coat-of-arms transfers.

By 1966, all could not have been well with Sonia and the Council sold her to a W.& P Stone (Builders) Ltd of Lancing, Sussex for £550, her price clearly

reflecting her state. Her history in Sussex between 1966 and 1969 is cloudy (does anyone know any more?), but it is believed she just languished. She must have been in a pitiful condition, but her fortunes revived in 1969 when she was bought by Lionel Creed for his private 10.25 inch gauge railway in his extensive garden at Malvern Link, Worcestershire. Lionel carried out major repairs (including it is believed a new boiler) and refurbishment which considerably enhanced both her performance and appearance.

Locomotive

It was towards the end of 1978 that Michael Oliver purchased the locomotive and she was towed up to Scotland in a horse box (which was not, I hasten to add, Barry's).

After a two-month service and repaint in black livery, the loco became 5156 Ayrshire Yeomanry the Earl of Carrick's Own and she was first steamed in Lochgilphead in September 1980. The locomotive was then moved to Kerr's Miniature Railway at Arbroath and pulled passengers during the 1981 season before she returned to Lochgilphead towards the end of 1982. By October 1986, work started in earnest and she was pulled apart down to the last nut and bolt. After 18 months' rebuilding work, she steamed for the second time in Lochgilphead in May 1988.

Two years later 5156 moved back to Kerr's Miniature Railway at Arbroath where she was steamed for a visit by the Heywood Society in September 1990. For the next six years the locomotive

languished at the back of the shed at Arbroath and although well cared for by Matthew Kerr and his team, the locomotive was not steamed again as the boiler certificate had by now expired.

On October 17 last year, the story of 5156 entered a further chapter when after a successful, if cautious test steaming and run for me at Arbroath under the watchful eye of Matthew Kerr, the locomotive was transported south once more.

After a further steaming and test run at her new home on the Manor Railway, 5156 moved to the British Engineerium in Hove for what was initially intended to be just a simple boiler examination and while the superb workmanship of Trevor Guest meant that very little in the way of repairs was required to return the boiler to full certification, the Engineerium's team, led by Peter Fagg, discovered that her long years of hard work had taken their toll. She suffered a loose piston and broken rings caused scoring of a cylinder which, together with some other repairs, provided many hours of hard work.

Now once again 5156 is resplendent in full LMS Crimson Lake and while as a Black Five she was, of course, always just black, I share previous owner Michael Oliver's view that poetic license will allow us this simple (and I believe highly effective), flight of fantasy. As her current custodian (I don't believe that we ever actually own these objects but just keep them for future generations to cherish), I do hope that you will take the opportunity to pay 5156 a visit at Ingfield before too long.

Chris English



Photo - Laurie Marshall

PROGRAMME FOR THE YEAR

The first most important date for your diary is Sunday, June 8, which is the date of the annual Ingfield School Fete.

All are most welcome to assist with the many tasks that must be carried out if the railway is to raise money for the children of the school.

If you are planning to attend on that day and are able to help in some way (if not, why not?), please contact Lynn so that she can allocate you an appropriate task.

As you will have seen in the Infrastructure Update on Page 2, it is some ten years since the railway last published a newsletter and a glance through that publication will show that in the previous summer (August 2 1986), the railway celebrated its tenth anniversary.

Honour

While we have passed the twenty year mark, it would seem appropriate that we have a small get-together to honour Keith's memory and celebrate the coming of age of the railway which meant so much to him. With this in mind we hope to have a special celebration day on Sunday, September 7, please let Lynn know if you are able to attend.

As always, there are regular working parties on the first and third Sunday of each month and it is on these occasions when so much of the hard work is carried out. This work includes replacing rotten sleepers, reballasting the trackbed, repainting the buildings and trackside furniture, extending the signalling system and so on.

If you are free on any of these days

Busy time ahead and we need your help

please come along. Someone will press a paint brush or a shovel into your willing hands. Once again, please let Lynn know in advance.

With the new millennium less than a thousand days away, there is a body of opinion that believes that Keith would not have wished this important occasion to go unrecorded in the annals of the Manor Railway.

Accordingly, much thought is being given to a suitable project for the railway and any positive thoughts you may have will be welcomed. ██████████
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Right: The new Station Master's Cabin at Haven Road

Below: A full train at Ingfield Central



On the right track . . . the 'train gang' at work near Marsh Halt

SEEBOARD