

Triple News

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Newsletter of the Kempton Great Engines Society No.52 Winter 2018/19

Kempton volunteers awarded highest accolade

Members of the Kempton Great Engines Society have been recognised for their work by Her Majesty The Queen. Volunteers at Kempton Steam Museum have received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the Sovereign's most prestigious accolade for service to the community.

Just a year after the volunteers of the Metropolitan Water Board Railway Society received the same award, the museum has now joined the illustrious ranks of local clubs, societies and voluntary organisations recognised by Her Majesty The Queen.

Six volunteers were chosen to make the journey to the City of London to receive the award from the Lord Lieutenant of Greater London, Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE, on behalf of all those who give their time so generously in support of the museum.

Kempton's manager and treasurer, John Barnes, earned the additional honour of being presented with the crystal award, engraved with the logo of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, plus a certificate signed by Her Majesty The Queen.

The Kempton volunteers were among a number of local groups recognised, ranging from charities helping the homeless and the disadvantaged, to those working with young people and ethnic minorities.

After the ceremony, there was a reception with drinks and canapés to celebrate what was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and a well-earned reward for the hours of time and effort all Kempton's volunteer army dedicates to the preservation of one of the UK's most spectacular industrial monuments.

Visitors can see the Award and signed certificate on display in the foyer and volunteers have been issued with enamel badges to wear with pride.



From left: John Barnes, Gaynor Cauter, Stephen Fielding, John Burd, Ray Marie and Jerry Scholefield with Lord Lieutenant of Greater London Sir Kenneth Olisa



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service



John Barnes receives the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service from the Lord Lieutenant and a certificate signed by HM The Queen

Going... going... gone!

Whatever happened to the mysterious banks of steel silos? *Dave Laing* of Thames Water reveals all...



Giant telehandlers with steel-nibbling attachments go to work on the banks of old silos in the fenced-off area to the right of the Triple House



Demolished remains of a granular activated carbon (GAC) storage silo amid the rows of concrete posts that once supported the huge tanks

Walking up to the museum from the railway, you pass a pair of large steel gates to an open area, originally bordered by a row of huge silos. Once upon a time, a steady stream of tankers would come and go, dispensing or collecting who knew what. Then, one day, it all fell silent. The gates were locked, the lorries came no more and that was that.

The 'silo farm' was part of Thames Water's treatment works and used for the storage of granular activated carbon (GAC). Thames was just one of many water companies to use GAC in the production of high-quality drinking water, to remove micro-contaminants and to help resolve any taste and odour issues.

GAC has a limited life span in service and, when 'spent', can be regenerated in a furnace for reuse. Thames Water ran a GAC regeneration furnace in the main building of Kempton Park works for a number of years, located in the old boiler room alongside the museum.

The dozen silos were used to store the spent GAC prior to regeneration and to



The now-vacant lot, which Kempton volunteers had been eyeing up with interest, is to house a replica cast-iron trunk main where Thames can test new scanning devices to inspect water pipes

store the regenerated GAC in readiness for use at various water treatment sites. However, in 2013 it became no longer viable for Thames Water to run its own regeneration furnace and this service was transferred off-site to an international

GAC specialist, making the banks of silos surplus to requirement.

Over the past few years, the furnace in the old boiler house and the attendant silos have been fully decommissioned and recently, the silo farm area has been demolished to make way for a test rig.

A replica cast-iron trunk main is being built in this cleared area to provide Thames with a testing ground for scanning devices capable of inspecting the condition of the trunk mains from inside the pipes. This is part of a larger programme of trunk main research by Thames Water, with the objective of better targeting its investment by determining which sections of the highest-risk trunk mains need to be replaced and which ones are safe to carry on being used.

Gift proves a cut above the rest

If there's one thing Kempton loves it's donations... and we're not just talking cash! While discussing the fragile state of the museum's long-serving metal-cutting hacksaw, John Barber recalled an Ajax power saw at Gatwick Airport, where he once worked, that was rarely used. After making a few enquiries, the saw was ours and airport staff kindly bolted it to a pallet so that it could be loaded onto Jerry Scholefield's trusty trailer. Although far from new, it's in good nick, heavy duty and, best of all, comes complete with instruction manual. All it needs is an emergency 'off' button and we're in business. Thank you very much Gatwick!



Meet the team... Bob Webb

Bob was born in Bristol on a day when both his home town and Coventry were subjected to particularly heavy WW2 bombing raids.

Although he obviously can't remember the incident, Bob was later reliably informed that moments after his arrival into the world, he was unceremoniously bundled up and 'shoved under the bed'.

After this inauspicious start, things began to look up for young Bob. He attended Bristol Secondary Technical School until his father's employer, national airline carrier BOAC, moved from Bristol to Heathrow in the 1950s and the family had to move with them.

Now in his teens and living in Stanwell, Bob continued his education at Twickenham Technical School of Engineering. Armed with the necessary O-Levels and recommendations from his tutors, he was encouraged to continue studying. He obtained an apprenticeship with Petters Ltd and alongside this, studied for his ONC and OND certificates at what was then called Twickenham College of Technology. Interestingly, although the building remains just where it was in Bob's day, it is now known as Richmond College.

Having completed his apprenticeship, Bob embarked on a long career with Petters, ending up as Production Manager. In 1989, Petters became Lister Petters and moved production from their site in Staines (now a Sainsbury's supermarket) to Dursley in Gloucestershire.

Bob decided not to move West with his long-term employer and instead, found a job as Service Manager for a garage equipment



company in nearby West Drayton.

In 1994, he was appointed Mechanical Engineering Superintendent at Brunel University in Uxbridge. This job made ideal use of Bob's experience in machining, engine testing, hydraulics and pneumatics and he enjoyed his time at Brunel, where he worked until he finally retired in 2006.

Retirement allowed Bob to concentrate on

"When the Triple is in steam, I experience a sense of awe and excitement"

his many interests and hobbies, which range from helping to maintain the small golf course where he plays to supporting projects such as *SS Great Britain*, *Vulcan in the Sky* and becoming an Honorary Member of the British Astronomical Association.

Bob loves volunteering at Kempton – for anyone with an interest in how things work and what makes things tick, he says it's a magical place. "For me, spending time with like-minded people who share my enthusiasm for steam engineering is a great way to spend a day.

"When the Triple is in steam, I experience a sense of awe and excitement," he adds. "Steaming weekends are a great way to share this with the public and it's very satisfying to see visitors to the museum experience this same sense of wonder.

"Open days also mean that the café is open and serving a range of homemade cakes that are nothing short of spectacular – I particularly recommend the bread pudding. *The Great British Bake Off* has nothing to equal this!"

Bob is particularly grateful to the Kempton Great Engines Trustees for their support and enthusiasm for the current project of restoring Triple No.7 to its former glory and he hopes to continue volunteering at Kempton for many years to come.

Railway world loses greatest patron

Just as the Hampton & Kempton Railway extension project finally got underway, we heard the sad news that the society's President, Sir William McAlpine, had died. Trustee Ray Marie, who knew him well, writes the following:

"Sir William (known to most as Bill) was a colossus of the railway preservation world and well known for his rescue of *Flying Scotsman*. Less well known was his support for smaller, less famous enterprises such as our own waterworks railway.

"In 1997 he had teamed up with Shepperton publisher Ian Allan (he of the ABC trainspotter guides and Great Cockcrow Railway) and Thames Water to look at restoring the Hampton to Kempton



line as a commercial enterprise to attract tourists.

Plans were drawn up with the intention of joining Kempton with the old wharf on the river Thames by means of a 15-inch or a two-foot gauge railway. Unfortunately the proposal foundered after the group asked John Snell, then managing Director of the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, to prepare a financial case that could be offered to Thames Water. After careful analysis of factors from his own railway and two other well-known preserved railways, John Snell concluded that 'if the project has to be justified on hard commercial grounds, it's a dead duck'. He also questioned the need, asking: "Aren't there enough steam railways already?" The proposal had hit the buffers.

"After a decent interval, the Kempton Great Engines Trust considered a new, non-commercial initiative in 1999. Sir William joined the Trust and passed over plans and correspondence to support a new approach to Thames Water. He continued to take a keen interest in Metropolitan Water Board Railway Society (MWBRS) affairs, sponsoring it for membership of the Heritage Railway Association in June 2012 and attending the opening ceremony of the Hanworth Loop in May 2013.

"It was very sad that Bill didn't see the next milestone – the signing ceremony for the lease. He would have been gratified to know that his original idea was alive and well and in good hands. Although Bill wasn't there, we were delighted that his wife Judy was able to represent him on the day the lease was finally signed (see page 4).



Lease signing gives railway project green light

It's full speed ahead as the Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway finally gets permission to start work on its ambitious heritage project

After painstaking negotiations, Trustees of the Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway and Thames Water have signed on the dotted line, paving the way for their most ambitious project yet.

The signing ceremony, which took place in the Triple House, was attended by Trust Chairman Michael Hamilton, Richard Aylard and Richard Hill of Thames Water, the Mayor of Spelthorne, Vivienne Leighton, and the Deputy Mayors of Richmond and Hounslow, plus Judy, Lady McAlpine, representing her late husband Sir Bill, former President of the Railway Society (see page 3).

The Society will now start raising funds to build a two-foot narrow-gauge railway from the existing Hanworth Loop. The route will follow as closely as possible that of the original railway used by three locomotives before the war to bring coal to the Triple House from a wharf on the Thames at Hampton. This site has since been developed and the recreation of the original track will now terminate at Oakfield Road.

The first stage of the project will begin this summer with the bridging of the aqueduct to give access to South Field, where the initial work will take place.

Eventually, the heritage rail line will cross the Portlane Brook bordering the field housing the Hanworth Loop. From there, it will go under the A316 flyover, across the aqueduct into South Field, where it will circle the edge of the field before crossing back over the aqueduct.

From there it will cross Bunny Lane, go under the main rail line, past Red House reservoir and into Hydes Field to finish at Oakfield Road.



Signed and sealed (standing, from left): Christopher Leighton, Kempton Trust Secretary Nick Reynolds, Richmond Deputy Mayor Benedict Dias, Mayor of Spelthorne Vivienne Leighton, Deputy Mayor of Hounslow Mukesh Malhotra, Thames Water's Head of Property Richard Hill and Judy, Lady McAlpine; (seated, left to right) Thames Water External Affairs and Sustainability Director Richard Aylard and Trust Chairman Michael Hamilton with the signed lease

Film crew lights up Triple House



Kempton's splendid Art Deco exterior often attracts film crews looking for an imposing building for its outdoor shots and the latest to take advantage of our Grade II* National Monument is director Stan Lee, shooting British crime drama series *Lucky Man* for Sky 1. Hero of the series is Harry Clayton – a troubled cop played by James Nesbitt, whose talents range from Ian Rankin's *Rebus* to a dwarf in Peter Jackson's *Hobbit* trilogy.

Triple News is the journal of the Kempton Great Engines Society

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The aims of the Trust are to restore one of the two historic triple-expansion steam engines at Kempton Park Waterworks on behalf of Thames Water Ltd and to operate the restored engine for public viewing on selected weekends every year.

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Triple News is printed by Culverlands, Winchester; www.culverlands.co.uk