

Issue No. 873 December 2024

The News Sheet

North London Society of Model Engineers

December 2024



You can see this News Sheet in
colour by visiting our web site at www.nlsme.co.uk

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Front cover; -

Leaves on the line are clearly not a problem on our ground level railway. Andrew had a great run in November. The engine was built by his father Peter. Power is supplied by a stationary engine acquired from another club member mounted on a custom-made chassis with hydraulic drive. Based on the narrow-gauge locomotives produced during the first WW to supply the trenches. We hope to hear more about this unique locomotive in a future edition.

Picture by Paul



Your editor is very grateful to all those who have contributed to this edition. Your efforts are much appreciated by all the members of NLSME. This News Sheet would not be possible without you.

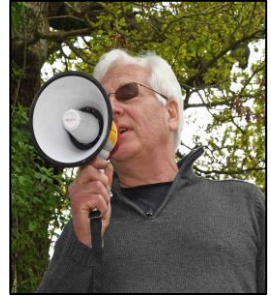
Articles long or short on any subject which would be of interest to members of NLSME will be gratefully received for inclusion in future editions. If you don't want to put pen to paper but have a suggestion for a topic which is of interest let the editor know and we will do the rest.

Chairman's Comments

Les

Well, that's another year almost gone. There has been plenty of action at NLSME during 2024 with all sections active. Notably we have started on the next major stage of the steaming bay project. All existing raised track bays and bases have been demolished and we are now starting to rebuild under Dave's guidance. The old workshop has been stripped of all electrical services and benches ready for repurposing as carriage and general store. Alan and Mike are leading this internal work. Many thanks are due to Keith for producing the drawings and conceptual layouts that were so important for us deciding what to do and how to do it. These are available to view on our web page, look under the news sheet tab.

Other winter working in hand is the raised Track signalling revamp, replacing old cables and connectors that became problematic at latter part of running season. Thanks are due to George, Paul and Waz for taking this on.



Another job which has been started is the replacement of the timber deck on the Raised Track flyover which is in the capable hands of Grahame, Jonathan and Mick.



Our normal maintenance tasks will not be overlooked, these include RT and GL track inspections and rolling stock inspections. The GL crew have a busy schedule inspecting and renewing as necessary track welds. Peter is using his woodworking skills to repair the door to signal hut as part of the proposed restoration works on the building. To add to this hive of activity the G1 group will start their new steps and trolley access ramp. If that were not enough, we have routine maintenance as listed elsewhere in this edition. Plenty of work for all. A list will be maintained on a white board at the carriage. Ideally put your name against items you want to take on so there is no duplication of effort.

Hopefully in 2025 we will commence, or even complete, the improvements to kitchen and welfare facilities at HQ. These are much needed

Mike Ruffell's Simplex has now been sold, to a member I am pleased to say. This leaves us with selected items of tools from his estate. These will be auctioned to members at HQ on Saturday 8th February. I plan to include a list in the February news sheet.

The Abbey Theatre in St Albans are staging a production of the Railway Children, see flyer in this issue.

The cast visited us on 23rd November to take publicity photographs, in costume, at various locations on our site. We are pleased to assist any local organisation and despite the dreary weather on the day they were happy with the result.

For the Facebook users amongst us the full publicity shots and videos can be seen on the Abbey Theatre page.



Our annual new year's day run will of necessity be limited, on the raised track, to smaller engines that can be lifted onto the track.

Finally, I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and look forward to another good year pursuing our shared and varied modelling interests.

Treasurer's Report

By Mike

At the last Council Meeting we were pleased to accept application to join from Romeo, whose interests includes Locomotives, Engineering and Slot Cars.

We have paid our Annual dues to the Water Board for the Tyttenhanger site but have yet to receive an invoice from London Borough of Barnet for HQ, this I had expected to receive at the beginning of October. A gentle reminder has been sent to them.

Enclosed with this last issue of the News Sheet for 2024 is the latest copy of our Name & Address list. Please check that your details are correct and let me know of any changes or errors therein. I know that one or two people have changed address of late.

As you are no doubt aware 'Project 2000' has in its latest incarnation finally been started in the last couple of weeks with the demolition of the Raised Track Steaming Bays.



This will mean that the traditional New Year's day run will of necessity be limited, on the raised track to smaller engines that somebody wants to carry up the field to the station! The Ground Level Railway may of course opt to run.

In the New Year the raised track will in any case be closed whilst annual maintenance is taking place.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a very Happy Xmas and Best Wishes for the New Year.

Keep safe and keep engineering.

Winter Maintenance List (additional to the projects underway)

- Coach, both ends are in need of a wash repair and painting with the appropriate colour.
- Coach Gutters need clearing.
- Coach, new 'Tooth' needed at BBQ end of platform.
- The Toilet Block external needs a refurbishing coat of paint, internally to be cleaned.
- Machine shop needs a coat of green preservative. Ditto for other structures such as carriage sheds etc.
- Orchard Junction Signal Box also needs appraisal, and the excellent work of rehabilitation resumed.
- Top Tunnel is in need of patching with torch on felt or otherwise to delay further deterioration.
- All benches, tables & chairs need a wash down and a coat of Ronseal.
- RT and Cuckoo line sleeper replacement as necessary.
- RT and Cuckoo line rail holding sleepers to be replaced as necessary
- GL signals to be repaired as necessary
- Leaves to be collected and disposed in approved places
- Carriage drain to be rerouted into sewer
- Complete green painting of the containers and doors 1 – 7

Unsafe Trees – An Update

In the November 2024 News Sheet details and photographs were given about the large unsafe tree located near to the main toilet block. I am able to advise that Managing Agent representatives for Affinity Water and their tree contractor recently visited the site. Work to remove this tree as well as some others which are showing signs of decay is scheduled to take place on Thursday 28th and Friday 29th November. So, hopefully, by the time this News Sheet lands on your front doormat the work will have been completed.

However, a cautionary note. If, for whatever reason this work is delayed, or it has not been possible to complete it during the allocated 2 days some areas may continue to be fenced off.

If so, please do not enter any areas where a barrier is still erected and on no account is any member to take any action to cut or remove any part of trees within these areas.

All Drivers running at Colney Heath please note.

As you will read elsewhere in this month's News Sheet the refurbishment of the steaming bays and workshop has begun.

The signing in lectern and book has therefore been temporarily relocated in the container workshop whilst the old workshop is being modified.

The Club WhatsApp group

By John

It has been a while since the club WhatsApp group was mentioned so I thought it was about time it was highlighted again.

Any club member is welcome to join the group. It is a great place to ask for and receive any advice you may have regarding your model engineering projects. Also, if you have any spare appropriate materials to offer to other club members it can be very handy.



You can post anything that you think would be of interest to other members obviously within our hobby world. Or indeed just enjoy seeing what other members are up to, a popular subject are the model railways that are in members' homes and never see the light of day! Incidentally if anything is deemed inappropriate it will be removed immediately, happy to report that this has yet to happen! I am aware that of course some sections within the club already have their own WhatsApp groups which is great, but the club one is ideal if you want to get information to a wider audience or to see what other people within the club are up to.

How do you join?

Obviously, you will need to have the WhatsApp app installed on your smart phone. Then using said app send a post to me John Davy using my phone number 07918 655270. Just tell me who you are. I will be able to see your number of course.

Then I will add you to the group. It is that easy.

Incidentally if you find that it's not for you, you can always leave the group, and no one will ever know!

H Q Friday 1st November 2024 General Meeting. The East Coast Mainline in Art and Models.

That Friday was a dreik and damp muddy evening, but it did not deter a goodly representation of the membership from attending HQ. We soon discovered why, because the talk had been very thoroughly researched and prepared.

Starting from the beginning it was Kings Cross Station built in 1850 with lots of influence from the Cubitt family of civil architects. The boundary to the South is Marylebone Road with Battle Bridge to the North. The “battle” was between the Brits (led by Boudica) against the Romans. Boudica is reputedly buried under Platform 10.

Near to the station is the Model Railway Club in Calshot Street (1920). They are very active most evenings with various groups developing layouts and locomotives. They are perhaps the largest Model Railway Club in the Country.

Travelling North the Alexander Palace is passed where the Annual Model Engineering Exhibition was a great attraction for many years. Soon to arrive in Barnet; why Barnet you ask? Well Bedford Avenue housed a rather unique and special Model Railway built by Mr Cooper and friends. It was OO gauge and started at Kings Cross and ended at Waverley! On the way it went through the neighbour’s wall to complete the journey! I had lived in Bedford Ave for six years before I knew of its existence!

One evening I was admiring the layout with Mr Cooper when about six burley men arrived; they had just finished their shift at Kings Cross and were going to ‘play trains’ with a strict timetable, signals and rule of the road. It was fortunate that Mr Cooper’s nephew lived next door and was also fond of trains! Just before I moved from Bedford Avenue Mr Cooper sold up and moved to York and that most satisfying interlude expired.

Paul then took us up North after passing several interesting model tracks to Peterborough where my in-laws lived and where I started my sons in Train Spotting on that rather mundane station. My mother in law’s next-door neighbour (Mr Freddie Beard), was a leading light of the Peterborough Model Engineering Society and also modelled locomotives for the Science Museum. I noticed that he was making a superb model of the Iron Duke Class locomotive, *Lord of the Isles* in his workshop. I believed that it disappeared to America very soon after he died!

Great Northern seemed to save money by only having large prestigious stations at important places like Kings Cross, York and Waverley.

Paul continued our wonderful journey proceeding North visiting Model engineering Societies of Doncaster Durham and Edinburgh before glimpsing

the Majestic Firth of Forth Bridge. (built in 1890 by Fowler) at the conclusion of our run.

Paul was thanked for a truly wonderful evening which had been very well researched and planned. Then, it was time for the crowd of enthusiasts to wind their way for liquid sustenance or to their homes.

Booking an Event at Colney Heath?

Tyttenhanger site is open to all members at all times.

However, on certain pre-arranged days members access is subject to some restrictions. This does not prohibit members running/sailing but should note booking requirements and priorities are as follows; -

Public running days 2pm – 5pm

Set by council. Managed by Senior Steward. Notified in news sheet

Priority given to public passenger hauling

On site parking for members and disabled badge holders only

Event Days

Proposed by members, approved by council. Managed by sponsoring member.

Notified in news sheet

Priority given to event passenger hauling.

On site parking for visitors at sponsor's discretion

Private parties

Proposed by members, approved by council. Managed by sponsoring member.

Notified in news sheet

Priority given to party passenger hauling.

On site parking for visitors at sponsor's discretion

Members days

Ad hoc events do not require council approval. No notice in news sheet

No priorities apply

All public, event, parties or members days to be in accordance with the Rules and Regulations for the Tyttenhanger Site. (copies have been provided to all members)

Narrow gauge Dec 2024

By John

Hello everyone and welcome to the festive issue of narrow-gauge news. firstly, may I wish every club member a joyful Christmas and a healthy and happy new year.

We have had a good year in the world of narrow gauge, our numbers have increased, and we have enjoyed some wonderful running sessions and always with great camaraderie and friendship. Thanks to you all...



The layout ends the year in a better condition than it started, in the last newsletter I mentioned the work that was ongoing, replacing rotten battens etc., more work has been done since and will continue throughout the winter.

As this is the Christmas issue you may recall for the last few years, I have included a quiz to challenge you. This year is no exception, previous ones have been railway or transport related but I think now that has been exhausted. However, knowing how clever you all are here is a general knowledge quiz to exercise the old grey matter. I am sure our editor Keith (by the way thanks for all your hard work in getting our nonsense into some sort of sense Keith) has put the answers somewhere else in the newsletter. (see page 34 ed) So, pour yourself a 12-year-old and off we go! don't forget to tell us how you do!

1. Who wrote the book Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang: The Magical Car?
2. In which part of your body would you find the cruciate ligament?
3. What is the most populated city in Australia?
4. What is the name of the main antagonist in the Shakespeare play Othello?
5. When was the movie the Titanic released?
6. What element is denoted by the chemical symbol Sn in the periodic table?
7. How many of Henry VIII's wives were called Catherine?
8. What is the name of the 1976 film about the Watergate scandal, starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman?
9. What is James Bond's code name?
10. What is the capital of Finland?
11. In what US state is the city Nashville?
12. What is the currency of Denmark?
13. Which Tennis Grand Slam is played on a clay surface?

14. In which European country would you find the Rijksmuseum?
15. How many films have Al Pacino and Robert De Niro appeared in together?
16. What was the old name for a Snickers bar before it changed in 1990?
17. Who was the head of state in Japan during the Second World War?
18. What is the smallest planet in our solar system?
19. Who wrote the novels *Gone Girl* and *Sharp Objects*?
20. Which legendary surrealist artist is famous for painting melting clocks?
21. Which football club plays its home games at Loftus Road?
22. Continental United States has 4 time zones, can you name them?
23. What is the northernmost country in Africa?
24. Name the coffee shop in US sitcom *Friends*.
25. How many human players are there on each side in a polo match?
26. In what year did Tony Blair become British Prime Minister?
27. What is the common name for the larva of a housefly?
28. Street artist Banksy is originally associated with which British city?
29. From what grain is the Japanese spirit Sake made?
30. What was the Turkish city of Istanbul called before 1930?
31. At the beginning of the 17th century, what did Pope Clement VIII declare to be 'The devil's drink'?
32. The Scandinavian word 'Blåtand' was given to a 10th century Danish King who brought together disagreeing tribes to resolve their issues. Which modern technology, which brings devices together, is named from the Anglicized version of 'Blåtand'?
33. What is it about a rat's constitution that makes them particularly susceptible to poison?
34. What is the lowest form of wit?
35. What does BCC stand for when sending an email?
36. Who was the successor of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa?
37. On what in New York did James' giant peach land?
38. Where did Charles Darwin take the place of Charles Dickens?
39. Which mythological creature is found on the Vauxhall Motors logo?
40. Of which chemical element does a diamond consist of?

The Geoff Cashmore Photo collection

The Society has been gifted the photographic collection of the late Geoff Cashmore. It is a vast collection, prints, slides and negatives, mainly dating from the late 1950's to mid-1960's.

As promised last month we continue with a selection of pictures recording Geoff's travels. This month the archives provide a pictorial record of his day out on Saturday 25th September 1965 to North Wales on a special excursion.



Our first picture shows the Talyllyn railways AGM special excursion at Shrewsbury. The headboard reads "Talyllyn Railway Special Train" The two locomotives 7802 Bradley Manor and 7812 Erlestoke Manor have been attached to the train for its onward journey to the next stop Towyn. It is interesting to note that neither now has name plates but the brackets which held them can still be seen. Both engines were withdrawn only two months after this picture was taken.

A handout issued on the train refers to 1965 as being the Centenary Year of the Talyllyn Railway and that this special train carried the greatest number of "pilgrims" ever to the AGM – over 400. It departed Paddington at 07.50 and arrived at Towyn at 15.00. The return trip departed at 23.36 and arrived back in London at 09.10 the following day!

Looking into the history of these engines In April 1946, 7802 was transferred to the Cambrian Section and in August 1964, Shrewsbury became 'home'. The engine was regularly used on the prestigious Cambrian Coast Express. After one year in thoroughly run-down condition, 7802 was withdrawn in November 1965, and towed to Barry scrapyard. Following the successful steaming of fellow-Barry scrapyard resident 7812, its owning group purchased 7802 for intended cannibalisation, and in November 1979 it was towed from Barry to

Bewdley. Fund-raising activities plus offers of certain missing parts and restoration expertise, caused the owners to re-think the future of 7802, and in March 1983, the decision was made to return the engine to working order. This was achieved on 5th April 1993, and 7802 became a popular choice for working Severn Valley services. 7802 is currently in store on the SVR but 7812 can be seen working on the railway.



We have finally arrived at Towyn, and passengers have walked the short distance to Tallylyn Towyn Wharf station. As it is the occasion of the AGM its a very busy afternoon scene. There are no less than three engines in steam a diesel and another engine on display in the background. If anyone can provide information regarding the diesel and the engine on display, we can publish this in the next edition.

Whilst compiling this month's selection of pictures your editor came across a great little 1965 film of the railway. It's 14 minutes long and a bit American but well worth a light-hearted view of the early days of railway preservation.

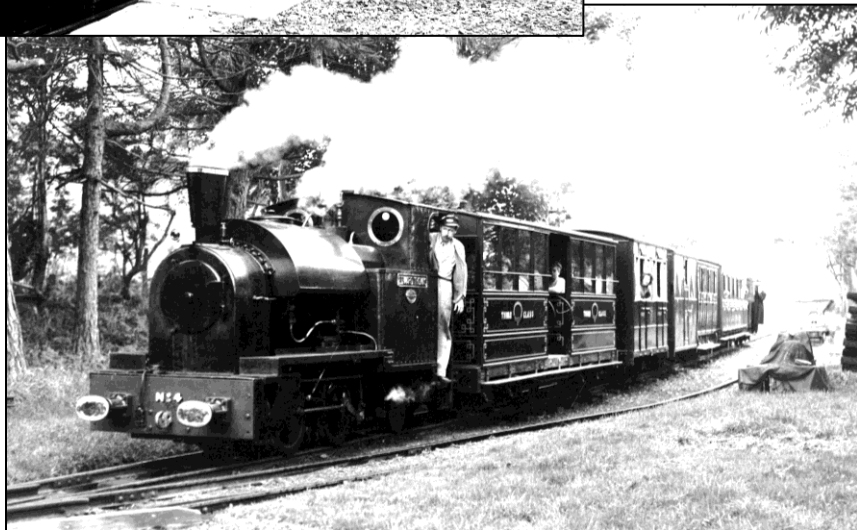
Go to YouTube and search; *Railway With A Heart of Gold (1965-Talylyn Railway)*

It seems Geoff didn't just visit the Talylyn railway and next month we move further north into Wales and visit the Ffestiniog with the army giving a helping hand. But before we move on here are a couple more T.R. pictures



This great picture is of Talylyn which has just arrived at the Wharf station. I think the guy talking to the driver is having problems with his trousers.

In our final picture for this month No 4 Edward Thomas is taking another party from the excursion train on a trip up to Abergynolwyn.



Public running & Fetes and Fairs events Looking back at 2024 forward to 2025

On behalf of the NLSME Council I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Senior Stewards, Track Stewards, Tea Stewards & Fetes and Fairs volunteers who have made a success of our public running sessions this year. Without you turning up to do a stewarding duty at our Colney Heath track or volunteering at a Fetes and Fairs event we would have been unable to bring pleasure to the public as well as boosting the funds of the Society.



Now that the running season/events for the public are over, our winter working parties at Colney Heath have commenced with the **BIG NEWS** that the Steaming Bay Project is underway so if you would like to get involved details of the working parties can be found at the back of the News Sheet.

So, with Christmas not too far away and 2025 equally not too far behind, it is time to look forward and make some plans. As in previous years it is my intention to issue a draft Track Stewards Rota in either the February or March issue of the News Sheet. The basis I will use is that track stewards will be able to do their duty on the same 1st or 3rd weekend of the month as they did this year. I have already had a small number of notifications where a member has a commitment for a particular date in 2025 when they will not be available, and I plan to take these into consideration when drawing up the draft rota. New members will be allocated a date where a vacancy has arisen.

When the draft is published, and if the allocated date is likely to cause a problem, would you please swap your duty date with another member and then let me know, preferably by email, – address on the back of this News Sheet. If you are not on email, then please telephone me with the details of who you have swapped with – again my number is on the back of the News Sheet.



All members are reminded that being a member of the North London Society of Model Engineers requires you to commit to do at least one rota duty when you join or re-join each year.

If, however, you are unable to perform the duty on the date published **it is your responsibility to arrange a swap with another member and to advise me as well as the two Senior Stewards involved of the change.** A phone call or email allows the Senior Stewards to plan for the number of stewards who will be there

When drawing up the rota we will continue to take into consideration country membership, distance from the site, advancing years, fitness and members of the Gauge 1 Group who, in 2025, will be continuing to do Sunday tea duties, so not every member of the society will be listed.

The Fetes & Fairs Section would also very much welcome assistance by any member of the Society who would like to become involved with the wide variety of events they attend every year. If you would like more details of how you can become involved, please contact Peter Davies. His contact details can also be found on the back of the News Sheet.

Our public running days at Colney Heath and the events the Fetes & Fairs Section attend provide a lot of pleasure to parents and children as well as publicising our Society. The income from the public, as well as the subscriptions we pay, go towards improving and/or maintaining our facilities not only at the track but also at Headquarters.



So, thank you again for your help at one or more of these events during 2024.

Nigel (On behalf of the NLSME Council)

Ground Level Waffle.

By Paul

Hello, well doesn't time fly, I had just finished reading last month's news sheet when I receive a reminder from the editor that the deadline for next month's article is nearly here.

So, what has happened since I last wrote, well more leaf clearance and track maintenance as always, but this time a little more interesting, as we have repacked and added more ballast to the line in the tunnel. Now you would think this would be exactly the same as any other ballasting work and so it would be if every time someone went to put down a shovel full of stone someone else had not stood in front of the light plunging the work area into complete darkness. At which point the culprit was asked to please move away from the light (or words to that effect) so the job took a little longer than planned but we got there in the end.



Next the token post for the tunnel loop was renewed, as some of you will have noticed the old one has been propped up with a piece of angle iron for the last few months after it was knocked over and found to be rotten, the arm which holds the token has also been modified slightly, so the token should now not get caught between the post and the arm.

The battery loco Merlin has had a brake pipe fitting mounted on the front end, so that when double heading the driver of the pilot engine can now control the train brakes. During a routine examination it was found that the drive chain to the No1 (front) axle was missing, after walking the track a couple of times we could not find it, so a new one was order from the loco builder A.M.E. who supplied the new one free of charge, for which we are very grateful.

Vinyl name and number plates have been acquired for this loco but at the time of writing these have not yet been fitted.

And finally, the team spent time removing the old and rotten fence from around the dead tree by the toilet block, hopefully this has made it easier for the tree surgeons to do their work. Once the tree has been cut back the new fence can be installed.

We have a big job to complete during the winter rewelding rail joints but more of that once we have started.



I will finish with a nice fire and plenty of supervisors on a cold day.



And before you all fall asleep may I wish everyone a merry Christmas and happy new year.

New supply of bags of coal available for sale at the Colney Heath site.

Anthracite Beans in 20 kg bags at a **new** price of £16.00 per bag.

The size most used on our locos.

Anthracite Grains in 20 kg bags at a **new** price of £16.00 per bag.

Suitable for 3 1/2" gauge or those with very small fire-hole doors.

Contact the Treasurer, Mike

NOTE: - Regarding Oils, we are out of stock of lubricating oil at present until I source and order more.

Gauge 1 Report

By Geoff

As another year heads towards deepest winter, it is a time to ponder on what has happened in the last twelve months.

I am pleased to say that we welcomed two new members to the Gauge 1 group during the year and fortunately we have not lost any, however there are a couple who we have not seen for some time. Our thoughts are with them. We have over thirty of the NLSME members registering interest in Gauge 1 and we have received visits from all except four at some time during the year.



We normally get 12 members during our weekly Wednesday running session, from a consistent group of 20, and some also use the facilities at other times of the week. So far, we have only been rained off on two occasions this year. That was a Wednesday in February and again in May.

I know some of you who normally operate locomotives on the larger tracks also have built some Gauge 1 models, so why don't you come along, you would be very welcome.

We received visits from two different G1MRA groups along with a commemoration meeting to remember loco builder extraordinaire, Tom Barratt and a very good time was had by all at these events. In addition, we were invited

to a group in East Anglia. Plans are under way for similar visits next year. It is the social side that we really enjoy.

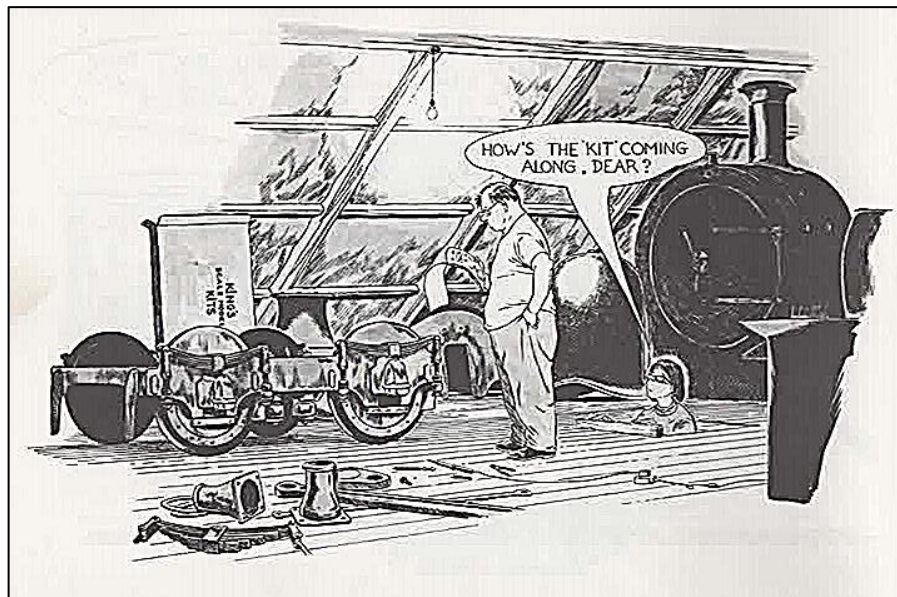


We will be continuing our weekly running sessions in December and into the new year. The cold air creates some lovely steam exhaust effects, and they are not to be missed. We will not mind the cold as we have access to the Bothy with its tea brewing facilities and protection from chill winds.



Come along and see what goes on, especially on a nice bright morning. Get some clear air away from the workshop. I look forward to having a toast with our members before we break for Christmas.





Bookworm Writes – Memoir of a Clubman

Our Speaker for tonight ...the story continues.

I looked again at the post-it note my wife Jackie had given to me with the name 'Lawrence' written on it followed by 'Curly' which was underlined and had a question mark beside it and pondered. I told myself this obviously couldn't be the Curly I had heard on the recording. So, who was it? It must be somebody's idea of a joke, and if it was a joke I felt I needed to know who was behind it.

I waited until I was next outside in the familiar surroundings of my workshop before phoning the number on the piece of paper. After much shushing, hissing and crackling on the line, the number eventually connected, the comforting burr burr, burr burr pulsing my ear until eventually it was answered. 'Hello, Purley 2436' a soft female voice with a hint of a Scottish accent answered from the other end.

'H e l l o' I stammered, 'I had a message to phone this number to speak to a Mr Lawrence, is this the right number?' and after a pause added 'I am sorry to disturb you if it's not'. 'No, you are quite right' the soft voice replied, 'I'll fetch him'. I heard the sound of the receiver being put down and could discern light footsteps on a wooden floor walking away followed by an exchange of voices in the distance. After a little while what I thought were the same footsteps returned followed by the sound of the phone being picked up once more.

'Hello, can I help you' the same light voice I had heard on the recording the other night intoned from the other end. At the sound of the voice, I felt a cold sensation shoot through my body. Steadying myself against the workbench and looking quickly around the inside of my workshop to reassure myself I was actually really there and not dreaming, I took a breath and said, 'Mr Lawrence?' 'Curly if you don't mind' the voice said firmly. 'We haven't met' I said 'but I have read a lot about you, in fact the other night I listened to part of a recording of a talk you gave to the North London model engineers in Barnet in November 1964.' As I finished, I couldn't quite believe what I had just heard myself say.

'Aren't you the chap who asked me about finishing your father's 3.5inch gauge Doris that night.' Curly asked. 'But that was....' I started to say staring hard at the rack of files on the wall in front of me and finding it difficult to take in what I was now hearing. 'Well, aren't you?' Curly's voice sounded impatient. 'I wanted to have a further chat with you about that engine and about the items your father left with me. I didn't get round to doing anything with them after we had discussed it and then time went on'... his voice trailed off, 'and the situation unhappily changed'. This statement left me feeling decidedly uneasy as I had no idea what Curly was referring to.... if indeed this was Curly I was even talking to, I knew nothing about any 'items' my dad had spoken to him about, in fact I

no reason to believe my father had even known Curly. 'Why not jump into the gas buggy and come and see me on Saturday' Curly suggested. 'Yesss, I could ...' I said slowly, 'What time?' 'Shall we say around two thirty' Curly replied.

It took a while before I felt I could broach the subject with Jackie about visiting Purley that coming Saturday as I wasn't sure how she would react if I told her about my recent phone conversation. Besides I needed more time to think about it all.

By the Tuesday of the same week, I had decided it was too ridiculous to contemplate driving all that way to the other side of London based on a conversation that had obviously been a 'wind-up.' However, on the Thursday morning I had just started breakfast when Jackie appeared in the kitchen doorway holding a postcard.

'Who do you know in Purley that likes trains Neil' she asked inquisitively. 'No one as far as I know' I replied, 'why?' 'Well, this card has just come in the post addressed to you. You can't miss the train on the front and on the back, it just has an address and a sketch of a railway signal with a green lens that looks like its flashing, it's not yet another exhibition is it?' Taking the card from her I smiled awkwardly, inwardly knowing that this development was now going to require a great deal of care and tact in handling if I was not to find myself in a lot of trouble.

Saturday came and even though I knew Jackie still had severe misgivings about letting me go to Purley, not least because I didn't really suppose she had been won-over by my explanation that I was going to visit someone who, according to the Model Engineer magazine had died in 1967, leaving her therefore in little doubt that I must want to go there for some other nefarious reason; surprisingly, she let me go but on the understanding that we would keep in regular touch throughout the day thereby reducing my chances in her eyes, of me getting up to anything shall we say, more questionable.

Shutting the front door of our house I wondered and not for the first time that day, what on earth I was doing driving all the way to Purley supposedly to meet someone who was definitely not going to be the person I thought they were. However, having got official sanction from Jackie to go it seemed a pity now to waste the opportunity to find out who it was behind this charade.

Once in the car I entered the address I had been sent into the Sat-Nav and waited for it to find the location. After a short wait it told me the journey would take around an hour and half using the M25 and to come at junction 6 and head up to Purley via the A 22. With the information successfully loaded I hesitated once more before pressing the start icon on the screen...'was I really going to make this journey'? I asked myself already knowing the answer had to be a definite YES.

Decision made I turned the key in the ignition stirring the engine into life, selected 'Drive' on the gearbox and slowly rolled the car off the hardstand and in the direction of Purley Oaks and 121 Grange Road.

The journey was fairly uneventful save for two tricky patches on the M25 and a minor hold up on the 235 that lost me about twenty minutes all told, so I arrived in the Croydon area later than I had intended just before 2.30. As I got closer it had become overcast and was now drizzling making the windscreen mist slightly. Almost immediately I felt a warm flow of air against my face as the auto de-mist was activated, it was against this and the distraction of the windscreen wipers intermittently rubbing across the screen that my Sat-Nav indicated I was getting near.

'At the next junction turn right' I was instructed, *'Turn right'* it reminded me as found myself leaving Allenby Avenue and at last turning into Grange Road. Then, *'In seventy yards you will have reached your destination.'*

I started to drive slowly down Grange Road looking for number 121. 'Fifty-two.... seventy' I said out loud, 'must be on the other side, one hundred and three ...one hundred and eleven there it is one two one'. I continued past the house and turned the car round at the end of the road returning to pull up outside a tidy white painted terraced property; and even though this was my first visit to the area it seemed somehow to be vaguely familiar.

'Ok this is where the fun starts' I said to myself as I got out of the car, closed the door and walked up the stepped path to the front door and pressed the doorbell.

Waiting for the bell to be answered I looked up at the clean bright rendered front of the house, my gaze stopping to admire the white UPVC frames fitted to the windows and thought how smart it all looked. With no immediate response to my ring, I rang the bell again and this time could hear it ringing inside. I waited a few moments longer and was just going to ring once more when I saw through the little glazed portion of the front door the outline of a figure approaching from the other side. It was followed shortly after by the sound of a security chain being unfastened followed by a lock being released, the sound of them unexpectedly making my heart thump in nervous anticipation.

Moments later the door opened gingerly, and a kind friendly looking female face appeared in the opening. 'Good afternoon, am I right for a mister Lawrence?' I enquired expecting a blank look from the other side. 'Yes, you're quite right' the same soft Scottish voice that I had heard on the phone answered. 'You're here to see Curly, aren't you?' she said opening the door further, 'please come in'.

As I stepped into the cold hallway, I was struck by how much darker it seemed after the white of the frontage. Looking around me, I saw that one wall was

mostly taken up with a large hat and coat stand, and all the woodwork in the hall, the bare floorboards visible either side of the hall carpet, skirting boards and the staircase itself that filled nearly half the available space fitted with the same no-doubt hard wearing but gloomy coloured carpet, were all stained dark oak. The available daylight reflected from the old fashioned looking distempered ceiling and cream floral pattern wallpaper struggled to overcome their dullness with enough light.

'Forgive me asking' I enquired as my new acquaintance shut the door behind me,' but are you Mrs. Lawrence?' all the time expecting her to say, 'Mrs who'? But instead, she stood for a moment seemingly surprised by my asking, 'Why bless you, yes I am, but do feel free to call me Mabel, most of Curly's friends do.' She turned and walked towards a door opposite the foot of the stairs. 'If you would be so kind as to wait in the sitting room, I'll tell Curly you are here' Mabel said opening the door and showing me into a homely but just as cold looking front room.

Inspirational source: LBSCs writings for Model Engineer Magazine - Bookworm original story 2024

Steel sections for sale

We have a large quantity of steel at Tyttenhanger that we offer to members at bargain cost to clear as much as possible.

Flat bar 1/16", 3/32" and 1/8" thicknesses at various widths up to 1/2". £1 each

Round bar below 1/4" diameter £1 each but for 1/4" or larger £1.50 each.

Hexagon bar below 1/4" AF £1 each but for 1/4" or larger £1.50 each

All bars are approximately four feet long.

They are stored in the machine shop which will be open on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday mornings when key holders are present. Use the honesty box if no council member around.

This sale does not include the brass or copper stock, except brass sheet which is for sale at the price written on it.

A priced list of the non-ferrous items, mostly copper pipe, will be provided in February news sheet.

Track cleaning

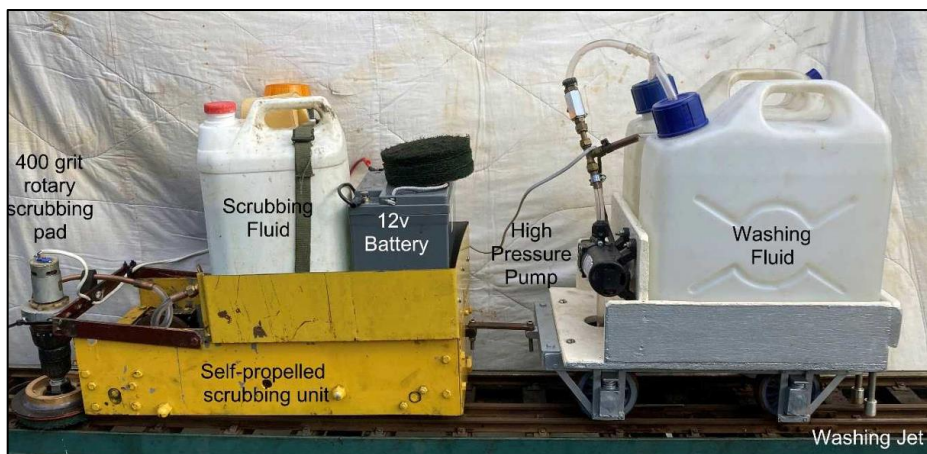
This document was written by Paul Purser and was originally published by the Colchester Society of Model and Experimental Engineers in October 2024.

Does your railway track accumulate oil on the rail head? Do your loco's lose traction when hauling more than the driver, or when negotiating gradients? Well, the chaps at Colchester SMEE have suffered with these problems for some time and have now established a method of cleaning that avoids members bending over the track with rags soaked in a degreasing.

Developed from an initial concept of just a rotating wire brush mounted on a carriage, the present (2024) 'Proof-of-Concept' vehicle now incorporates: depressant application; abrasive cleaning; and high-pressure washing, which is proving to certainly be heading in the right direction to a long-term solution to our problems.

This all sounds very sophisticated (and expensive), but the degreasant is washing up liquid; the abrasive is a 20mm diameter 'scotch Brite' pad of 400grit, attached to a 12v cordless drill head and rotating at 500rpm; and the high-pressure washing is from a 12v 70w High-pressure Water Pump rated at 8litres/minute, and designed for use in caravans (purchased from eBay at around £50).

Pictures speak a thousand words, so hopefully the concept is self-explanatory, below





To demonstrate how the unit currently works, a CSMEE member has uploaded a video to YouTube, here: <https://youtu.be/Cgcr94wR23I>.

Results through 2024 seem to indicate that with the track being cleaned regularly (depending on frequency of track days), locomotives are easily able to negotiate the gradients of up to 1 in 66 whilst hauling loads appropriate to their available power.

My model-boat collection No 22 continued from Nov 2024

By Roy

The diversion to a water level controller back in 1987 was nicely timed to fit in with what I was doing building the Streamlinia model.

To continue the conversation, I was having with Malcolm, I said if the metal probe can give an electrical 'change' in this case sense a resistance variation between boiler and water level then 'No Problem'. I went home with the American transistor circuit and had a think. Electronics had moved on and I thought the modern series of ic's could be used to simplify and reduce component numbers.

At the time I was a Field Manager with about 15 engineers doing maintenance and repairs on the large ICL computers. I was the only F.M. who also liked playing with electronics and had kept up with modern technology in this case the 7400 series chips. I would ask my engineers not to send off PCBs for repair as I would repair them in my spare time when visiting all the sites we looked after.

When PCBs were sent away for repair you got another alleged 'working' one by return. I regarded these as potentially dodgy! It also just so happened that our up-time for systems was much better than most others.

There was no obvious 7400 series chip I could use so I decided that the ever popular 555 timer integrated circuit would work. As I needed 4, I used the 556 chip which had a double 555 ic within. The way my circuit worked was to sense the difference in resistance of probe to water as the water level dropped. Then turn this into a steady signal and then apply it to another 556 chip to work a standard radio control servo.

I laid the circuit board out on Veroboard with sockets for the integrated circuit chips. So, a non-electronics person could blindly follow what to do. If there was a problem the chips could be taken out of their sockets and swapped over. If this produced no change then the ic's were not at fault

Malcolm's part was to provide an engine driven pump, pumping water out from the pond and back in again. On the way, there is a tap activated by the servo, which diverts the water into the boiler as required. "Simples"? Then the real world steps in!

The water in a boiler producing steam is in turmoil inside, as you can imagine. I seem to remember on this first outing that the boiler just filled with water and after the mark1 was removed I had to work out where the problem lay. I thought that what was needed was a constant signal when the water level was low and not the jiggling about that was actually going on. The answer was a time delay, so only a constant signal would activate the servo and put water into the boiler. I decided on a 2 second delay using a simple time constant circuit at the i/p.

During my thinking I did a 'what if 'check? Because as designed, the worst scenario could be an empty boiler with the burner still on! By reversing one of the signals the default was water being pumped the whole time into the boiler. So, with a few more adjustments to the circuit it was the Mark4 that was eventually installed on the system the following weekend.

This worked well as there were 3 different LEDs telling you what was going on in real-time. Red was low water. Yellow was pumping. Green was water level good.

By now the unrehearsed genius of Malcolm Beak had designed and built a steam plant and gas fired boiler to go in his 48-inch-long Picket Boat. We went to the competition lake at the assigned time, it was very windy and off we went around the course.

It was not to last very long for us, as we were run down by a 'Pot hunter' who decided that knocking out the opposition was part of the contest. I was driving at the time and the large shield to protect the helmsman on the pinnace, acted as a sail and she went out of control in the now increasingly high wind. Sideways on to the enemy ship, we sank! We had thought of having a ping pong ball released if the worst happened, but we needn't have bothered as the burner gas feed produced a column of bubbles. Into the rescue dinghy and Malcolm reached down to get his boat. On getting to the bank there was too much boiler damage to continue so we each returned to a comfy bed at home for the night.

As I said the brain that never switches off contacted me again and told me the latest idea which was to use the steam pressure just before the lifting of the safety valve to turn down the gas flame. Very logical I thought.

I had enjoyed the build as we were the first to fit automatics to a steam boiler for a model boat, and also the testing and experiments in Malcolm's workshop. We also had our late friend Don Eunson participating, he was a retired Shipyard Super-intendant. We had had a lot of fun and produced something new. The building and circuitry were published in Radio control Boat Modeller magazine, a now defunct magazine which had international circulation.

There was a nice follow up at the St. Albans society exhibition that year. I had taken over the selling of tickets to relieve the lads for a lunch break. I welcomed a young man who turned out to be visiting from South Africa and on holiday here. After purchasing a ticket, he got out a magazine and pointed to the article that Malcolm and I had contributed some months earlier. He had some questions and was here in the UK to see if anyone could help?

He just did not believe it when I got hold of Malcolm and we introduced ourselves!

Later at a regatta we met two Frenchman also interested and on the Saturday evening Malcolm invited them to visit his workshop. They were fascinated and took photographs and a few months later Malcolm and I found our photos in the French equivalent of their Model Boats magazine.

We had also exhibited my Streamlinia on our stand at the then very popular Model Engineering exhibition at Wembley. The automatic part on display and again lots of interest. We had talked to Cheddar Models to see if they were interested, but the boss said no! People like to bring their boats in and fill them up etc and enjoy the steam plant. Less than a year later he was marketing a system for doing the water level control that his son had made. This version monitored the sight glass of the boiler but otherwise the same principles as our one.

Our original design electronics is still in use with Malcolm B who has it is in his open steam launch which occasionally comes to the lake.

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Quiz Answers

1. Ian Fleming
2. Knee
3. Sydney
4. Iago
5. 1997
6. Tin
7. 3
8. All the President's Men
9. 007
10. Helsinki
11. Tennessee
12. Krone
13. The French Open
(Roland Garros)
14. Netherlands
15. Four
The Godfather Part 2
Heat
Righteous Kill
The Irishman
16. Marathon
17. Emperor Hirohito
18. Mercury
19. Gillian Flynn
20. Salvador Dali
21. Queen's Park Rangers
22. Pacific
Mountain
Central
Eastern
23. Tunisia
24. Central Perk
25. Four
26. 1997
27. Maggot
28. Bristol
29. Rice
30. Constantinople
31. Coffee
32. Bluetooth
33. They cannot vomit
34. Sarcasm
35. Blind carbon copy
36. Thabo Mbeki
37. The spike of the Empire
State Building
38. On a British ten-pound note
39. Griffin
40. Carbon

Club Dates for your 2024 Diary

<u>Every Wednesday:</u> G1 group meet at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Thursday:</u> Working groups, and general conversation	
<u>Every Saturday</u> Ground Level Rly at Colney Heath	
December 2024	
Friday 6 th	Christmas gathering. Mince pies & quiz - 8pm at HQ
Sunday 1 st	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Tuesday 3 rd	Council Meeting at HQ – 13.00
Sunday 8 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 15 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 22 nd	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
January 2025	
Wednesday 1 st	Limited access Reverse running day on Raised track at Colney Heath 9am onwards. (See Chairmans note page 5)
Friday 3 rd	Jack Wills presents his experience of 3D Printing and Laser Cutting for Modellers - 8pm at HQ
Sunday 5 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 12 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 19 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 26 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Advance notice of events in 2025	
Friday 7 th February	Usual meeting cancelled
Saturday 8 th February	Auction of tools - 11am at HQ
Friday 7 th March	Gauge 1 section entertains – 8pm at HQ
Please notify our secretary of all meetings and other Society events for inclusion in the Society Calendar and also tell the news sheet editor. Approval for special events still rests with Council.	

A representative of any Section or Committee or an Officer of the Society shall, on request to the Secretary, be entitled to attend a Council Meeting as an observer and submit proposals thereat. If attendance is agreed the secretary will advise the member concerned. The Editor of the News Sheet shall be entitled to attend, ex officio, all Council Meetings.