

## **From Paul and Gill King who came to visit as two of a party from the Ingfield Railway in October 2017**

Pleased to say Gill and I have 'been there, done that, as two of the Ingfield visitors. MOST IMPRESSED with the line, the trackwork - especially the pointwork - the signalling (especially) and of course the locomotives. Was pleased to meet Cliff Perry again: we had met several times during our professional careers. It was also helpful that whoever is in charge of the weather appeared to be a railway enthusiast and provided a virtual umbrella over No. 17...

Sorry that Alan was away 'on business' and also that unfortunately we couldn't be at Ingfield on the Sunday due to a family visit, so couldn't offer our thanks - and this message - in person. (I would have preferred to send this by post, but I'm currently 'between printers', with either my PC or the new Epson sulking and refusing to talk to the other!)

I noted the offer of a map of the line, but more than pleased when I sought same to be offered a copy of the Railway booklet, which includes the map plus a lot more. I hope my 'tenner', produced in haste, was sufficient. I was interested to read of the previous owners, the Ballantyne-Dykes. I was aware of the name and their interest in miniature railways, not least when the sale of (I think) another property complete with a railway, when one of the national papers picked up same and published an aerial picture. My recollection was of a rather more open site, but of course trees have a habit of providing increasing cover and it could have been your own house and garden. I kept a copy of the page, but it IS carefully filed - under 'somewhere'...

I happened to note a few items of not-so-recent electronic equipment in store, and mentioned to Anne (I hope the familiarity is acceptable) that I wondered if they included an Army '19' set. My experience with same - and other equipment, arose when my National Service took me to Arborfield, then the 'home' of REME. (The have now moved, lock, stock and soldering iron to Lyneham, and I expect the original site is now sprouting as many houses as the land will take.) Having spent 3 1/2 years as a Premium Apprentice with the newly-Nationalised railway, working on overhauls, etc., at the former GER Works at Stratford - now totally erased from the face of the earth and largely part of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park - I was somewhat surprised to find myself initially assigned to a Radar Course! Although, of course, with steam passing through pipes and radar pulses through wave guides I guess the Army had made the connection even if the thinking was a bit questionable.

Within a few weeks, and due to a lack of suitably-inclined regular soldiers, a dozen of us were then transferred to a LASSIE (Leading Artisan Staff Sergeant) Course lasting no less than 39 weeks, to become Instructors on Radio and Telecomms. That was where I met the 19 Set, although I fear I blew up more of them than I fixed. At the end of the course we only had around 9 months left before DeMob, and I wasn't best pleased, as a near-teetotaller (on price rather than taste...) to find I was to be the Sergeant's Mess 'Caterer' running the Bar for the next SIX months! While a protest to the CO (a fellow member of the I. Mech. E.) saw me returned to instructing after a month or so, I was reminded of my spare time activity while manning the Bar (!) in building several OO gauge vehicles, including a couple of the LNER Brick wagons. You will no doubt make the connection with one of your goods wagons, and it was that which pressed the 'Nostalgia' button and reminded me of the foregoing. I would have been circa. 1952.

Once back in Civvy St I returned to Stratford, but its future was clearly limited, and after a

failed application for a Drawing Office post at Swindon, where the Western 'Warships' were at the design stage (and also where 'not trained here' still applied...) I moved to the Rolling Stock Development section of the then Southern Region, where I soon settled in with a team of some very friendly, knowledgeable and competent engineers. I'd like to think a little of the above rubbed off on myself, and I saw into service pretty well all the new stock, starting with the Hastings Diesels, a dozen or so of the builds of the electric multiple units from the 1951 stock onwards (including the Bournemouth stock with the REP units propelling eight coaches to 'BOMO' which were then hauled on to Weymouth by a modified Class 33, to be pushed back to BOMO for a return to Waterloo hauled by another REP unit. These were of equivalent power to a couple of the Cl.73 Electro-Diesels on the 750V, but applied to a four-coach passenger unit.

I also saw about half the Class 33 fleet into service, having made their final inspection before they left the former Birmingham Carriage & Wagon Company works in Smethwick. (Quite what a C & W Works were doing building locomotives is a good question, but my bosses knew what they were doing, having 'brought up' the three Southern Deisel-Electrics 20001 - 3. One of the Tech. Assistants rode with them whenever possible and made copious notes of the faults and how they were corrected, and if possible, eliminated. The experience with these three was fed back into the Cl. 33s and made them some of the most reliable locos on BR. More than a few survive on both preservation lines and with Freight companies.

Quite enough fro me: apologies if I've exceeded the allowed word count, and over-blown my trumpet. All because of your collection of devices, electronic!

Thank you again for a brilliant afternoon.

Paul & Gill King.