

SSME 2022 First Newsletter (By the Chairman)

2021 update & the state of play as we approach the 2022 running season.

After a very quiet start to 2021 with little running or indeed income, the latter end of the year proved to be exceptionally busy helping to bolster our funds, particularly as we decided that the safest way to collect any money was by donations, so that the members operating the station would not be exposed to the physical contamination risk posed by handling coins or notes. This period of operation put us in a far healthier financial position in quite a short period of time, than was originally expected. The year's operation culminated in an extremely busy Santa running session with Saturday and Sunday operation over 3 weekends, which certainly provided the financial icing on the cake for the final part of the 2021 running season. The new year was also welcomed in with our usual joviality when we ran and generated funds for our local Air Ambulance, again we experienced generous donations and an excellent amount of £276:38p was collected for what we at SSME consider a very important local facility. Thanks to all members who stood out in the cold to make this happen. It should be noted that Normanby Hall Management have formally thanked SSME members for their ongoing support, especially during the Christmas period, which considerably helped to salvage their difficult year.

As notified previously we suffered an incident late in 2021, that, unfortunately, involved a serious injury to a child. It should be noted that this injury did not happen during a public running day. Because of the nature of the injury and after examination of the legislation, it was judged necessary to report the injury, within the time restrictions contained within the legislation to the HSE. This report was made via the RIDDOR reporting mechanism and was carried out on the 5th of November 2021. The incident remains in abeyance and we await the findings of the HSE from the subject matter contained within the report. This process could be a considerably protracted period and we may not know the outcome for some time. Because Normanby Hall Park management were involved with the provision of first aid for this incident, certain extra requirements, identified from investigation of the incident, have now been imposed on our operations at the Normanby Hall Park site. Fortunately, we had delivered Risk Assessments & Method Statements (RAMS) for operation of the railway to Normanby Hall management several years prior to the incident, diligently updating the documentation and notifying the Hall team of the changes, generated to comply with the Governments or at local level, Normanby Hall management, throughout the period after railway operation recommenced. This has formed a sound base to allow our railway operations to continue at this site. Nevertheless, we now need to make some changes to our management at Normanby Hall Park site, some of which are listed below.

To comply with the hall's future requirements, it is now very important that members and visitors do not stray into the park areas, other than associated with the railway, unless they are in possession of a daily admission ticket or season admission membership. Access to the toilet block and cafeteria will remain available to SSME members.

For those members who have read the recent NAME newsletter, circulated by the Secretary and principally the sections of the newsletters concerned with safety, it is apparent that a tightening of control on model/minature engineering societies etc, is being implemented by the HSE. To comply with these measures and implement further protective measures to prevent a similar reoccurrence to the above-mentioned incident, several initiatives are being or have been put place.

Approved Guidance note HS2020 lays down the minimum standard for operation of a miniature railway. This document can easily be viewed on the internet and has been circulated by the Secretary. To ensure we meet all enhanced standards and requirements we intend to apply HS2020 wherever it is applicable to the SSME Normanby Hall Park site, in operation, maintenance and modifications of the railway systems. It is the collective belief of all who operate and maintain the railway that these standards are already being employed by SSME which therefore gives us a sound base for the future, but there are areas where we need to enhance and document our current practises to comply with the requirements of HS2020.

In the letters section of the NAME newsletter the lead inspector is quoted, by the NAME chairman as saying, "if it is not written down it has not been done". In the main we meet this requirement, but there are areas where this requirement needs to be included in our practice. To this end several initiatives will be rolled out during 2022 and some are listed below.

1. A test to allow safe access to the site will be instigated. This will cover safe access, general knowledge of the site and where to report incidents or request assistance such as first aid or the emergency services.

2. A test to drive a locomotive will be instigated, this will not be about driving your loco but it will lay down what criteria should be met at site by you to drive your loco.
3. A site induction system will be developed.
4. An abridged training system for notifying visitors and visiting drivers of our requirements will be instigated.

To enable delivery of this initiative to comply with HS2020 an initial team of testing officers has been formed. This team consists of: -

Chief testing officer Jim Pell.

Assistant testing officer Vic Crossman.

Assistant testing officer Martyn Parsons.

Retest & appeals testing officer Dennis Shemilt.

All the members above have now been put through the test procedure; the test being conducted by 3 testing officers to ensure the process was rigorously applied to each individual testing officer. This number of testers will not be necessary for the rest of the membership and the numbers utilised will be at the discretion of the testing officer, conducting the test.

The testing process is set out in Proc. T/001 and will be freely available to all members.

All existing driving authorisation ceased at the end of 2021 and all members will now need to pass through the re-testing process, before driving on SSME Normanby Hall Park railway.

It is our intention to carry out the required number of tests to ensure sufficient drivers will have passed through the test & recording procedures before the start of railway running at Easter 2022. This should be accomplished by utilisation of members running days once the track maintenance work has been completed.

Please contact Jim Pell to arrange a date for your test.

Again, to comply with the requirements of HS2020 a series of Procedures, have been produced covering most of the railway operation and maintenance. These procedures will be available at Normanby Hall site, published on SSME web page and can be referred too if any member requires information or direction on how a task or operation should be carried out.

Throughout the period of operation under COVID 19 restrictions, modification of operating procedures and railway systems has been carried out. These changes were made known to members operating the site at the stage of change by verbal communication. Moving forward a system of updating members will be instigated at Normanby Hall Park site so that all changes are displayed and documented. Major changes will be distributed by communication from the Secretary.

Ongoing work 2022

A new workshop is under erection in the carriage shed area to allow safe maintenance of rolling stock local to its storage location.

The steam bay manual transporter beam is undergoing an extensive refurbishment and alignment procedure to correct for ground movement and physical metal protection to prevent deterioration of the beam.

Further signals have been and more will be installed prior to the start of the 2022 season. These signals control progress of trains up the gradient into the station and passage through the station to comply with the requirements of members who have operated the station, to reduce the possibility of infection from COVID 19.

A central clock tower has been built and donated by Vic & Shirley. The clocks can be heard chiming when the railway is in operation. Sound amplification equipment has been donated by William Shemilt.

All credit to our team of gardeners, there has been Great progress made, removing weed growth and enhancing the gardened areas across the whole site. The majority of the plants have been generously donated by members which during the times of low income allowed the projects to progress. Additionally, an allotment of funds was made at the AGM for the purchase of garden plants and this money is now also being utilised to further extend the excellent looks of the site.

Exhibitions:

Our forward skirmishing team Vic & Martyn have attended and displayed models produced by SSME members to fly the flag for SSME at Workington & Blackpool, receiving a good response and comments from both locations. Unfortunately, our home exhibition at Doncaster, has again been cancelled for 2022 and we can only hope for more favourable conditions in 2023.

The operational CCTV, that is used only when public running is taking place, is being extended so that information about the site is available on the station, supplying information to the track Marshalls. The CCTV equipment and system has been donated by Dennis & Linda Shemilt.

The 2022 Season:

Operation in 2022 will continue in a similar vein to the Autumn & Winter of 2021, with continued use of the safety systems installed during 2021 to protect the members operating the railway and primarily those staffing the station.

It is important to note that new requirements are necessary when members are running their own engines and when the railway is closed to the public. These are covered by Proc. O/001. A synopsis of these requirements states:

1. 2 members single engine running – prepare & check track is safe only.
2. 2 members, more than 1 engine running as above and signals must be used
3. 2 members plus visitors – as above plus public running safety standard's
4. Public running full public standards must be in place including queue management.

As stated previously for the 2022 operating season short familiarisation sessions and driving test where applicable are being implemented for all members. The information necessary to pass the tests should ensure all members are equipped with the required information to safely access the railway site or if applicable run a locomotive/train on the SSME Normanby Hall Park railway.

Should a member require information at any time on any of the required tasks, contained above, the procedures explaining what is required in all these tasks and how to carry out that process will be available in the clubhouse at Normanby Hall.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members and officers who have pulled out all the stops and contributed to this bank of work, which has effectively kept the railway in operation through the Christmas and New Year periods of operation. Many members have also worked to supply and document the information requirements needed to meet the more exacting demands of HS2020. This work will continue through the summer months with the production of maintenance work specifications where repetitive procedures are required to keep the railway operating. The process of individual work was already covered, by RAMS produced in previous years, the initial individual RAMS process was for maintenance of the transporter systems, (Bendy Beam), an undertaking which required re-work from the foundations to the rails. This proved to be an adequately planned, well-managed effective process, utilising many individual skill sets culminating in an overall excellent result. Therefore, taking the previous methods as good practise this methodology will be utilised in all future projects.

Dates for the diary 2022:

Boiler testing date 2nd April – contact Jim Pell (usually available at NH on Tuesdays) to book your boiler in.

Preseason members running & proving days Wednesday the 6th & 13th April.

First public running days Easter Sunday & Monday the 17th & 18th April.

Dennis Shemilt,

Chairman.