

**SOUTHWOLD RAILWAY SOCIETY**

# **NEWSLETTER 50**



**NOVEMBER 2006**

# The Southwold Railway Society Newsletter



## Issue 50 — NOVEMBER 2006

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*The cover shows a detail from Joe Crowfoot's wintry  
Wenhaston postcard (also available as a Christmas card.  
See Page 7)*

### The Committee

**President - David Negus (01502 723606)**  
**Chairman - Geoffrey Crabb (01502 724644)**  
**Treasurer - Len Harris (01502 724843)**  
**Membership Secretary - Maureen Cooksey  
(01502 722686)**  
**Alastair McFarlane**  
**Graham Thurston**  
**John Bennett**  
**David Lee**

### Production Team

**Editor** .....John Bennett  
**Production Assistant** .....George Bennett



## editorial ramblings...

### THE NEW BOARD

Here we all are (except Graham Thurston who was taking the picture) in Southwold Town Hall for the first Board Meeting of the new Trust. We are still awaiting charitable status but this should be con-



firmed shortly. *That's Len Harris in the foreground, and then clockwise round the table, John Bennett, David Lee, Maureen Cooksey, Geoffrey Crabb, David Negus and Alastair McFarlane.*

### TRACK WALK

The Christmas Track Walk will commence at 10.30am from Blythburgh Station site on Saturday 30th December. Please let me know if you are coming.

### THE GAUGE

Some discussion, in this issue, of whether we should adopt 2 foot gauge. There has been much heart-searching on this, as several of us are very keen on 2 foot, but we think that it is important, for Heritage

lottery funding, to retain the historic 3 foot gauge. It is shown as 3 foot on the drawings which David Negus has nearly completed for our application. But we might still have a bit of 2 foot as well at the Southwold end. Let us know what you think.

### CLUB NIGHTS

These will be on 29th November, 31st January and 28th February

### NEW MEMBERS

Another 22 members have joined since the last newsletter. A very warm welcome to **Geoffrey Scott** - Cambridge, **Edward Francis** - Chelmsford, **Chris Chambers** - Greenwich, **Rev P.M. Seadon** - Birmingham, **Peter Banks** - Colchester, **P.M.Hansford** - Lowestoft, **Paul Welby** - Wenhaston, **Martin Taylor** - Winfarthing, **Denis Gahagan** - Aldeburgh, **Peter Bridge** - Felixstowe, **Rev Charles Lombard** - Bungay, **Alistair Crossan** - Farmoor, **Kenneth Bromley** - Tonbridge, **Will Johnson** - London, **Rev Roger de Lacy - Spencer** - Southwold, **Paul England** - Southwold, **David Wood** - Cretingham, **P.J. Brittain** - Crosby, **Barry Moore** - Claydon, **H.M. Johnson** - Daventry, **Jamie Gilham** - Egham **D.J. Pritchard** - Acle

*John Bennett  
20th November, 2006*

## WELSH NARROW GAUGE

By *Alastair MacFarlane*



*Welshpool and Llanfair No 14 (also below)  
Alastair chatting up the driver.*

A dream come true, my dear wife arranged a series of visits to no less than seven Welsh railways—during one week—one standard gauge and six of great interest to us as their gauges ranged from 2 foot to 2 foot 6 inches, and thrown in for good measure was a valuable afternoon at Boston Lodge on the Ffestiniog Railway, boasting facilities to build coaches, goods wagons and locomotives. I will touch briefly on the Llangollen Railway—as this was standard gauge—as our locomotive was Foxcote Manor,

and we were treated to a splendid run of 16 miles return, between Llangollen and Carrog. A wedding was celebrated on the train even as we steamed—they have to be a happy couple!

Our next stop was the Welshpool and Llanfair, challenging and 2 foot 6 inch gauge - but massive in its way and comparable in many respects to our own projected line, but mercifully we do not have to contend with a 1 in 29

Gradient at the outset of the journey! They have just taken delivery of a new coach, built at Boston Lodge - and another is being built now, luxurious, balcony ended and stunning. Our 2-6-2 Hunslet loco ex Sierra Leone, handled the train well, but was a trifle light-footed on the steepest gradient. Other locomotives on the line, in particular Earl and Countess, had surer grip because of the axle loading and absence of ponytrucks. This tends to increase track and flange wear, but the plentiful use of check rails on the sharper curves mitigated this to some extent, but added to the tendency to slip on gradients, because of an increase in the friction factor, where it is not wanted



Riding on a carriage balcony end, inches from the smoke box of the pulsing locomotive was a remarkable experience, cinders, smuts and all, but you could not get much nearer to the feel of the foot-plate, short of actually being in the cab, and the atmosphere was superb. We had very pleasant runs on the Llanberis Lake and Bala Lake, short lines of 5 miles or so, 2 foot gauge and competently handled by Quarry Hunslets—remarkably wag-free - even under stress.



*Carriage construction at Boston Lodge*

My afternoon at Boston Lodge was greatly enhanced by the warm welcome I received, the enthusiasm of the workforce and the spectacle of well-built rolling stock under construction and in service. Locomotives, both coal and oil-fired, can be built in their entirety at the works and great interest was shown in our bio-fuel concept, particularly with regard

to draughting, economy and availability of fuel. We had discussions on track weight, durability and availability; currently a lot heavier track is going down up to 90 lbs, and the running improvement is dramatic. Speeds of up to 40 mph being perfectly safe, even if not permissible under normal running conditions. There is nothing that cannot be scrutinised and attempted; there is a true pioneering spirit in this organisation and it is something to be encouraged as it can grow into really exciting and worthwhile results. I came away from Boston Lodge exhilarated and I just hope that the beneficiaries of our Southwold Railway scheme can catch something of this infectious and pertinent attitude towards a valuable communication asset in our lovely county. As cars diminish as we know them, and public transport regains its rightful place in our economy and landscape,



*Welsh Highland*

it is good to know that Boston Lodge and the far-sighted promoters of our line are ready to take up the challenge.

On the Tallylyn, our locomotive was a Kerr-Stuart, Tattoo class 0-4-2, a favourite of mine. I got a footplate ride and did she handle that train well! Smooth, steady, and there was none of the surging found on some lines, and with some drivers!

The Welsh Highland was a joy, 2 foot gauge, big coaches, big loco—Beyer Garratt, another footplate ride and really smooth fast travel. Track weights overall varied from 60 lb to 90 lb and, where 90 lb was in use and carefully laid, this line was outstandingly smooth running. Trolley refreshments throughout the train— coach connections and seating three across— just like full size in concept—and I did not spill a drop of coffee!

Our last call was the Vale of Rheidol, and , as it was the last steam railway in BR hands, it was very competent and a lovely journey. However, for overall professionalism, give me the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland— totally impressive and a pattern to strive for on our Southwold Railway. If we go for 2 foot gauge we can save a lot of money and find some ready to run locos and stock to get us started. With good track down in this gauge we can maintain good timetables, sensible speeds and safe and smooth running.



**Welsh Highland—departure from Carnarvon—Beyer Garratt  
(footplate ride!)**



## NEWS FROM THE SHOP – 2

*By Graham Thurston*

Since the end of the holiday season things have slowed down a little, but as I write this, the rain has stopped, the sun has come out and it's half-term. Southwold is autumn-tinted, beautiful as ever, and busy. Sales have been going well, and the shop has been well visited, but the high summer visitor does not always see fit to buy anything.

The total we have taken has been helped by the Henham Steam Rally; quite a busy weekend as the shop was open and the Rally stand manned for two days. The upside was nearly £500 banked for the weekend.

Special thanks and welcome to new shop volunteers; Stewart Green, David Smith, and to the Heaps family who worked valiantly at the Steam Rally.

We are expecting some new sales items soon, so watch this newsletter or keep in touch with

the shop. A new booklet on the finalised reinstatement plans will appear soon and will supersede the original reinstatement book. Of course there are a lot of detail drawings which our President is grappling with at the moment for the planning application. Exciting times. Also there are Christmas cards available now. These sold well last year, and if you are reading this, well, you should be buying them, shouldn't you?

PS The shop computer has passed away. Donation of a base unit would be nice so we can get virtual Southwold running in the shop.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

Joe Crowfoot's  
"Winter at Wenhaston"  
card (like the cover)  
75p each or 10 for £6  
plus P&P. From the  
Southwold Railway  
Shop.



# ***ALAN TAYLOR'S ALBUM***



In the early part of the twentieth Century Southwold Harbour was rebuilt and as a result shipping business, especially fishing, increased and a railway branch to the port was constructed. The Southwold Railway Company expecting an increase in traffic ordered a new locomotive from Manning Wardle of Leeds. No. 4 "Wenhaston" was delivered in 1914. She is seen here at Southwold in the 1920's.



Jackson, the Locomotive Foreman, proudly stands on the footplate of No.2 "Halesworth" resplendent in its Great Eastern blue livery.



It was usual for repairs to the locomotives to be repaired in the open outside Southwold Engine Shed. Here No.2 “Halesworth” is receiving attention.



Another view of No.2 outside Southwold Engine Shed.



Suffolk winters were often very cold. The cabs of the locomotives offered limited protection. Here No.3 "Southwold" has her cab partially enclosed by extra boarding



This shot of No.3 "Blyth" is not too sharp but it does show the treatment given to its cab for the winter



## **SOUTHWOLD RAILWAY INCIDENTS** **in the Year**

### **1912 (part 3) by Ian Bunting**

The Halesworth Times of 27<sup>th</sup> August recorded, 'RECORD RAIN IN EAST ANGLIA – SERIOUS FLOODS – TRAINS STOPPED...The waveney [sic] Valley was under water and the railway service suspended at Redenhall. The line between Beccles and St. Olaves was also blocked and London passengers to Yarmouth reached their destination via Lowestoft. The G.E.R. motor bus traffic from Lowestoft and Southwold was held up during the afternoon, two large trees having been blown across the road at Frostenden bringing down telegraph wires and posts with them...The Southwold Railway Co. ran all its trains on Monday [26<sup>th</sup> August], but after the last down train had gone breaches were made in the line at Wenhaston and Blythburgh, the traffic being suspended this (Tuesday) morning. The telephone wire was also broken during the night by a falling tree, so that communication with Southwold could not be effected.'

The story of the rest of the stormy week was told on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 'During Saturday afternoon [31<sup>st</sup> July] 7 trains were held up between Halesworth and Ufford. The 1.50 pm Lowestoft express to London did not reach Halesworth until after 6 pm and was held up just outside the platform for several hours. The large number of returning excursionists got out of the carriages and held a picnic on the line.'

*'The Southwold Railway which suffered damage at Wenhaston and Blythburgh, stopping the traffic throughout Tuesday [27<sup>th</sup> August], was got into working order by Wednesday morning and maintained their regular service for the remainder of the week. The dislocation of the G.E.R. on Saturday [31<sup>st</sup> July] added to the discomfort of visitors to Southwold, but this was minimised as far as possible by the Southwold Railway Co. running their trains long past midnight, and early on Sunday morning.'*

A meeting of the Halesworth Urban Council was described in the newspaper on 10<sup>th</sup> September. At this meeting a letter from Mr. J. B. Chevalier (promoter of the Halesworth Light Railway) was read explaining that they were postponing their application for a loan from the council, 'as time was required to arrange a satisfactory financial scheme, and when this had been done the resolution would again be submitted to the Council'.

In the same edition of the newspaper it was reported that, 'George Henry Millar ship's steward, of Newcastle, was brought up in custody charged with breaking and entering the railway station at Blythburgh, and stealing therefrom the sum of 9s. 8d., and a bicycle of the value of £6, on the 4<sup>th</sup> September, the property of Grove Thomas Moore, of

Blythburgh, relieving stationmaster.’ Miller was remanded until 12th September. On the 12<sup>th</sup> September Millar (now referred to as Miller) was brought before the Saxmundham Petty Sessions. Grove Thomas Moore stated, ‘before leaving the Station at 9.30 on the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> September he left all the doors locked up and safe. Inside the waiting-room was a gentleman’s bicycle, and in an unlocked drawer in the countinghouse was 9s. 8d. in money with an old coin. Next morning at 5.15 o’clock he found the window and outside door open. The inside door was also open, having been forced. The money and coin in the unlocked drawer were gone and another drawer, containing papers, had been forced and the contents littered about. The bicycle had also disappeared. Outside there were bicycle tracks to the main road leading to Lowestoft. In the afternoon, in company with P.-c King, he went to Yarmouth Police Station, and found his bicycle there. Herbert Haylock, foreman plate-layer, corroborated...’

and flung it on the line, and afterwards stuck it up on end between the sleepers. They went away over Walberswick Common. Witness soon afterwards heard a train whistle, and he informed Mr. George Cotton...

The account goes on to describe how Detective Arthur Boulton arrested Miller as he was attempting to sell the bicycle in Great Yarmouth. ‘When charged prisoner made no reply, but afterwards in the train he said, “I am only sorry I robbed a workman and had I known that I should not have done it.” ...he was committed for trial at the next Quarter Sessions.’

Finally, at the East Suffolk Quarter Sessions, Miller pleaded guilty to the charges. His age was given as 31 years and Groves Thomas Moore was now described as

‘deputy station-master’. Miller had been in trouble before in Scotland under the names of Morrison and Murphy, and had thrice been convicted of similar offences to this. He had been a miner. ‘A sentence of four months’ hard labour was imposed.’

*‘The nuptials of Frederick Ernest, only son of Mr. H. A. Wright, station master of the Southwold Railway Company at Halesworth and Annie Bertha, younger daughter of Mr. Wm. Page of the Hill farm, Halesworth, were solemnised at the Parish Church Halesworth, on Wednesday [11<sup>th</sup> September] in the presence of a large gathering of friends.’*

The above wedding was reported in the Halesworth Times of the 17<sup>th</sup> September, as was the following, ‘Mr. E. L. Clarke, who has been employed at Halesworth Railway Station for 12½ years, is leaving the town next week to take up railway work in New South Wales, Australia.’

Also on the 17<sup>th</sup> September, ‘4<sup>th</sup> BATTALION SUFFOLK REGIMENT, F COMPANY ORDERS...It is notified for information that the Stannard [Standard Firing] Test will take place at Southwold on Saturday next, the 21<sup>st</sup> inst., at 2.30 p.m... Train leaves Halesworth at 1.30 p.m. (Signed), Francis J. Rodwell, Capt., Comdg.’

Returning to Petty Session Reports, this time at Halesworth, ‘Thursday [3<sup>rd</sup> October] ... Thomas P. Pilcher, of 12, Milner Street, London, was charged with placing a wooden post and notice board on the Southwold Railway at Walberswick on the 14<sup>th</sup> September. Mr. F. J. Rodwell prosecuted for the Southwold Railway Co., and Mr. E. R. Cooper appeared for the defence.

*‘A boy named Stannard deposed to seeing two men and a women (one of whom was the defendant) cross the line and pull up a*

post...and flung it on the line, and afterwards stuck it up on end between the sleepers. They went away over Walberswick Common. Witness soon afterwards heard a train whistle, and he informed Mr George Cotton...

'George Cotton, gamekeeper, Walberswick, stated that he was on the high road between Blythburgh and Walberswick...The witness Stannard came to him about 4.15 p. m. and made a statement, in consequence of which he went on to the railway and saw a notice board and pole, about nine feet long, standing between the metals on the line. Witness then went to the defendant, who was sitting down with a man and woman. They were having tea on the Common. Witness asked defendant what right he had to go on Sir Ralph Blois' property and pull up the post. Defendant said he only did it for a joke. Witness told him he had better put it back. Defendant then went and pulled the post up and flung it on the fence...

'By Mr. Cooper: The Post was merely stuck in the ground, and would have fallen down at a touch. The driver of a train would have been able to see it at a distance of more than 200 yards...

'Mr. Rodwell, for the Railway Company, stated that they had no desire to press the case; when the information was laid they had no idea the charge was of such a serious nature. The Company only desired to let the public know that they could not allow such doings on their line.

'The Bench, addressing the defendant, said that they had come to the conclusion that no Jury would convict in the case. He had been guilty of a very foolish joke, which he (the Chairman) thought he was sorry for. Under the circumstances they would dis-

miss the case.'

To conclude 1912; from the Halesworth Times of 8<sup>th</sup> October, 'GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY MAGAZINE.- The October number... contains an interesting article on the recent floods in Norfolk and Suffolk... It is stated that one thousand million tons of water fell in Norfolk alone, the largest precipitation being in and immediately around Norwich... This city, which has six possible railway routes from London, was for two and a half days cut off from railway communication with the outer world. The Waveney Valley, where from four to five inches fell resembled a huge inland lake, and at Homersfield Station the damage was very extensive

## LETTERS

*From Philip Ford. By email.*

Some fine work has been done on a possible new Southwold Railway, and a great deal of thought has obviously gone into it. However, there exists no item of rolling stock from the original line which could possibly be re-used, so why is the original 3ft. gauge considered sacrosanct? In the present railway preservation world it seems to me that the action is in the 2ft. gauge, there seem even to be serviceable locomotives looking for tracks to run on. New stock has been designed and built, why re-invent the wheel? Guest motive power seems to be a big attraction, there won't be any if we go with 3ft. gauge. Construction costs for both rolling stock and infrastructure would also be lower with the narrower gauge.

## AGM 2006 - THE MINUTES

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Electric Picture Palace, Southwold on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2006

1. Apologies for Absence. Brian Bailey, David Brand, Sue Doy
2. President's Welcome by David Negus.
3. Minutes of Last Meeting. These were approved.
4. Matters Arising. The Chairman reported that due to continuing poor health, Brian Smith was unable to take up the duties of Membership Secretary.
5. Chairman's Report. .
6. Treasurer' Report. Copies of the audited Balance Sheet were circulated to members. The Treasurer explained that the cost and income from trading items would next year fall out of the accounts because the Society's merchandise was being distributed through the Southwold Railway Shop which meant that the Society did not, since December 2005, receive income from these sales. However, the value of the Shop to the Society was evident in the number of new members recruited (about 43) and the interested created in its affairs on the part of members of the public making visits. There was some discussion about the relationship between the Society and the Shop and it was explained that there was difficulty in finding volun-

teers to staff the shop which meant that for some busy periods it remained closed. On a separate matter it was decided that the changes to postal rates would not result in increased costs in distributing the Newsletter.

7. Appointment of Chairman. Geoffrey Crabb was elected, proposed by Simon Wilson and seconded by Norman Wright.
8. Appointment of Secretary. Maureen Cooksey was elected, proposed by Ian Bunting and seconded by Alastair Macfarlane.
9. Appointment of Treasurer. Len Harris was elected, proposed by Graham Thurston and seconded by Dave Smith.
10. Appointment of Committee. The existing Committee (John Bennett, David Lee, Alastair Macfarlane, David Negus, Brian Smith and Graham Thurston) was elected, proposed by Simon Wilson and seconded by Norman Wright.
11. Appointment of Auditor. D. Godfrey was elected, proposed by David Negus and seconded by Alastair Macfarlane.

Those attending. David Forster, Geoffrey Crabb, Alan Taylor, Ian Bunting, Tim Heaps, Eileen Heaps, Clive Lovelock, John Oxley, Graham Thurston, Dave Smith, Peter Mulley, David Negus, Alastair Macfarlane, Simon Wilson, Norman Wright, Len Harris, Maureen Cooksey, David Tarbun, Mark Evershed, John Ridgway, John Bennett, Trevor Kelsall.

12. Reinstatement. David Negus provided an up-date. There was little opposition from land owners, only 2 on the section east of the A12 having some reservations about disturbance. One had offered the use of a barn, another was keen to sell produce at a halt whilst the owner of the Henham Estate was especially supportive of the scheme. An ecology specialist had recently walked the route and could see little objection to the line. Generally, the diversion of the line away from the Hen Reed Beds and withdrawal of the level crossing at Mights Bridge had removed the main practical objections to the earlier proposal. John Bennett then described the terminus at Southwold Pier which would be environmentally friendly incorporating a roof which would generate power and provision for water tanks under the platforms to collect rain. There would be cycle hire facilities to complement the cycle track which would run alongside the track.

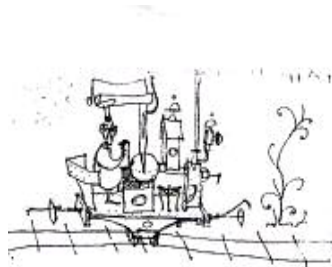
David Negus described very encouraging meetings with the officers of Waveney District Council who had offered to help in approaches to Government in respect of, for example, seeking the necessary Orders and meeting safety standards. There was some technical discussion on, inter alia, the provision of 5 level crossings between Southwold and the A12 and the advantages of using a 2 foot gauge for the planned initial stretch at Southwold Pier. But in this respect it was important that we should not move too far from the style and character of the for-

mer S.R. as this might prejudice our application for, or continuance of, charitable status which requires a strong educational element. Operating a transport system is not enough.

There was some discussion about funding and it was explained that the Society would not be responsible for building and operating the line. New bodies, such as a PLC, would have to be set up, as is the case in other heritage railways, but the Society in its new guise as a Company Limited by Guarantee (see Chairman's Report) would continue to have overall control, perhaps through a 'golden share' arrangement.

Finally, David Negus estimated that if all went well we might have received the necessary consents and could make a start in Spring 2007. The Chairman thanked David Negus for his continuing efforts and this was enthusiastically endorsed from the floor.

13. Any Other Business. David Forster announced that he was shortly to visit South Africa and would be willing to investigate any 3 foot gauge railways if members could advise him of any systems.



***Southwold Railway Shop***  
***27 High Street, Southwold IP18 6AD***  
***Tel: 01502 725422***

Please send any orders to the shop, with a cheque payable to the **Southwold Railway Shop**, and allowing 10% of the cost to cover P&P (min £1). All orders will be gratefully received .

**SOUTHWOLD RAILWAY & BLYTH VALLEY WALK £5** The well- received guide to walking the trackbed (or adjacent footpaths) with details of the railway, wildlife and a complete list, with locations, of all SR features extant or disappeared.

**THE SOUTHWOLD RAILWAY CHILDREN £9.95**

Book of reminiscences of people who travelled, as children, on the SR. Many original and previously unpublished photographs and drawings.

**BRANCH LINE TO SOUTHWOLD £14.95**

The excellent Mitchell & Smith book. Hardback

**RAILS TO SOUTHWOLD VIDEO £14.95, DVD £16.95**

- the 30 min Hillside film of the SR including early newsreel footage of the line

**THE HERONRY PRINT**

**£15 in a tube**- Peter Green's excellent painting on an A2 size landscape format print showing SR train between Blythburgh and Walberswick

**JOE CROWFOOT POSTCARDS £9**

Set of 18 full colour postcards each containing a charming SRy watercolour

**SOUTHWOLD RAILWAY GAME - £12.95**

Entertaining SR board game

**BACK ISSUES OF NEWSLETTER £2.50**

**SECOND HAND RAILWAY BOOKS**

**SRS BADGE £3**

**The Journal of the Southwold Railway Society**