

# Britain's Great Little Railways

Newsletter 55



April/May 2014

## 2014 AGM and Spring General Meetings

There was a reasonably good turnout for the AGM and Spring General Meetings which were held at the East Herts Miniature Railway. A special thanks to Simon Brown and his team for hosting the meeting which was held in the Van Hague Garden Centre. There were lively discussions during the meetings but some



members commented afterwards that the acoustics of the room did leave some people having trouble following the discussions. I will investigate whether we can come up with a microphone/speaker system for the next meeting. The minutes of both meetings have been distributed to all members.



After a very tasty lunch it was time to ride on the railway and closely inspect the signal box frame from LT's Hyde Park Corner station which was featured in the January Newsletter. Most of the members then took a stroll along the route of the proposed extension to the railway. The main picture shows the members carefully studying the contours for the proposed track. The picture to the left shows our Chairman in splendid isolation on one of his favourite Tinkerbell engines and thoroughly enjoying himself.

The distribution, after the meeting, went smoothly and many members took posters and brochures for railways that could not make the meeting – many thanks for your efforts in keeping our postage costs down.

Photos courtesy of Jim Haylock

## BGLR NEWS

All posters and brochures have now been distributed. If you have any problems please contact me or Mike Hanson.( [mike@rlsr.org](mailto:mike@rlsr.org))

Can I recommend members to check out our website regularly and please make use of the forum. It's easy to use but does not seem to generate much traffic from our members. If you have any ideas as to how to improve it please contact Mike or myself. Please email me if you have forgotten the log in or password.

The Autumn General meeting will be held at the Woking Miniature Railway on October 15<sup>th</sup> at 11.00 am.

## HRA, LEGISLATION, & SAFETY REPORT

BGLR is a corporate member of the Heritage Railway Association. Members can read HRA "members only" publications on [www.heritagerrailways.com](http://www.heritagerrailways.com) by entering the username bglr and the password kcnsy37

Iain Dinnes was appointed the BGLR Director responsible for HRA Liaison at the 2014 AGM. He can be contacted at [iain@ehmr.co.uk](mailto:iain@ehmr.co.uk) if you have any questions regarding the HRA, Safety and Legislation issues.

The latest Sidelines and Broadlines are available from the members area of the HRA website using the sign in shown above.

## NEW MEMBERS

### The Great Cockcrow Railway – Matthew Scrutton

The origins of the Great Cockcrow Railway can be traced back to a private address in Walton-on-Thames in 1946. However, in 1968 a move was made to the small village of Lyne near Chertsey. The layout has continued to develop since moving to its present site. The miniature railway is one of the most extensive of its kind in the country and authentic operation is evident. The GCR is 7 ¼ inch gauge, and offers a choice of



two regular routes, served every few minutes. There is a special train, 'The Gladesman', which covers both

routes on its journey, and normally consists of a longer length train and is double-headed with two engines.

All locos are scale outline standard gauge, and usually 8 engines are out on a typical running day.

The railway runs every Sunday from beginning of May to end of October, 13.30 to 17.00, ticket office closes at 16.45. The Railway also runs August Wednesdays, 13.00 to 16.00

For more information go to <http://www.cockcrow.co.uk/index.html>

### **Ness Islands Railway – Ian Young**

The railway was first established by Ian Young, in 1983. The track was rerouted in 1989 to incorporate a superb 140ft span iron bridge, built in about 1837, which once was a footbridge on the River Ness near the railway site.



The line is a dumb bell folded over on top of itself, with the station on a C shaped single line in the middle. We currently have two diesel locomotives from Mardyke Miniature Railways and in 2012 welcomed steam back to the line in the form of Tinkerbell *Chrissy* (built by P Beevers). Together they pull our four sit-astride coaches (built by C Edmondson).

The Railway runs every weekend and daily during school holidays Easter until October 1130-1700

More information at <http://www.nesislandsrailway.co.uk/>

## NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

### Rudyard Lake Steam Railway

This year has started well for us.

We did not run trains in January and the early part of February to allow us to upgrade the last 400 yards of track at the north end of the railway. This involved raising the track by 4 inches, adding 3 extra sleepers to give 11 per panel and re-spacing the others. Then we add ballast and kango pack level. The track is much more substantial and better drained. The weather was kind to us so that we did not lose any of the working parties although one did finish in a thunderstorm. But despite losing 6 days we are up in numbers overall and just had our best Easter ever.

The other area of activity has been the rolling stock. We have refurbished the 2 bogie flat wagons. New Heywood style steel ballast boxes have built for one of them. We have built a new compressor wagon so we have spare and a new enclosed 12 seat LTM coach is on the list next. The bogies are already in stock. This will bring the fleet up to 13. Hope that's not too unlucky.



We invested £2k in 3 mobile ticket machines in the autumn of 2013. These have long been on our wish list but we could not find the right ones. With a railway a mile and a half long with 3 stations and substantial numbers of single tickets having ticket offices is not viable, so fares have to be collected on the train. It's been an interesting exercise. We have had some issues with the machines and some with the staff. Both seem to be now being overcome and indeed some staff are now put out if there is no ticket machine. The genuine public clearly like having a ticket and those who used to avoid paying are now walking or stumping up.

Revenue has gone up especially at the stations away from Rudyard. I believe we have got our money back already. And will be well in profit by the time we have had them for a year. We also now know for certain the pattern of travel on the railway

### Mutual Marketing

In addition to the leaflets and poster we share I suggest we should be doing more to help each other. In BGLR we have some leading examples of the use of social media and I think we could all make more of this. I intended but forgot to raise this at the last meeting by suggesting that everyone who attended should do a positive review of our hosts the East Herts Miniature Railway. We should also be doing the same for other members. This is best illustrated by the fact that we did a positive Trip Advisor review of Perrygrove on 26<sup>th</sup> of February this year. This was partly a thank you for some advice they gave us and



also because we think it's a great railway. I had an email today from Trip advisor to say it's been read by 726 people in the last 2 months. Anyone who wants us to do the same email me at [mike@rlsr.org](mailto:mike@rlsr.org) and please return the favour.

The pictures show a model of Pendragon sitting on the water tank of the real thing – excellent scratch building by one of Mike's railway enthusiasts.

## Eastleigh Lakeside Railway

As the name and address of the railway might indicate, lakes and ponds are part of the normal surroundings. However, this year, owing to the severe wet and windy weather more lakes, hopefully temporary, have appeared and the rails have, at times, become semi-submerged under ever rising surface water. The railway continued to operate despite the appalling conditions with trains running every weekend and during the schools' half term holiday.

The valve gear and pistons of 10¼" gauge 4-6-2 Pacific No: 6220 'Coronation' were successfully overhauled and the locomotive has returned to the operational fleet along with 7¼" 4-4-0 Schools No: 932 'Blundells' which also underwent extensive work. The overhaul of 'Blundells' included new piston rings on valves and cylinders, new inside big end bearing and new super heater element as well as a myriad of other minor tasks. All the work was carried out as part of a scheduled overhaul, the first major work since the locomotive was first built in 2000 by Jesse Moody. Also passing through the workshops for minor repairs was D1994 'Eastleigh' the railway's 10¼" gauge diesel hydraulic following the discovery of cracks on the radiator mountings.



Work continues apace on the refurbishment of several First and Standard carriages with some having completely new body work whilst others simply had panels or floors replaced.

In readiness for the ever popular 'Day Out With Thomas' events, Bullock locomotive No: 1001 'The Monarch' which masquerades as No: 4 'Gordon', entered the workshop for a planned overhaul mostly to

the pistons and connecting rods. This work was finished by mid March giving plenty of time for any glitches to be ironed out before the first 'Thomas' event in May.



4-6-0 7¼" King Arthur class No: 30453 'King Arthur' which was for sale alongside two other 7¼" gauge locomotives - 4-4-0 Schools No: 932 'Blundells' and 4-6-0 Lord Nelson No: 850 'Lord Nelson' -has now left the railway following its sale to a new owner in February. All three locomotives were constructed by Jesse Moody.

Work is progressing steadily on the railway's new

build locomotive Bulleid 4-6-2 Pacific, re-built Merchant Navy No: 35004 *'Cunard White Star'*. Once again, the workshop and engineering skills of Jesse Moody are being used to build this engine and to date the frames of both the locomotive and tender have been completed, whilst the wheels, piston blocks and some of the motion have been added to the engine's frame. To help with the fabrication of some parts of the locomotive, photographs were taken of the full sized version of a re-built Merchant navy, namely No: 35028 *'Clan Line'* when it was at Stewarts Lane, being prepared for mainline duty and thanks must go to the support crews for their considerable help. No specific timescale has been put on the construction of No: 35004 but it is hoped to have it 'launched' on the railway within the next twelve months where it will become a valuable stable mate to un-rebuilt Merchant Navy No: 21C1 *'Channel Packet'*.



Returning to the theme of 'Day Out With Thomas', Clive Upton, Dave Hart and Rob Hart were surprised and delighted to receive, from HIT Entertainment at the Forum Awards ceremony held at Drayton Manor Hotel in Tamworth, the certificate for, 'The Best Overall Event 2013'. This is quite an honour especially as Lakeside was competing against some of the major standard gauge railways in the country. The certificate is proudly displayed for all to see at Parkway Station. All staff and volunteers at the railway are looking forward to another successful series of events in the coming months.



The Railway's Spring Steam Gala was held on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March when eighteen of the resident locomotives were in steam varying in style from narrow gauge prototypes through to B.R. Britannia Class. There was a selection of 7¼" and 10¼" gauge engines hauling freight and passenger trains, some of which were double-headed. Most notable was the 10¼" gauge version of super power - two Bullock 4-6-2 locomotives, No: 2005 *'Silver Jubilee'* and No: 2006 *'Edward VIII'*, working together hauling full passenger trains. The sight of so many locomotives in steam must have gladdened the hearts of the many

visitors whether they were railway enthusiasts or people just content to enjoy the thrill of riding behind a steam locomotive albeit in miniature.

With the coming of warmer, drier spring weather a start has been made on track maintenance with particular attention being paid to areas of the track that suffered from high surface water levels during the deluge of recent times.

## **Bure Valley Railway**

Spring Bank Holiday Weekend, 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2014, will be a busy time for the Bure Valley Railway, Norfolk's longest narrow gauge steam railway. All available locomotives, coaches and rolling stock will be in action. The locomotives will include No.1 "Wroxham Broad" which is celebrating her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2014. No.1 was unavailable in 2013 as she was on loan to the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway from March 2013 to January 2014. No. 8 will also be in steam bearing her new name following a naming ceremony to be held at Aylsham station on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

There will also be a chance for visitors to see the newly completed running shed at Aylsham Station and the workshop at Aylsham will be open throughout the weekend with staff on hand to answer questions and give visitors the chance to see No.6 Blickling Hall stripped down for a heavy overhaul.

To keep the younger visitors entertained there will be a competition sheet for the train journey with a free prize for every correct entry.

Andrew Barnes, BVR General Manager, says, "This event will give railway enthusiasts and families alike the chance to see a collection of world's most powerful 15-inch gauge steam locomotives on display and in operation" Train fares allow unlimited travel on the day of issue. Children under 5 travel free.



## **Exbury Gardens Railway**

### **A Year at Exbury' to be captured on film**

Filming will begin shortly for a ground-breaking project, set to capture the drama of the changing seasons at the world famous Exbury Gardens and Steam Railway in the New Forest. Using a variety of state of the art filming techniques, including aerial filming, time-lapse and 'macro' filming, an edited series of high-definition videos are to be created that will form a stunning record of the Gardens and Railway throughout the year.

Weather permitting, the first aerial filming date has been set for the 28<sup>th</sup> April, when the Rothschild collection of rhododendrons and azaleas will be in full bloom.

Nick de Rothschild, Gardens President, is excited at the prospect of the year ahead: 'Whilst Exbury is known for its rhododendrons and azaleas, the films will hopefully show that Exbury is truly a year-round Garden. We have a rich and diverse tapestry of plants, trees and shrubs; and the passing of the seasons

will be observed in the finest detail, producing a showcase for the flora and fauna that call this part of the New Forest 'home.



Founder of Seeing Red Ltd, Red Johnson is overseeing the filming. Red is looking forward to the challenge: "This is an extremely exciting project. We are utilising the latest image capture technology to record in incredible detail a full year in the life of one of the most beautiful gardens in the country. From the explosion of spring colour, through the long summer months and into the beautiful autumn hues, the results will provide

a unique digital perspective for people to learn about the amazing range of plants that Exbury is home to."

Exbury Director and Trustee Marie-Louise Agius, whose firm Balston Agius were awarded a coveted gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2013 for their East Village Show Garden, still firmly calls Exbury home: 'I was brought up at Exbury and know every twist and turn of the twenty miles of pathways that wind through the Gardens' woodlands. I can still walk in these gardens every day and discover something new that I have never seen before, such is its' diversity. My great-grandfather Lionel de Rothschild founded the Gardens nearly 100 years ago, and he was a pioneer – not only in garden design and hybridising, but also in his employment of modern technology to capture the beauty of the landscape. His passion was for the 'autochrome', an early photographic technique employed in the days before colour film. I have seen at first hand how Red Johnson and his team have brought their modern filming techniques to bear in their digital coverage for the BBC at the Chelsea Flower Show. Their footage has been incredibly well received and has opened up the Show for an entirely new audience. We have every expectation that 'A Year at Exbury' will have a similar effect, and we are looking forward to sharing the footage with our partners and visitors. No-one is quite sure what we will capture during the year, which adds to the complexity and excitement of the project. My great grand-father would certainly approve that Exbury is again pushing the boundaries of gardening photography and film'.

Railway Foreman Ian Wilson is looking forward to welcoming the film crew. 'Shortly after the Railway opened in 2001 we produced a DVD 'The Dream that became Steam' recalling the trials and tribulations of Leopold de Rothschild in setting up the railway and achieving a life's ambition. It will be very interesting to compare the new and old footage – in the thirteen years we've been open the Railway garden has matured nicely, and the aerial footage should show this off to good affect. The Railway garden is also home to all manner of New Forest Wildlife – our passengers regularly see pheasants, herons and occasional glimpses of deer and kingfishers, whilst dragonflies circle our ponds in the summer. It will be wonderful to capture all of this on film.'

## North Bay Railway, Scarborough

There has been a lot going on at Britain's biggest public transport miniature railway.

### Apprentices via Heritage Skills Initiative

For the last year, Richard Robinson has been employed at the railway and was joined by Callum Darrugh in December. HSI is a Lottery funded initiative to enable Apprentices gain experience within the heritage sector. As well as a number of railway placements, others have been taken on to gain experience with Classic Cars and Classic Boats. Richard has impressed, both David Humphreys and Graham Duncan, the railway's engineer that he has been offered a full time position within the Group.

### Sky Trail

A Sky Trail is a high ropes adventure course and is a great family attraction! (If you're after an adrenaline rush!) People navigate around the two level rope, bridge and beam course, with trains passing below them. This opened in time for Easter and is proving to be a massive hit.



### Steam Locomotive 'Georgina'

North Bay has been operating with Diesel Hydraulic locomotives from day 1 in 1931. Indeed, the two original locomotives and Robin Hood, one that North Bay Railway Company brought along when it took over operations in 2006 are the three oldest Diesel Hydraulic locomotives in the world.



David, the owner's passion is for steam locomotives and some will recall that he commissioned the 'Effie' replica in 1999. It wasn't going to be long before a steam locomotive was sought, but at 20" gauge, it is only one of two railways at this gauge in the country along with Shipley Glen Tramway. Accordingly, steam power at 1'8" is scarce, so the engineering staff have almost completed a new one! 'Georgina' is a Bagnall 'Sipat' class and will be completed this summer. Indeed, they are building a second, but at 2' gauge and further commission builds will be undertaken via North Bay Engineering Services Limited, see below.

### **North Bay Railway Engineering Services Limited**

David and Graham are wanting to promote more Apprentice training positions.

Accordingly, as mentioned above, Richard Robinson is being appointed as a Railway Millwright to complete the steam locomotives, undertake general engineering work as necessary on the railway and also complete any commission, restoration work or heritage engineering business won, not only in the railway sector, but anything that requires traditional skills.

To assist with this, the railway has bought the equipment of a Scarborough engineering business and now has the capacity to undertake every job required on the railway in house, including turning the wheels of the Pacific locomotives and the manufacture of welded boilers. It also has CNC capacity to manufacture components and finish castings including, as mentioned previously, a complete steam locomotives. The proprietor of the business that has been bought has agreed to work with the new team and with his 50 year background in marine engineering, gives the initial staff a fantastic opportunity to see and do things in a traditional way.

An external initial advantage the company can give to others is reduced costs as things can be undertaken by supervised apprentices and initially, without VAT being added, so if anyone wants any work completed, please call David on [07787 967694](tel:07787967694).

**Fairbourne Railway** – a poster advertising a Little to Large Gala is on the back page

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Registered in England & Wales - Company No. 3143331

BGLR Website – [www.bglr.org](http://www.bglr.org)

More Pictures from the Meetings at the East Herts Railway by our Chairman







# Fairbourne MINIATURE RAILWAY

## Little to Large Gala



**MAY**

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>**

**& Monday 26<sup>th</sup>**



- return of original Fairbourne loco **Whippit Quick**
- visiting steam engine **Soony**
- miniature traction engines
- passenger carrying 7¼ & 5" gauge rides
- static steam displays
- model tent
- craft stalls
- intensive train service

*... and lots more*



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