



SUE'S SPOT

Firstly, I have to apologise for the delay in producing this autumn edition of the newsletter. I had originally planned to have it to you by August Bank Holiday, and harangued my contributors to hurry up accordingly. So it is to them I must apologise most. I won't bore you with excuses and my problems; mainly it's a case of not being able to find the time, then the computer took a misogynist turn, one printer kept chewing paper and the other is constantly running out of ink. But despite adversity here we are!

Public Running:

We ran our engines in aid of the Alzheimer's Society (as some of you may know, I am coping with my dad who has been afflicted with this terrible mental disease) and raised £300 for them (unfortunately we never received a receipt although I asked for one – perhaps they forgot!). One August Sunday we started running early for the annual visit by children from Chernobyl. Also, on our August Wednesday Playtime we gave an hour to give the children from MENCAP free rides. We were touched to receive two thank-you cards made especially by the children the next week.

Just a reminder to all our drivers – please ensure as soon as you've finished that your trolley is put away – don't leave it lying around thinking someone else will use it! While I'm moaning, it was disappointing to have hardly any volunteers to man the station, particularly after my plea last newsletter – we've existed by relying on the same faithful few – many thanks to them.



Round The Premises:

Sadly there was another attack on the buildings by the professional graffiti artists, leading us to ask the local council if we could consider painting some of the buildings with anti-graffiti paint. They responded by cleaning off all the graffiti for us! A summer band of Wednesday Workers, lead by Dave Deller, started in July, and they have made great improvements around the Club premises, as listed below:

- Both Clubhouse small side windows have been bricked up, and a cupboard put into one alcove.
- Service and cleaning of Clubhouse ventilator fan (fans to be installed in the ceiling in due course, preparation done ready).
- Fitting of brighter "daylight" tube lights in the Clubhouse.
- Complete redecoration of the interior of the Clubhouse, including plastering and making good.
- Fridge defrosted and cleaned, plus disposal of items with 20th century sell-by dates (joking!).
- Painting of the outside shutters with anti vandal paint.
- Redecoration of Ticket Office inside and out.
- Boarding and painting trolley store ceiling.
- Repair fence and gate.
- Repainting the green paint round the steaming bay and station.
- Repairs, varnishing and painting the outside Club benches.
- Some track work.
- General works and tidying up.

Our grateful thanks to those unsung heroes of the Wednesday Gang (and also Sunday Workers). Please, everyone, keep the Clubhouse tidy and don't leave old clothes and stuff down there if it doesn't belong there, take it with you when you go.



As you may recall, earlier in the year a side window was broken into and the model steam crane that had been donated to the Club was stolen. We'd never steamed it, and it probably wasn't worth much, just nice to look at and consider renovating to full working order sometime in the future (think how long it was before we started completing the Enterprise chassis!). Everyone should keep an eye out for it in their travels; Gerald Spenceley has kindly provided a picture of it here for us, as I couldn't find one.

Club Events:

One of our vice presidents, George Barlow, gave what might be his last talk and slideshow for us at the beginning of May, as he is now well into his eighties and feels it may not be feasible for him to travel to us in future. These are always most enjoyable, and thank you George for greatly entertaining us so well as you have over the years. June, July and August saw our evening runs, with an assortment of refreshments, well attended, and the monthly Wednesday Afternoon Playtimes also continue to be popular. We had hot and sunny visits to Beech Hurst and Sutton Clubs, they are coming to us on Saturday 28th September and 5th October respectively, which neatly leads us

Into Winter:

The Wednesday Workers will continue – there is always something that needs doing! (Dilwyn where are you, the guard rail needs you!) Twenty of us are taking a trip on the Steam Dreams Cathedrals Express for the day on Wednesday October 23rd to Chichester. If you want to join us, please let me know, and I will see if I can book any more seats. Unfortunately, there were not enough takers to make it worthwhile for us to arrange a coach to the Midlands Exhibition at Donnington Park at the end of October. I guess that approximately 180 miles each way meaning at least 6 hours travelling is a bit too much for most to enjoy as a day trip. Looking even further ahead, the Sue's Holidays Including Trains week for M.M.E.S. members in June 2003 is already fully booked (South Wales is the venue). Should you be interested in future holidays, or as a reserve, then let me know.

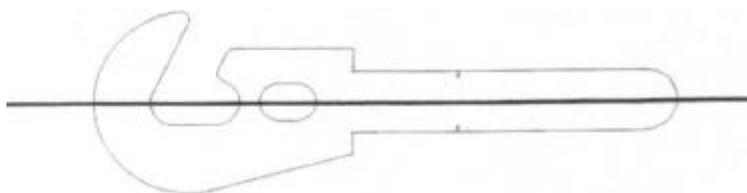
The committee are drawing up formal plans on our proposed additional trolley storage and siding, as the council have confirmed they will consider a formal planning application. Anyone who wants to know more should contact a committee member.

Next newsletter I'll include one or two snippets I've kept back, but I'm desperate for articles (as usual), preferably engineering/train related, although I do often include other items I'm given. I'll accept anything from now; closing date for the Christmas edition is Sunday 8th December, by post, person or e-mail. Computer contacts: The Club Website can be found at www.maidstonemes.co.uk, contact Martin at secretary@maidstonemes.co.uk or myself at SueAParham@AOL.com (please note change from CS.com to AOL.com).

Happy reading – and writing!

Following the Hook

Firstly let me mention that I have slightly modified the design of the hook as shown in my report in the last issue of the Maidstone Model Engineering Society magazine a drawing of which is shown here. All I have done is to line up the centre of the pull onto the centre line of the hook body.



After the design of the hook I wondered what I could do with it, then, as luck would have it, Len and I saw a Bogie Well Wagon which we took a liking to, and decided to use up our stock of hooks building these. So it was onto the computer laying out the design, and detailed drawings of all the parts for the bogies etc. After a number of design changes and a waste paper basket full of crumpled up discarded drawings, we arrived at what we considered to be a satisfactory product. Next it was a shopping trip to various suppliers for metal, wheel blanks etc. and a set of drawings on disks for the Laser people.

Then we started the manufacture, and the first thing we realised was, that when you decide on a 3" dia wheel it is not a good idea to purchase 4" blanks even though they might be less than half the price of 3.5" blanks, and we had heaps of swarf to prove the point. Well, some time later after clearing our workshops of much unwanted swarf, we set to and made a set up jig for welding the main frames, as we had decided to build 2 wagons each, and by Boxing Day we had them completed and on the track at Canvey.

No sooner had we got them on the track when a queue formed and we were asked, "Will you make me one?" "Will you make me one?" Well, to cut a long story short, we did manage to make one or two more. Here they are pictured below (apologies for picture quality):



I must say, although they did hold up the other projects we were doing, we did enjoy building them. As there has been a great deal of interest in them, we are contemplating disposing of the scraps of paper and backs of envelopes, and doing a set of drawings so that anyone who wishes can have a set to enable them to build their own.

LAURIE NICHOLS
JULY 2002

The Riddles and the Anderton Boat Lift



Industrial Archaeology has long been an interest of Geoff's, from the enormous steam engines that drove the machinery in the huge mills and the magnificent engine houses to the vast network of waterways which covered a large part of the country, feeding fuel and raw materials to the industrial heartland and the finished products back to market.

We first discovered the Anderton Boat Lift, which is near Northwich, Cheshire, when Geoff was checking through his books for sites of interest to visit, when we were planning a narrow boat holiday in the mid eighties. It is the first boat lift built in the world and was opened in 1875 joining the Trent and Mersey canal to the Weaver Navigation. Unfortunately we never saw it working. It had been closed in 1983 after

a routine safety inspection found some serious structural defects. Originally hydraulic it was extensively refurbished and converted to electricity in 1908 but is now, once again, hydraulic.

Over the years we had visited the site to catch up on the progress of the fund raising for restoration work. The last time we saw it, in the mid nineties, the machine deck had been removed. The gear wheels and cable drums were lying around the base of the lift with the grass growing through, it was a dismal sight.

We were delighted when, early this year, we read that the work had been completed and the restored lift would reopen in the spring. We were determined to see it working and our June 'steaming' holiday in Derbyshire would be the ideal opportunity.

Tuesday – a steaming day at Urmston, on the southwest side of Manchester - a drive to Northwich would only be a thirty-mile (or so) detour. Off we went, map in hand, to find the Anderton Boat Lift. We arrived about 5.30ish only to find that the lift had closed at 4.30 p.m. – We wouldn't see it working today.

Wednesday – a free day (no steaming). Anderton Boat Lift, here we come – from Buxton, across the peak district and on to Northwich, a sunny day, a pleasant drive and some spectacular scenery. The visitor's centre is open and they do passenger trips through the lift. In we went to book our tickets only to be told that the lift was closed for maintenance all day. The first and only day it had been closed since it reopened in March. When were we going to see it working? -Thursday and Friday were steaming days and we were going home on Saturday – another detour perhaps?

Saturday – cars loaded, everyone heading for home, except 'you know who'. We really had to give it another try. Third time lucky.



It was open, it was working and we had our tickets to ride. It takes about 30 minutes for the transfer which is a very sedate pace compared to the dozens of boats that they could move daily in it's heyday. No health and safety regulations in those days.

We boarded the boat at the top, in the canal basin, for the trip down in the lift. The boat eased it's way gently along the aqueduct and into the upper caisson, the gates were lowered and sealed, we were ready and waiting to go, and waiting..... and waiting..... and waiting A small problem, some debris from the river in the gates of the lower caisson had prevented them closing correctly. They would need to clear the obstruction and restart the closing and sealing procedure for the lower caisson, should only take ten to fifteen minutes. We passed the time by chatting to the two crewmen about the restoration and general operation of the lift. We chatted amongst ourselves, thirteen passengers, was this an omen? Half an hour had passed, another problem, this time with the computer software. Opening and re-closing the lower caisson gates had upset the programming, it had gone into safety shutdown mode – they needed 'the man who knows about these things' and he was at home, but had been summoned. We were stuck, sixty feet up, but the view was pleasant, the weather sunny and the boat had a toilet. Fine, until they told us it was out of order. Another half an hour and the natives, several young children and an elderly lady (no, not me) were getting restless and hungry – it was now well past 1.30 p.m. and none of us had eaten lunch before we started the trip. The walkway back along the lift was only a small step from the side of the boat so we asked if we could get off, walk back along the lift and aqueduct, into the canal basin, but were told that it was not allowed and should only be contemplated in an emergency (with the loo out of order they may soon have one). We watched the video, we waited..... Another half an hour, another plan. If they could open the gates the boat could be reversed back out along the aqueduct and into the canal basin from whence it came. Small problem, the two gates, one on the caisson and one on the aqueduct, had to be exactly in line before they could release the air pressure. The caisson, which our boat was in, had 'settled' and was 40mm lower than the aqueduct. They would have to attempt a manual lift to align the gates - was there a man somewhere winding a



handle?

At last, success, having rerouted some of the hydraulics, the caisson lifted the 40mm needed, the gates were opened and more than two hours after we left we glided slowly back into the canal basin. The operations manager was very apologetic but regrettably the lift would not be working any more that day.

We came so close, we have our complimentary tickets and we are going back. We *will* have our trip through the Anderton Boat Lift.

Pat Riddles.



HOW PICTURES CAN MISLEAD *by Ed Nutter*

A guy at the club was telling me the other day how he recently got up at the crack of dawn and drove a 400 mile round trip in the search of a 5" gauge tender engine he had seen advertised on the internet.

Although he is working on several tender engines, he is impatient to have one in working order. Having been lucky on the horses he has been watching out for several months for a good engine to be advertised. He has been scanning the model press and several web sites without any success.

He thought his luck had changed when details arrived recently from a dealer, of a 5" gauge A3. A 'collectors engine' he was told. Several more pictures of this engine was requested and duly received by electronic mail. On driving the 200 miles to see this engine, how disappointed he was when on seeing the model in the dealer's window he could immediately see that the build quality was far short of what he had interpreted from the pictures.

Buying a second hand model steam engine is a risky business even if the build appearance is good. A scruffy looking engine can be rebuilt into a fine looking model but only if the initial construction is good and accurate. One can never be sure if the initial construction is good, but obvious visual impediments such as poor symmetry usually indicate that the build is poor – his opinions he quickly added.

This apparently was the second disappointment he had had. Previously he had driven well over a hundred miles. Negotiated a mile long pot holed farm track, been forced onto a ploughed field by a huge farm tractor who refused to give way, to find another model which looked good in electronic images, but in reality he would have been ashamed to have been seen with.

He was tempted to make an offer for this engine as a rebuild project, but was persuaded against this by an accompanying modelling friend who remained rather more rational.

Marigold, as a few know him, explained to me that the internet is a very useful and powerful means of communication particularly with the ability of electronic imaging but one does have to be careful with the interpretation of these images. Not that there was any intent to deceive, he stressed.

He went on to explain how he has now created a slight problem for himself, in that prior to these trips he has always resisted car journeys in excess of 200 miles. Taking the wife down to the daughter at 180 miles distance has previously been the limit. A return trip the same day out of the question! Not any more says her indoors.

To cap it all, the evening of the 400-mile abortive trip, he received a call detailing the availability of a local engine. He is now the proud caretaker of a superbly built GER 1500 series 4-6-0 in superb working order.

Austria 2001: Part 2 by Brian Harris

The second steam outing featured the Zillertalbahn, which has its base on the other side of Jenbach bahnhof to the already described Achenseebahn. Now this is a real working steam railway, which uses both diesel rail cars and four steam locomotives as necessary.

The line, opened in 1902, runs on 760mm track, from Jenbach to Mayrhofen and is 36km.long. The journey time is about 45 minutes. Unfortunately on the day of our trip it decided to rain so all the snaps are from the Jenbach yard. Loads of steam and smoke though.



Locomotive No. 2

Locomotive No.5.

Note Lenz poppet valve gear

A more general view of the engine sheds. The modern one has engine No.4 (a large 8-coupled tender engine) inside in an advanced stage of refurbishment (sorry no pics. didn't have the flash attachment).



The other side of No.5. just after coaling up by the JCB type tractor just behind the engine. The Lenz poppet valve gear driven by the Walschearts' valve gear more clearly seen in this view.

Mainly the local communities own the company it serves and moves the majority of the heavy freight into the valley. On the day of our excursion a mainline train of loaded timber, wagons was being shunted into the exchange siding, to be put, one at a time, onto 760mm gauge transporter wagons. These were being assembled into a train in the narrow gauge sidings, to be taken later to a sawmill half way up the line.

As an alternative, after a very damp couple of hours in Mayrhofen, (the apple strudel and coffee was out of this world and the high point of the visit), we returned by local bus service. This is also part of the Railway Company and that took just over the hour for the same journey. The roads in the valley are very winding so the railway is also the quick way to get about.

Jenbach station: on the left the Zillertalbahnhof.

To the right the Achenseebahn.



The articles represent just two days out of a ten-day break. Austria has a transport system to be admired. It is punctual, clean, and easy to use, even if you do not speak the language (German Austrian). More to the point everything connects and provides a seamless journey from A to B. Many of our excursions were by local public transport (48 people, some elderly). A pity we can't seem to do that in this country.

End of the line: a damp day at Mayrhofen



Yet another engineer joke:

An engineer was walking along a California beach deep in prayer. Suddenly he said out loud “Lord, please grant me one wish.”

Suddenly the clouds parted and a booming voice said: “Because you are a good man I will grant you one wish.”

The engineer said: “Help me to build a bridge from here to Hawaii so I can drive over to there any time I want to and be known as the greatest engineer of all time”.

The Lord said: “ Your request is too much trouble, think of the logistics! The supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific, all that concrete and steel! Think of another wish!”

The engineer thought for a long time. Finally he said, “Lord, I wish that I could understand women. Why they cry, what they are thinking when they give me the silent treatment, why they say nothing is wrong when it is, and how can I make a woman truly happy?”

After a few minutes God said: “ You want two lanes or four on that bridge?”

A(nother) Week in Yorkshire

It doesn't seem to take much of a reason for Lisa and me to find an excuse to spend time in Yorkshire. The excuse this time was the Annual dinner of the Ryedale Society of Engineers (of which we are members), followed, a week later, by a Mainline Rally at the track at Gilling. So, a week it was to be then. Rather than spend all this time in a Bed and Breakfast, we arranged to hire a cottage for the week, which would allow us to come and go as we pleased, and allow us a bit more space than the single room that the traditional B&B offers.

The dinner was set for Saturday evening (11th May) in Helmsley. With no other plans for the day, we were in no particular hurry, so left around midday. The M2 was closed (again) due to the road works, and we stopped somewhere along route for a leg stretch/bite to eat/pee break, but still managed our destination and home for the week before 5 p.m.

The actual dinner was a very pleasant affair, with absolutely wonderful food. Everyone had pre-ordered some months ago. Fortunately, our choices were listed on the reverse of our place names, as I believe that just about everyone had no recollection of what they had originally ordered. My own choice for the main course was chicken breast in a very exotic sounding sauce. Apart from being delicious, the only other comment I would like to record is that I would love to see the chicken it came off. It was *enormous!*

Sunday was an opportunity to visit the Engineering show at Harrogate. Armed with a lengthy shopping list, a very pleasant time was spent wandering around the various exhibits and stands. Despite all expectations, I managed to spend very little, although it has to be said that very little on the shopping list actually managed to find it's way into my shopping bag. The main item was to be an inverter to allow me to run a 3 phase equipped machine from a single-phase domestic supply. Unfortunately I had omitted to obtain the specific details of the motors I need to run, not realising that the information was vital to obtaining a compatible solution. Oh well, once the required details are to hand a quick phone call should resolve the situation.

Monday was spent with friends in Middlesborough, the setting for some of the scenes from the new series of 'Auf Wiedersehen, Pet'. For those who have been watching the series and wondering about how the writers managed to find a bridge about to be demolished that they could write into the script, I have a revelation; it's all done by computers. Sure, Middlesborough does have a transporter bridge and that's my point. Middlesborough has a transporter bridge. It hasn't been demolished, taken apart or otherwise disposed of. The big gaps and missing pieces seen on TV were all created digitally; the bridge remains, as it was the day it opened in 1911, and I've got the photos to prove it. As this will not appear in a Newsletter until long after the series has ended, I hope I haven't spoiled it for anyone.



Tuesday was a day of rest, with a minimal shopping trip to Helmsley, principally to buy a new pair of walking boots. A few other essential items were also purchased to keep the larder stocked, and that pretty much sums up the day. We did however go for a short walk, in the vicinity of Rievaulx Abbey, to break the new boots in.



The Abbey, or ruins thereof, is still an impressive building, which happens to be built in the middle of nowhere, which makes it rather incongruous. It was built by a bunch of Cistercian monks who came to England from France in the 12th century. All I can add is that if they were looking for peace and quiet, they definitely found it. Even in the 21st century it would be difficult to find somewhere quieter or more peaceful.

A day on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway was planned for Wednesday, and we treated ourselves to a day rover ticket to facilitate the plan. Unfortunately, being a weekday and still fairly early in the season, services were marginally limited. Whilst it didn't hamper us in anything we wanted to do, anyone who wanted to perhaps get off at every station to explore may have found it a little restricting. The only mistake we did make was to buy a guide to the Rail Trail at the end of the day rather than at the beginning. Had we known about some of the walks when we got off at Goathland that we only found out about later, we may have spent our time there a little differently. Other than that, we had a thoroughly enjoyable day. One thing I found interesting was that two of the locomotives that were in steam the last time we visited are now in pieces in the workshop. A4 'Sir Nigel Gresley' was seriously in pieces, with the boiler nowhere to be seen. A2 'Blue Peter' was minus a few connecting rods, and it looked as if some work was being done to the lower edges of the firebox. For those who may be interested, trains in steam on the day were a Black 5 and a Standard class 4. All that was rounded off by a visit to the footplate of the Class 4 and the signal box at Goathland, which I have to say, differs quite considerably to any of the boxes I normally work in. (It was clean, for one thing!)



We had nothing specific planned for Thursday, but as the day dawned to be fine and sunny, we thought it would be nice to do another walk and take in some fresh air. As Sutton Bank is only a few miles from where we were staying, and affords some fine views from the top of the escarpment; we decided to spend some time in the area. It was also quite pleasant watching the gliders from the Yorkshire Gliding Club, who are based at Sutton Bank, being towed into the air and then being left to their

own devices to try and stay airborne.

Despite not having flown a glider for some 10 years now, there is still a part of me that feels as if I am soaring through the clouds whenever I see one of these graceful machines in the air. And despite the serene appearance from the outside, I can appreciate how fraught it can get in the cockpit when the ground is looming closer and the next thermal is proving rather elusive. But that is all part of the fun isn't it?

One of the main tourist attractions in the area is a large chalk horse that has been carved into the hillside. Unfortunately, the contour of the hill means that this spectacle cannot be fully appreciated from the ground, either from the path at the top of the hill, or from the car park at the bottom. The only views that can be obtained of the complete carving are either from a distance out in the valley, or from the air. Perhaps that's the real reason why the Yorkshire Gliding Club based their club where they did.



And then we come to Friday and the weekend - the Mainline Rally at Gilling. I am sure those of us who spent a week in Yorkshire last year will remember the track at Gilling very well. For those who have never had the privilege, the track is laid at ground level and consists of a large convoluted oval of double track, with a set of sidings on both the 'up' and 'down' lines. Signalling on most of the circuit is automatic, but in the area where the sidings meet with the mainline, all signals and points are controlled from a miniature signal box, containing a 30-lever frame.

The frame is fully interlocked to prevent signalmen setting up conflicting moves, and on such a busy weekend, the box is restricted to authorised signalmen only.

People come from far and wide to attend the rally, either to run their locomotives or just to watch. The number of people who turn up is reflected in the variety of motive power on show. To list just a few, there were a couple of Y4's, an A1, an A4, a V2, a P2, a B1, two Britannias, an Ivatt 2-6-2 tank, a Black 5, an unrebuilt Southern West Country class, a couple of different Great Western tank locomotives, an LMS Pug, numerous classes that I was unable to identify (too lazy to ask) and several battery powered diesel outline locomotives. The only proviso insisted upon for visiting locomotives is that they are 5" gauge, and are of a British prototype. Looking around I would guess that in excess of 30 locomotives were in attendance.



Outnumbering this impressive line up, however, was the amount of rolling stock available to be hauled around the track.

Again the variety was quite exceptional, ranging from Mk1 coaches to the humble coal wagon, with all sorts in between.

The idea is that trains are run to a timetable and, generally speaking, smaller locomotives are used in the



sidings to marshal trains, and the bigger ones are used to run them around the mainline. Where possible, the type of locomotive is matched to it's train so that something like the Britannia would be used to haul a rake of passenger coaches whereas a Gresley 2-8-0 would be used to pull a mineral train. This seems to appease the majority of drivers, who come as much for meeting old friends as they do for driving their engines. No doubt there will always be some for whom this type of gathering does not appeal; for many of those who attended it is a long journey, and time spent actually driving can be considered as limited.

However, there are other aspects of this type of weekend that go some way towards offsetting this disadvantage, which probably explains why whenever Lisa and I have been able to attend we have started to recognise some familiar faces, who continue to return whenever these events are held. As the owner of a narrow gauge locomotive I am 'disqualified' from taking part with my engine. Notwithstanding this, there

are other aspects you can get involved in without driving, although I have to say that I was lucky enough to be offered a go on one of the Y4's that was being used to marshal trains in the 'up' sidings. At other times I have spent time assisting the yardmaster, which is the other side of the coin as far as shunting goes, and on this latest visit I also managed to spend some time inside the signal box. This was on an assisting basis only, but was fun none the less. Bit of a busman's holiday really, but just like real signal boxes, the box at Gilling has it's own little quirks



which means that it will take more than a couple of hours before you are deemed competent enough to operate the frame without supervision, especially when running such a busy timetable.

All in all we had a marvellous time, and I have to say that it was nice to get back to work for a well-earned rest!

ANORAKNAPHOBIC REFLECTIONS

As a self-confessed train spotter (Anorak) of many years standing, I have the scope for a great deal of reflection back over my life of the many events that had an element of 'Train' in them.

From my earliest days, before I could walk, to the more recent events at Uncle Tommy's I've always found that trains and railway lines were never far away and they would always attract my attention, sometimes at the expense of something else that should have had my undivided attention.

In the beginning, so the stories told at family gatherings have explained, way up North in my hometown (city) of Leicester, as the first son of my parents, the first nephew of many aunts and uncles and the first grandchild of a granny. All of these members of my family (on dad's side) would be only too eager to take it in turn to push me in my pram through Leicester's Victoria Park and show me off to anybody that couldn't run away quick enough. My treat was the trains that went over the bridge that we had to pass on the way there and back. So the story goes, if I didn't get to see two trains there would be 'all hell to pay'. But they got a laugh out of it as at that age my vocabulary was very limited; - I called trains 'gogogs' and clocks 'goggies' and when approaching the bridge I would get wildly excited and start yelling 'gogog gogog' thus causing so many onlookers to take an interest in the subject of my exuberance. If the pram pushers were aware that a gogog was coming they knew that it was in their own best interests to make sure that we were close to the bridge when the gogog arrived otherwise there would be 'all bloody hell to pay'. Not that I can remember much about it, but this activity would often be the cause for me, my pram and pusher to be seen scorching it's way across the park at speed just to make sure that I didn't miss the gogog. Granny was almost blind and very small in stature so this added to the spectacle of Paul being taken train spotting as she weaved her way across the park going, hopefully in the right direction and not crashing to many times en-route.

Now, my Dad being a tradesman not long out of the Army after the war did a bit of D I Y and one Saturday morning he took me in the pram to the local builders yard to buy some sand. Prams in those days were big and featured a large well that was accessed by lifting up a panel in the bottom of the bit where the kid sits and this is where the sand was stowed. Dad wasn't in a rush to do the job and so he left the sand in the pram for a few weeks. What Dad didn't do was tell all the pushers that the pram was half full of sand, so there were many comments about me suddenly getting heavier and that it was now getting very much like hard work to get me to the bridge at the same time as the trains. And just to make it a bit more of a challenge for the pram pushers, whilst careering across the park to get to the bridge in time to see the gogog we had to go past the clock tower which could not be ignored since my only other word was goggy and it was another one of my fascinations. And so there we would be, racing across the park with me straining against the straps trying to stand up to reach out to the goggy whilst the pram pusher was busting a gut pushing the pram, me and the sand as fast as possible to get to the bridge to see the gogog

And so this was my introduction to Train spotting; ANORAKNAPHOBIA.
Wake up and pay attention, there may be a test at the end of this article.

When I was 4 years old we moved from Leicester to Kent where Mum's family lived and by that time I had a brother so we shared the pram when my legs got tired and mum was in a hurry, the sand had by that time been removed. I always looked forward to visiting certain southern relatives; a granny, two aunts and uncles who lived near Gads Hill close to the river because in order to get there from Twydall where we lived, we had to walk along what was called the cinder path that ran alongside a reasonable length of railway to the East of Gillingham station.

This was very good for train spotting and so my enthusiasm was still satisfied, although I no longer called them gogogs and I didn't have the squawking rages if I didn't always 'spot' a train.

At the age of seven the railway thing reached new milestones; - I had my first train set; a Hornby Dublo

'OO' gauge goods train (sometimes Dad would even let me play with it whilst he drank a cup of tea), but also, I would be sent to visit granny all by my own. It was much safer in those days for kids to be out and about. I always took the most favoured route along the cinder path that ran between the railway and Gillingham cemetery (bit spooky on a cold winters afternoon) from Woodlands road railway bridge to Featherby road level crossing and that was my favourite place to be when the Iron Horse came through, out of Gillingham station gathering speed towards the coast, belching smoke, whistling, rumbling and sending vibrations through the ground. It all meant so much to a small boy who could get so close to it at the crossing gates and feel the rush of wind, the ground shake and the sound and the smell and above all else there was a number or a name to record in that most treasured possession; the spotterpad. Do you remember those times? Go on, Confess to it.

I really took my time going, and coming back so that I could spot as many trains as possible. Timing on a Sunday was crucial since 'Sunday service was very casual and if I didn't get the timing right then it was a train less trip. Mum used to worry if I was late back and get on her bike to come and find me. She always knew where I could be found and would give me the usual verbal clip round the ear, but dad always understood, to me he was the ultimate train spotter, the 'Grand Toggle', what he didn't know about trains wasn't worth knowing.

I was by that time well on my way to becoming an Anorak and in the following years many other events involving railways happened and have left a library of anecdotes to be told in later years. In due course you will read of them including the final episode of the Uncle Tommy affair, which I can't finalise now because I don't want to upset the chronological 'train' of events any more than I have done already through my earlier articles.

Paul Rolleston

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