

# Railway Ramblings

Issue 111

October 2019

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The monthly newsletter of the Hitchin Branch of the RCTS

## Meetings This Month

At Hitchin (19:30-22:00, doors open 19:00)

8 October: **London to Velke Kapusany, a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Odyssey** – “Who knows where this may lead us” – David Jackman

At Welwyn Garden City (14:00-16:30, doors open 13:30)

29 October: **Along the Tracks from Home and Away** – “Something for everyone today” – Steve Batty

## From the Photo Album



61306 'Mayflower' passing under the new overhead gantry at Langley Junction, Stevenage heading for Lowestoft with a Steam Dreams tour on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019

*Photo: Adrian White*

*If you have photos (old or new) that you are willing to share with other members please supply them, with a suitable caption, to the Editor ([John.Dossett@btinternet.com](mailto:John.Dossett@btinternet.com)). They should be your own photographs!*

# Chairman's Platform

Our September meetings were well attended with a number of "new faces". There have also been a number of members now choosing to sign-up to receive this newsletter. All of this augers well for the future of the branch.

An injection of new books received during September is a very welcome addition to our Book Sales table at branch meetings and I hope that many of you will be able to find space on your bookshelf for that extra book that catches your eye.

A reminder that for the October meetings the branch would like to encourage you to invite a guest AND sign them in at the members' donation rate (sharing your membership number on the meeting register). Sharing your love of railways with others is a benefit of being an active member of the RCTS.

## Observations at Bressingham Gardens (27/8/19)

The following special and very detailed report has been received from Stuart Hicks Secretary, Thames Valley Branch, RCTS:

A group of around 20 members and friends arrived at Bressingham on a warm Tuesday morning at a civilised 1100. Unfortunately, as the 0900 from Liverpool Street had been cancelled owing to a problem with the inbound train, your scribe arrived later having cycled from the gentle 3 and a bit miles from Diss station having taken the 0930. In the car park is plinched a broad gauge Finnish loco, which although carrying no identification, is believed to be VR Tk3 2-8-0 1144.

Our Group admission entry paid, everyone got their tickets which enabled unlimited travel on the three narrow gauge railways and up to three rides on the Gallopers. Tickets had to be shown before each ride as alternative entry tickets did not include rides. Some friends had kindly waited for me with my ticket and we were soon in around 1130 and in good time for our first ride: the 1140 Garden Railway circuit with 1350 yards of 10¼" gauge track. The three carriages are numbered 1,2 and 3 and the usual locomotive is *Alan Bloom*, constructed in 1995 in the railway workshops. The line runs through the gardens with a balloon loop at the far end. The locomotive is then turned on a turntable between trips.

The ride takes about 12 minutes and after pictures of the locomotives back at the station and on the turntable, we went to the nearby Fen Railway (Nursery Railway until 2017) departure platform for the 1200 service. Three coaches were in use here of the 6 available - an open saloon, a closed saloon and in the centre a brake closed saloon (the other three being in a nearby siding) and motive power was *Bevan*, built in the workshops in 2010. The Fen Railway is 15" gauge and has a lengthy loop 2,310 yards long, with a separate arrival platform before the level crossing. A request to stay on across the level crossing to complete the circuit was refused.

Although we had hoped to get a picture of that train leaving before the next Waveney Line departure, we soon realised that they left more or less simultaneously and decided to take a trip (at 1230) on that route. It intersects the Nursery Railway at two points, one just beyond the station and another further south and train running is such that the Nursery Line precedes at both crossings, but gives time for passengers to wave at each other. The Waveney line is another loop circuit, 2,486 yards long. This was the route on which the two Krupp pacifics ran for some years, but they have been out of service for over a decade. *Rosenkavalier* is now in the museum block and *Mannetreu* is in parts at last undergoing restoration.

Near the Waveney line platform is the shed for both this and the Fen Railway.

Neither the miniature line built in 2013 - a circular track of both 7¼" and 5" gauges nor the standard gauge were running. I understand that the standard gauge runs in Sundays, using *Martello* and guards van on the 616-yard route mostly parallel to the last section of the Waveney Line. The miniature runs occasionally but judging by the state of the track at the crossing into the amusement park it had not run that recently.

Trains appeared to run every 20 minutes on the Garden Line all day to 1620 and every 20 minutes in the morning and 30 in the afternoon on the other two lines where there was less demand, last on both being at 1630, both having a short break for crew lunch.

Three other things to see, mostly under cover:

- Raydon Wood signal box, restored with equipment from Oakington.
- The Exhibition Hall, which contains a LNWR TPO vehicle, Krupp locomotive *Rosenkavalier*, a variety of railway ephemera (plates, signs etc.) relics upstairs, along with two old model railways which are being updated (and not running). Also, downstairs are an old fire engine, other items in the Dad's Army collection (four episodes were made here and are played in a cinema area).
- The standard gauge halls. These contain the standard gauge collection, part of which is loaned by the NRM, along with a few other larger items, which include:
  - Royal coaches 2901 (of 1957) and Queen Alexandra's saloon (ECJ 396)
  - LBSCR Terrier class 662 *Martello*, now operational
  - LSWR *Granville*
  - GER E4 number 490 and J69 87
  - LTSR 80 *Thundersley*
  - NSB Class 21c 377 *King Haakon VII*
  - Beckton Gas Works 25
  - Baddesley Colliery Beyer Garratt 6845
  - DB/NSR 5865 *Peer Gynt*

There is a diesel shunter numbered 11104 whose cab you can enter but this appears to be industrial in origin, not a Class 03.

The Fen and Waveney line sheds contained several locomotives, not all visible, but outside were number 3 and Penrhyn Quarries 316 *Gwynedd*. And inside I could see *Cloister*, D6353 and works loco *Ivor*.

And, of course, the other important exhibit is The Gallopers, for which a maximum of three rides per person are available with each daily ticket, although I only took one....

For more details of some of the exhibits, see:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bressingham\\_Steam\\_and\\_Gardens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bressingham_Steam_and_Gardens)

A variety of images are available of locomotives, trains, gardens, gallopers, signal box, museum exhibits etc.

Best wishes  
Stuart Hicks  
Secretary, Thames Valley Branch, RCTS

## Book Sales

The book-sales table is popular at meetings and the revenue helps towards our running costs. If you can contribute any books to the branch they would be most welcome, and it will give you shelf-space to purchase "new" books for your own enjoyment!

## More from the Photo Album



47802 & 6233 *Duchess of Sutherland* pass the new track bed for platform 5 at Six Hills Way Bridge, Stevenage with the 5Z53 Southall to Norwich WCRC ECS on Friday 6.8.2019

*photo: Adrian White*



Street running by a large 2-8-2T (built 1932) on the Mollibahn (900mm) in Bad Doberan, Germany on 5 August 2019.

*photo: John Dossett*

# Newsletter Distribution

This newsletter is distributed by the Branch Chairman (Steve Lacey) using email. If you do not currently receive a copy directly but would like to do so, provide him with your email address and you will be added to the list. Conversely, if you currently receive a copy but wish to be taken off the distribution list then please advise him accordingly. Steve's email address is [gricersteve@hotmail.com](mailto:gricersteve@hotmail.com)

For the present a small number of printed copies will continue to be available at branch meetings.

## Forthcoming Branch Events

During November 2019

At Hitchin (19:30-22:00, doors open 19:00)

12 November: **American Rail Rover** "Big country, big trains, large loads and more" – John Day

At Welwyn Garden City (14:00-16:30, doors open 13:30)

26 November: **The Railways of Western France** "Our annual visit to the continent with Michael" – Michael Bunn

All members are welcome at all meetings.

A reminder that the new meeting suggested donation rates, which started at the September meetings, are £2 for members and £3.50 for non-members.

*Railway Ramblings is published by the committee of the Hitchin Branch of The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society. Such committee does not endorse any personal opinions expressed in this publication. The committee comprises Steve Lacey (Chairman), David Elsdon (Secretary), Paul Holloway (Treasurer), Chris Alton, John Dossett (Newsletter Editor), Martin Elms, Roger Moulden and Adrian Scrutton. The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation Registered with the Charities Commission*