

No. 88 – Winter 2009/2010

KING'S MESSENGER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE 6024 PRESERVATION SOCIETY LIMITED





Editorial

When the ultimate story of main-line preserved steam is told, Bernard Staite's name will resonate more significantly than any other. The stamina and longevity of this remarkable pioneer resulted in railway authorities across the national network becoming happy to host preserved steam. It cannot be overstated how much we all owe to Bernard, or how difficult the railway climate was in 1971. Largely due to his persistence and determination in partnership with sympathetic railway professionals, the 1970s and 1980s saw barriers toppled, and through what his son has described as his "vocation" Bernard coaxed and cajoled people into acceptance, so that by the arrival of "open access" in the early 1990s promoters were pushing on an opening door.

It's fair to say that for over three decades he was the "father" of the main-line preserved steam world as we know it. He would modestly credit the volunteers but we have all incalculably benefitted from his influence. He knew the preservation world intimately and while Bernard's primary concern always was for the fare-paying passengers on excursions, he was hugely generous in sharing his knowledge and experience with those of us who had a lot to learn.

It was a great honour and privilege for the Society to be asked to help Bernard's family fulfil his final wishes on Llanvihangel bank and as much a prize for this *King's Messenger* to have as its centre-piece his family's personal responses, accompanied by words of friends from inside and outside the Society.

Quite by chance, a piece written in a recent *British Railway Modelling* magazine by 0-gauge modeller Mr Ken Payne captures the richness of the far-flung consequences of Bernard's work. Mr Payne wrote as follows: 'Jeff, my youngest, and I drove over to Sapperton to see *King Edward 1* storming up the bank with a heavy train. We spoke very little as we drove home afterwards, our thoughts still full of the sound of the King, the staccato exhaust, the trail of steam curling away down the misty valley on the still night air, the total silence of the small group of fellow enthusiast (mostly middle-aged), who, until a few minutes before, had been chatting excitedly and stamping their feet to keep warm; all very nostalgic, very emotional. Eventually Jeff said "if those people who call us mad because we go train spotting could have seen and heard that, they might understand why we do it". Jeff wasn't born until nearly the end of steam on the main-line. "Just the way it was" I mused'.

What we have all regained, whether we are closely involved in steam, or more remotely connected as many line-side enthusiasts are, owes so much to Bernard. Thank you.

Front Cover – On the 12th December 2009 No. 6024 put on a faultless display on its run from Bristol to London and back and is seen here crossing the Thames at Maidenhead on its way to Paddington. **Photography Mrs Green**

Inside Front Cover – On the 15th November 2009 No 6024 awaits departure from Kidderminster with the Members' Day Luncheon special which was a great success, attracting a sell-out attendance. **Photography Clive Hanley**

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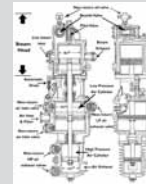
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David Elphick
11/2007

Membership Report

by Richard Abbey

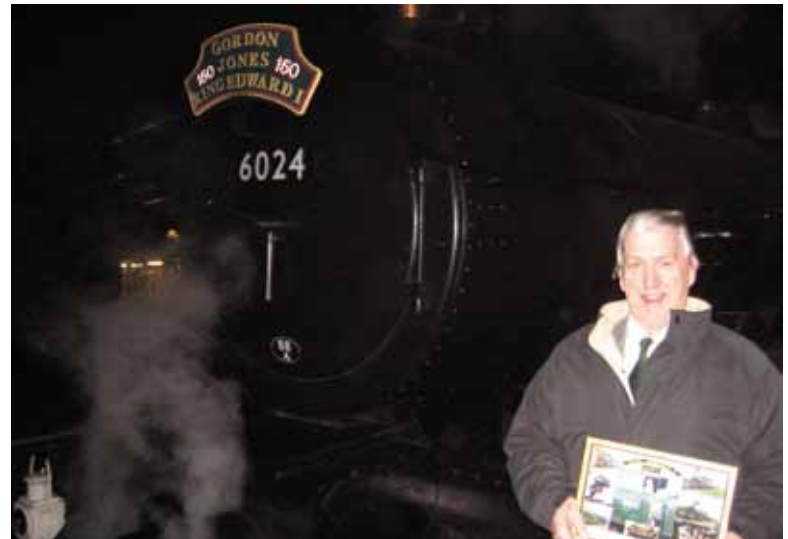
After an enforced absence from the main line due to boiler repairs in the early part of the year, No. 6024 came back with a vengeance on the Torbay Expresses, during the indifferent weather of what was forecast by the weather men to be a scorching summer! Full trains with blanket membership leafleting, together with the locomotive's appearance at the West Somerset Autumn Gala, encouraged a number of new members to join the Society.

A number of members stoically manned the locomotive's footplate when on static display, selling the benefits of membership to West Somerset visitors and spreading the word. Unfortunately, the last two/three months have seen a number of members pass on, which in itself is a timely reminder that not only is the locomotive getting older, but so too are we!

Membership Statistics (previous tally in brackets)

Honorary members	6	(6)
Annual members	42	(42)
Life members	66	(66)
Club 6024	307	(305)
Total	421	(419)

The *Club 60-TwentyFour* Annual Members Day took place on Sunday 15th November in glorious autumn sunshine, after a week-end of torrential rain. The King hauled the SVR dining set on a return trip to Bridgnorth. Unfortunately, dining accommodation was limited and the trip was over subscribed early on. Not wishing to turn members away in the future, plans are already being formulated for an event in June/July next year, when hopefully we will be able to accommodate all members and guests who wish to attend. Thank you for your continued support.



Above – Gordon Jones and his headboard on 12th December 2009

Photography Tim Watson

NOTICE: King Edward I at Teignmouth c. 1954

Original acrylic 24" by 18" framed. £295 + post & packing

Limited edition prints available at £25 or £45 framed

Shown Opposite

Why not commission your own painting to your specification.

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STOP PRESS!

On Saturday 12th December 2009 Society Member Gordon Jones of Newport achieved the astonishing record of travelling on his 150th. railtour hauled by No 6024 since 1990. The locomotive hauled an excursion from Bristol Temple Meads to London Paddington and return.

The locomotive carried a special headboard to mark this massive commitment of support to the Society by Gordon, and he was presented with the headboard at the end of the run. Thank you Gordon, and here's looking forward to the next 150!



Engineering Report

by Colin Henderson, Huw Button, Martyn Bane

Review by Colin Henderson

We finally overcame the extra work imposed upon us at the last Winter Maintenance period, which resulted in not only additional costs but some loss of revenue.

The loco was run in for 300+ miles by courtesy of the West Somerset Railway, to prove the bearings which had been renewed. We also ran a Members' Train after the EGM for those who wished to try the evening delights of Minehead, it was noted most members seemed to enjoy a bag of local Fish & Chips on the platform.

A light engine move took us back to Barton Hill Bristol ready to pick up on our Torbay Express duties. However before we undertook these duties we had been requested by Bernard Staites family to comply with Bernard's last wishes of disposing of his ashes on Lanvihangel Bank with the King. We considered this an honour and were happy to assist for a man who had done so much for steam preservation. The loco undertook the run from Bristol to Shrewsbury and return without any problems.

We then undertook The "Torbay Express" runs. Unfortunately an air brake problem prevented us from running the first of these Torbays, the fault developing late in the day in an almost inaccessible position. Repairs were successfully completed over the following few days, access to a pit at Barton Hill, and a test with their air brake test rig which they use for their own rail vehicles, proved the repair was successful.

The remaining runs were fault free and to the usual high standard we have come to expect as the norm from the DBS regular crews who man the loco.

An interesting event occurred upon arrival at Taunton during one Torbay, Bells and Two Tones our water supplier had broken down, so no water! A bit of traditional local thinking came in to play, with the train being moved forward to Fairwater Yard so as not to block up the works, and the Fire Brigade being called out. One of our local members had to accompany the fire crew to Fairwater Yard as being from Bridgewater they did not know where it was.

After successful completion of the Torbays the loco ran light engine to the Severn Valley Railway to undertake a commitment to work there.

Opposite – Roger Fox and Pete Goodland strip down and clean up the Society's spare air pump at Williton. **Photography Martyn Bane**

Unfortunately the SVR were unable to fulfil their request for us to run, except for the run of our members train on a Sunday. This was undertaken and a pleasant time was had by all, the weather being very good. During the period at the SVR the loco was on display in the platform at Kidderminster, and the working party were kept busy with a constant stream of visitors to the loco during the half term week and at the weekends, with quite a few voluntary donations being given. This also gave our working party Northern Members (north of Bristol) an opportunity to assist with the ever ongoing job of cleaning and polishing the loco.

During this period our working party Southern Members (south of Bristol) have been attending Williton works WSR to overhaul our spare air pump, which we have recently acquired, with a complete strip down and examination of air valves, steam valves, and the air and steam pistons. It is hoped to fit this spare during the next maintenance period.

With Winter approaching and the end of this running season near, we now have to look forward to our winter maintenance programme, the major item being the washout and annual examination of the boiler by our insurers and our VAB .

I would just like to thank all the working party members who have given so much time and commitment over the last year. Any member who would like to come and help, or just call in for a natter and a cup of tea, are most welcome.

Locomotive by Huw Button

The engine has run well on its various duties this year in part making up for the late start. Aside from an unfortunate leak at a soldered joint on the air brake train pipe (connected to the hoses with the red ends) which prevented the locomotive from fulfilling its first Torbay Express duty there have been few major out of course items to deal with. The normal items requiring attention include the odd firebar and stay nuts needing to be replaced between runs and sometimes ashpan spark arresting screens.

Given the nature of the boiler repairs undertaken earlier in 2009 there was some concern to see how things would settle down once out on the mainline. Testing on the WSR had been relatively trouble free with a handful of small tubes needing to be re-expanded as the firebox tubeplate moved

and settled. To everyone's delight no further work has been required since leaving the WSR in August. The tubeplate has remained entirely dry without even the slightest sign of leakage. The same is true for the smokebox tubeplate.

One area of concern surrounds the superheater elements. One was found to be holed in August with two more in November. It appears as if a new set will be required sooner rather than later.

During late August it was noted that the injectors were not quite keeping up with steam demand when the locomotive was working hard. On inspection it was found that the fireman's side injector combining cone was nearing the end of its life. A new cone was sourced curing the problem instantly. The delivery cones on both injectors were replaced in 2008. The driver's side injector is also not in the greatest condition with some pitting and scoring of the combing cone surfaces. A new cone is in stock and will be fitted during the winter maintenance period. The best parts from the current spare injector and those removed will be combined to give the best spare.

The air pump has given some trouble which can be traced initially to lubrication problems, which proved fairly easy to resolve. More seriously, at times, the pump beats became irregular especially when nearing maximum working air pressure. On investigation it was found that the vertical pilot valve had broken into two pieces. With grateful thanks to the 5029 and 71000 groups a suitable spare was obtained whilst the original valve was repaired. Since that time the pump hasn't been 100% happy so, as detailed elsewhere in the Kings Messenger, it is to be removed this winter for a full overhaul, its first since being fitted in 1996. The society's newly acquired second air pump, currently under overhaul, will be fitted in its place.

As reported in the railway press a suspected broken spring leaf on the tender was detected during a mainline fitness to run exam in August. Given its position within the spring and the apparent lack of movement it was agreed to allow the locomotive to run provided the spring was monitored. If the leaf moved opening up the fracture the spring would have to be changed prior to running again. As this report is written the leaf has shown no movement. A spare spring is in stock. It will be fitted during the winter maintenance period.

The limited running has meant only one washout has been required. This was carried out at Minehead on October 10th using the excellent facilities at hand. Our thanks to all on the WSR who worked to ensure everything went smoothly. No new problems were detected during the washout and associated inspection. The water treatment continues to do its job within the previously mentioned constraints of using a less than perfect antifoam.

A steam test was carried out the following day, again without any problems. As this report is written the winter maintenance period is being planned. Items to be attended to include:

- Regulator – This has continued to be reluctant to fully close despite attention last winter. It is not believed there is a fundamental problem as, on occasion, it will shut almost perfectly. Further investigation is required to determine what needs to be done to cure the problem for good. It is likely that the regulator rod will have to be removed as part of the process. At the same time the non-return valve on the regulator lubricator is to be replaced as a very slight leak (into the smokebox) has proved impossible to stop.
- Pipework – Following the air brake pipe problem in August the system is to be checked over in minute detail. It is anticipated some piping will be renewed. Other pipes, where accessible, will also be included in this process as a few have become a little tired.
- Renewal of the right hand outside big end bearing.
- Examination of the rear driving wheel springs.
- Examination of all 4 pistons.

Support Coach by *Martyn Bane*

Nothing of note required attention until after the last Torbay Express. Unfortunately, at the end of this trip, the coach wheels picked up flats on all wheels. On inspection it was decided the best course of action would be to have all the wheelsets turned. This was carried out at Bristol St Philips Marsh courtesy of First Great Western. Our thanks to them for accommodating us during their busiest part of the year (leaf fall season) and for DB Schenker's assistance in moving the support coach from St Philips Marsh to Barton Hill after the work was completed. The coach was delivered to St Philips Marsh by 6024 on 1st December, the first time in many years the locomotive has worked on to that depot.

This winter the coach needs a number of problems to be addressed. The bogie bolster anchor rubbers are nearing the end of their life. Some were replaced in October with the remainder to be renewed during the winter. One battery box is slowly rotting away so is to be replaced. The steam heat system, which has been temperamental for some years, is to be given a thorough check through. The only other planned work at this stage is to undertake the required annual examinations.

Water Wagon by *Martyn Bane*

The water wagon has had no booked work this year and as a result as remained on the WSR, mainly at the S&D Trust's Washford yard. This winter attention will be minimal. In addition to the required examinations covers will be sourced to protect the brake discs from the elements.

General Manager's Report

by Richard Abbey

Reading a recent "Main line diary" listing in a well known steam publication, I was amazed at the number of steam rail tours being advertised, no less than six excursions were booked for the 28th November and seven for the week-end of the 12th/13th December. Of course, not all excursions run and problems with crewing, together with a finite number of passengers, inevitably result in cancellations. Locomotive owners are quite understandably keen on running as many trips as possible in order to help fund what is becoming a very expensive hobby.

It has been said that new-build A1 No. 60163 *Tornado* has taken the British public's imagination by storm. I have to take my hat off to *Tornado's* promotional team for securing so much national press coverage. Last spring hardly a day went by when, on opening either a broadsheet or tabloid newspaper, there was a picture or article about *Tornado*. This of course, culminated in the three musketeers of Messrs. Clarkson, May and Hammond racing motorbike, car and steam locomotive to Edinburgh. What price could you put on hours of B.B.C. T.V. film making? Let us hope that this high profile exposure of steam will rub off in the future with British tourists remaining in the U.K. for summer holidays and whilst in Yorkshire, travelling to Scarborough, Scotland to Mallaig, Wales to Pwllheli and of course, the West Country, travelling on the "Torbay Express" from Bristol to Kingswear, all by steam.

2010 marks not only the 175th anniversary of the Great Western Railway, but also our locomotive's 80th birthday and it is hoped to suitably celebrate this milestone next year. It is the Management Board's intention that No. 6024, as the main line flagship of the Great Western, will play a prominent role in next year's celebratory events, which might well end up with a very interesting line up at Didcot later in the year!

I mentioned in September's *Club 60-TwentyFour* Newsletter that member, Ray Harris, had kindly volunteered to be part of the fund raising team for the next major overhaul. If, say, three other members would volunteer to assist, it would not only spread any work, but stimulate ideas for sources of funding that those of us closely involved with the day to day running of the locomotive and Society, have probably overlooked. Please step forward and offer your services as soon as possible.

I am very pleased to report that member, Shirley Parry, has kindly volunteered to take on the role of Education Officer for the Society. Grateful thanks are extended to Roger Waring for stepping into the breach when

requested, some years ago. The Society Board has been conscious for some time of the increasing age profile of the membership and the need to recruit new, younger members for both physical and administrative roles. This has been difficult due to main line running and periods when the locomotive is inaccessible to the general public, located at E.W.S. and D.B. Schenker depots. Only when visiting preserved heritage railways can members who do not hold a Track Safety Certificate, access the locomotive.

Shirley has ideas for a "junior" club, with various competitions and benefits in order to try and encourage youngsters not only to show an interest in steam (and the King in particular) but also to nurture this interest with perhaps some hands-on work on the locomotive (under supervision). It is an area fraught with difficulties, due to the Criminal Records Bureau checks required to work with children, although some members already have the necessary qualification in place. Please feel free to contact Shirley if you have any ideas or suggestions, especially if you are able to help in getting such a club off the ground.

CORRECTION

Apologies to **Mr Dave Down** of Plymouth.
The photograph published on page 23 of King's Messenger No 87
Spring/Summer 2009 was taken by him and not as credited.

Overleaf left hand picture – Just catching the last sunset of the summer at this location, No 6024 skirts the Teign estuary at Shaldon on the 27th September 2009 with the "Torbay Express".
Photography Mike Tyack

Overleaf right hand picture – Later, in full dark but caught by a monster flash-gun, No. 6024 and the 27th September's "Torbay Express" reach Whiteball summit and milepost 174.
Photography Mark Wilkins





6024 Air Brakes

by Martyn Bane

As many members will remember 6024 was fitted with an air braking system in 1996 by the now defunct Lancastrian Carriage & Wagon Ltd. The system's major components are a Polish made steam driven reciprocating air compressor (referred to as the pump from now on) and brake system control valves. These are a mix of Davies and Metcalfe and Westinghouse components recovered from diesel locomotives in the UK.

A long term omission in the Society's Spares inventory has been a comprehensive set of air brake system components. The driver's brake valve (Davies and Metcalfe type FV4) was one spare held, other spares consisted of air pump valve and piston rings but that was about it. In the past, when components needed to be changed, these had to be borrowed from other groups. For example the Merchant Navy Preservation Society generously allowed 6024 to be fitted with their air vacuum relay valve (Davies and Metcalfe DV2) when 6024's was considered to be faulty.

In recent times a concerted effort has been made to increase the spares held for the entire air brake system. The Society has recently acquired a spare DV2 valve, a Westinghouse Application Unit and a number of smaller spare parts such as spare valves for the pump. In the early summer of 2009 perhaps the single most important spare was purchased – a practically complete pump. Thanks are due to Richard Corser who located this pump and proceeded to negotiate an excellent price for it.

The precise history of the pump fitted to 6024 is currently unknown. What is known is that the pump design is that of the German braking systems company Knorr Bremse. Polish factories produced pumps of this type under licence for many years. As steam was being withdrawn in Poland during the early 1990s, pumps of this type started to be imported into the UK, initially for use on narrow gauge locomotives. Following the fitting of air brakes to 35028 Clan Line in 1994 (with a different type of pump but also originally a Knorr Bremse design) many more pumps were imported with one ending up on 6024.

These pumps are made up of three cylinders. The top is the double acting steam cylinder and associated components – referred to as the steam head. This head contains two valves. A vertically mounted small bore pilot valve and a larger horizontal shuttle valve. Between the two, steam distribution to the cylinder is controlled. Below the steam head is the low pressure air compressor cylinder. The piston size is nominally 240mm. Below this is the

high pressure air compressor cylinder with a nominal diameter of 140mm. The three piston heads share a common piston rod.

The basic operating cycle is air is drawn into the low pressure cylinder. On the opposing stroke it is compressed. At a fixed pressure this air is exhausted via non-return valves travelling directly to the high pressure cylinder where it is further compressed. Again at a set pressure non-return valves open exhausting the compressed air to the 35' long after cooler (simply a pipe run of the required length), then through a grease separator into the locomotive's main reservoir. This reservoir, which is located under the tender, is made up of three tanks with a total volume of 25 cubic feet. The operating pressure for the system is 140psi with the safety valve being set at 150psi. From the main reservoir the air brake system is feed via a series of control valves which will be covered in a future article.

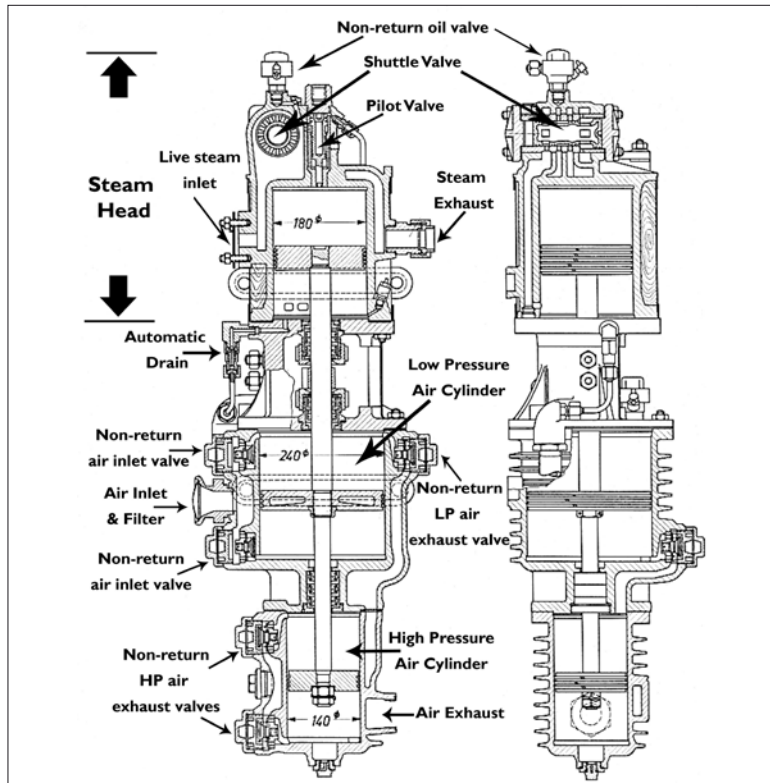
From 1996 the pump gave remarkably good service with only limited attention until one Sunday morning at Bridgnorth when the locomotive was being prepared for service. A loud banging started which, after some investigation, was tracked down to the low pressure cylinder. The low pressure piston head has come off the common piston rod – the banging heard was the last throws of the head being attached to the rod. It didn't take much more banging to detach it. Not surprising the threads on the piston rod has stripped entirely. At this point the pump went back to sounding more or less like normal but it was incapable of producing air above about 50psi.

To cut a long story short it was determined the cause of the failure was down to the non return air valves on each compressor cylinder being very badly carbonised. This carbonisation caused the valves to hardly open thus creating a considerable back pressure in the system. The pump was fighting against itself being unable to adequately exhaust the air it was compressing. This explained why, for some years, it has been necessary to operate the pump with the control valve opened fully (several turns). Following repairs to the pump, which included servicing the non return air valves, only ¼ of a

turn was found to be necessary to operate the pump at what was its normal speed.

This problem had a silver lining. A great deal was learnt very quickly about the functioning of the pump, until then something of a mystery, in part due to the expert assistance of Richard Kempton. Richard, who was then overhauling 34027 Taw Valley, had much experience of this type of pump. It was also realised how easy it was to remove the pump. The pump had to be removed from the locomotive to repair the piston rod and detached head. This was achieved within a couple of hours proving that should it ever be necessary, in theory, pumps could be exchanged on a mainline prep day (not that we would want to have to do this.)

Following repairs the pump performed very well during the remainder of 2007. Come 2008, despite initial reluctance to start after many months



Above – Cross-sectional annotated drawing of No. 6024 Air Pump.

inactivity, things started well. But then problems started! Throughout the summer lubrication and valve trouble dogged the pump. In essence having run since 1996 without a thorough overhaul the pump was starting to misbehave. For example the vertical pilot valve was found to have broken into two pieces in August. It had already been decided to overhaul the newly acquired spare with the aim of fitting it during the winter 2009-10 maintenance period. The problems experienced brought this job near the top of the task list.

So, come the middle of October 2009, with the locomotive at the Severn Valley Railway on static display, a few members of the engineering team started to meet at Williton on Saturdays to assess and overhaul the spare pump.

This pump had been stored outside for many years and looked like it. Most of the outside was covered in moss. However, appearances can be deceptive. Internally the pump was in excellent condition – it appeared as if the pump had been overhauled, packed with grease and never used. This pump's history is also unknown other than to say it is of the same type as the society's original pump and it is believed to have come from Poland.

As the pump came to pieces and components were checked very little was found to be amiss. A few small items had suffered during storage but, essentially, it was sufficient to strip it down, clean up the parts, check fits and clearances then reassemble. Perhaps the biggest job was removing the accumulated growth from the outside. This task and that of thoroughly cleaning the steam and air passages was made much easier by the use of Williton's decarbonising tank. This large tank is full of a noxious smelling fluid which does an excellent job. The major components were left in the tank for a week. On recovery they came out looking almost like new.

The list of items renewed on the pump is very short – 8 non return air valve springs (the springs fitted were incorrect preventing full opening of the valve), 14 valve rings (on the advice of Ian Riley these have been made from phosphor bronze instead of the original cast iron which is prone to breakage), 1 control steam pipe and 3 copper lubrication pipes. In addition it has been decided to replace the steel cladding bands on the steam head with brass bands, a common practice on these pumps in some parts of Eastern Europe. All the piston rings were found to be like new.

As this article is written the pump has been partially reassembled. Once a few of the items listed above have been delivered the reassembly can be finished. The pump will then be tested on compressed air. Once we are happy with its performance and following the return of 6024 to Williton for its annual round of inspections and planned maintenance this pump will be fitted to the locomotive. This will allow the original pump to be removed for a long overdue overhaul after which it will be kept as a spare should it be required.



Bernard John Staite

Many Members will know that Bernard Staite died in early April 2009 after a long battle with cancer. It was Bernard's lasting wish that his ashes should be disposed of in the firebox of a 'King' (his favourite class of locomotive) on Llanvihangel bank (on his favourite route). It was a great honour and privilege for the Society to be able to assist Bernard's family carry out his final wishes.

Mrs Dorothy Staite and Family

Thank you so very much.

Andrew Staite (10th August 2009)

Thank you from the bottom of my heart! Words cannot express my gratitude for today!

Joanne Burkinshaw (10th August 2009)

Just seen a photo of the King looking immaculate. Please pass on my sincere thanks to EVERYONE involved in granting Dad's final wish in such a magnificent manner and I would also like to wish the 6024 Society all the very best in the future love and best wishes. Jo xx

Andrew Staite (19th August 2009)

On behalf of the family I would very much like to thank you and the Society for all the effort that was put in to the operation and for allowing our late father's ashes to be disposed of as per his last wishes.

We all know that this would not have been possible without the help and determination shown by the Society in making 6024 available. For the family it was also a privilege to be allowed to travel on the train and for my younger brother to be present on the footplate of 'KE1'. We have all taken comfort from the efforts and steadfast support of the Society over the last few months.

We do not need to tell you what the GWR meant to Dad and it was fitting that 6024, the Society and that the crews from DBS were involved. It would also have meant a great deal to Dad that Alun Rees was also present.

6024 was superbly turned out and the wreath was beautiful. To find Stocks for the wreath at this time of year must have stretched the resources of all involved.

As a family we wish both you and the Society continued success in your endeavours on the main line and may 6024 steam on for many more years!

Opposite – Demonstrating yet another variation on this particular theme, No 6024 crosses the Huntspill on the return 27th September 2009 "Torbay Express".

Photography Mike Tyack

Jonathan Staite on behalf of Dorothy, Joanne, Rachel, Andrew, Jonathan and their families (31st July 2009)

As I write this letter to you on behalf of Bernard's close family I am all too aware of what an important and emotional day it will be for all of us. Whilst not all were able to attend, everyone is aware of why the trip is so special.

In the last ten days of his life both Andrew and myself promised Dad that his long-standing wish for his ashes to be placed in the firebox of a GWR King travelling up Llanvihangel bank would be carried out. I am struggling to explain how grateful we are that this wish has now come true. It is an event we will never forget.

For literally as long as I can remember Dad was working hard with what became his vocation, steam. As a family we are so proud of what he was able to achieve however he was always the first to say that it was the volunteers and railwaymen that made it happen. You are one of those that Dad spoke so highly of.

When we see any mainline steam engine running with the regulator open full, the bright red and orange glow of the fire, the oily smell of smoke and steam, the sound of metal on the rails and hear the clear whistle in the air we always think of Dad. What better memorial can there be to 'BJS'.

".....right away to shed".

Chris and Rae Fogden

I write to thank both you and the Society for your generosity and kindness helping the Staite family to fulfil Dad's last wishes.

With 6024 looking magnificent steaming along Dad's favourite route and the kindness shown by all those on board a potentially difficult day for us all became a celebration of Dad's "Steam Life".

Thank you once again for all your help. Monday 10th August will now be memorable for all the right reasons.

Memories of the Staite Family

Lemon Bonbons in small white paper bags, Liquorice Toffee, spearmints, those hard green mints in green plastic wrapping. Lion Bars. Ice cream

Pistachio, rum 'n' raisin, Mr Whippy, "two 99's please", Steak the Sunday before Christmas, Donald Russell, Granddads' meat van, Belly Pork slices with baked beans and peas. A good pork pie. Woodpecker cider, Lime & lemonade, "...milky coffee Doffee..." two pills please. Nic's sausage rolls. Eccles cakes. Jelly and fruit. Every year at the end of November "*How many of you and when are you here over Christmas? I've got to get the meat order in*" and we always asked "*Has Mum put the sprouts on yet?*" – soggy sprouts and mushy peas.

Hamlet cigars, B&H, timetables, a piece of card to lean on when writing. Handwriting nobody could read, days in the sales rep. Escort, banana fritters, and luncheon vouchers. Green shield stamps. Brake van rides, white wooden steps to climb up to carriages, whistles, ticket punches, Double Home box, black shiny drivers cap. The black & white photo of Grandad, Dad and the King.

Pencil cricket, rodeo tonight, beach cricket, cheese and beetroot, cheese and pickle, cheese and tomato. The green tartan plastic picnic case. Camping Gaz behind a windbreak on the beach. Jelly and bottles of pop in the stream to keep cold. Grandad's caravan, Cie Bach, Whitland, Pendine Sands. Cows' milk straight from the dairy in a bucket, gas mantles. The roof rack and Uncle Pete's car when we broke down. Bridport, Dartmouth, crabbing. Fish and chips on Newquay Harbour, ice-creams with clotted cream on top at Bayards Cove. Two bottles of pop with 4 straws and if we were very lucky a packet of crisps each.

Throwing apples in the Orchard. Apple picking for Bulmers. Dodging the geese to get to and from Foof's. Going back the Bromyard way. Swimming on Dad's back in the river and the sea. Canoeing to Hay-on-Wye or on Cie Bach beach. Bonfires. The Knapp and Arran Avenue. The Morgan car. "*Our kid*". "*Nobody knows like our Rose*". The tick and chime of clocks. Yelling "*Get down*" at every dog he came across however placid and then muttering "*Mad dog*" but eventually admitting a soft spot for Jessie. Football pools and football scores via radio, tv, teletext and eventually even the dreaded mobile phone. Cricket on the radio and tv at all times of the day and night.

Last Night of the Proms on the tele, at Shugborough and even at the Royal Albert Hall. Classical music blaring in the car apart from when listening to Johnny Walker's Drive Time or Wogan. Anything with John Thaw in or David Jason – *Open All Hours* (Gladys!), *Only Fools and Horses*, *Darling Buds of May* (Ma!). Diana Dors. Fern Britton. Sky+ being the only technology he ever truly embraced. The History Channel, *The Two Ronnies*, *Casualty*, *Countryfile*, *Saturday Morning Kitchen* (food heaven or hell). Len and Bruno – Seven!

"*Put the plug on or I won't buy it*". Did he ever buy a screwdriver? Buying a Betamax video recorder. Firework displays and parties. The Red Arrows.

Pulling off the door of the Mini in the accident over the road yet when he saw a car on fire refusing to use his fire extinguisher in the Company car because of all the forms he would have to fill in. Trying to replace the taps and smashing the sink downstairs. On the phone about work as the house was on fire the day before Rae got married. Being tickled pink at Jon's brown leather gloves – just like on *Juliet Bravo*.

"*Wait til your father gets home*"; "*all meat a real treat*"; "*she's a bouncing piece*". The use of the word "queer" in its original context when describing someone's actions. "*At the end of the day*"; "*that'll do from you*"; "*now be careful*"; "*madam you should not buy French apples*"; "*one to come off*". J. Sainsburys and reward points. Stocking up for the gravy browning shortage. Eating the pick and mix all round the store. Insisting on parking in the Parent and Child spaces when he had his 40 something Daughters in the car with him. Every birthday and Christmas "*What did we get you?*"

The sounds of the river at Marden, the green leather chair, the small folding table, the railway room. Railway magazines everywhere. Andy's 40th birthday weekend – ladders and bald heads. All of his grandchildren in the day room at the Hospice that last weekend and how we laughed and teased him back.

Every time we said goodbye Cheero!

In recognition of Bernard's immense contribution to the promotion of preserved mainline steam and particularly to his close interest in No 6024, a number of contributions have been received following the appeal in King's Messenger No. 87

Alun Rees

Many many thanks to you and all at 6024 for yesterday. Hope engine was ok at Bristol. Alun. Unforgettable!

Brain Dodd

When No. 6000 *King George V* steamed onto HP Bulmer's property on 30th October 1968, amongst those present was Bernard Staite, enthusiast for all things GWR and son of a Hereford Barton driver. When the 6000 Locomotive Association came into being to promote and run the Bulmer Railway Centre and promote No. 6000, Bernard took over as General Secretary from Brian Whitehurst and thoughts of a return to main-line steam running were never far away. Working with Peter Prior, MD of Bulmers, who was of course responsible for No. 6000 coming to Hereford, the campaign to persuade BR to lift its ban began.

Many and varied were the objections put forward by BR. Lack of watering and turning facilities, shortage of suitable coal, lack of vacuum-

braked steam-heated stock, diminishing numbers of men trained to drive and fire the locomotives, etc., etc. All these obstacles were, however overcome, and on the 8th September 1971, Bernard and Peter were present in the BR Board-room at Paddington to finalise arrangements, the object as stated in the press release being to establish what difficulties are inherent in the running of occasional steam excursions.

My involvement began with a phone call from Bernard, requesting my presence at the Bulmer Social Club in Hereford – *“I can’t tell you what it’s about but you can guess!”* It was then that a group of us learned of the proposed “Return to Steam” tour lasting one week, and we were at various times to steward the Bulmer Pullman train and see to the needs of No. 6000. All the arrangements for the week were detailed, an early indication of Bernard’s organising abilities. That the tour was a success is now history, and when one looks at today’s programme of steam-hauled tours, it is sometimes difficult to comprehend that it all sprang from 2nd October 1971. We can’t overestimate the part played by Bernard.

This was to be continued in his role with the Steam Locomotive Operators’ Association (SLOA). BR was becoming very concerned about the amount of management time being given to running steam specials which were being promoted by many different clubs and organisations, who saw it as a way of making money. SLOA was formed to bring some organisational discipline into a rather chaotic situation, and Bernard and George Highcliffe did just that. Bernard had an instinctive grasp of what was feasible and what was not, and whilst was always willing to consider new routes and locomotives for submission to BR in the person of David Ward, he was careful to keep his enthusiasm in check, softly-softly being his motto. He was much in favour of regular services over certain lines, for example the Settle & Carlisle, where once a path was established, the amount of BR planning needed was much reduced and the operation became almost routine.

SLOA trains were always stewarded, with each coach the responsibility of a certain society, for example, the Severn Valley Railway, Tyseley, Bahamas Loco group, 6000 LA, etc. Bernard placed great importance on passengers being kept informed concerning any problems, delays, connections at the end of the day, etc. *“If passengers know what is going on, they are much happier; there’s nothing worse than no information”*. SLOA stewards were once unkindly christened “Staite’s Gestapo”, but they were there to ensure the safety of passengers, particularly at run-pasts.

Bernard was a strong supporter of run-pasts. *“It gets them off the train to stretch their legs, get a photo, or go for a walk”* was his reasoning. Safety was paramount however, and I well remember one occasion when after stopping to perform two run-pasts, a group from a certain preserved

railway saw no reason why they should not cross to the opposite platform and not stand on the footbridge, after all they ran trains without all this fuss on their railway. Bernard had the train held and pointed out to the group that they were NOT on their railway now and were expected to obey the rules of the big railway. Furthermore, if they persisted in their attitude, there would be no run-pasts at all, and the other passengers would be informed of the reason! The group saw the force of his argument and moved!

It was Bernard who arranged run pasts on the Settle & Carlisle. The Divisional Manager at Preston sent his Chief Locomotive Inspector to observe on the basis that if he was happy, then they could go ahead. The Inspector was happy, and it was a distinct advantage that he was an ex-Western man from Shrewsbury; he and Bernard got on very well!

Bernard did not “suffer fools gladly”, particularly those who contributed nothing to revenue, and when a photographer who had not bought a timing sheet rang up to complain that he had missed a photo because the train was running twenty-five minutes early, and that the timetable should be adhered to, Bernard’s unsympathetic reply was to the effect that he should have got there earlier; SLOA trains were not run for the benefit of photographers!

As well as being a superb organiser, Bernard was a very practical man in all aspects of railway operation. More than once he donned a smock and demonstrated the operation of buckeye couplings to BR shunters unfamiliar with them. On another level, it was not unusual in the latter stages of a tour to find him in the kitchen of the dining-car doing the washing-up to help out the crew. He established a very good relationship with the regular watering crews on tours out of Euston and Kings Cross, and SLOA stewards never went hungry!

At the ‘Rocket 150’ celebrations at Bold Colliery it was decided to re-organise the loco yard one evening, and it was no surprise that the man in charge of all the complicated movements was Bernard. He did the job without problems once it had been decided which way the loco on each end of the line was going to move. He was no stranger to the footplate and once fired A4 *Sir Nigel Gresley* light engine most of the way from Shrewsbury to Hereford, whilst the Inspector drove and the driver and fireman rode in the coach! *“Like giving strawberries to a donkey”* was his verdict!

Bernard was an enthusiast who, through his insistence on high standards of operation of steam specials and his instinctive grasp of what was reasonably possible, gained the trust and respect of the professionals of every rank, and when he eventually went to work on the big railway, his reputation went before him and he continued to work in the same reasoned and logical manner. The present-day steam movement has much to thank him and to remember him for.



Richard Abbey

In April this year mainline steam lost perhaps its Number 1 champion in the death of Bernard Staite. As many members will be aware, his name was synonymous with No. 6000 *King George V*, in particular the breaking of the British Rail steam ban in 1972. Between Peter Prior of Bulmers, the Hereford cider makers, and Bernard, No. 6000 enjoyed many years on the main line,

paving the way for our own No. 6024 *King Edward I* running on the national network today.

I first came across Bernard when living in Shropshire and a visit to Shrewsbury station to see *KGV* roll in on a rail tour from Hereford and the south. Bernard was there in his trademark dark blue dust coat, ensuring that the locomotive was efficiently cut off the train, run up to Crewe Bank sidings



Above – No. 6024 slowly crosses the Victoria Bridge over the River Severn on the Members’ Day special on 15th November 2009.

Photography Bob Green

Opposite – On 20th September 2009 No. 6024 bursts from Parsons Tunnel on the down “Torbay Express”.

Photography Bob Green

for water and servicing before running through the station and turning on the triangle, before heading back to Hereford. Bernard took the time to talk to me, kindly assuring me that the loco would be back and if I walked down to the Hereford end of the platform I could get a good broadside view of the locomotive.

Latterly, with his SLOA and Past Time rail tour involvement, we had many happy outings together, with Bernard always coming up into the support coach to talk to the crew and, of course, listen to one of his beloved Kings working hard "at the sharp end". I was privileged to be invited to join the Staite Pullman in February 2005, when in order to mark Bernard's retirement, Nos. 6024 and 7802 *Bradley Manor* double headed the V.S.O.E. Pullman coaches from London Victoria to Paignton.

The loaded test run on Monday 10th August, over the north and west route, was a very moving day, with Bernard's ashes being placed in the firebox of the King, whilst climbing Llanvihangel bank, just north of Abergavenny. The long blast on the King's whistle, echoed around the hills as we said goodbye to the great man of mainline steam.

Thank you Bernard, for all you did for us.

Richard Corser

"*I seem to have got a bit of an audience*" boomed out amongst a small gathering of 'regulars' assembled on Plymouth station as Bernard beat a retreat into the train. No. 5051 'Drysllwyn Castle' had failed and BJS was once again on the 'phone arranging a diesel pilot for No. 5029 at short notice. For the 'regulars' he presented a dilemma as on the one hand he often presented an unapproachable guise, yet on the other he could provide all the answers that they needed in situations such as above.

Bernard Staite's name had long been established as a leading light of steam's return to the main line before I first met him. It was on my second ever mainline steam excursion on 30th December 1985 which saw No. 3440 *City of Truro* being paired with No. 4930 *Hagley Hall*. Joining the train at New Street, Class 47 47522 was exchanged for steam at Kidderminster. We had a good run until Ledbury when news broke that 4930 had run a hot tender axlebox. We then proceeded at a stately 25mph to Hereford whereupon the SVR got to work on a repair. Managing to speak to Bernard on Hereford platform he told me that despite the problem being associated with 'Kings' that "*Halls could do it as well, my boy!*"

Bernard's encyclopaedic knowledge of railways and their operation stood him in a position of influence and during his latter working life spent at EWS he would often be consulted with general railway operational problems. Coupled with this was a great respect from colleagues and industry partners

many of whom were given nicknames. Alun Rees was simply "J A"; Steve Philpott, who arranged depot and station access was "*The Old Flower Pot*" and Paul Blowfield was "*un-printable*."

2nd May 1998 will be a date that sticks in my memory as it was the first, unsuccessful, attempt at steam's return to the Blaenau Festiniog branch where BR Std Tank No. 80079 with load 6 got no further than the infamous Milepost 19 (1:47 on reverse curves) between Bettws-y-Coed and Blaenau. Bernard was in harness in one of the compartments and his familiar breathy announcements to the passengers were coming thick and fast. Now by pure co-incidence Hertfordshire Railtours had run a special to Llandudno for the Victorian Festival which was also operated by EWS so BJS made arrangements for the Class 47 to run from Llandudno to Bettws-y-Coed. He came over the P.A. system announcing that "*I've told the Old Fat Man (John Farrow – another nickname which he will always be known by) that we've had to borrow his loco to rescue the train. He wasn't at all happy when I told him...*". The 47 hauled the whole train at reduced speed (due to loco being vacuum braked) back to Llandudno Junction. Things became more animated when 80079 was hand coaled by a team from SVR with Bernard himself joining in. The stewards did not need to warn people to keep back from the edge of the platform as a few of the lumps sailed over the bunker and landed on the platform itself! And when eventually the Hertfordshire Railtours train returned through the adjacent platform with dinner being served, all his passengers just looked on, flying coal and all, at this mischievous train which had considerably delayed their return to London!

Bernard's first love was obviously the Great Western and one could sense his excitement (as well as my own) in October 2004, despite by now in less good health, as No. 7802 *Bradley Manor* headed west from Shrewsbury along the Cambrian Line for the first time since 1965. Fitting then it was when No. 7802 paired with No. 6024 to haul "The Staite Pullman" to mark his retirement from EWS in February 2005 with the VSOE carriages and those of us lucky enough to be there on the day witnessed a man visibly humbled by so many people wishing to show their gratitude to a great servant of steam.

Roger Fox

I knew Bernard and Dot well in the early days of the 6000 LA. They got married around the same time that we did. Our kids came along at around the same time as Bernard and Dot's as well and when they were old enough we travelled on many of No. 6000's railtours together.

I will never forget Bernard egging on the Hereford men when we were steaming in Bulmers one day. He eventually persuaded them to put

No. 6000's regulator into the second valve. This must have been heard in Worcestershire.

Richard Loydall

It is probably no exaggeration to say that without Bernard's energy and commitment to main line steam, what might be permitted to operate today would probably be a pale shadow of what we actually have the chance to experience and enjoy, if it existed at all. To pick one recent weekend, Saturday 28th November 2009 saw five mainline steam trains operating on the same day - Carnforth to York, Birmingham to Chester, London to Worcester, Newcastle to London and Swanage to London. Add to this the increasing number of 'repeat itinerary' trains such as the Jacobite, Torbay Express and Scarborough Spa Express, and it is clear that his legacy is significant. The words on Sir Christopher Wren's gravestone in St Paul's Cathedral seem equally appropriate for Bernard: "If you seek his memorial, look about you".

However, while mainline steam was clearly Bernard's main activity, it's worth remembering some of the other things he was involved in. Among them was the programme of 'Pullman Scenic Land Cruises' of the early 1980s, which utilised the Metro-Cammell built Pullman carriages that



Above – Bernard Staite and his father Fred stand by No. 6000 at Abergavenny in the early 1970s, shortly after steam returned to the mainline.

Photography Staite Family Archives

SLOA operated at that time. SLOA Marketing handled all the telephone enquiries, bookings, ticketing etc from Bernard's home in Litchfield, with their literature suggesting that phone calls should be made between certain times on weekdays evenings - no full time office staff or internet bookings then, of course. As I recall, the fares were very reasonable, given the distances travelled and that accommodation was generally included as well. In addition, you could pay an extra sum, and have a further ticket included to cover your rail travel to and from the starting point of the Land Cruise.

I was fortunate to travel on a couple of their 'Land Cruises', with one I particularly recall heading to Kyle of Lochalsh and back. Accompanied by my dad, we had to join the train at

Carlisle (I think) sometime around midday one Saturday. Taking advantage of the long summer days in Scotland, we travelled up to Inverness behind a class 47 diesel, where on arrival in Inverness we swapped the '47' for a pair of class 26's. It was a beautiful summer evening as we headed for Kyle, stopping at one point for a photo stop (remember them?) before arriving in Kyle around 9pm. A short stop to admire the view, and then back on the train to be served with a salad tea packed in a cardboard box (no full dining then, as I recall). SLOA had booked all the passengers into a couple of hotels in central Inverness for bed and breakfast, the latter being for many passengers one of the high points of the weekend. Suffice it to say that most of the passengers decided to have a very hearty breakfast on the Sunday morning, feasting on what seemed an almost unlimited amount of food arriving from the hotel kitchen. There couldn't have been a pig safe within 50 miles, given the quantity of bacon and sausages that were being cooked for us.

After making our way back to Inverness station, we then headed for home, but this time going the long way round, travelling via Aberdeen and the Tay and Forth Bridges, before reaching Edinburgh Waverley station by mid afternoon. A short break there, and then the final leg back to Carlisle, and onwards back to home, reflecting on a fine weekend enjoyed by all.

Ray Harris

I met Bernard a large number of times over the years at various locations and on special anniversaries and the one thing that remains with me was his true professionalism and knowledge about the Rail Tour industry.

He was always there making decisions to enable the passengers to get satisfaction on their special day out and in getting value for their money, but always ensuring that the need for safety was paramount at all times.

He will be missed and will be a hard act to follow. My thoughts go out to his family.

Ivan and Mary Rumbelow

Over the latter years my wife and I had on several occasions met up with Bernard and Dot and were becoming good friends really enjoying their company. But sadly Bernard's illness came on.

It was bit different in the early days. My first real encounter with Bernard apart from the odd "Good Morning" was "The South Devon Coastal" with 76069 on the Bristol-Plymouth-Exeter working which put loco and stock in place for the "Dawlish Donkeys".

On boarding the service train which was full to standing, Bernard ended up standing beside me. Bernard's final words I have never forgotten and put to good use many a time in my building work. He said to me that if you are going to be successful in this business – the railway – there is only one way



to do things and that is the right way by paying "strict attention to detail" and you would do well to remember that "my boy". And I have!

The sequel of that was a year later again working 76069 down to Exeter for its second "Dawlish Donkey" season, Bernard invited my wife and I to lunch with him and Dot at the "Mill on the Exe".

For me it was great honour to have been able to produce the "Bernard Staite Salopian" headboard for Bernard's final steam journey. He was a man I held in very high esteem.

Tim Watson

I hope the lasting memories Bernard's family have of Bernard will be the good ones, when he dominated the mainline steam landscape with his massive personality and hard graft and commitment, making a huge difference over and over again to thousands of people's lives. He was a towering figure at all times and it was a pleasure and an honour for me to have had the chance to get to know him a little.

Bernard Staite Salopian

by Richard Corser

Good Friday 2009 news broke to me from Andy Staite that "Dad had passed away" peacefully during the night. All his family had been with him and he was at peace after a long battle against cancer which had been diagnosed not long before his retirement from EWS. Moving from Lichfield he had retired to his native Herefordshire, at Marden, near the North & West route.

Bernard had made a final wish to his family that his ashes should be submitted into the firebox of a 'King' on Llanvihangel Bank – a very specific request and one which lay with the 6024 Preservation Society. The small matter now was making it happen...

His passing was immediately honoured by mainline excursions carrying wreaths across the country but meanwhile in Somerset No. 6024 was paying its own silent tribute in Williton Shed awaiting remedial work to its tube plate. Repairs were clearly going to take some time with a number of regulatory bodies and inspectorates wishing to inspect the work as it progressed. This left time to start to put together a plan and after some meetings at The York Public House in Islington amongst others it was decided to formulate an operation that could double as a proving run for 6024 as well as carrying out BJS' final wish. Network Rail's Stephen Cornish in a final parting gesture before his retirement agreed to waive Track Access costs and DB Schenker (Network) the new owners of EWS provided traincrew at cost.

The date was chosen with No. 60163 *Tornado* working its last "Torbay Express" on Sunday 9th August so Monday 10th August 2009 as the coaches would still be within their exam period from the previous day and this would leave several days before the first "Torbay Express" for No. 6024 on Sunday 16th August 2009 in case any problems surfaced. Our

Engineers and support crew had been hard pressed in the week leading up to the chosen date with a fairly intensive running-in period on the WSR as well as final VAB sign-offs etc. The operation was in two parts with a gentle light engine & POB move from Bishop's Lydeard to Barton Hill on Sunday 9th August afternoon with a couple of 'stop and examines' built into the specification taken at Highbridge and Yatton loops. Huw Button was anxious to monitor how the bearings would behave when subjected to some more significant speeds but happily they remained cool throughout and once on shed at Barton Hill the stage was set for the following day.

To give greater operational flexibility the initial specification of Locomotive and POB (Private-Owner Brake) was strengthened to Load 5 using 4 of the Riviera Trains carriages from the Torbay Express set which were stabled in the middle road at Bristol Temple Meads. This meant that the train could run at higher speed (up to 75mph) than the normal 50mph which eased the pathing constraints that exist over the North & West Route nowadays. However, one of Bernard Staite's ex train managers from FSS & RCS days, Bob Dewhurst and his train timing team at Leeds had managed to find a path which did not look too onerous. High speed running would also be the best test of the loco before the 16th August, Torbay Express.

Our support crew consisted of Richard Abbey, Tim Watson, Huw Button, Keith Lines, Bob Robson, Roger Fox and me on duty as RO. DBS followed suit, rostering long-standing friends and colleagues Gareth Jones and Tom Rees as TIs, Geoff Ewans as driver (to Hereford), Fred Lewis (driver

Opposite – The Staite family Members are joined in a photo at Hereford by DB Schenker and Society Crews on 10th August 2009. **Photography Richard Corser**



from Hereford) and Mark Dale as fireman to Salop with Vince Henderson as return fireman. Both crews had known Bernard well.

Preparations for the this unusual run had been progressing well and Keith Lines had managed to get a beautiful wreath made using stocks, Bernard's favourite flowers and Ivan Rumbelow had cast a special headboard for the occasion which afterwards was given to Jack Burkinshaw, one of Bernard's grandsons. And as the finishing touches were administered by Chargehand Cleaner Bob Robson at Barton Hill the locomotive looked magnificent.

We were away from Bristol Temple Meads right time and were soon climbing out of Bristol heading towards the Severn Tunnel with first stop at Pilning to pick up members of Bernard's family. We were soon one the move once again and disappeared into the murky depths of the Severn Tunnel. Emerging into the Principality a gentle run down the relief lines brought us to East Usk Yard where we were booked a pathing stop and to pick up local resident Fred Lewis who was to travel passenger as far as Hereford. Richard Abbey had been Owner's Rep as far as here, exchanging now with Keith Lines; all the time meanwhile Tim had been acting as *chef par excellence* catering for crew and guests. The stop gave Huw time to check bearings which showed no causes for concern.

Once clear of the Maindee Junctions, Driver Ewans found the main valve of the regulator and we began climbing smartly up through Ponthir and



Above and Opposite – On the 10th August 2009 No. 6024 hauled a private train on behalf of Bernard Staite's family from Bristol to Shrewsbury and return. Here the train waits for the road at the tallest semaphore signal on earth at Craven Arms.

Photography Bob Green/Mrs Green

Llantarnam in the mid 50s as far as the relatively new station at Cwmbân where we made the last pick up Mr. Alun Rees, long-time friend of Bernard. A mile further on brought us to Panteg Up Goods Loop where we had a booked pathing stop and a further check again was made around the loco. A Cardiff-Manchester train passed us here and soon we were ready for departure and resumed our climb towards the first summit at Pontypool Road where a further brief stop was made. Keith Lines was relieved by Roger Fox as Owner-rep for the next section to Hereford and he was joined by Jonathan Staite together with the casket.



Above – On the 28th February 2005 the Society and many railway partners joined in the celebrations of Bernard's retirement and with No 7802 *Bradley Manor* No 6024 hauled the "Staite Pullman" from Taunton to Paignton and back. Here Bernard dons a dust jacket before mounting the footplate of the *Manor* at Tiverton Junction.

Photography Gerald Peacock

All of us felt it was most appropriate that Roger should be there as he had known Bernard the longest through his involvement with the 6000 Locomotive Association. As we picked up speed into the dip at Penpergwm it was clear that the passenger service in front had not cleared Pontrilas and Abergavenny's distant was on so as we approached Abergavenny the brakes were on and only as we passed the signalbox did the starter come off and we commenced the battle with the bank towards the summit. At this point my thoughts went back to when we had invited both Bernard and Alun Rees on the Brunel 150 railtour promoted by Kingfisher on 8th April 2006 and remembering them both sitting together in the support coach and being impressed in how well No. 6024 did with 13 coaches on that occasion on this very same piece of line and it was Geoff Ewans driving then as well! However on this occasion we had a feather-light load which the locomotive was handling with consummate ease.

The familiar outline of the 2000ft high Sugar Loaf came into view and we were now approaching the summit of the line. The rip of the four cylinder sound abated to a murmur and several shrill whistles rang out. It was clear to us all that the deed had been done, an emotional and poignant moment. We gently gathered speed down the other side through Pandy and then were forced to reduce speed right down near Pontrilas for two gauging restrictions. Once clear No. 6024 was 'given the gun' and as we tore past Tram Inn signalbox No. 6024 was running at her permitted maximum. It was clear that the crew were keen to prove that all was well with the loco and to provide a 'bravura' finish for the Staite's family run as far as Hereford. As we pulled into Barrs Court station it was impossible not to think about how many times No. 6000 and other locos that BJS had organised trains for had done so in the past. It was now our turn to return the compliment. Later talking to Jo Burkinshaw (who was unfortunately absent) it seems that she plans to plant some daffodils near to Milepost 19 (Llanvihangel Platform) which will provide a constant reminder to passing trains.

We bade farewell to the majority of guests here, took a few photographs and having refilled the tender resumed our journey northwards as the first place now to turn No. 6024 is Shrewsbury. Bob Roson was now our footplate rep and Fred Lewis set about this taxing piece of railway with a vengeance. The scheduled pathing at Woofferton did not materialise as we had managed to open a bigger gap between us and the following service train. The Welsh Marches were looking beautiful and soon we had climbed past Craven Arms, through the picturesque Marshbrook to Church Stretton and began the long descent to Shrewsbury. We were running well and it came as no surprise when we arrived early at English Bridge Junction.

Our routing from here took us around the Abbey Foregate Loop Line

and onto the Wolverhampton Line. We then had to propel the stock into the carriage sidings, detach and run forward into the siding which we had previously used in June 2007. Water would be taken here from a hydrant; the fitting of the standpipe caused some difficulty but this was eventually overcome. Coal from Smallshaw's necessitated the loco to run through the wash-plant which presented other hazards but after the various shunting manoeuvres had been accomplished using pre-planning and knowledge of signals by Gareth and the Abbey Foregate signalman we were making a propelling move back into No.7 platform, thus making the final turning move and were then ready for the return run.

Richard Abbey's family were on the platform as we came in, as was Dave Fuszard and it was here that we bade farewell to Gareth with Tom Rees taking over as TI. Ahead lay the unbroken climb for 12 miles from Sutton Bridge Junction to Church Stretton, which just for good measure had a 5mph restriction near Bayston Hill and for once this restriction looked completely justified from where I was standing on the footplate. We were soon making good progress and were on time into the loop at Craven Arms which is, as Alun Rees reminded me, protected by the tallest signal arm in the country. Signalling in this part of the country has little changed over the years with Shrewsbury's signals all being lit by oil and the whole line from Shrewsbury to Little Mill Junction being worked under the Absolute Block system; really incredible for 2009.

We dropped Alun Rees off at Ludlow for him to collect his car and I swapped with Tim Watson on the footplate. The fast section from here onwards saw time being kept and just after the single bore tunnel at Hope-under-Dinmore a series of whistles were sounded at Marden Level Crossing for Dorothy Staite. By Hereford No. 6024 was thirsty once more and we drew forward into Edgar St sidings whilst Keith and Richard laid hoses out in Aldi's car park much to the interest of the early evening shoppers. I wasn't the only one to feel spoiled by the likes of Bells & Two Tones when we have to organise and obtain all our own water! A reverse propelling move back into Hereford station and we said farewell to Tony Staite, Bernard's brother affectionately known to his family as "Our Kid" who had stayed with us to Salop and back. Huw took up position as the Owner's Rep for the last section to wave to his Mum and neighbours once again at Penperlleni and as we passed Llanvihangel a further succession of whistles ensued.

As dusk began to fall we all realised what a day it had been, a day of 'double emotions'. Firstly closing a chapter on the life of a legendary man in Bernard and secondly opening another with a 'King' fit for another year on the 21st Century British mainline railway. We must never forget the work of the former to enable the latter.

Society Dates, Railtours and Visits 2010

- 1 May **Exeter – Par and return**
6024 Throughout
Pathfinder Tours
- 2 – 8 May **Great Western Society**
Didcot GWS 175 Event
- 30 May **Bristol TM – Kingswear and return**
6024 Throughout
Torbay Express Limited (bookings through Pathfinder Tours)
- 6 June **Bristol TM – Kingswear and return**
6024 Throughout
Torbay Express Limited (bookings through Pathfinder Tours)
- 13 June **Bristol TM – Kingswear and return**
6024 Throughout
Torbay Express Limited (bookings through Pathfinder Tours)
- 26 – 28 June **London Paddington – Penzance and return**
6024 to Exeter (with 5029 to Penzance, return to Paddington via Bristol)
Steam Dreams
- 10 July **London Paddington – Worcester and return**
6024 from Paddington to Worcester via Snow Hill and return
80th Anniversary Special (*Members entitlement*)
6024 Preservation Society (bookings through Pathfinder Tours)
- 17/18 July **Yeovil Railway Centre**
GWR 150 Event

To check when bookings open, to make bookings, or to obtain ticket information, timings and details of intermediate station pick-ups for the above mainline runs, contact:

Pathfinder Tours

tel. **01453 835414** or **01452 634477**
www.pathfindertours.co.uk

Torbay Express Limited

tel. **01453 835414/834477**
www.torbayexpress.co.uk

The Railway Touring Company

tel. **01553 661500**
www.railwaytouring.co.uk

Steam Dreams

tel. **01483 209888**
www.steamdreams.co.uk

Back Cover – On the 12th December 2009 No. 6024 crosses the Thames at Maidenhead on its way to Paddington.
Photography Bob Green

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