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The News Sheet

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The Society's stand at the London ME Exhibition **Photo:** Owen Chapman

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The Chairman's Notes

Happy New Year to you all; I hope that those of you that I have not yet been in contact with had a good holiday season and were able to escape to the workshop for at least some of the time. It was a different holiday period for me this year, the first for the Corcoran's in our nearly completed house and strangest of all no Model Engineer Exhibition to be involved with on behalf of the Society.

It has already been a busy month and I am writing this unfashionably early by my normal standards with over ten days to go to the Newsheet deadline. New Year's Day saw the first run of the year on both the Ground Level Railway and the Mainline (well except for about four feet of it). Several members attended, did a bit of work, and had a play, topped off by a quick pint. A very enjoyable way to start the year!

This has been followed by the January General Meeting, which, I am told, was a real treat for those who were able to attend (I had the Flu and am waiting to see the film). Mike Chrisp displayed two of his newly-transferred-to-DVD cine films; at least one of these fantastic films was a 'health and safety' demonstration, which showed how far we have come in thirty years and gave an insight to those who were unaware as to how the track at Colney Heath was constructed.

The London Model Engineering Exhibition will have happened and as I write, the majority of the work prior to the last minute jitters are well in hand, and with our Editor kindly extending the editorial deadline for photographs this month there should be at least one picture of the Society stand within the pages of our fantastic News Sheet. Also occurring in January the HO boys are attending an event in Dartford with their Young Street Yard layout, which I hope was a great success.

Moving onto a monumental screw-up: at a time when it was hoped we would be confirming the full details of the Society's Gala Weekend the Council regrettably must inform the membership that our Gala Weekend has had to be postponed to a date to be confirmed later in the year. This unfortunate incident has had to occur in the best interests of the Society's good name following the incorrect early confirmation by the Loco Section of a Birthday Party at Colney Heath on the Saturday of the Gala Weekend.

In setting the date for the Gala Weekend the Council spent a considerable amount of time on choosing a date to best avoid a clash with other popular local events, so that the Society could present our hobby to the widest range of people in order for us to gain the maximum enjoyment for our efforts.

It is because of the other local events and our wish to avoid the school holidays, that we the Council had to take this unexpected and unfortunate decision to postpone the Gala Weekend. I can assure everyone that we are taking steps to avoid this sort of

incident ever happening again, and that a new date should be published next month, so watch this space.

Not so long ago you could not listen to the radio without having heard about the new requirements for employers created by the Disability Discrimination Act; what you may not have been aware of is that this Act also placed obligations on our Society. In order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, Accessibility Audits need to be carried out.

The Council, through Mike Foreman, asked Paul Godwin (who has more letters after his name than there are in the alphabet) an expert in this field, to carry out this Audit on our behalf as a favour to the Society. In December the Council received the Accessibility Audit for the Tyttenhanger Site and it was discussed at length during the January Council meeting. The Council and I thank him for his efforts and expert advice, as this has made our life a lot easier.

A copy of this Accessibility Audit is available in the Coach for every member to read. The Tyttenhanger Committee will be compiling a list of jobs for immediate action during the winter working parties and volunteers will no doubt be required to carry out these important jobs. So if you feel able, please volunteer to a member of the Tyttenhanger Committee.

Have a great month!

Donal Corcoran

PS. Having delayed sending this article to Nick until after the London Model Engineering Exhibition, I am pleased to say that our stand was a success. I on behalf of everybody thank Mike's Chrisp and Hodgson and their team of merry men (and women) for their efforts towards the weekend; also thanks to the members who took time off from working on their model(s) to allow them to be displayed.

Treasurer's report

A belated Happy New Year to you all. Unlike everyone's personal finances over the festive period, well mine anyway, the society's finances have been ticking along slowly with no major expenditure to report.

On a personal note my work commitments have increased significantly over the past few months and I feel I am no longer able to commit the time that being Treasurer of the North London SME deserves. So I do not intend to re-stand at the next AGM. Further to this, if there are any volunteers who wish to take over prior to the AGM I would be willing to step down before this date. If you wish to take on the position of Treasurer please contact either myself or a member of the Council. In the event of the Council being flooded with more than one volunteer an early election may even have to be arranged.

Kieran Corcoran

Stop Press

Positions Vacant

The Society currently has vacancies for the following positions:

Secretary
Council Member

As you may have read, due to work commitments our **Treasurer** would like to seek a replacement before the AGM in May.

If you are willing to fill any of the available positions please contact the Chairman.

This is the ideal opportunity for anyone wishing to stand at the forthcoming AGM to stand up and be counted - your Society needs you!

Stop Press

The December General Meeting by OMAH

Due to the combination of weather and traffic we arrived late, but I don't think there was much, if anything, in the business line. Although some gannets had already started on the refreshments there was more than enough to go round. Jean Chrisp had, as usual, done us proud on the sarnies and other goodies. Mike was running some video of the track in the seventies and it was nice to see familiar faces even though, sadly, some of them were no longer with us. Some of us, not me of course, looked a lot younger. One who had hardly changed at all was Bert Mead, he is still as upright at 95 as he was then. Mike then introduced Bert to give us a couple of his many WW2 reminiscences while in the constabulary. Although the first was slightly harrowing the second was purely humourous and both were well received, particularly from those who were not around in those dark days. Bert re-created the atmosphere of the times and the experiences of people who had to carry out duties, which were not always pleasant, but who got on well together and helped one another. Thank you Bert.

Having consumed some further refreshment, both solid and liquid, and viewed some more video footage, Mike thanked us for coming and Bert for entertaining us. Our thanks to Jean and Mike for yet another enjoyable spread.

We then departed into the dark but at least the traffic was quite quiet by then. (There was quite a lot of food left over which Mike produced at the Sunday morning working party where it was much appreciated and Mike had nothing to take home.)

SUNDAY MORNING TEAS

Since I only get to see daylight during that short but hectic period when the workers descend upon us, I have little idea what they are actually doing out there. However, from various comments, they all seem to be well satisfied with the progress of whatever activity they are pursuing. Some of them are so keen that they have been working on the ground level on Saturdays in addition, plus Mick Avery who also comes up during the week. On Christmas Eve we managed to force down a few Sausage rolls and Mince Pies. The lucky ones were those who got to the hatch early enough to consume the Pies made by Kate Reddish, unfortunately more folk turned up than I had calculated for, so the remainder had to make do with shop bought, edible but not to be compared with the genuine article. Thank you Kate. Thanks also to the gentleman who gave me a further box of pies; I know the face but not the name. Initially I thought they were going to be surplus but, thanks to the extra gannets, this was not the case. May I wish a Happy New Year to all, especially our customers.

Jim Robson

FOR SALE

Good Home Needed:

That wonderful loco *Lionheart* requires a new home; it passed its last boiler inspection/test but I really do not have the time to maintain him or even run the beast.

I paid the original owner £3,500 for the pleasure of owning this powerful 0-4-2 so sensible offers please. I would rather it stayed in the club so I have not placed any further adverts.

Contact **Paul Lacey**

The December Loco Section Meeting by Roger Bell

Mike Chrisp, complete with Father Christmas hat, had prepared a varied evening's entertainment which started with some excellent photographs of work at the track. The photographs nicely projected onto our large screen depicted the following scenes:



Left: Peter Brown (standing) and Nick Bone have been working to complete the anti-tip rail around the raised track using special screw clamps and a fixture to locate the anti-tip rail from the running rails.

Right: With the old track removed from the tunnel, its securing pins had to be cut off before the new track sections could be positioned. Mick Avery used an off-hand grinder in the gloom for this task.



Left: A few of the timber sleepers that form the structure of the raised track have reached the end of their useful life. Mike Foreman (left) and Grahame Gardner have been replacing them.

Right: Derek Eldridge and Brian Apthorpe (right) have been assiduously overhauling the raised track passenger carriages. Peter Brewster (left) has also been involved.



Below: Derek Perham (left) and Ron Price had to repack the barley straw bales for water treatment because rats had gnawed through the plastic bindings! Work on raising the edging slabs and paving around the boating lake is making good progress.



The ground level track is progressing well; tooling is all part of the job here and a gauge had been made to set the width of the shuttering. Aided by a theodolite, a nice straight trench has been dug, lined and filled with MOT-er what's that? A tool made from wood was used for laying out the radius of the curves, a chord measuring device; tricky stuff this geometry.

One job that went fast and well was the erection of the ground level track coach storage shed. This had been made from a prefabricated garage but cut in half height wise; clever these engineers.

The ground level station canopy is being worked on; the ceiling boards had some rot in them. A beautiful sunset over the track completed this part of the presentation.

Next we watched what is now archive film that Mike has had copied from 8mm film to a DVD. It dates to 1977; many of the individuals we saw are now no longer with us. Mike gave a superb commentary; he could actually remember all of the names: to mention only two, we saw Curly Laurence and Martin Evans. It was noted how lush the grass was then in the car park.

A future presentation now also being transferred to DVD is of the building of the track extension from the tunnel to the bottom of the field and back up made in 1969/1970. This contains some real classic sequences.

During tea break we watched in the background a film of the building of Terminal Five at Heathrow Airport.

Edwardian Steam followed from the period 1902 to 1912. Such short films as 'The great train robbery' were seen; this was the first staged film, made in 1903 and coloured one frame at a time by hand. The Jonah man was another, complete with a scene of a horse bus. Railway sequences from the films were selected; the ladies in their large hats and the large gap between carriage and platform were noted, and no wonder the coaches had running boards.

The most crooked railway in the world was near San Francisco; it had 281 curves in 8 miles and climbed to a summit half a mile high. A check rail was fitted to guard against derailment and falling down the always present bank. One story from the line was of the train passing through a forest fire; the heat was stripping the paint off the outside of the coaches. The passengers lay on the floor to avoid the smoke and dowsed themselves with champagne which had been reserved for their arrival. This railway disappeared nearly sixty years ago due to the advent of the motor car.

The next film was of Crewe which has a special place in our history books. Crewe was developed from a small village to a large town for the railway by the railway. It was established by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, now widely accepted alongside Winston Churchill as the greatest and most popular men of our time. Of the town's population of 60,000 some 16,000 were employed by the railway. It had its own schools, shops and hospitals.

In the locomotive workshops everything was made there, yes everything; nothing was made outside. We saw large lathes turning the crank axle for the George the Fifth class, the locomotive of the day in 1910. The boiler shop was filmed from one of the overhead cranes; the size and scale of it were amazing. One guy was grinding tools; he sat in front of a four-foot diameter wheel with no guards or eye protection. The men in the foundry also lacked protection from the molten metal. Outside, shunting horses were used to pull one coach at a time. The first George the Fifth class loco was named Coronation and shown outside the works absolutely immaculate with its wheel rims painted white to celebrate the occasion. The workforce must have felt very proud of themselves as they alone were designing and building these locomotives from scratch.

We thanked Mike for a superb evening; his jovial style commentary made it all the more enjoyable.

Tyttenhanger Site Committee News

Loco Section Meeting

As those of you who came to the January Loco Section meeting will know the planned talk by Nick Rudoe had been postponed to a later date. Instead we had open discussion of what has been going on, Sunday mornings at the Tyttenhanger site. Les talked about the Ground Level stages, and Mike Forman introduced his mainline deviation proposal. It was evident that we need a complete evening to further discuss the ground level plans. After tea we were treated to some film of ground level tracks that Mike Forman had visited last summer which inspired food for thought.

Sunday Working

Sunday working is progressing very well especially with the ground level extension. Quite a team has been working both Saturdays and Sundays. Momentum has been created from much enthusiasm and *camaraderie* from a core team and is most enjoyable to be a part of. Much of the hard core has been used up so if any of you have any clean hardcore you could bring, it will go to good use as a base to the MOT. This team is also talking of continuing work through the summer. If you would like to join the GL working team do come along.

Much effort is going on with the renovation of the raised carriages and good progression with the raised track replacement of rail, sleepers and anti-tip rail.

General site jobs are also going on but so much more could be done if only more members came to help in this essential work. Unfortunately there will always be those who do all the work and those who just use or abuse our wonderful facility. So come along and do your bit as we have important jobs that will not get done yet again this winter. Those of you who have positive views of how things can be done at the Tyttenhanger site please come along and contribute.

So, Sunday mornings start 9.00am. This is your chance to give back to the society. A list of jobs is displayed on the notice board in the coach. Any suggestions would be appreciated. We are so fortunate to have this fantastic facility at Colney Heath. We need to look after it and do all the things required to maintain and improve the site for all our members and guests to enjoy. But this can only happen if: **YOU GET INVOLVED** I cannot over emphasise that: **YOUR HELP IS REQUIRED.**

We again ask all members to keep their cars parked outside the gate, over the winter to minimise damage to the already poor condition of the car park.

Loco Events

Every Sunday WINTER WORKING, every Sunday till Easter- 9am start

Fri 16 Feb 07 Loco Section Meeting HQ 8pm – Any ideas?

Fri 16 Mar 07 Loco Section Meeting HQ 8pm – Further discussion of the Ground level extension.

Loco Section Meetings

What do you want at Loco section meetings? They are only as good as what you the members want. Do you have a talk you can give? Who do you know who has something to share? Your suggestions would be most welcome, thanks.

Steward Rota

As I have had very little response on how you think the steward rota went last year I can only assume you either do not care less or you are happy to continue with a similar arrangement. So I will attempt this essential task again this year. If you would be prepared to do second duties, please let me know by email. If you have any preferences of date or difficult dates, please also let me know as soon as possible.

Adrian

Addendum to TSC News:-

The rubbish/hard core at the entrance gate to Colney Heath has been removed by Peter Funk and the Ground Railway team. The hard core had mostly been used as a foundation for the Ground Railway track bed. Peter tells me that there was a considerable number of black plastic bags filled with decaying food rubbish. These bags had attracted rats. May I ask that all 'domestic type' rubbish is taken home for appropriate disposal and not left at Colney Heath to rot. This action is particularly relevant in the hotter summer months.

Our thanks to Peter and his team for their help.

David Harris

General Meetings 2007—Forthcoming Programme

Unless otherwise indicated, all our General Meetings are held 8 – 10pm at NLSME Headquarters in Legion Way, North Finchley.

Ron Thorogood kindly takes time out to prepare and dispense coffee, tea and biscuits at around 9pm; all donations to cover costs are welcome. A raffle has become a customary feature, any prizes for which

are also much appreciated – all profits from teatime and the raffles help towards club funds.

Any ideas you may have for meetings are gratefully received, and if you feel you can contribute in any way to the enlightenment and/or entertainment of your fellow members, please call me so I can make the necessary arrangements.

Our meeting hall can comfortably seat about fifty; for various reasons our regular attendance has dwindled over the years – I can remember occasions when it was ‘standing room only’, but that was some time ago. In view of this, I hope you will forgive me for asking you to

make a particular effort to attend meetings when we have a special Guest Speaker, and I see no reason why you shouldn’t bring friends and/or family with you as guests to enjoy our General Meetings.

We look forward to your company ...

2 FEBRUARY 2007 – TIM WATSON: MODELS MICROSCOPES AND MOLARS

The unusual title of Tim’s talk partly derives from his longstanding interest in model steam engines; until recently, mainly of the railway type. President of the Model Railway Club, Tim has been heavily involved in two of their 2mm scale (similar to N gauge) layouts: ‘Chiltern Green & Luton Hoo’ and ‘Copenhagen Fields’.

Tim has been scratch building (mainly) 2mm scale models for over thirty years; many of these models include bits of gold to represent the brass fittings. This derives from his other interest: dentistry – he

teaches at King’s College London, Guy’s Hospital. His research focuses on high resolution scanning optical microscopy, using this to image the drilling of teeth, among other things. To do so requires the fabrication of special microscope stages, hence the engineering interest.

Most recently, Tim has built a 4in. traction engine from a Model Works kit, and this has opened up a whole new game.

He will be touching upon all of these topics in his talk. Remember to bring your glasses along with you!

2 MARCH 2007 – FORUM: PAINTING OUR MODELS

At a recent General Meeting, it was suggested that we should revisit the topic of painting and finishing our models.

Basic painting and finishing techniques apply no matter what our special modelling interest – detail may differ according to whether our work is in a scale of 2mm to the foot, or half size, but the principles remain. That said, the successful painting of our models can, and indeed has, brought many an otherwise strong modeller close to tears!

As these words are being first written, Chris Vine has just published his excellent book: ‘*How (Not) to Paint a Locomotive*’, prompted by the experience of finishing his superb Gold Medal winning LNER B1 locomotive ‘Bongo’ in 7¹/₄in. gauge. This work could be considered required reading for tonight’s meeting when we shall have an opportunity to review painting techniques and hand on valuable hints, tips and wrinkles that have helped us when seeking that elusive perfect finish on our own work!



THE LONDON MODEL ENGINEERING EXHIBITION

Text and photos

This is an ideal opportunity to thank all whose efforts made our stand at Alexandra Palace the success it undoubtedly was. Without the exhibits freely volunteered or willingly loaned, our stand would have been a poor affair. Without the energy

and efforts of those who gave their time to build up the stand on Thursday afternoon and dismantle it on Sunday evening, things would have been extremely difficult. Without the company of those prepared to spend time as stewards, our time at the exhibition would have been much less enjoyable. Thank you all for the part you played in keeping the activities of North London SME visible to the model engineering fraternity.

Our aim was to present as wide a variety of exhibits as possible, to reveal the diversity of interests associated with our membership. In this we were clearly successful as any of our stewards will confirm from the numerous questions from visitors to the exhibition, many of whom spent quite a lot of time studying and enjoying our display.



MODEL ENGINEERING EXHIBITION 2007

by Mike Chrisp

The event seemed to have been well received by both exhibitors and visitors alike – in fact we have yet to hear any significant adverse comment relating to this exhibition. It provided an excellent opportunity to renew acquaintances with friends in the model engineering world,



to meet new folk, to purchase tools and materials from the various trade stands present, and to enjoy the range of exhibits and activities at the show.

A few images accompany these words which, while they do not attempt to reveal the extent and variety of what was at 'Ally Pally', hopefully they provide a flavour of the atmosphere. Going anti-clockwise from the top middle: photos 1 and 2 were taken from the organ dais at lunch-time on Friday. How many NLSME members can you spot around our stand at the centre of photo 2? Photo 3 shows Tim Watson's Burrell and photo 4 is of Brian Baker's Foster, both of which were much admired by visitors. Photo 5 shows three 1/12th scale rail cars from the NLSME collection that provoked a great deal of attention.

GLR AGAINST ALL ODDS

Glückliches Neues Jahr!

Congratulations what a splendid start to the ground level project. Against all odds in the face of the enemy 342 yards of trench has been cut, shut & back filled; this phenomenal task was achieved by two small teams working towards each other exercising razor sharp wit & banter. Against all odds I hand-picked the finest men money can't buy and boy! what a motley crew we have. Terms & conditions have yet to be set (see upper management). It was suggested to work on Saturdays and to my delight work was started early 8am, continuing at a blistering pace all day; tea was brought down and drunk on the job with only a short lunch break. Against all odds the weather was exceptional for the next four Saturdays leading up to Xmas. It was quite noticeable that no one member would go home until all the team packed up, whereupon tools would be gathered up and we would walk down to the station for a last cupper. Sitting down getting our breath back watching the sun go down, a biblical thought ran through my head (will we be back for Easter?). Against all odds Pete (the pallet) Davies found time to make the tea, supply us with shuttering & buy us all lunch (well done); also well done Pete Mack chief mud groveller & shutterer, Brian Baker Mr bed tester (see photo), Mike Hodgson for sheer determination, Nick Bone & side kick (sorry Pete), Adrian and family backfilling and cakes (perhaps it's the new job). My thanks also to John Mills (no dog), Jeffrey Bolton for supply of 2x1 batons (any more?), and Jerry Moore who has found a new meaning for heavy breathing; last but not at all least Lawrence Steers for plant supplies without which the heavy work would have been a lot heavier. Thanks again and apologies to anyone I've missed.

It's become clear to me that there is a very determined group hell-bent Against All Odds who are going to build the ground level railway and have fun doing it. I am pleased and delighted to be a part of the group, so if you want to be part of our club's history in the making come and join a successful team - there's plenty to be done. Xmas, the inclement weather and a virus have slowed proceedings for now, but we'll be back. Hopefully a comprehensive set of winter working and new year's steam-up photos will be posted on the our web site courtesy of Mr M Chrisp; thanks again for all your endeavours.

Peter Funk

GLR section leader (we do it on the ground)

WANTED (To please elder daughter)

Black dial telephone. Ideally one that has been converted to current plug, but not a problem if it hasn't.

Jim Robson

The January General Meeting by OMAH

We had a good turnout; Mike Chrisp wished us a Happy New Year and hoped we had all enjoyed the Xmas festivities. We discussed the arrangements for Ally Pally, (which will all be history by the time this is published but I thought it worth mentioning that the arrangements had been discussed). The aim was to cover as wide a range of section items as possible, “an eclectic selection”, as one of our better educated members said from the back of the room.

Mike then introduced our subject for the evening, which was the building of the track extension, c autumn 1969 to almost spring 1971. The films were taken by Mike and recently transferred to DVD. I vividly remember Geoff Cashmore saying that he thought the loco section was getting stultified and a new project was needed to provide new interest. What he had in mind was doubling the length of the existing track in the form of a mirror image. This would of course mean getting permission from the water board for the use of a considerably larger piece of ground. Much to my, and I suspect one or two other members' surprise, permission was granted and we made a start. The first shot was of Geoff Wren turning the first sod, (served me right for getting in the way). Although this was early autumn the ground was already so hard that Geoff had to abandon his spade for the pick! The weather was diabolical during much of the two Autumn/Winter sessions of the project; snow, ice, hoarfrost, you name it. Nonetheless this did not decrease the enthusiasm of the work force and the job was finished well inside the estimated time. I seem to remember that the average turnout was around 35 members, but there were quite a few sessions with 42 present.

I was considering including a list of those involved but one is sure to miss someone and possibly hurt their feelings. I decided to scrub that idea; those who were there are well aware of the fact and can be well satisfied that they participated. However, there were certain folk that stand out in the memory: Geoff Cashmore the originator, Tom Luxford the obergruppenfuhrer, Tom Ball the site surveyor, Bill Thrale and Ed Hobday the ‘obtainers’ of materials, (Bill Thrale also provided cream cakes for the tea break.) We had a grand opening in 1971 with Mr Stace, Chairman of the water board, driving Ted Moon's “Susie M” through the tape, an appropriate task since he had done the same service for the original track opening in 1964. The tape breaking ceremony was accompanied by maroons set off by Geoff Wren and Ron Price, (who else, ‘the terrible twins’! I don't know if Geoff has ever done a Wren family history but if he had I would have been quite surprised if Guy Fawkes did not figure prominently).

Everyone enjoyed the film, especially those who had been there at the time. It was nice to see those familiar faces though sad to think how many of them are no longer with us. After a round of applause for Mike we departed, having had a really cracking evening.

1969-71 TRACK EXTENSION

As I commented in the General Meeting report it is not always a good idea to try to remember a list of all those present, since you are almost certain to leave someone out. Looking back on it I am amazed at the amount of work we got through in such a relatively short time. I believe that it was largely due to having a large proportion of folk who had built the original track and not only knew the tricks of the trade but also what not to do. Those who had learned the 'black arts' of superelevation and transition curves, etc. Those of us, myself in particular, who had not the vaguest notion of how to build a track just got on with some allotted task. Gradually I became more aware of what was going on and progressed to more important tasks; Tom Luxford was always a great believer in passing on knowledge and getting mere labourers to do more interesting things like track alignment, etc. Doubtless one of the biggest contributors to the rapid progress was that we only had one project to concentrate on.

The other thing, looking back, that I recall was the lack of hassle, I cannot remember any arguments, those who knew, instructed those who didn't, and they just got on with it. (I hope that the latter comment is not read as a criticism of our recent situation, it is just the way I recall it and I think that anyone else who was present at that time would agree. Speaking as one who is not currently on the shop floor, but merely observes life through a serving hatch, the situation appears, to me, to have improved. At least, all my customers seem quite happy and the buzz of conversation on the station platform sounds contented and redolent of those bygone years.)

One or two interesting points after the extension was opened relates to track occupancy. Since we were, initially, the longest track in the UK our Open Days for the first year, and several after, attracted a lot of visitors. So many that we had to limit their running time to one hour. Fortunately most visitors accepted the condition in good part; nonetheless the job of steaming bay steward could be quite lively, and it was certainly never boring! Mike Chrisp and myself, together with Brian Apthorpe and Ray Frohock carried out this task for many years. We had anticipated that we would have a similar situation with our own running and plans were drawn up for maximum numbers on the track coupled with running time limits as necessary. Strangely enough not only was this never necessary, due to the fact that the number of Sunday loco runners actually decreased, and the Saturday group who used to run regularly in the days of the original track diminished to the occasional one loco. Most odd.

Jim Robson

The January Loco Section Meeting

by Roger Bell

Initially Adrian asked if everyone was happy with last year's track stewards rota arrangements. It appeared we were and that in the main those who did not turn up to do their turn had left the club.

The first half of the meeting was to briefly give a progress report of some of the work that has taken place at the track. Les Brimson covered the construction of the ground level track. The levels are being set before anything else. The top of the shuttering is where the top of the track will be. The team are laying Terram onto the ground which is a white material designed to stop the clay coming up through it but allowing water to drain through. MOT is then laid on top; MOT is Ministry of Transport grade one road hard core. This is vibrated down to compact it. This is better than concrete as it allows for some movement. It's beginning to look pretty good already.

A member has loaned the club some track for this year which will be laid on a temporary basis and next winter we will continue with the construction of our own track.

Risk assessment and single line running has led to having a double line from the station to the back straight. Unfortunately the carriage shed by the toilet block will have to be moved to accommodate the double lines. A carriage shed has been donated to the Society which is at the bottom of the site. The double track will be closer together than allowed so it will be run as though it were a single track. This has eliminated the risk of a head on collision.

This summer we will be running around a new bottom loop.

Mike Foreman then spoke of realigning the raised level straight up to the tunnel to avoid a couple of large trees. The sixty foot radius by the workshop will continue round away from the trees and then curve back to meet and join the current line just before the tunnel.

After tea break we watched some films provided and commented by Mike, which he took whilst on holiday in Norway, Sweden and Germany visiting club tracks. The track near Hamburg had features which could be of use in our design; one was a sprung point that served four sidings, a nice simple design. We toured the track from our train which had scenic gardens and a girder bridge over some water. There were a mass of locos in the steaming bays. The roundhouse had a turntable made from stainless steel. Even the tunnel was lit on the inside.



Left:
The Ground-level Crew (at least, some of them): Peter Funk, Mike Hodgson, Brian Baker and Adrian Reddish



Awaiting the fish and chips for Saturday lunch; a relaxed group in hungry expectation, seated at the table all laid with cutlery (lunch with the Garden Railway section on Wednesdays is not as posh as that!)

Right:

Seconds later, Brian was flat on his stomach, testing the bed!



Scenes from the Ground Level Railway production

All photos by Mike Chrisp



Some innocent piece of shuttering gets a hammering from Peter Davies

Some incidents in the life of an apprentice fitter, at Barry sheds in the late 1940s by Peter Kearon

Part II—The Case of the Leaking Gland

Noon to one o'clock at Barry sheds was Dinner Time. Use of the noun "lunch" would stigmatize the speaker as a snob and prey for ribald "Barry speak" upper class mockery. Dinner hour was exactly placed such as to be 4½ hours from morning signing-on time and then the same hours on to finishing time. The canteen provided a two-course meal for nine (real) pence which was often dished out by popular Miss Tapscott, sister of the then Arsenal and Wales centre forward. The atmosphere was stiflingly hot and dark with the cigarette smoke of most of those present; as a non smoker I should be long dead judged by today's hysterical rulings.

On the day in question I was making my way to the canteen when Charlie, the locomotive foreman, asked (?) me to work my dinner hour on a "rush" job. I learned that an R-class ex-Rhymney engine had been lit up before a previously reported fault - a leaking regulator gland - had been dealt with.

Charlie had with him all the necessary tools - spanners, spiral extractor knife and a coil of packing - and as he handed them to me he offered the bribe that I needn't come back to work until 2pm. This meant that time used less than one hour would be my bonus, hardly a challenge for a senior apprentice as this work wouldn't take more than half an hour. The prospects of a 90 minute break in the warmth of the canteen appealed.

I climbed into the cab to find the fire well alight and the boiler shell already warm. In some comfort I unbolted the regulator handle, removed the gland and set about removing the old packing - easy except that finally the extractor did not make contact with the expected metal neck ring but came against something resilient. With some effort the culprit was pulled out and proved to be a hard rubber ring and something I had never previously encountered. Certainly not a GW standard.

Charlie had not supplied a rubber ring and the chances of shifting the storekeeper from the canteen to look for such a nebulous item were non-existent. With the boiler getting warmer I decided to pack the gland in the usual way. Half a dozen rings of packing filled the stuffing box, were pulled down and another ring half entered to allow for later tightening. Regulator handle on and away to the canteen for my well-earned break.

Promptly at 2pm as I was making my way back to work I heard a rude call from the cab of that Rhymney engine. "You packed this ***** gland?" The question seemed

pointless but as I climbed into the cab the truth became clear - with only 501b. on the gauge steam was pouring out of the gland despite the fact that it had been fully pulled down. By some good fortune the old packing and rubber ring were still on the bunker back - witness that all packing (except the rubber ring) had been renewed. The foot-plate men were hugely unhappy and quite logically directed their wrath against me. The driver declared that this ***** engine was unsafe and that I had made a complete ***** up of my work while the fireman let it be known that he would not take the boiler pressure above 100lbs. All the fitter could do was to wrap strips of canvas and sacking around the gland to deflect leaking steam downwards where to some extent it condensed into drops of water.

It could not be denied that the boiler should have been shut down and when cold the packing again renewed. But to what purpose? The work had been properly done - the results were appalling. But two conditions applied which prevented any such action being taken. Firstly the absolute Barry rule "an engine booked out goes out" and the fact that the engine was a "foreigner" from far-away Radyr shed and the sooner she went back there the better. I left the engine and waited while she limped away with hardly enough steam pressure to turn the wheels. I could only hope that she could make the 12-mile journey back home.

But my troubles were far from over as I was then called into the presence of the foul-mouthed shed foreman Mr Roger Trigg, not because my work was defective - that would have been in the domain of Charlie, the loco foreman - but because I had delayed the departure of an engine. In truth I had no defence as the facts were solidly against me and I could do no more than listen to the railings of an unrestrained bully. As I staggered out of his office the only hint of good news was that there was no sight of that crippled engine.

Memories of this awful experience were brought to light soon afterwards when I learned of the scrapping of that particular engine. Obviously at the time of my debacle plans were already in hand to send her to Swindon on her very last journey and led me to consider how this could have been associated with my misfortunes.

It would seem reasonable to assume that regulator gland leakage was not a new problem and it could hardly be denied that wear and tear was the most basic cause - the mysterious rubber ring was no more than a red herring . Working on these conclusions I formulated a set of explanations which would fit the bill and - more importantly - provide some excuse for my abject failure.

It is reasonable to consider that the brass gland and the brass neck ring were worn down to such an extent that the regulator rod was no longer supported in the central position and that this eccentricity prevented the packing from making a concentric steam-tight seal. Renewing the neck ring with the regulator rod in place would have been an impossible task. Adding a second neck ring would have improved matters

but, as was the case with Barry sheds, there was probably no lathe at Radyr.

It may have been possible to form a crude ring or strip from a half-inch thick wagon drawbar rubber cushion pad. When rammed into the stuffing box it might have provided some support for the regulator rod and given the packing a better chance to make a proper seal. It may be asked how such material would have been affected by steam at 2001b/in² and near 400 degrees F. Such a support may have had a short useful life - a possible explanation for a Radyr engine requiring attention at Barry.

All conjecture. Pie in the sky. Make-believe excuses to cover unacceptable work? Or is there some grain of truth in this hypothesis? We'll never know.

COURT

CORNER

Things people actually said in court, which were taken down into the formal record by court reporters.

Q: Are you sexually active? A: No, I just lie there.

Q: What is your date of birth? A: July 18th Q: What year? A: Every year.

Q: What gear were you in at the moment of impact? A: Gucci sweatshirts and Reeboks.

Q: What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke up that morning?

A: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?" Q: And why did that upset you? A: My name is Susan.

Q: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning? A: Did you actually pass the bar exam?

Q: Can you describe the individual? A: He was about medium height and had a beard. Q: Was this a male, or a female?

Q: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney? A: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

Q: Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people? A: All my autopsies are performed on dead people.

Q: Do you recall the time that you examined the body? A: The autopsy started around 8.30pm. Q: And Mr Dennington was dead at the time? A: No, he was sitting

on the table wondering why I was doing an autopsy. Q: Before you performed the

autopsy, did you check for a pulse? A: No. Q: Did you check for blood pressure? A: No. Q: Did you check for breathing? A: No. Q: So it was possible that the patient

was alive when you began the autopsy? A: No. Q: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

A: Because his brain was sitting in a jar on my desk. Q: But could the patient have

still been alive, nevertheless? A: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practising law somewhere.

📖 Dates for your Diary 📖

Friday 2 February	8.00pm General Meeting; Models, Microscopes and Molars; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Monday 12 February	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Friday 16 February	8.00pm Loco Section meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Friday 16 February	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for March News Sheet</i>
Friday 23 February	8.00pm Workshop Evening; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Monday 26 February	8.00pm Tyttenhanger Site Committee Meeting; 23 Bunkers Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 8AX
Friday 2 March	8.00pm General Meeting; Forum -Painting our Models; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Monday 12 March	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Friday 16 March	8.00pm Loco Section meeting; Discussion of the Ground level extension; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Friday 23 March	8.00pm Workshop Evening; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Friday 23 March	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for April News Sheet</i>
Monday 26 March	8.00pm Tyttenhanger Site Committee Meeting; 23 Bunkers Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 8AX
Friday 6 April	8.00pm General Meeting; Laser cutting for model engineers; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Sunday 8 April	Easter Day/first public running day
Monday 9 April	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Saturday 14 April	Birthday party (help required)
Friday 20 April	8.00pm Loco Section meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Friday 20 April	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for May News Sheet</i>
Monday 23 April	8.00pm Tyttenhanger Site Committee Meeting; 23 Bunkers Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 8AX
Friday 27 April	8.00pm Workshop Evening; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley

NB: Please remember to notify all meetings, events & exhibitions, in advance, to Owen and Rachael Chapman, our Events Co-ordinators.



Every Wednesday	Miniature Railways, British and American and Video Group at HQ; Garden Railway section at Colney Heath
Every Thursday	Slot Cars Section at HQ
Every Sunday	Morning work parties at Colney Heath (start 9.00am).