

ERLESTOKE MANOR FUND

Newsletter No 55

Editor; David Kilner

September 2011

Bradley's Overhaul Moves Forward!

The earlier prospect of Bradley Manor being laid up as a museum piece for many years did not appeal – and would have done nothing to increase the number of serviceable steam locos on the SVR! The committee has therefore acted in conjunction with the SVR management and commissioned Tyseley Locomotive Works to overhaul the chassis for completion by late spring 2012. Simultaneously the replacement 3500 gallon tender project has moved forward significantly with the purchase of an old tender chassis from which to salvage many useable parts.

An enthusiastic workforce with some young blood has been building up momentum on both these fronts, preparing the loco for dismantling at Bridgnorth and systematically removing reusable items from the recently acquired tender at Bewdley. Whilst the heavy repair of the loco chassis is a major step towards a return to service, work is also needed on the boiler. This will shortly be removed and stripped for assessment at Bridgnorth.

To push the whole project forward to an early conclusion we are initiating a boiler and tender appeal for which a leaflet is appended to this newsletter. It is some while since we appealed for funds and we ask you to carefully consider supporting this worthwhile initiative aimed at the early return of 7802 to SVR service accompanied by a new 3500g Churchward tender. In addition to the appeal leaflet please see later in this newsletter specific items for which we seek sponsorship via share purchase.

Footplate Experience Week

Come and try your hand on the regulator and the shovel! Your opportunity for participating in our footplate experience trips this year are Monday - Wednesday October 10th - 12th. Under the close supervision of our footplate qualified drivers and fireman, you can experience the joy of driving and firing 7812 Erlestoke Manor on a train between Kidderminster and Bewdley. Not only will you have the thrill of a lifetime, but also have the satisfaction of knowing that financial proceeds will help towards the cost of 7802's

early return to service. The smaller tender behind Erlestoke, over which the footplate crew can more easily see ahead when running in reverse, will also convince you of the need to provide a similar one for Bradley!

The cost per participant will be £195 (£350 for a double helping) to cover both a driving and a firing turn. As previously, participants (strictly EMF shareholders only) and 1 or 2 family guests can travel in the train during the five or six round trips during the rest of the day. To register your interest, contact David Kilner on email kilnerdr@halcrow.com, by phone 0771 365 6363 or post to 3 Woodbury Park, Holt Heath, Worcester WR6 6NT. (Note; See also *Stop Press for special Footplate Experience Offer for early share purchasers.*)

7802 Overhaul – the Background;

A gradually dwindling number of Severn Valley home maintained locos, overcome by hired-in visiting locos such as the current 9F 2-10-0 No 92212 (for fees which fund that loco's future overhaul) had begun to characterise the situation on the SVR's fleet. Questions are currently being addressed regarding the railway's strategic direction on loco overhauls including future funding of the home fleet. The early withdrawal of 7802 threw these issues into sharp focus for the Fund's trustees who were faced with the possibility under current arrangements of the loco



7812 on a seaside express! Actually its on the SVR by the banner (repeater) signal north of Bewdley on 28th August 2011. Photo by Tom Clarke

being sidelined for possibly 10-20 years out of service waiting its place in the queue of similarly sidelined locos awaiting overhaul.

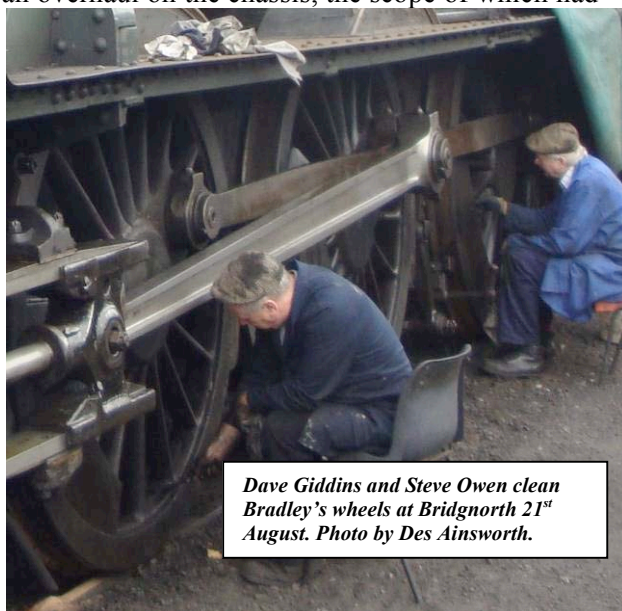
Fortunately through our own previous fund raising initiatives we were in a position to play our part allowing planning of early attention to the mechanical overhaul and a start on the necessary boiler work. Meanwhile the railway is now actively moving from a “pay for eventual overhaul” to “pay for as used” approach, a move which we broadly welcome and which provides greater incentive for loco owning groups to remain active.

First Step – the Loco Chassis;

Realising that the SVR’s own workshop resources are currently over stretched and in the process of reorganisation, the trustees sought out other heritage rail workshops interested in at least overhauling the loco chassis. This resulted in a quotation from Tyseley Locomotive Works for carrying out an overhaul on the chassis, the scope of which had been agreed with SVR’s own staff. This quotation, being entirely within the Funds own means (allowing for some contingency), was duly accepted by the trustees and the order has been placed by EMF for Bob Meanley’s team at Tyseley to commence the work in November this year for completion by late spring 2012. This deal allows EMF volunteer efforts over the winter months to progress items such as cleaning and painting of parts at Tyseley. The SVR have agreed that on return, the chassis will be stored under cover, pending completion of the boiler overhaul.

Next Step – the Boiler!

This is the critical bit currently facing resource constraints but some progress can be reported. After various meetings, initially between our Chairman, Terry Jenkins and SVR managers, and later the Trustees with SVR General Manager, Nick Ralls, agreement has been reached that SVR will assist with the lifting of the boiler from the chassis in October, onto a bogie wagon, and help facilitate the move of the loco chassis to Tyseley. The boiler will then be stripped for a full and detailed inspection at Bridgnorth in order to determine the scope of work required. The aspiration has been agreed in principle for a jointly funded overhaul of the boiler to commence during 2012. This is one important reason for our current appeal for funds.



Dave Giddins and Steve Owen clean Bradley's wheels at Bridgnorth 21st August. Photo by Des Ainsworth.

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SVR New Chairman, Nick Paul

On learning the news of the appointment of a new Chairman, Nick Paul CBE, for the SVR Holdings company (who was quickly reported in the press with a new vision for the organisation), the trustees were delighted to secure a meeting on 27th August with him and Nick Ralls, the General Manager, to hear his views and particularly have an opportunity to discuss and review the issues surrounding locomotive overhauls, not least our own!



Nick Paul was a past Chairman of Advantage West Midlands which oversaw government funding of local infrastructure projects and for which he was awarded his CBE in 2009 (*pictured left receiving it from HRH the Prince of Wales*). He also chaired the MG Rover Task Force and is currently chairman of Tricorn Group plc - a group of companies that develop and manufacture products and services for the environmental engineering sector and also chairman of Midland Expressway. Married with four children and five grand-children, Mr Paul’s two great passions are steam trains and rugby union; so he particularly enjoys his roles both as Chairman of the SVR and also as

a board member of Worcester Warriors Rugby Club.

We were very heartened to learn that Nick Paul was not only already well aware of loco overhaul issues but he was very determined to ensure something is done to rationalise the situation over the next year. The financial issues around loco overhauls, loco agreements etc were discussed at some length with a new SVR strategy now emerging.

The Appeal

Enclosed with this newsletter is a Boiler and Tender Appeal leaflet for subscribing to shares in the Fund to assist with both these necessary projects. We earnestly ask all our shareholders to consider supporting this appeal and thereby bring 7802 back into service by 2013/4. We have already committed existing funds to the loco chassis

overhaul and with much of the tender chassis already funded, the construction of the 3500 gallon tank to sit on top will depend on the outcome of this appeal and the need to put funds towards the boiler overhaul.

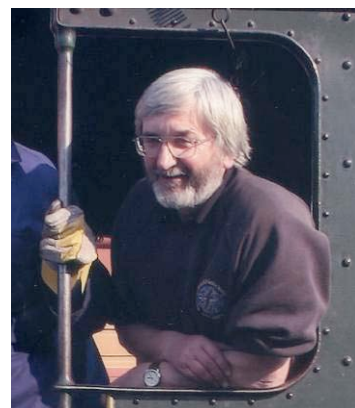
New Lines – EMF Polo Shirts and Fleeces

Smart new EMF emblazoned polo shirts and fleeces, available in either brunswick green or black have been commissioned by the Fund and are available on application via Graham at the Bewdley sales coach, by his email stevensg2@aol.com, phone 01299 400596 or post to Graham Stevens, 13 Fort Mahon Place, Bewdley DY12 2PB. You need to specify size, small, medium or large, polo shirts £15 and fleeces £25 each.

Trustee Appointment – Des Ainsworth

The trustees were delighted that Des Ainsworth has recently agreed to join the EMF committee of trustees with his invaluable background in accountancy and experience of financial and insurance matters particularly from his trusteeship of Bardsey Island off the Llyn peninsula, North Wales. Des, who lives in Tarporley, Cheshire, and an EMF shareholder since 1993, has shared in many of our mainline exploits with Bradley Manor. More recently he has been able to devote more time actively on the SVR, regularly working at Bridgnorth SVR workshops, not only on our two locos but on several others as well. The share appeal leaflet has been largely designed by Des and he has already made a significant contribution to the debate on the way forward for 7802's overhaul.

(Right) Des enjoying last years "footplate experience" on 7802



Tender Progress – a Rusty Acquisition!

An opportunity presented itself earlier this year to acquire the remains of a Churchward 3500 gallon tender chassis (no 2329) hitherto located at Llangollen Railway. It's owning group, in focusing their more urgent attentions on a prairie tank (no 5532), were prepared to sell the tender chassis and, after some deliberation, EMF made an offer which was accepted. In July it was duly delivered to Bewdley and the Fund have since set about recovering the re-useable parts for use both in our own new 3500 gallon tender for 7802 and also some spares for the existing similar tender running behind Erlestoke. The parts include horns, axle boxes, some springs and spring brackets, rear steps, draw bars, some brake gear and brake cylinder parts together with various other parts such as tank filler and beading which eventually can be incorporated into the tender tank.

However we are not inclined to re-use the somewhat deteriorated tender frames which hadn't anyway been costed as a benefit prior to purchase. Also, as we have a re-tired set already, the wheels from this chassis will be available for resale elsewhere. Meanwhile Neil Parker who works in Bridgnorth pattern shop has devoted much time and effort to producing a pattern for the tender handbrake stand, a part which we particularly need and which we would like to get cast soon. Through cooperation with the GWS at Didcot we are able to obtain two tender tank vent castings. – *see items for sponsorship below.*

Items for Sponsorship – Tender Project

Whilst we have made excellent progress with the tender project (mid way between a rebuild and a new build), additional funding is needed to continue moving forward. For space and other reasons we have approached this project in the reverse way from conventional by choosing to concentrate on acquiring a full kit of parts before buying new mainframes, thus allowing more rapid build progress once started. So far around £30,000 has been raised and invested in items for this project.

You may be attracted to being able to identify your own contribution specifically as part of the project, which could particularly benefit through sponsorship of the following items through EMF share purchase:

2 no tank vent castings	£250 each	2 no steel mainframes	£1250 each
1 no handbrake stand casting	£300	1 no vacuum brake cylinder top cover casting	£300
Steel for front dragbox	£750	1 no vacuum brake cylinder piston casting	£300

If sponsoring a particular item interests to you, please fill in the attached appeal form and endorse it with the name of the component you would like to sponsor. As the project progresses further sponsorship opportunities will arise.

‘Allo ‘Allo! What’s going on ‘ere then?

Terry Jenkins (driver, centre of photo) confides “This photo was taken for SVR publicity purposes on the Friday of "Manor Week", just before the start of this year's 40's weekends. The 'Allo 'Allo cast were on the railway over both '40s weekends. It was strange to be on the loco with this lot after seeing them on the telly! The policeman, Officer Crabtree (Arthur Bostrom) was particularly keen on railways and related tales of his spotting days!”



The photo (left) was taken by Bob Sweet and Lawrence Mortimer (on left) was the fireman that day.

Footplate Experience on the Cambrian – (Gerald Lewis of Aberystwyth has sent some reminiscences)

Probably my first footplate rides occurred when I was aged 8/9, when my family, including my father, uncle and aunts, all railway employees, rented an allotment in Aberystwyth from the railway. Its situation made it interesting, being situated in the middle of a specially built railway triangle. This made it easier to turn locos around as the station was a dead-end junction requiring many turnarounds each day. Occasionally the loco driver would stop to give us a short ride, an ideal situation for a young lad, whose only ambition at this time was to become an engine driver. **(Was that your ambition? Then why not try our Footplate Experience in October?- Ed)**

7802 Bradley Manor arrives at Ellesmere with an Oswestry – Whitchurch local train on 1st September 1962. Photo: Robert Darlaston.



Later as a teenager I would make my way to the station in the evening to await a train from the Shrewsbury or Carmarthen direction. I would then be allowed on to the footplate whilst we shunted the coaches ready for the next day's departures, then take the loco to the shed before walking home. My father, a driver, would only use the local bus service when he worked on the "Cambrian Coast Express". He was always clean due to the fact that the loco was prepared by another driver, due to limits on hours of work.

My final footplate experiences were during my service in the RAF stationed at Hereford. If all went to plan I would join the train at Shrewsbury as a passenger, switching to the footplate at Westbury/Hanwood as far as Borth before returning to Aberystwyth prudently in the train as a passenger.

During my time as a TTI on the Severn Valley Railway I was invited onto the footplate on many occasions. I have always considered myself fortunate to have had such wonderful experiences. I never made it to be a driver due principally to the fact that I obtained a scholarship to "Ardwyn Grammar School" in Aberystwyth and my father decided I should look for another career. Accountancy has been a great profession, but lacked the excitement of a steam loco driver. **(By Gerald Lewis)**

Sunday trip to Carmarthen

Attached is a photo (right) supplied by Neil Evans and given to him by the late Ifor Higgon showing double heading on the Aberystwyth to Carmarthen "branch". On 18th May 1959, 7802 Bradley Manor and 7823 Hook Norton Manor are seen climbing the bank to Strata Florida, not far from the Tregaron bog (now a SSSI – site of special scientific interest).



Neil relates "This was a Sunday outing for the local churches. I remember talking to Mike Thomas who was a fireman at Aberystwyth and his brother John who was a driver (and went to school with my mum). They were on 7802 and told me that the carriages had all the water used up by half way and had to be topped up because many of the kids had never seen a flush toilet and flushed them all the time! At Tenby there was a small yard and the tenders were filled by hand by the local coalman's daughter!! Hmmm."

Stop Press! – Footplate Experience offer to existing EMF Shareholders!

To get the appeal off to a good start and as a reward for further support from existing loyal share holders we are offering a FREE footplate experience between October 10th and 12th to the first ten existing shareholders contributing at least £500 to the current appeal in a single contribution. If you wish to take up this offer please contact David Kilner without delay on email kilnerdr@halcrow.com or by post to 3 Woodbury Park, Holt Heath, Worcester WR6 6NT or phone 0771 365 6363.

If you are happy to receive newsletters by email saving us postage, advise Dave Kilner on kilnerdr@halcrow.com