

STOVEPIPE

Magazine of the Urie Locomotive Society



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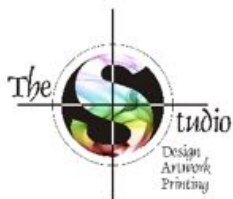
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Call for Articles

We have had many favourable comments about the “memories” feature that has been running over several issues of Stovepipe and would dearly love to continue to publish your recollections. Please share your thoughts on the days of steam; whether you were working on the railways or simply a train enthusiast, I'm sure there are lots of stories that will trigger happy memories for all our members.

If any of you were able to join us on 2nd June for the launch of 506, we would love to hear your thoughts on the loco or the day in general. Please send any letters or stories to me at urieloco.marketing@hotmail.com or mail them to the address listed under Mark's name on the back cover. Many thanks.

Lynda Pedley



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Cover Photo - THE FIRE IS LIT! After 18 years, Barry Stratton lights the first fire in 506 for final checks before the official steam test, 16.5.19. Photo © Mark Drinkwater

Honorary President's Statement



The words as spoken by Bob Urie on 2nd June 2019 immediately prior to formally handing 506 over to Jason Houlders, General Manager MHR, as she joined the MHR running fleet to begin the next 10 years of her story.



*Robert Urie
(Grandson of
Robert W Urie)*

“Good morning everyone and a very warm welcome to the launch of 506. As you will shortly see, 506 is in immaculate condition which is an exceptional result after the many hours of work that have been involved in bringing the locomotive to the condition necessary for the launch day. It is a particular success for Mark Pedley and the Engineering Team who have persevered with the multitude of challenges involved to achieve the return to service of 506.

The work has been carried out with great enthusiasm, dedication and resolve, and the result is a locomotive which I am sure Robert Urie would have been delighted to see. A successful project requires a support service that runs like clockwork. The ULS is most fortunate in having a very dedicated support team. The scope of expertise required, and which is always delivered, is illustrated by reading page 28 of the January 2019 edition of Stovepipe - a most impressive group of people, all with great determination and commitment. The Society flourishes as a result of the efforts of the Members and the staff of the Mid Hants Railway - a very sincere Thank You to everyone involved.

The result so far as 506 is concerned is here for us all to see, and what a superb sight it is! We do wish 506 every success as the locomotive returns to revenue-earning service at 10:30 this morning.”

Honorary Patron's Statement

I deliberately waited to write my piece for this edition of Stovepipe until I had seen 506 in all her glory in steam at Alresford on Sunday 2nd June to make sure there was no speculation about what might happen. Well, I'm glad I did as I couldn't have foreseen the tremendous day that panned out making me proud to be associated with the Urie Locomotive Society.



Firstly congratulations to Mark Pedley and Roger Burt for their brilliant organisation in making the day run so smoothly. They were probably like swans, looking graceful on the surface but paddling like mad under the water to make sure everything ran to time.

The turnout was much greater than expected, the loco looked magnificent, the weather was perfect, in fact, nothing spoilt our day. Speaking to the crew on the footplate, they remarked how balanced the engine was, how great she sounded and that she ran "as smooth as a sewing machine", so a special mention must go to our engineering team who made it all possible within the time frame and, of course, the financial restraints. A herculean job.



Perfect reflection of Alresford signal box in 506's tender, so shiny was her paintwork. Photo © Mark Collins

Personally I was amazed at how she looked. I managed to take a selfie in the reflection of the tender, such was the shine on her paintwork and I hope that everyone who took photos and videos of her will pass them on to Stephen Bedser so they can become a pictorial history of this momentous day for others to enjoy on our new-look website.

This has undoubtedly been a team effort so congratulations go to everyone involved in the ULS, the team on the MHR and especially those who gave up their time to restore 506 for generations to enjoy in the future.

Mark Collins

Chairman's Statement

Well, it finally happened; on 2nd June 2019, after an absence of 18 years, 506 returned to traffic. Suddenly it felt like those 18 years never existed, like there was a seamless transition from withdrawal to launch in a split second ... but it's been a long road to get to where we are now!

Withdrawn in 2001 with boiler issues, 506 was initially stored for a couple of years while the Society negotiated new overhaul and running contracts with the MHR. Two years or so later, the overhaul began with a strip down of the boiler; it was known at the time that some pretty heavy work was required with cracks in the copper firebox crown to be welded, some wasted outer plating to be replaced and, of course, the small matter of full replacement of the crown stays.

What lay undiscovered at the time was the horror story which would unfold once the boiler was handed over to the MHR boiler team and we moved on to the mechanical overhaul. With the motion taken down and the pistons and valves removed, something very concerning became apparent; the cylinder blocks were pushed out at the top by a good quarter of an inch. There was no way round it, to get to the root cause of the problem the blocks had to come off. Burning the securing bolts out was a mammoth job in itself but once they were all removed and the crane called in to lift the blocks clear, there was the problem for all the world to see - rust. Over the years, the corrosive atmosphere under the smokebox had taken its toll and the frames became so badly corroded that in places they were down to one third of normal thickness.

Making a decision to replace the front 9' of frames on a 1920's steam loco is easy; doing it is a completely different story. However, as everyone knows,

nothing phases the ULS engineering team so we just got stuck in to what we had to do, never really knowing if we would ever see 506 steam again!

Fast forward to 2017 and imagine the feeling of sheer elation when we lifted the slide bars to the rebuilt front end and realised everything fitted ... you could almost taste the buzz and excitement that enveloped us as reality dawned that we had actually achieved something which a few years earlier had felt impossible.

With this new-found positivity and sense of achievement, the passion index went through the roof as we got stuck into completing the rebuild before handing 506 over to the MHR engineering team for the rest of the mechanical overhaul with our team helping as required. There was a significant shift in practices as the MHR paid staff, weekday volunteers and the ULS engineering team worked together in partnership with each other to complete the job; we all hope this will become the working blueprint for many years to come.

And so to the big day and 506's official return to traffic. Roger Burt's article which follows describes the day perfectly. There is absolutely nothing more for me to say other than to thank everyone who contributed to yet another ULS success. All groups have highs and lows, it's part of life, and the ULS is no different; we have certainly had our share of dark times. Look at us now though, flying high with money in the bank, donations continuing to pour in, membership on the rise and people wanting to be part of our project. We have received plaudits from around the country for the work done on 506, but I think the greatest accolade I have read is from Toby Jennings, who writes in the latest issue of Steam Railway, that we have "brought No. 506 back to life with one of the heaviest bottom end rebuilds in preservation". Wow, praise indeed.

What next for the activities at Ropley? There will be a couple of months sorting containers, disposing of accumulated junk and generally reorganising ourselves. Then we start the rest of our journey; 499 is on the way back to join her younger sister at the head of 'that train'. It will happen. We have some exciting things going on at the moment but those are for another time; this issue of Stovepipe is dedicated to 506 so please sit back and enjoy our tribute in pictures.

Thank you all for your continuing support, without it I doubt we would be where we are today.

Mark Pedley

Engineering Report

I hope you agree that all we need to say, as far as 506 is concerned, is 'job done!!' Everything which needed to be finished was finished, by a team of guys from MHR paid staff and weekday volunteers working alongside our own ULS team. This report is written to simply say two words - THANK YOU ... to everyone who played a part and made the return to steam possible. There are some who have been part of this journey since the day the loco was withdrawn from traffic in 2001, so let's consider the words of one of them, our very own Barry Stratton:

"After the years of work rebuilding 506 the final 3 months has passed in the blink of an eye. The most memorable part has been the spirit of everyone working on 506, railway's full-time staff, Mid Hants volunteers and Urie Locomotive Society volunteers all working to achieve the fantastic result we see today.

On a personal note, after 45 years' working within House of Fraser as maintenance engineer, I was made redundant and as a result have been able to commit a great deal of time since early March working on 506 ... my thanks to my long-suffering wife who gave me so much support; never has the term 'railway widow' been so accurately described.

One aspect of the overhaul perhaps not immediately thought about is all the people who had been involved in the purchase and initial overhaul of 506 who are sadly no longer with us. It was with a mix of pride and immense satisfaction that we approached the official launch, and when 506 pulled into Alresford I must confess I found it an emotional moment; 'we walk in the shadow of men past'. From the workshop staff at Eastleigh who built it through to the footplate staff and fitters who nurtured her through 43 years of working life, 506 is a lasting tribute to Eastleigh's engineering greatness.

Once the boiler had passed its final steam test on 21st May and then made an initial move under its own power later that afternoon, with light engine and loaded test runs the following week, it was incredible to note that we had no significant problems which, considering the magnitude of the overhaul, is a testament to the quality of the work and the professional approach of EVERYONE working on 506. It's also proved just what determination and teamwork can do - my sincere thanks to all."

Mark Pedley

Return to Steam Ceremony for 506, 2nd June 2019, Alresford Station

As the Chairman and Vice-Chairman planned the ceremony for the official launch of 506 back into steam on 2nd June, it was difficult not to compare the operation with the preparations for D-Day 75 years earlier. Would the weather be good, would the equipment work, would everyone be there on time? Should they be compared to Prime Minister Churchill and General Eisenhower - perhaps not, more Captain Mainwaring and Sergeant Wilson, or Laurel and Hardy!

Fortunately we had a great engineering team doing the final preparations and testing of the loco, and a really supportive team from the Mid-Hants looking after the logistics, feeding the troops and repeating the “don’t panic Mr Mainwaring” message at regular intervals.

506 had been hidden away in the wheeldrop shed at Ropley, only to appear in the evenings before the ceremony for test runs as light engine and then pulling a rake of carriages. A few tweaks here and a few adjustments there and she was as good as she was ever going to be (famous last words - Barry will spend the next ten years adjusting, improving and looking after her). She looked beautiful in her shiny wartime black livery with the word “Southern” and her number in the distinctive “sunshine lettering”.



*The crew look on as the crowds gather.
Photo © Dave Ryding*

The morning of the ceremony arrives. 506 runs light engine from Ropley to Alresford.

506 is positioned under the footbridge on Platform 2 at Alresford Station. Driver Mark Drinkwater, fireman Matt Ellis and cleaner Andrew Woodroffe are ready and waiting.

An even fire is burning in the firebox and there is 160 pounds on the pressure gauge. The rake of carriages she will pull for her first revenue-earning run has been positioned in Platform 1. At 09:30 the barrage begins in preparation for the ceremony - sorry, not a barrage, just our Chairman testing the PA system with the volume turned up too high.

The crowd gathers on platform 2 and our Chairman mounts the podium and opens the proceedings by welcoming everyone to the ceremony. Our Patron, Mark Collins, then mounts the podium and explains how men of a certain age become enthralled by steam railways. His own story parallels that of many of the rest of the audience. His introduction to the team and the work at Ropley on 499 and 506 on being invited to become patron clearly meant a great deal to him.



Bob Urie, our President, then takes over on the podium and thanks everyone for their contribution to the return of 506 to steam. It was clearly an emotional moment for him and his family and the author invites you to revisit Bob's speech, printed verbatim on page 3 of this issue.

Bob then turned to the general manager of the MHR, Jason Houlders, and metaphorically passed the shovel and regulator to Jason for the next ten years of work on the Watercress Line. A thank you from Jason and a blast on the whistle gave the seal of approval for the start of a new life for a near 99-year old locomotive that will work into the first decade of her second century.

With cameras flashing and whistles blowing, 506 gently made her way down the platform towards London. Everyone makes their way to Platform 1 including 506. She is coupled to the front of the train and more photographs are taken from the new vantage points. 506 simmers gently in the Sunday morning sunshine. The platform starts to empty as the passengers join the train. The first carriage is reserved for ULS committee, the press and invited guests.



Left-right: Mark Pedley, Mark Collins, Bob Urie and Jason Houlders. Photo © Matt Bentley

Friends and family are in the front of carriage two and a good number of passengers are in the rest of the rake of carriages. As Bob had said, 10:30 was her return to revenue-earning service.

At 10:30 on the dot, the signal drops, her whistle blows, and we gently ease out of the station heading uphill towards Medstead. Everyone agrees that she sounds superb, not a clank to be heard - just that rhythmic soft exhaust sound of a true Southern engine working hard as she heads uphill. Before long we slow down to pass through Ropley Station and pass by the loco yard. Sitting on her plinth is 499 - as we pass by, 499 gently reminds us not to forget that she wants to return to steam as well.

A suggestion had been made to break a bottle of champagne over one of the front buffers of 506 to mark the launch but this was dismissed in favour of buying more boiler stays for 499. Yes, 506 may be back in steam but 499 is waiting. No rest for the wicked as my Mother used to say - next weekend it is back to working on 499, drilling out boiler stays, machining parts, riveting on various large pieces of metal, raising more funds ...

The Engineering Team would like to thank everyone for coming to the ceremony today, for all the time and effort the ULS members and the MHR team have put into getting 506 back into steam and making today such a huge success.

Roger Burt, Vice-Chairman

506

THE JOURNEY

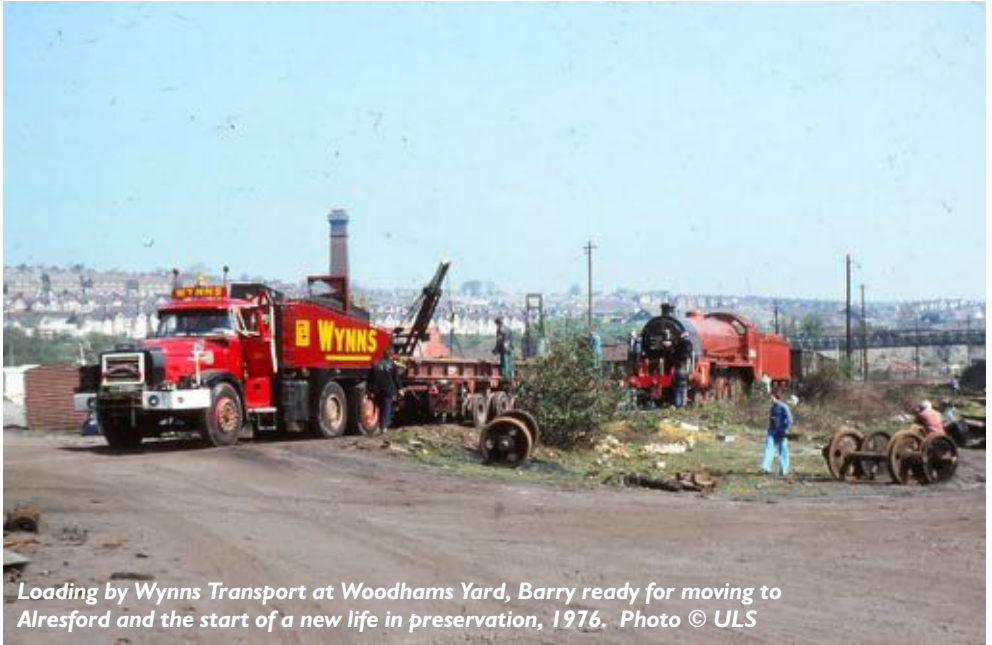
SO FAR ...



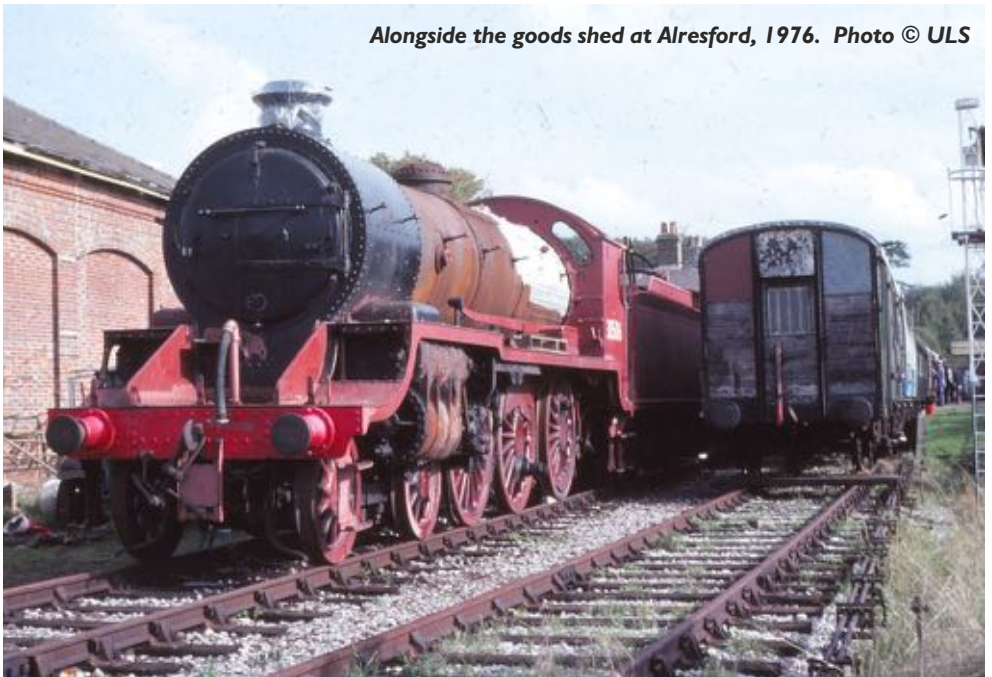
Feltham, 3 October 1925



Feltham, 1963 (exact date unknown)



Loading by Wynns Transport at Woodhams Yard, Barry ready for moving to Alresford and the start of a new life in preservation, 1976. Photo © ULS



Alongside the goods shed at Alresford, 1976. Photo © ULS



Cylinder bolt heads as seen inside the centre casting prior to removal, September 2012 ... Photo © ULS



... Same view 4 years later with the frame sections replaced and the blocks back on. Photo © ULS



The moment the cylinder blocks were removed, November 2012 ... Photo © ULS



*... to reveal this! An edge-on view
of the wastage to the frame plate
behind the cylinder blocks.
Photo © ULS*





The front 9' of frames had to be replaced, August 2014. Photo © ULS



506 in May 2015, the frame sections have been replaced and the centre casting is in the process of being riveted back in. Photo © ULS



This Hampshire Unit testing station was found in Eastleigh Works, sitting on a genuine Urie tender chassis, number 3208. Photo © ULS



Stripped of all the testing station gubbins, and now sitting under a "new" 5,000 gallon tender tank manufactured by Plenty's of Newbury . who would ever know?? Photo © ULS

Testing the safety valves as part of the final steam test, 21 May 2019. Photo © ULS



**Word has just filtered through
- "she passed". Left-right:
Steve Gault, Barry Stratton,
Mark Pedley and John Fry.
Photo © ULS**

*First test run to Medstead after passing the
final steam test, 23 May 2019. Photo © ULS*



On shed at Ropley before the big day starts, 2 June 2019. Photo © Dave Ryding



Easing down to platform 2 at Alresford ...
2 June 2019 ... Photo © Dave Ryding





... where the crowds are gathering to greet her. Photo © Brian Kennedy



Plenty of opportunity to get up close! ...
Photo © Matt Bentley



... before the official ceremony began.
Photo © Matt Bentley



A special guest! 55 years after
firing 506 on its last BR trip,
Richard Flann is reunited with his
old friend at Alresford, 2 June 2019.
Photo © Stephen Bedser

Awaiting the whistle which will mark 506's return to service at the Mid Hants Railway, 10:30am, 2 June 2019. Photo © Matt Bentley



The train sets off, next stop Ropley.
Photo © Matt Bentley



Running through Bishops Sutton.
Photo © Dave Ryding



Pausing at Ropley.
Photo © Brian Kennedy



*First train of the day departs Ropley
ready for the climb to Medstead.
Photo © Brian Kennedy*



In between services at Alresford, a time for reflection. Photo © Dave Ryding



Driver Mark Drinkwater, Fireman Matthew Ellis and Cleaner Andrew Woodroffe. All are MHR paid staff who were involved in 506's overhaul; we are indebted to them for the work they did. Photo © Matt Bentley



506 basks in the
Alresford sunshine.
Photo © Dave
Ryding



Waiting to depart Alresford
with the 12.30 service to
Medstead. 9F No. 92212 sits
alongside as she enters the
final few months of service
before withdrawal for
overhaul later this year.
Photo © Matt Bentley





The 12:30 service heads
out under Sun Lane.
Photo © Matt Bentley

Approaching Wanders Curve
on Medstead Bank. Photo ©
Dave Rydning



Running into Medstead
with a service train, 22
June 2019. Photo ©
Dave Rydland



Ropley yard preparing for her first turn on the RAT, 22 June 2019. Photo © Dave Ryding





*Ropley cutting, running into the station,
22 June 2019. Photo © Dave Ryding*

First RAT at Rook
Wood, 22 June 2019.
Photo © Dave Ryding





The end of a busy day and the sun may be setting, but this is only the beginning. We look forward to seeing 506 in service on the Mid Hants railway for another 10 years. 22 June 2019. Photo © Dave Ryding

Obituaries

While the overhaul of 506 was nearing its conclusion, I heard the news that one of the railway's early stalwarts, Barry Eden, had passed away after a brave fight against cancer. Barry was one of those early pioneers who somehow, against all the odds, restored the N class in the open air at Alresford, paving the way to the reopening of the MHR in 1977.

Barry was a very keen and extremely skilled model railway engineer who scaled up to full size; always a perfectionist with scant equipment but with his considerable ingenuity he produced some amazing results. Once you knew him and his very dry sense of humour, he would impart his words of wisdom and I for one gained so much knowledge. Being a perfectionist had its pitfalls; on one occasion, Barry decided the vacuum limit valve on 31806 needed some adjustment ... just as he was leaving the shed yard. The said valve was duly dismantled, unfortunately one of the parts fell down under the cab floorboards and a great deal of effort and a spot of good luck was needed to retrieve the bit, general merriment by everyone at Barry's expense!

I was able to attend Barry's funeral; never have I seen so many people paying their last respects.

Barry Stratton

Earlier this year I was contacted by the brother of David Vidler, GM of the MHR when the line reopened in 1977, to say that David had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer and was now in a care home.

I hadn't seen David for many years and was delighted when he invited myself and Roger Burt to visit him. Clearly he was very poorly but he still had the same sense of humour and wry grin I remembered from all those years ago. We chatted at length about those early days and he spoke with pride about his involvement both with the MHR and the ULS; his appreciation of volunteers and understanding of how crucial they are to heritage railways was a joy to hear. Sadly, not long after our visit, David passed away ... another new star signed up to the heritage movement in the sky. Roger and I attended his funeral, proud to represent the ULS as we said farewell to a great supporter.

Mark Pedley

... and finally

Unfortunately our Sales Officer, Sue Heanes, was unable to join us for 506's return to traffic, but it's fair to say she had a pretty good excuse!! Congratulations to Sue and Rob from everyone in the ULS, we wish them every happiness and a long and healthy future together.



‘Stovepipe’ is published three times a year in January, May and September.

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