
***Preliminary AGM and Special Talk and Discussion Advice
Promise of a memorable event – a landmark in the SIG's history***

1 of 3 - Current News and a date for your diary

The AGM will be in central London this year on, Thursday 4th June 2009 (PM).
There will also be a presentation and

Appendix 1 attached

2 of 3 - Minimum blame

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Appendix 2 attached

3 of 3 - Unexpected consequences – this month an NHS example

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And now for something different

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Final Appendix attached

Thought of the month

Synchronicity is a word that has recently been banded about. It is defined as "the simultaneous occurrence of events with no discernible casual connection". It is the non-faith explanation for your car not starting in the morning and delaying you for 10 minutes when the bridge fails and the traffic 10 minutes ahead of you all falls into the river.

See you soon with *NEWSLETTER No 41*.

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Secretary

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Appendices

1 of 3 - Current News and a date for your diary

The AGM will be in central London this year on Thursday 4th June 2009 (PM). There will also be a presentation and discussion on a very topical subject. A formal advice note will be coming out shortly with details of the speaker. Our hosts for this meeting, BDO Stoy Hayward LLP, have kindly offered the use of a room within the conference and training facility at their Baker Street, W1 offices, so I would appreciate knowing numbers in good time.

+ Thank you to all those who have come forward and offered to help with extra material for the Guide. With the additional workload (welcomed) this has set back the submission of the final draft of the preliminary work to the **irm** office, but we should still be on target for eventual publication by late Summer 2009.

+ In issue no 36 (late January 2009), a request went out for an alternative word for use in the Guide to embrace Education and Training. A fair number of replies came in. All of these really confirmed the original view that there was no one word that could be used – well, *Training* is so well established and everyone understands the meaning. Also, the decision had already been taken to drop the distinction between management and staff. However, one reply stood out, in fact no fewer than three people thought of it! *Enabling*

So, **educating (managers) and training (staff)** becomes, **enabling and training**
Thanks to everyone who wrote in.

2 of 3 - Minimum blame (or just blame?)

This theme will also be included within the Guide. It is imperative that retrospective investigations use up as little *costable* time as possible and little if nothing can be gained by the upset to people, both the interviewer and the interviewed. Clearly criminal matters have to be handled by the appropriate authorities and attention must also be paid to any major breach of duty and to gross negligence – but otherwise?

The subject has been researched by Dame Professor Douglas and is explained in the 1992 book “Risk and Blame” from which quotations will be taken. Douglas argues that we have a no fault divorce system, as it is cheaper on the collective purse. There is also reference to the Sherpas and other peoples who, without advanced technology or benefits of science, have nether the less achieved a no-fault culture, the same solution seems to apply. They irrigate their social system with a lavish flow of gifts. This can be seen as a social insurance.

The idea doesn't need to be sold to your editor – we had the “knock for knock” motor insurance claims system when I started out in the industry – and that was in the days when we also had a similar claims agreement for steam locomotives setting fire to farmers' crops without actual proof of blame. Anyway, there is more on the railways in the “and now for something different” section.

3 of 3 - Unexpected consequences – this month an NHS example

The SIG's attention has been drawn to an illuminated display board in a Health centre which was built in the 1970s as part of a re-generation scheme in an inner city area (I recall that some still called it slum clearance in those days).

When the doctor is free, a button is pushed and a buzzer sounds in the reception with a little light stating which doctor is free for the next patient to walk through. In this very different age, the receptionist then calls out the next patient's name before anyone gets up - regulars know, or should know that they have to wait till called. What happens on a very frequent basis is that the receptionist is busy multi-tasking - on the phone or is even called in to see one of the doctors and the name does not get called out. Quite regularly patients get fed up with waiting and some get up, usually out of their turn and just walk through. There have been a number of incidents - patient to patient and receptionist to patient.

The SIG understands that there are logistical problems with having this board relocated away from public view, so the situation persists.

Why oh why, do they not have a simple sign printed in block letters and fixed to the wall under the display board for everyone to see:

WAIT FOR YOUR NAME TO BE CALLED
OUT BEFORE GOING INTO THE DOCTORS

It could even be printed in the five or six usual languages that appear on other notices in the building.

This scenario, which no doubt some would argue is an operational problem, actually also falls under both *communication* and *unexpected consequences* headings of our interest.

And now for something different

This could perhaps be better titled, "*A tale of two stations*". In Issue No 37, I commented about the apparent going into reverse of development thinking in the area of hospital design. Now, if we change the context to unforeseen circumstances, the railways in the East Midlands are hitting the headlines at the moment - a new station has recently been opened, and ahead of schedule too. "East Midlands Parkway" is as it says on the tin, a station by a car park (just visible on the left centre of the pic below) intended for people from the Nottingham and Derby areas to commute to London and elsewhere.

The station has been created only very slightly to the south of Trent Junction - the crossing place of the Nottingham to Derby route with the Midland Main Line which serves Loughborough and Leicester and eventually London to the south - and Sheffield and others to the north.

When the Midland Railway Company built the network in Victorian times they constructed a station, which was in completely isolated open country, called "Trent". This was built on the crossing place to provide an essential service for passengers to change between the multitude of steam trains that linked the cities mentioned above and the numerous small stations and branch lines that had opened up the world of

travel. In those days, this gave new aspirations to a local society previously only linked to it's neighbours by horse drawn transport. Well yes, there were the canals, but mainly for heavy freight - anyway I digress.

Click below if picture does not appear



Fast forward to the 1960s and two things happened:

- 1) A massive power station was built to the south of Trent Junction (still active with emerging steam clearly being seen from the cooling towers visible in the pic) with the construction of a new mineral access line looping into the complex for coal trains.
- 2) The Government, acting on a report made by a Dr. Beeching, drastically cut the railways in the UK. The old Great Central main line from London to Yorkshire via Nottingham was closed and more passengers were diverted onto overcrowded Midland Main Line trains to Sheffield. Passengers then had to alight at the old "Trent Junction" station for change to local Derby to Nottingham services - your editor can remember standing there in howling gales when I used the London rail services between 1967 and 1970 - still there was the café with the original old black cast iron coal fired grate and canopy (not working by late 60s though) surrounded by regulation green ceramic tiles. Eventually there were so many complaints, many London to Sheffield trains were diverted via either Nottingham or via Derby - and eventually Trent Junction station was actually demolished.

Over the intervening years trains have become even busier, it has become increasingly difficult to negotiate the cities in time for the services and park by the conventional stations. Now the new "East Midland Parkway" site provides additional facilities to complement Nottingham and Derby city stations by providing for car users, mainly business types (judging by the up market motors in the car park), going mainly to London.

The irony of all this (and the main point of this story) is that the Power Station was intended to be built to the east of Nottingham close to quality suburbs, but had to be moved due to masses of protests at the planning stage. So if it hadn't been for the 1960s NIMBYs, there would not have been the same layout available on brown field land for the new station.

The interest for our SIG, is that this scenario came about, at least in part, by chance. In future, with a larger population and the country's land area tending to be reduced by erosion and flooding due to global warming, decision making will need to be more multi-dimensional with an improved process to ensure "ultimate outcomes" from scarce remaining opportunities. Another thing that our Guide will be about.

Comment

As for the verdict on the station - well, the howling gales haven't changed from the '60s and there is no screening or other protection to the car park or platforms. Also, being intended for commuters in a hurry, there was no provision for your Editor to get a cup of tea, not even from a machine. I suppose I will be getting letters from the carbon footprint lobby if I say "Come back, Midland Railway Company with your steam trains and cosy coal fires, all is forgiven" - so I won't! Ed