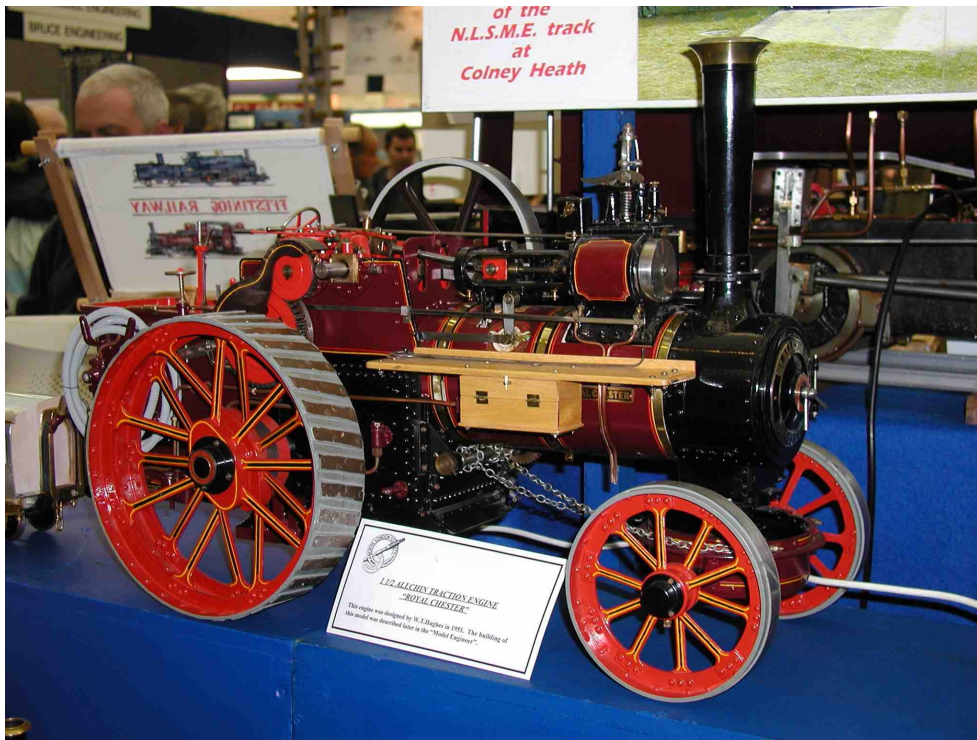


# The News Sheet

*This Month...*

Extra Meeting Notice (page 3)  
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## The Chairman's Notes

Firstly I have to deal with some sad news: the Society has recently learnt of the death of one of its members, John Old, who passed away in the middle of February. At this sad time for the family we pass on our deepest sympathy to them.

The Society's new News Sheet appears to have been well received by the membership; I have heard nothing but praise for the new format and long may it continue. Along this line I would like to pass on my and the Society's thanks to Ron Thorogood for his efforts in having the News Sheet printed over the last few years.

Maurice Cummins has also informed the Council that it is his intention to stop distributing the News Sheet and I wish to express mine and the rest of the Society's thanks to him and his team's efforts in ensuring the News Sheet reached us each month.

I also have to inform the Society that George Case has chosen to stand down as Loco Section leader and we thank him for his efforts during his time as Loco Section leader. An extra Friday meeting will be taking place at Headquarters on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2005 to discuss activities at Colney Heath; further details appear in the Secretary's Snippets and elsewhere in the News Sheet.

Having been around several of the Society's sections this month, it has been good to see the progress that they are making. For example the 'HO' section have been planning their future projects and I look forward to seeing exactly what they have in store for us. The 'OO' section have been making steady progress (even if it slows when I am around) on their extension/portable layout and I truly believe them when they tell me they will be ready for April, when it should be making its debut.

The Garden Railway Section are continuing their successful Wednesday afternoon meetings and were enjoying a barbeque and a couple of bottles of wine when I visited. Bearing in mind this was February I hope the food was hot because the weather wasn't.

Enjoy March, and don't forget the Running Season at Colney Heath starts at the end of that month.

*Donal Corcoran*

### Cover picture:

1½ in. Allchin Traction Engine "Royal Chester", as seen on the Society's stand at the London Model Engineering Exhibition at Alexandra Palace in January. *Photo by John Riches*

## Secretary's Snippets

The Council, at its last meeting, discussed at length the ills besetting the friendliness of the Society members, particularly within the Locomotive Section. It was concerned at the resignation of both joint Section Leaders and the non-cooperation of others, leaving the Locomotive Section leaderless. This situation is affecting working parties, the planning of future track improvements and the organisation of birthday parties. The Council has decided to set a lead in resolving this matter and invites all members to a special locomotive section meeting on Friday, 11 March 2005, in an attempt to air the difficulties and find solutions to these problems. It is hoped that as many as possible will make the effort to attend and make a positive contribution to the discussions. We have a great Society, one of the biggest and best in the country; we do not want to see it so sadly affected by negative comments and bitter acrimony.

The Council thanks Ron Thorogood for his efforts in getting the old News Sheet printed, and Maurice Cummins

and his team for their efforts in despatching the News Sheets to our members.

The Council also thanks Maurice for his efforts in organising the preparation and support for the NLSME Stand at the Alexandra Model Engineering Exhibition. The Society has received a £50.00 cheque as a recognition of its support.

Our President, David Alexander, has resigned his position with the Society, as he has moved on to another post. The position of President will be offered to his successor in due course.

*David Harris*

## The Treasurer's Report

As this is the last News Sheet of the financial year it must be time to pay your subs. They are due on 1<sup>st</sup> April. There are all the usual payment options; you can either send me a cheque payable to NLSME, along with your membership card and a self stamped addressed envelope, to the address on the back of the News Sheet or you can grab me at one of the forthcoming society meetings. Over the next month I will try to come along to as many as possible of the section meetings to make life easier, so bring your cheque book and membership card to the next meeting.

Can I also take the opportunity to ask you to check your details in the membership list and let me know any amendments you wish me to make.

Rates for the year April 2005 – March 2006

Full Member	£42
Old Age Pensioner	£34
Country Member	£20
Junior	£6

*Kieran Corcoran*

### **Stop Press – Extra Meeting Notice – Stop Press**

All members involved in activities at Colney Heath are invited to:

#### **A Discussion On Activities At Colney Heath**

Members from both the Tyttenhanger Committee and the Council will be present to discuss and hold a vote with the membership on matters such as a New Loco Section Leader, a reduction in Sunday running, the possibility of charging the public.

All this and more will be discussed at

**Headquarters at 8pm on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2005**

This is your opportunity to influence the future of the Society, so come along and put your points of view forward to all the membership.

**Stop Press – Extra Meeting Notice – Stop Press**

## The February General Meeting

### By OMAH

The meeting was opened by Mike Chrisp welcoming us to a talk by Adrian Newson on Mobile Radio Phones. Before the talk started our Chairman had a few words to say about the new News Sheet format, and said he would like some feedback on whether we should have more or less photos and any other comments. Subs will have to rise in order to cover rising costs across the board. Proposed £1/week to be discussed at an E.G.M., date to be announced.

Adrian began his talk by saying that questions would be welcomed. After a 4-year M.o.D. apprenticeship which embraced valves, integrated circuits, etc he went in 1971 to BT to work on BT-Telex telephone exchanges. From there he went into BT Cellnet in 1984 to work on cellnet phones which were still being developed and were launched in 1985. BT Cellnet became Mercury from 1990-92 in the Herts area and are now German owned.



Adrian started off with basic principles: like how your signal gets to the fixed telephone network, how does the system know where you are, etc. There are mobile Switching Centres dotted about strategically, linked to the many receive/transmit stations. They can trace by the signal from your phone to centre which can change the link to another station nearer to you if the signal from your phone drops. Each of these stations forms the centre of its cell suitably arranged so that each cell overlaps slightly to provide continuous cover. The cell size varies from approx. 0.5km down to 100-150m at street level

in a city such as London, expanding as you get outside city limits, to 4.5km and up to 25km by the time you reach the M25. The power involved from each transmitter is very low at source and half of it is lost in the feeder to the antenna. The antennas are located to give maximum coverage and to look as unobtrusive as possible, inside church steeples being quite popular. Some are disguised as dead trees, chimneys, while others at street level are placed on lampposts or inside dummy telephone poles. The Switching Centres are built into metal cabins, made by 'Portakabin' at York, which are lifted up by crane and placed on rented roof space. They are powered by sealed lead/acid batteries and cooled, when necessary, by a fan blowing air through the unit and out at vents on the opposite side.

Placing the units can cause some 'fun'; one at Wandsworth, being done on a Sunday to minimise traffic hold-ups went wrong when the crane's computer told the crane it was being overloaded and shut the system down, which meant the crane could not be moved. The driver did not know how to over-ride the computer and the nearest person



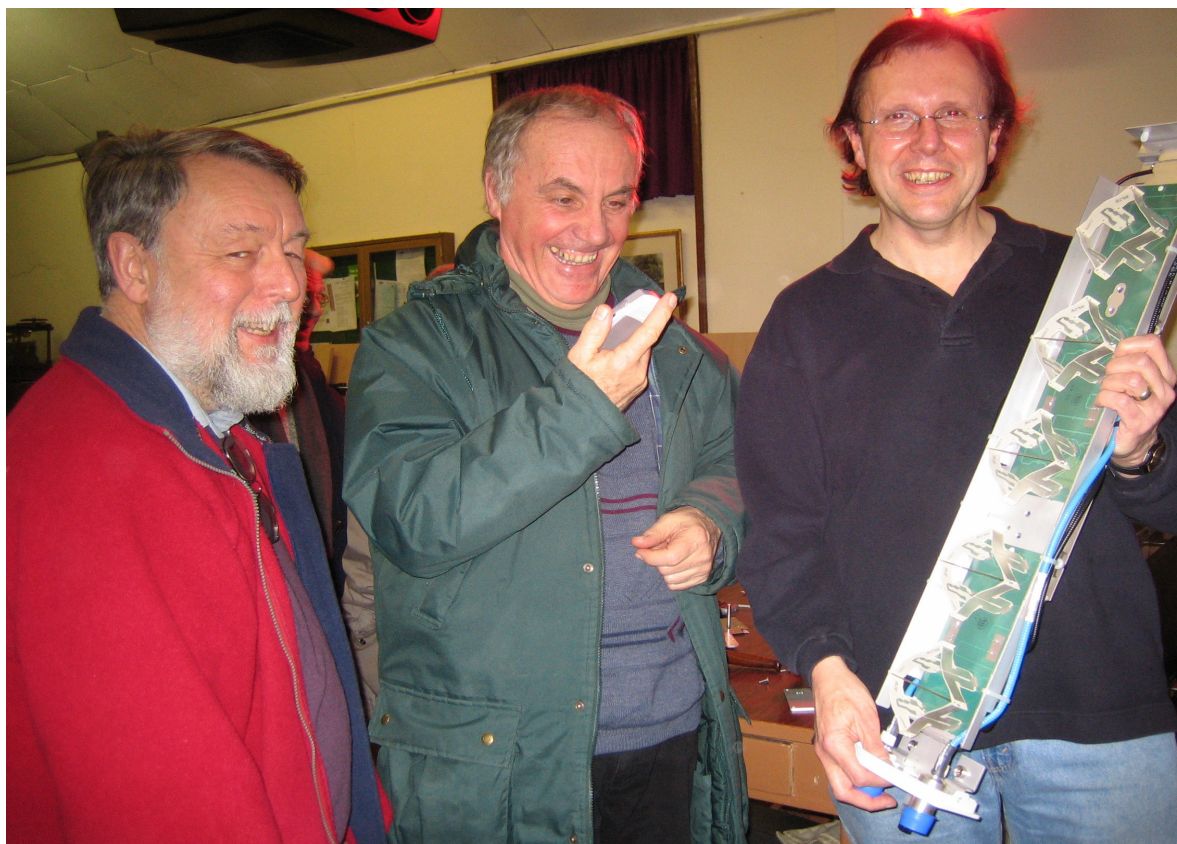
who did know was in Leicester. He was sent for but as he got closer he got snarled up in the consequent traffic-jam which was considerable by that time. The local constabulary was somewhat peeved and threatened to arrest the BT installers if they did not move the crane instantly, despite being told that it could not be moved until the man arrived and perhaps they would be better served if they could assist in getting him there. When he arrived he pressed a few keys and all was well!

In Liverpool they left the crane on site and returned to find it swarming with children. The crane had placed a very heavy drum of cable on axle stands, and they went to lunch saying, "who can pinch something that heavy"; when they got back the drum was still there but the axle stands were missing!

Another company that provided cabins did not believe in welding the joints in the walls but used a system with folded back edges that that sprung into the adjoining sheet and locked securely. Unfortunately they could be unsprung quite easily as demonstrated by some of the citizens of Glasgow who pulled them apart and made off with some of the contents. When they went to service a cabin on a particularly unfriendly estate in Liverpool they found a policeman inside who was on surveillance looking for car thieves from the roof. He had heard them coming and thought he had been spotted by the thieves; one of his colleagues had been thrown from the roof of an adjoining block while on similar duty.

Another site was on the far side of a large field and they had been warned to keep to the peripheral tracks, as the field was boggy. On leaving they repeated this warning to a JCB driver who chose to ignore it saying: 'these things are designed to operate on soft ground'. When they got back the JCB was in the centre of the field at cab level. There were several further anecdotes and then a last round up of questions and some hints of the next generation of phones.

Altogether a most interesting evening. Thank you Adrian.



Left to right: Roger Woollett and Dave Lawrence share a joke during a break in Adrian Newson's interesting and enjoyable talk about mobile Radio Engineering. Adrian is holding the innards of a transmitting aerial.

*Photo: Mike Crisp*

## General Meeting 4 March 2005: Work in Progress – On the Table

Work in Progress meetings provide a perfect opportunity to learn about our fellow members' current projects. The chance to appreciate the workmanship and problem solving involved always gives rise to interesting and enjoyable meetings.

If you have something to Show and Tell us about, please let me know by calling \*\*\*\*\*  
The meeting will be at our Headquarters in Legion Way, North Finchley, 8pm - 10pm, with tea and biscuits, courtesy of Frank Dell.

Next month (1 April 2005) members of the 00-

## General Meeting 1 April 2005: Our Section – The 00-Gauge Gang

Continuing with my policy of asking members of the various sections of our Society to demonstrate and describe their activities, tonight we turn the spotlight on our 00-gauge section.

I am pleased to report that the 00-gauge section members have come up trumps and we are certainly in for an excellent evening.

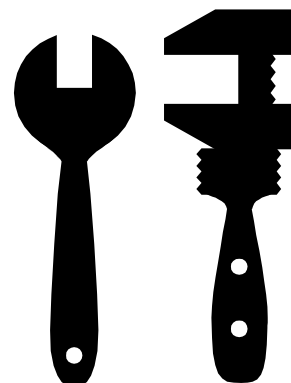
The meeting will be at our Headquarters in Legion Way, North Finchley, 8pm - 10pm, with tea and biscuits, courtesy of Frank Dell.

Next month (13 May 2005) your attendance is requested at the Annual General Meeting.

See you there!

gauge section will tell us about their modelling activities.

See you there!



Left to right: Jonathan Avery, Geoff Howard and Dave Green seen here busy with their new 00-Gauge layout during the 60th Anniversary Weekend held last September at Colney Heath, while Mike Ruffell makes sure they get it right! *Photo: Mike Chrisp*

## General Meeting 13 May 2005: Annual General Meeting

Not to be missed, the Annual General Meeting is an important occasion when annual reports are presented and discussed, and members are elected to manage the Society's affairs.

The meeting will be at our Headquarters in Legion Way, North Finchley, 8pm - 10pm.

Next month (3 June) our own D.A.G. (Derek) Brown will tell us all about the design and construc-

tion of his 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in. narrow gauge Manning Wardle locomotive currently being serialised in Model Engineer magazine.

See you there!

*Mike Chrisp*

# Welsh Highland Adventure

By Ian Murray

"I'm due off Caernarfon at twelve noon". With these few words John Shawe set in motion for me a day I shall long remember. He had told me that he was up at the Welsh Highland Railway for a few days carrying out driving duties and as I had long promised myself a trip to this "new" line I determined to drive over on Tuesday the 2nd June 04 and had asked John what his roster was for the day.

Tuesday dawned clear and sunny and having pointed my lady wife in the general direction of a weed filled garden I pointed the nose of the car west. My lightness of spirit was soon to evaporate however behind a succession of motor homes, caravans and small elderly cars all of which appeared to be piloted by the terminally cretinous and/or criminally obtuse. After taking two and a half hours to drive a mere eighty seven miles I finally pulled into the car park at the castle with only a few minutes to spare. Trying hard to resist the temptation to grasp the sloth-like car park attendant by his windpipe I smiled, handed over my money with studied calm, then covered him in dust and small stones as I floored the accelerator and aimed the car at the end of the car park nearest to the station. I ran (yes - ran!!!) to the ticket office, elbowing sundry tourists, young children and pensioners out of the way as I did so and thrust my purple face to within an inch of the nose of the implacable official.

"A first class return if you please" I thundered, breathing hard enough to disturb his neat piles of leaflets, whilst fixing him with a mean stare which said 'just you try and tell me the flight's full, closed up, off its stand or whatever'. He hesitated for but a second then, without breaking eye contact, ran his practiced fingers over the ticket machine which spat out my ticket. Moving fractionally closer to me and with the light of triumph in his rheumy eye he said "that will be nineteen pounds". I held his gaze as my knees turned to jelly and the blood began to drain from my face. Nineteen pounds! Was the man mad? With no time to argue as the big hand was approaching noon I eased a twenty pound note out of my back pocket and with superhuman strength pushed this across the counter AND LET GO OF IT !!!

A one pound coin was slid mockingly in my direction by the fiend in a cardigan. I picked it up, spun on my heel and stumbled towards the door frantically trying to remember where I was and why I had just parted with the equivalent of the average weekly wage in 1960. A haze of smoke at the far end of the platform brought me back to reality and I hurried towards the loco where John's welcoming face grinned down from the cab. I spluttered something about my day so far being strewn with fools and knaves which was dismissed with a wave of the hand.

"Are you coming up?"

"What, for a quick look before we go?"

"Er - no, for the trip" said John handing me an orange card which turned out to be a footplate pass!

BUT I'VE JUST SHELLED OUT NINETEEN POUNDS FOR A FIRST CLASS TICKET" I wailed (Scot first, railway enthusiast second you notice).

"I should think so too" was the reply whereupon I was heaved up onto the footplate and introduced to the fireman and trainee fireman, both of whom made me very welcome whilst John grinned and rolled his eyes.

A few words here about the loco might be appropriate. I was standing on the footplate of a Class NGG16 Garratt number 138 named Mileniwm/Millennium built in 1958 by Beyer Peacock at Manchester. She has a 2-6-2 + 2-6-2 wheel arrangement, 4 12" x 16" cylinders and a boiler pressure of 180psi. She is oil fired and was operated in South Africa for many years, returning to the UK in 1997 and being steamed that same year: very smart she looks too in her apple green livery with yellow lining and silver boiler bands.

First impressions were the heat from the closed fire-hole door, the size of the cab comfortably accommodating four of us and the array of five gauges arranged across the inside of the cab front. These sat atop a large, cast, red painted brass plate through which protruded a number of spindles and hand-wheels controlling a variety of functions, the main

two being the steam valves for the two live steam injectors. The roar of the oil-fed fire was continuous and I glanced anxiously at the twin water gauges where I could see no water level, and mentioned this fact with as much nonchalance as I could muster.

"Tide's well in" said the fireman laconically before going on to explain that there had been some suggestion when they came off shed that the loco was not steaming as readily as the other Garratt - "the black 'un". He was determined therefore to keep water as well up as he could and to ensure that pressure was where it should be on starting. The generous steam clearance in the boiler coupled with the tall steam dome should ensure that priming was avoided. John talked me through the five gauges which were:

Twin steam chest pressure gauges

A Duplex gauge showing vacuum levels on the engine

Main vacuum gauge

Steam pressure gauge - working pressure 180psi

In front of the fireman was a lever on a vertical spindle which rotated through 270 degrees and controlled the oil feed. Close to this on the left was a handwheel which controlled the steam feed to the oil atomizer, the small pressure gauge for which was on the backhead in ready line of sight for the fireman. Blower lever, draincock tap and injector water lever completed the main grouping of fireman's controls.

I squeezed against the cab rear to John's left (the loco being right hand drive) and tried to make my presence as unobtrusive as possible whilst asking questions which I hoped did not seem too stupid. The "right away" having been received John gave a quick blast on the loco's multi-tone hooter and lifted the long, red painted regulator handle. With much blowing of steam from the draincocks we began to move, John nodding to the fireman after several yards to confirm that the cocks should be closed. Boiler pressure was 170psi, and the fireman said that as she was blowing off 5lbs light he was keeping her at around 170psi to give him some leeway in keeping her quiet.

We gathered speed quickly along what had been the old LNWR trackbed, the loco riding smoothly, the fireman peering intently through the open front cab window, watching the colour of the exhaust smoke and skillfully balancing the oil and steam feeds. The

injector water valve was soon opened and the quick opening of the steam valve was followed by the reassuring gurgle of an injector feeding steadily. Steam pressure fell slowly to 160psi at which point the injector was knocked off, the loco forging on through lines of trees, with me looking over John's shoulder and trying to take in everything at once. The injector's use was repeated each time the pressure rallied and it became clear that the fireman was determined to get the loco to the main part of the climb in the best condition he could. I suspected that there was an element of pride at work here - and why not indeed. The teamwork between driver and fireman was impressive, not just in the handling of the loco and discussions with the trainee fireman but in procedures at level crossings as well.

We rolled to a halt at the first stop, Dinas, John ably demonstrating a smooth stop on a rising brake. Suddenly a fitter appeared standing on the bottom step, peering into the cab and asking how the loco was performing. There then followed a gentle pantomime which had me smiling inwardly. John and the fireman, with water well up and pressure at around 170psi, made oblique reference to the fact that they had been told that there was thought to be some steaming problem with this loco. The fitter, seeing the cab readings, sought to claim credit for the fitters. Our crew, however, whilst not decrying the efforts of the fitters, made it very clear by inference that there probably was a problem but that this was easily overcome with superior handling. With a lovely final touch the fitter was thanked for his interest and concern at which point he departed, not clear whether he had been ribbed or not! The fireman watched him depart with some amusement, confident that the fitter would make sure that whichever crew had complained would be told in no uncertain terms that today's crew were finding no difficulty. No doubt any work undertaken by the fitters would also be downplayed! The fireman then turned to me and imparted the gem that today the blower was blowing up the chimney rather than through the tubes as had previously been the case!!

Having left Dinas, John pointed through the front cab window and asked "Will we get through that do you think?" I peered ahead and was amazed to see a stone overbridge apparently at ninety degrees to the track. The combination of the narrowness of the gauge, the sharpness of the curve and the size of the loco meant that I had serious doubts, even though common sense told me that as the railway had been in operation for several years locos and stock must



fit. Nonetheless it was still quite astounding to feel the loco turn sharply to the left and see the bridge swing into view and engulf the loco rather like a sock going onto a foot.

The line had, by now, left the wooded lower parts and began to climb in earnest in more open countryside, which gave, for the first time, views of the hills of Snowdonia within the National Park, which began to rise on both sides of the line. A campsite appeared on the right, positioned immediately adjacent to the line, with a goodly sprinkling of caravans and tents in evidence. Some people stopped to watch our progress whilst others went about their business seemingly oblivious to our passing which paid testament to how quickly the line and trains have become commonplace.

Although the engine was now being worked harder, the load and gradient were still well within its capability, but I watched with interest as the fireman, hunched forward over his controls, moved his gauntleted hands from control to control, balancing oil feed, water flow and steam pressure, his eyes hardly leaving the chimney top, where the colour of the exhaust gave a continual tell-tale as to the completeness of combustion. I noted that the steam chest pressure was held around 40 - 50 psi and that even when starting this would only briefly exceed 60psi. That the loco was working comfortably within its capacity could not be doubted.

Reverse curve gave way to reverse curve as we forged onwards and I became fascinated by the acute angle taken up by the track as seen through the front spectacle plate. This appeared, on right hand bends, to be between 30 and 45 degrees, the articulated front end swinging out to the right to follow this seemingly impossible curvature. The track would then writhe off to the left and disappear behind the front of the loco whilst I waited for the change in direction. When it came the degree of leftward movement was so vivid as to almost give the impression that the loco was being turned on a turntable - something not needed, of course, with a Garratt.

At Waunfawr we crossed with the descending service and I was surprised to see a Pullman car in the formation. Named 'Bodysgallen', this saloon, along with most of the modern coaching stock, was built in 1998 by Winson Engineering of Daventry. Sponsored by an hotel company the vehicle boasts individual armchairs, is finished in full Pullman livery and is even heated! What more could the well-heeled

aficionado require?

Whilst waiting for the "off" the trainee fireman peered out of the cab on the driver's side at the rock formations on Moel Tryfan (over 1200 feet) where he claimed it was possible to make out the shape of an elephant. Much straining of eyesight and imagination failed to turn up anything resembling an elephant. Meanwhile, having had the signal from the guard, we had departed Waunfawr and were again setting about the climb. The trainee fireman continued to peer out of the cab to the rear obviously not wishing to be defeated and clearly hoping that our change in position might suddenly make the elephant appear.

"Perhaps low evening sunlight might help" I ventured.

"Tusks, big ears and a trunk would be even better" snorted John.

An abashed and crushed trainee fireman resumed his stance in the middle of the cab and stared impassively at the array of grinning gauges. Silence reigned, that is if the cacophony of an engine working hard was ignored.

Onwards and upwards, now above the 400 foot contour, following the valley of the Afon Gwyrfa (River Gwyrfa) which we rumbled over twice before stopping at a request stop platform called Snowdon Ranger. Below us, to the right, stretched Llyn Cwellyn (Lake Cwellyn) whilst up to our left towered the summit of Snowdon (over 3200 feet) all gloriously illuminated in the strong early afternoon sunlight. Such cloud as there was did not seem to cover the sun shining on our little party but shadows chased each other across the sunlit flanks of Snowdon whilst cows and sheep idly watched our passing without interrupting their steady chewing.

The fireman pointed out a channel in the hillside which he said pointed directly at the summit of Snowdon and had been cut (for reasons now lost in the mists of time) by the Druids. Looking higher up we were able to see one of the Snowdon Mountain Railway locomotives pushing its single coach up what appeared to be the very apex of a ridge. Its dark exhaust was shooting high into the sunlit sky, a following wind arcing this over the short train and carrying it well ahead so that it almost appeared as if the wind was blowing the little train upwards. Looking at the huge bulk of Snowdon with this tiny man-made contraption crawling, ant-like, up its side made me

very aware that man's efforts are both puny and transient when compared to nature's.

We were now on the final section leading to the current terminus, Rhyd Ddu which is just short of the summit of the climb at 650 feet. If anything the curvature of the line became even more pronounced than before and, as if to underline this fact, there now came a high pitched shrieking and squealing from beneath the loco. After a minute or so of this noise I bellowed at the fireman "Is this the flanges?" "We're in trouble if it's not!" was his quick reply and I laughed out loud at the ridiculousness of my question.

All too soon we were rolling into the platform where, on stopping, the fireman bent down to look at the nearest water gauge glass.

"Ah, there you are" he exclaimed as the meniscus put in its first real appearance of the day. With blower hard on to rally the steam pressure he opened the injector water and steam valves then watched as the needle on the steam gauge slowly began to rise despite the feed from the injector. Smart work from the crew saw us run around the train and couple up ready for the descent. There was now time to look at our steed from the platform and again I marvelled at what was contained on and within the loco, sitting as it did on two foot gauge trackwork.

Much to my embarrassment the crew shared their "snap" with their wholly unprepared guest, including large draughts of cold lemonade from the buffet car and I have to admit it was all very welcome indeed. The talk ranged over the locos, the Ffestiniog

line and locos, authority (and how not to wield it!) and much more as we awaited our departure time.

The return journey consisted largely of ensuring a controlled descent and I now took the opportunity really to enjoy the scenery, the company and the sheer privilege of being where I was. Children waved (as ever), adults smiled and, where the track ran parallel with a cycle path we, at one point, overtook a sombre looking local who did not so much as look as this large clanking monster rolled past. "Either someone for whom the railway is now commonplace or someone who never wanted it in the first place", I thought.

The woods at the bottom end of the line embraced us again and with feelings of regret I saw the platforms at Caernarfon come into view. I remained on the loco as it was speedily un-hitched and then ran past the rolling stock and onto a spur which boasted a water crane. The fireman did the honours whilst the trainee fireman fiddled with the oil burner and steam controls as he had been told that he would be in charge for the next trip. Having taken enough water we made our way to the front of the train and "tied on".

It was now time for me to leave the crew to get on with their jobs and I bid a very fulsome goodbye, trying, and probably failing, to express just how much I had enjoyed the trip and how much I appreciated their welcoming me in the way they had. Three hours had passed in what seemed like no time. In particular I had John to thank for such an unlooked for surprise but my invoice for nineteen pounds is in the post to him all the same!!

## Date Alteration – Stationary Steam and Traction Engine Section

Terry Baxter and Brendan Corcoran will be at Colney Heath testing miniature traction engine boilers on  
**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2005 from 10am.**

Any models may be tested on this morning but priority will go to stationary steam.

Don't forget your certificate and a suitable 5/16 by 32 male adapter for the test kit.

## **Marine Mutterings**

### **By Derek Perham**

As I write our young female hero sailor is nearing the Western Approaches, with only a few miles to go to knock the record for six around the world; a monstrous 27,000 odd miles. What a task — even with all the electronic gadgets that are on board that trimaran we must still admire the physical determination of this young lady. Who said the weaker sex were women!

On to this year's arrangements or visits to our site. I have had The Toy Boat Society ask if we can have them again this year, so I have booked them for the two requested visits - which I believe we all enjoy - to attend our site on May 29th and July 31st. I am sure we will welcome them as we did last year. I am reliably informed that over the two days that they visited last year our takings in the coach canteen

were two of the highest takings along with the donation box. They have requested a 9.30am start which will allow them to play in the morning, and in the afternoon they like to show off their play-things of yester-year. Do make an entry in your diaries for these two days.

Work on Sundays is progressing at the site and our Gardening member Kate has planted some more tulip bulbs so watch out Kew Gardens, we also have a pond with a garden! The white wood fencing has been washed down but needs painting, the pavings are at present being water blasted and will look like new by the time I have finished. The marine section still needs a new leader so think about it all you sailors. That's all for now.

Happy sailing.

## **Tyttenhanger Gazette**

### **by Roger Bell**

The large picture on the wall caught everyone's attention as they arrived for the February Loco Section meeting; it was of a train leaving King's Cross in 1950 and picking its way slowly over the points and crossovers with their 8mph speed restriction. The last coaches were still hidden in the station complex in the background. It had in fact hung for many years in Tony Dunbar's office during his railway career, which was in fact the subject for tonight.

Having an interest in mechanical engineering his time at Enfield Technical School suited him, but when the opportunity came to leave he decided to visit the careers officer. There he was met with 'I have got just the job for you', and an interview was arranged with the Chief Civil Engineer, Eastern Region BR. Tony remembered the interview well; it was on the top floor at King's Cross in the boardroom which was Gresley's old office. He sat with the light in his eyes at the fifteen-foot diameter table and was asked if he played cricket, he answered 'no', but despite that was offered a job as Temporary Junior Tracer in the Civil Engineering Department and he started on 28 Aug 1955.

It was the Tracer's job to turn a Draughtsman's

schemes into production drawings, which were drawn with Indian ink on linen. Tony felt that most bore his trademark of a hole in the linen due to rubbing out. At that time millions were to be spent on the railways; it was a good place to be.

The offices were painted in Great Northern green from 1923 and whilst they had electric light they also had coal fires. The scuttles were filled for them but when the coal ran out Tony was sent to scrounge some from empty offices elsewhere.

The work became more fascinating with technical queries on the land; he had to find the original deeds and determine the conditions under which the land was purchased, in order that future development would not conflict. After 6 months he was offered a 3 year Studentship Course and became involved in 'New Works'.

He worked in the parliamentary office for a while; this is where proposals for development were prepared to go for authorisation before government. This held him in good stead for his Professional Interview as one question was to write an essay on the procedure for building a new railway. He was sure it got him through the interview as he gained his Chartered status in 1967.

As we know, most upgrade work on the railway is done over weekends, and during the night. At the age of 18 he was able to work Saturday nights and did his first shift – an horrendous 21 hours long starting at 10pm. At that time he lived with his parents at their shop in Finsbury Road and did not tell them of this impending shift. They went away and on their return asked where he had been. He had to confess as apparently Tony had left the key to the shop in the door and a local Bobby on patrol had taken the keys back to the station; they were returned later.

After his studentship he chose to work at Stratford and cover 200 stations on the District. The work varied with minor jobs such as adding a window in a building to replacing waiting rooms with modern type bus shelters, as it was deemed that the passenger is only waiting in a similar manner to a bus passenger. Whilst there, continuous welded rail was fitted for 14 miles from Stratford to the other side of Ilford.

The next move took him to British Rail Workshops, Reading, where he worked 9am to 4pm but his travelling day started at 7am and finished at 6pm, and involved 18,000 miles a year. One area at Wolverton was used to burn old coaches, but there was ash on the bank and this caught fire. Water was put on but there was a chemical reaction and it continued to burn for a year. After 18 months he returned to King's Cross to the Works Engineer's office working on earthwork schemes.

Later one billion pounds was allocated to the study for the Southern approach into King's Cross for the channel tunnel route. This started in 1989 and three years later was abandoned for the approach from Stratford. This led to him to working for Union Railway, until they moved from their offices in King's Cross to Croydon, when he was made redundant after 38 ½ years on the railway.

One of the largest projects was the GN Suburban Electrification, which was to upgrade the line from King's Cross to Royston including the loop to Hertford. This would increase speeds from Wood Green to Finsbury Park to 100mph and Finsbury Park to Kings Cross to 80mph. We saw the original 12 drawings for King's Cross, each marked up in different colours to cover each of the 12 stages of work to be done. The colours represented track to be taken up, track to be laid and running lines during

the work.

Three bridges were built between Finsbury Park and King's Cross to cater for the proposed new London airport rail route to Foulness. These were not needed. The needs of local towns were considered; at Hornsey the low bridge was raised 2 feet to increase headroom and also to take the dip out of the line. In all 7 bridges were demolished, 4 were raised, 29 overbridges were rebuilt together with 3 underbridges and at one the track was lowered. New flyovers were also built. A brand new turntable was built at Haringay to turn HST power cars to equalise wheel wear.

All of this, through the night and between trains running. One had to contend with the 3am down newspaper train, then shortly after the up sleepers. Abutments of the bridges were actually bricked up between passing trains. The signalling had to remain intact although if things went wrong they could revert to hand signalling. There were 464 new signals, 57 signal boxes changed and 4,700 structures erected to support 266 miles of overhead wires. The wires were copper, the catenary made from steel cored aluminium. The wires last virtually for ever; it is the carbon pan on the train that wears.

He had made lots of friends at King's Cross including George Case and David Broom; their reunions still draw an attendance of 100. He felt that he had a thoroughly good career and enjoyed every moment of it, but was not sorry to be out of it now.

A final look at the picture with its 1920s signal box; it looked like that from 1950 to 1977, the year the electrification scheme started and Tony and his colleagues changed it all for the better.

We thanked Tony for his superb presentation that could well have lasted longer had we had the time, and about which a book could be written. It is strange to reflect that when one thinks of the railway one ponders on locomotives and trains, stations and signal boxes, but behind all that are the cuttings, embankments, bridges and track which make it all possible. With most of the changes taking place at night and in places far away from the public glare, the only clue to the early morning paper reading passengers would be the easier running and the absence of the lurch and jolt from yesterday.

**BE VERY PROUD TO BE BRITISH BECAUSE:-**

- Only in Britain... can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance.
- Only in Britain... do supermarkets make sick people walk all the way to the back of the shop to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.
- Only in Britain... do banks leave both doors open and chain the pens to the counters.
- Only in Britain... do we leave cars worth thousands of pounds on the drive and lock our junk and cheap lawn mower in the garage.
- Only in Britain... do we use answering machines to screen calls and then have call waiting so we won't miss a call from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place
- Only in Britain... are there disabled parking places in front of a skating rink.

**NOT TO MENTION...**

- 3 Brits die each year testing if a 9v battery works on their tongue.
- 142 Brits were injured in 1999 by not removing all pins from new shirts.
- 58 Brits are injured each year by using sharp knives instead of screwdrivers.
- 31 Brits have died since 1996 by watering their Christmas tree while the fairy lights were plugged in.
- 19 Brits have died in the last 3 years believing that Christmas decorations were chocolate.
- British Hospitals reported 4 broken arms last year after cracker pulling accidents.
- 101 people since 1999 have had broken parts of plastic toys pulled out of the soles of their feet.
- 18 Brits had serious burns in 2000 trying on a new jumper with a lit cigarette in their mouth.
- A massive 543 Brits were admitted to A&E in the last two years after opening bottles of beer with their teeth
- 5 Brits were injured last year in accidents involving out of control Scalextric cars.

**AND FINALLY.....**

In 2000 eight Brits cracked their skull whilst throwing up into the toilet.

**RULE BRITANNIA!**

**Genuine complaints to Enfield Council:**

My bush is really overgrown round the front and my back passage has fungus growing in it.

... and he's got this huge tool that vibrates the whole house and I just can't take it anymore.

It's the dog's mess that I find hard to swallow.

I want some repairs done to my cooker as it has backfired and burnt my knob off.

I wish to complain that my father hurt his ankle very badly when he put his foot in the hole in his back passage.

... and their 18-year old son is continually banging his balls against my fence.

Will you please send someone to mend the garden path. My wife tripped and fell on it yesterday and now she is pregnant.

I request permission to remove my drawers in the kitchen.

The man next door has a large erection in the back garden, which is unsightly and dangerous.

The toilet is blocked and we cannot bath the children until it is cleared.

**Continued over page.....**

Our kitchen floor is damp. We have two children and would like a third so please send someone round to do something about it.

I am a single woman living in a downstairs flat and would you please do something about the noise made by the man on top of me every night.

Please send a man with the right tool to finish the job and satisfy my wife.

I want to complain about the farmer across the road; every morning at 6am his cock wakes me up and it's now getting too much for me.

**Below are actual insurance claim form gaffes and are the collection made by Norwich Union for their annual Christmas mag...**

" I started to slow down but the traffic was more stationary than I thought."

" I pulled into a lay-by with smoke coming from under the bonnet. I realised the car was on fire so took my dog and smothered it with a blanket."

A Norwich Union customer collided with a cow. The questions and answers on the claim form were:

Q: What warning was given by you? A: Horn

Q: What warning was given by the other party? A: Moo

" I started to turn and it was at this point I noticed a camel and an elephant tethered at the verge. This distraction caused me to lose concentration and hit a bollard."

" I was going at about 70 or 80 mph when my girlfriend on the pillion reached over and grabbed my testicles so I lost control."

" I didn't think the speed limit applied after midnight"

" The car in front hit the pedestrian but he got up so I hit him again"

" I had been driving for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident."

" I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment."

" Coming home, I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree I don't have."

" I thought my window was down, but I found out it wasn't when I put my head through it."

" A pedestrian hit me and went under my car".

" The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him."

" I had been shopping for plants all day and was on my way home. As I reached an intersection a hedge sprang up obscuring my vision and I did not see the other car."

" I was on my way to the doctor with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way causing me to have an accident."

" My car was legally parked as it backed into the other vehicle."

## 📖 Dates for your Diary 📖

Friday 4 March	8.00pm General Meeting; Work in Progress – On the Table HQ Legion Way, North Finchley.
Monday 7 March	8.00pm Tyttenhanger Committee Meeting; St Mark's Christian Centre, Church Lane, Colney Heath.
Friday 11 March	8.00pm Special Loco Section Meeting, HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley.
Monday 14 March	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley.
<i>Wed 16 March</i>	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for April News Sheet</i>
Friday 18 March	8.00pm Loco Section Meeting; illustrated talk by David Mitchell; <i>the Talylyn Railway</i> ; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley.
Friday 25 March	8.00pm Workshop Evening; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley.
Sunday 27 March	Easter Day – First Running Day at Colney Heath
Friday 1 April	8.00pm General Meeting; Modelling in 00 Gauge; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley.
Monday 4 April	8.00pm Tyttenhanger Committee Meeting; St Mark's Christian Centre, Church Lane, Colney Heath.
Monday 11 April	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley.
Friday 15 April	8.00pm Loco Section Meeting; an evening of slides; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley.
Friday 22 April	8.00pm Workshop Evening; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley.
<i>Friday 22 April</i>	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for May News Sheet</i>
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Every Wednesday	Miniature Railways, British and American and Video Group at HQ
Every Thursday	Slot Cars Section at HQ
Every Sunday	Morning work parties at Colney Heath (start 9.00am).

## Provisional Track Stewards Rota for 2005

The provisional Rota for the first part of the 2005 running season is set out below.

It has not been decided what form the public opening dates of the Tyttenhanger site should take this year. The decision will not be taken until after the publication of the March edition of the *News Sheet*, so I thought it would be prudent to publish a provisional list now. If the season takes place in the same form as in previous years, then the list will stand.

Remember that you are only required to do one 'duty' a year, that it is good fun and certainly not onerous, but for safety's sake your presence is positively required.

It is of great help if the Senior Steward can remind his team of their impending tour of duty, and let the following weeks' Senior Steward know of any alterations to the routine at the track.

Please try to put past differences behind you and support the Club.

*Ian Johnston*

Provisional Track Stewards Rota 2005.						
Date	Senior Steward	Track Stewards			Tea Stewards.	
27th March	R Price	M Cummings	G Price	D Harris	Mrs Thorogood	R Thorogood
3rd April	B Apthorpe	J Shaw	W Mason	R Bell	K Ashman	Mrs Apthorpe
10th April	N Griffiths	G Bullock	P Brewster	J Beesley	Mrs Griffiths	M Smith.
17th April	J Edwards	R Piper	J Deans	A Gorski	M Griffiths	A Harmer.
24th April	G Ainge	S Pearson	G Gardner	R Cross.	H Barrow	R Smiles.
1st May	M Foreman	P Precious	R Foreman	G Eccles	Mrs Foreman	M Hodgson.
8th May	F Hills	J West	P Castle	M Dear	Mrs Hills	M Bolle.

