

# Elstree & Borehamwood Museum

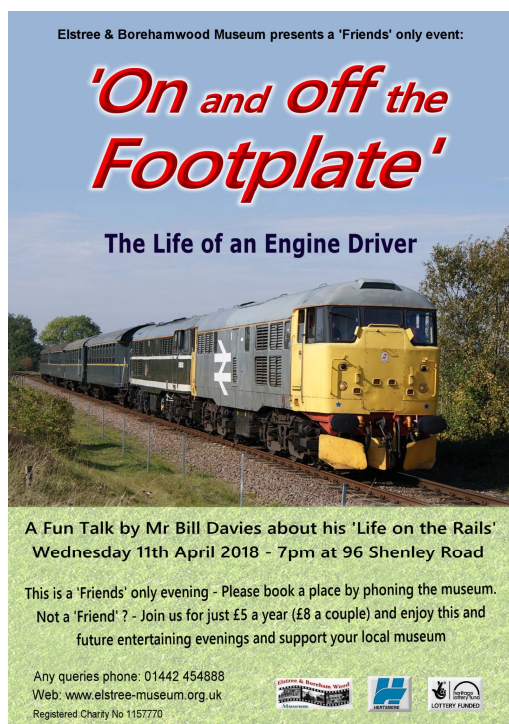
## Friends Newsletter

### May 2018 : Issue Number 17



#### **"ALL CHANGE!" GATHERS SPEED**

Our new Exhibition about the Age of Steam, the creation of Borehamwood & Elstree Station, and the consequent growth of the town in the last 150 years, has become a huge hit. Not just among the local trainspotters, and those of a certain age with fond memories of the smell of steam and coal, but with many youngsters too. Tales of bacon and eggs cooked on the firebox, the sound of the whistle, and the chance to dress like a British Rail guard, complete with flag, are just an irresistible combination for visitors.



And of course the Friends were involved too. Our first meeting of 2018 was a 'sold-out' event and we packed the second floor of the library to hear our guest speaker, Bill Davies, now retired. From the age of 5 he wanted to be an engine driver, and so started work on the railways in 1964, a few years after steam trains slowly disappeared. Of course it took a number of years as he worked up through training and other duties before he became a

driver, and he worked out of King's Cross and other parts of the South East. He gave an insider's defence of Dr Beeching's cuts following the nationalisation of the railways which had led to the duplication of lines in a number of areas. There were lots of stories of the characters he met, the occasional mishaps, and the different attitudes we all had in the sixties and seventies to work.



**Bill In Full Flow**

After moving to Bedford he became a driver on the 'Bed-Pan Line', which runs through our station; then diesels were replaced by electric trains and privatisation led to changes in working practices. He gave a fascinating insight into life behind the driver's handle, accompanied by many photos for train lovers and several amusing anecdotes.



**The Friends Meet Bill**



## "ALL CHANGE!" MODEL DAY

The Museum held a Model Railway Day in April to advertise the current Exhibition, and to play with some tracks and trains. Organised by Dave Armitage and Helen Stamp we ended up with nearly a dozen circular track layouts in 96 Shenley Road, and one amazing model.



Dave and Helen

Created by Tony De Swarte, the model featured the Borehamwood and Elstree Station as it was in 1900. Before cars, before so many houses were built round the station, and just as the population was increasing rapidly, the Station almost stands alone in the fields. Of course there was by then one gasometer, but still a cattle pen, sheep on Woodcock Hill, and a single trackway from the brickfields over the top of the tunnels and down to the sidings. And the chimney of the brickfields was still standing proud, before the thought of Zeppelins flying over was even entertained.



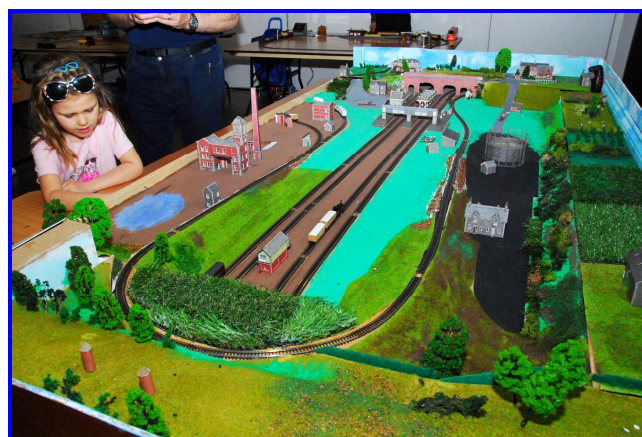
Tony making final adjustments

In 1900 there was a small building, as shown on a 1898 map of the time, near the cattle

pen and the 'allotment fields'. It was located at the rear of the station when the main entrance was on the other side of the tracks. At the time it was a Methodist Chapel, but soon to become a cinema, later a council office, then a public convenience, and a florist among many uses. And 118 years later it continues to refuse to disappear!

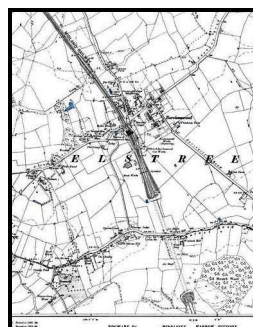


Station Close Up



The Long View

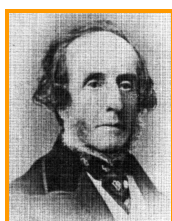
All this is faithfully shown on Tony's model. It was a fine attraction and over 150 visitors of all ages enjoyed playing with the various set-ups, different gauge toy trains and trying their hands at model making.



1898 Station Map

## JOHN FREDERICK TAYLER : 1802-1889 : A Life In Art

The original Barham House in Elstree, of which only the gatehouse remains, has seen many illustrious residents, visitors, births and deaths. A particularly significant birth was that of Frederick Tayler who became one of the most famous watercolour painters of his age, and a firm favourite of Queen Victoria.



Frederick Tayler

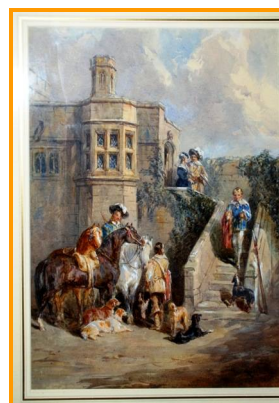
One of 17 children born to Archdale and Frances, Frederick was baptised at St Nicholas in Elstree. His youngest brother William was to become commissioner of Patna in India, but was ignominiously removed from office for his harshness after the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion.

Although Archdale was a noted country gentleman he was ruined by a dishonest agent, and forced to join the army where he died whilst Frederick was a child. Fortunately the family had High Church connections, so Frederick was educated at Eton and Harrow, and was expected to enter the Church. But his artistic leanings came out on top and he insisted on studying at the famous Sass's Academy before moving to the Royal Academy.

Returning from a visit to his brother, who was Chaplain to the British Embassy in Florence, Frederick visited Paris and stayed for four years after being so impressed with the artists working there. He studied horse anatomy painting with Theodore Gericault, worked with Horace Vernet and his son-in-law Paul Delaroche, and shared a studio with Richard Parkes Bonington. Bonington was to die at 28 from TB, but became recognised as one of the greatest painters of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

After Bonington's death in 1828, Frederick returned to London and begun his climb up the artistic ladder. Although he first exhibited in oils at the Royal Academy in 1830, he concentrated on watercolours, joined what was to become the Royal Watercolour Society in 1834,

and eventually became its President from 1858 to 1870. During his time in the Society he exhibited over 500 paintings. He was awarded many honours, medals and exhibitions in his long life.



Haddon Hall

His work was first seen by Princess Victoria in 1834, and when she became Queen purchased his works for Windsor Castle and Osborne House. He helped the Queen with her painting, drew her favourite horses, and used this royal connection to gather work from many aristocratic houses. His favourite subjects were among the clansmen and the Highlands, and he was a frequent traveller in the glens of Scotland. In spite of his success he seems to have moved house in and around London and Brighton virtually every year, and, after some poor investments, ended up in West Hampstead where he died and is buried.

Though greatly in vogue in his day, his art to us seems rather old-fashioned, and the great critic John Ruskin compared him unfavourably with Turner, which is hardly surprising. Many of his works languish in the storage of art galleries and museums, and are rarely displayed - the sporting and hunting scenes and the costumes are no longer in fashion. The Museum owns two originals : Haddon Hall, and Cottage Life. They are both in storage.



Cottage Life



## NEW FRIENDS EVENT



Following on from our very successful Friends Evening when Dr John Wigley of Haberdasher's Aske's Boys School gave us a talk about their history, the Friends have been invited to visit the school on the afternoon of Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August. We will have a guided tour followed by tea, and places will be strictly limited. Please ring the Museum on 01442 454888 to reserve your place.

### St Teresa's Primary Visits *All Change!*



Vania, Helen and pupils dressing up

We recently had a visit from the Year Three class from St Teresa's Primary School to see the *All Change!* Exhibition.

The children had fun involving a range of differing activities, from following a museum trail, dressing up as passengers and railway staff, to exploring local maps and making their own steam powered wind turbines.

"The children had a fantastic time" said Ms K Ayres, the Year Three class teacher.

Thanks to Dave Armitage and Alan Robins, engineers and steam enthusiasts, to Linda Parkin on maps, Helen Stamp, museum guide extraordinaire, and Derek Allen, our resident photographer. Museum Trail and workshops devised by David and Vania (Community Learning Officer).



Alan and Dave reveal the secrets of steam

Museum Photographer : Derek Allen

### NOW ON SALE - Museum Merchandise

A range of Museum items – pens, keyrings, local magnets and tote shopping bags. Make sure that as a Friend you remind all **your** friends to purchase these items to boost the Museum's funds! On sale in the Museum or on our website.

#### Elstree & Borehamwood Museum

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FB : [www.facebook.com/EBWmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/EBWmuseum)

Twitter : <https://twitter.com/EBWMuseumHerts>

Open : Tues, Wed & Thurs : 12pm - 6pm Sat :  
10am-3pm

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Elstree & Borehamwood Town Council

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