

### **Newsletter September/October 2014**

It has been a very busy year for the Society and the committee is very appreciative of the time and effort put in by members at the Park and in attending Thornton Hough. With regular operations at the Park most weekends, meetings at Thornton Hough twice a month and a good number of members turning out for the weekly Wednesday working parties many members are busy with society interests. It is an interesting fact that the members participating in these society activities are not necessarily the same people all of the time! Notices and discussions can be carried out within the various activities without 'others' even hearing of them.

The society has had a newsletter in various forms since 1988. Wirral Steam was last produced for us by Dr Alan Banks in 2013. In his editorial he clearly asked for members to come forward and take on the role, together with other activities that required help.

Members are presumably 'not interested' in assisting the society with any of the vacant roles because no one has responded. The 2014 AGM also covered the vacancies and whilst there was a very welcome new member of committee, no offers of help were forthcoming from the membership that would resolve the vacancies. It is ironic that in this modern day and age where instant access to communications throughout the world can be held in your hand, WMES still do not have a newsletter, an editor or a method of disseminating society information. Or for that matter, a meetings secretary!

The committee is very aware of the issues and this news letter is a communication to all our members – hoping for a response. If you are quietly interested in joining in with society happenings – but holding back or shy - please contact the secretary, or any member of committee. New ideas and help are vital!

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#### **Santa Specials 2014**

Due to members demands the society proposes to run another Santa Special event this Christmas.

As usual we have to use the society premises for the event and – as usual – there is a plea for help with the organisation and running over the two weekends before Christmas, the 13th and 14th and the 20th and 21st December, operating from 12.00 until 16.00 each day. Whatever the weather!

The tasks fall readily into the following:

1. Operating the railway, which is driving and associated activities.
2. Ensuring safe access for all visitors to and from the grotto.
3. Helping with refreshments for all members involved in the event.
4. Help with setting the day's event up and putting everything away at the end.

If you are able and willing to help there will be a Rota provided in the workshop. This will be on the notice board on December 3rd.

This will list the jobs and please note – the jobs are in 2-hour intervals, designed to give everyone a break. However, you can sign up for as many sessions as you wish!

The grotto requires setting up and work is scheduled to commence early in December. If you would like to assist please contact either Dave Morris or Ian Eccles.

The theme – this year we will be visiting Santa in his Ski Chalet. So bring your boots and skies, scarfs and wooly hats for a festive adventure. Viva Rudolphski!

Bookings commence for the public on the 5th October. Please – if you have family and close friends who would like to visit Santa contact Mo Stephen before the 5th October to book and ensure your choice of day and time. After the 12th October bookings can be made with Bob and Elaine Spencer.

#### **Track events**

##### Members Day

The society hosted a member's day on the 12th July. This was an opportunity for society members to 'have a go' and perhaps drive locomotives for the first time.

There was a very good turnout of members but sadly, only the ground level track was operating. The raised track was missed!

Lunch was provided and some very nice comments and appreciations were received. Thanks to all those who took part, helped and ate the food.

##### The 7 ¼" Gauge Society junior members day – 13th September 2014

With the forecast being for a fine day proceedings commenced at 10.00 am. Two junior members and family came from

Brighthouse & Halifax MES, WMES provided three junior members and one young visitor from the Wirral came having seen the event advertised.

Following refreshments, a couple of runs by train over the track were taken to familiarise every one with the track. Our locomotives, Royden, Little Clifty and Ashover were introduced and the participants invited to drive them. Meanwhile the steamers were being prepared.

Lunch did not take long for the youngsters to devour before they were back to driving and gaining confidence.

They were then introduced to the Tinkerbell class steamers 'Peter George' and 'Tinker' and a model of an Australian Sugar Cane tender loco 'Coolum'. Initial steam driving took place on the meadow and, when more confident, by driving back to the station.

The afternoon passed with all locomotives being driven and broad smiles from all the participants. Even the grown ups were allowed to enjoy a drive or two!

The day concluded around 4.00 pm with general agreement that the day had been a 'good one'.

In closing we wish to thank the WMES members who assisted in the event and in particular our ladies who looked after the refreshments all day.

### Future events

Based on the past year's events would members indicate what events or activities they would like to participate in? The society should, by now, have next years programme in place. At present topics are very scarce. Please contact the secretary in the first instance if you have ideas or proposals.

All input is very much appreciated, for example the recent evening 'Where I'm up to...'

On the evening of 18th September we were treated to yet another splendid evening at Thornton Hough where members had brought their 'work-in-progress'. Thirteen members were present and three tables were laden with projects with two heavier articles floor-standing.

- Alwyn Duerden had brought one of the now completed driving wheels for his current traction engine.
- Stood on the floor this evoked the comment 'so this is your unicycle project'. Good to understand what the mysterious rollings that were going on in our park workshop. He had also brought some home-made patterns for components to be cast.
- Ian Jameson brought his 3.1/2" GWR King 4-6-0, this is a 4-cylinder design and is beautifully crafted with fine details as we have come to expect from him. He also had brought the brass tender body, laser cut from Malcolm High, and defied the rivet counters!
- Barry Harrison displayed his 5" Class 5400 Prairie Tank engine chassis mounted on a building frame, this showed the advantages of such a piece of kit in ease of handling for access to the innards. He hopes to finish it in his lifetime!
- Dave Eldridge presented the tender chassis for his 5" Merchant Navy - perhaps he may be able to relegate the fish tank!
- Les Dobbing displayed the tender chassis for his Stirling Single. It will look good when complete and married to the already finished engine.
- Bill Shirley tabled a selection of injectors which he had made with some of the tooling and jigs he had made and used in their fabrication. Also, he exhibited an almost complete 7.1/4" Terrier tank engine mounted on a much-needed sturdy floor-standing building frame. Much thought had gone into the assembly of this engine.
- Alan Powell brought a boilered chassis of a 5" Pansy and demonstrated the brass side tank which was another Malcolm High kit. Seemingly no advice was given as to which way it ought to be assembled so Alan had cleverly devised a way round the problem.
- Albert Kanes brought a Stuart Turner design Twin Victoria horizontal engine mounted on a wooden plinth. This was, as usual, to Albert's very high standards.
- The evening ran itself with members freely explaining and sharing their hints and tips - so good to see, and knowing that is what our Society should be about.

Thanks go to all who exhibited and the effort required to get them there - a great evening! *Alan Pennell*

### Visitors

There has been an increase in the perceived number of visitors to both tracks at Royden Park over the past months. This is very encouraging and it is good to involve 'others' in our activities.

A new 'Visitor's Book' is installed in the inner workshop next to the first aid box. Would members who invite visitors and relatives who are not members of the society please sign them in for their visit. Where access to the workshops and society facilities are required, members must accompany them at all times.

### Society website and access for members to the secure area.

All members are aware that the production of the Wirral Steam ceased last December. In that publication an indication was given that the website was being re-arranged to provide aspects of society business, with access restricted to members only. This has been arranged and a new access code is required.

The code is:

UserXXXXXXXX

PasswordXXXXXXXX both are case sensitive.

As with all access codes please keep the login confidential to yourself. This minimises unauthorized access and the risk of hacking. If you wish to be reminded of the access code at any time please contact the secretary.

As always there is a requirement for someone to co-ordinate the items and information that will be placed on the site. Our Webmaster, who does a great job for the society, can only deal with hard facts and information! Is there someone who would be

willing to organize and collate such information? (Editor?)

There may be some members who do not have or want access to the website for various reasons. Would they please contact the secretary so that a list can be compiled. Hard copy will be sent to those on the list, the intention would be to provide an update on 'society matters' two or three times a year mirroring the items placed on the website.

Of course there will be some members asking why the information cannot be provided as hard copy to everyone. Two points – the society requires an editor and cost. Our subscriptions are already heavily subsidised by those who help to operate the railways in the Park. To keep the society self-funded subscriptions need to be reviewed each year noting that income from the Park is not guaranteed.

The committee would be pleased to receive any constructive comments about how the society should communicate within itself, electronically or otherwise.

### **Records**

Please – if any of your membership details have changed have you let the secretary or the membership secretary know? This really helps when communication is required!

If you think that the information the Society holds about you is not correct, please contact the membership secretary in the first instance.