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This Month...



The News Sheet

Chairman's Chatter, Raised Track Report, Frank Hills, Forthcoming General Meetings, The Apsley 'Piddler', Fetes & Fairs in Enfield, Treasurer's Report, The February General Meeting, Draft Stewards List, Diary Dates, AGM Nomination Form, Club Contacts.



Chairman's Chatter

And the months keep rolling by, daybreak gets a little earlier each day and sunset falls a little later each day. Winter flowers currently to be seen will soon be replaced by spring flowers and before you know it we will be back in to public running days!

“Oh Dear” & “Not Again” I can hear being mumbled from some quarters; but in general, many of our members who run regularly at Colney Heath are looking forward to showing off their workmanship and/or acquisitions. For many of these members the opportunity to treat passengers of all ages to a railway experience can be very enjoyable along with the opportunity to run on days when the public are not in attendance.

So this brings me on to Stewarding. “Oh Dear” & “Not Again” I can hear being mumbled from some quarters! Now I am sure that our secretary Alan may mention this topic, in either this or future Newsletters regarding stewards. As you may know, Alan has the task of trying to formulate the Stewards Rota for the forthcoming year. Not an easy task as holidays and sickness can ruin the best laid plans at any time. One problem we are encountering is that as time goes by; with very little ‘new blood’ coming into the Society offset by those who are becoming frail or infirm, or a multitude of other reasons for not being available to act as Steward, we may need to ask for volunteers to double up on their availability. I am sure that many of you would be more than happy to volunteer for a second afternoon whilst some would not be prepared to. So if any member is happy to volunteer for two or more stewarding sessions can they please let Alan know as soon as possible.

On the same topic can all Senior Stewards please remember to contact every member of their team, in advance, to remind them of their ‘turn of duty’ and ensure that they are available or have found a replacement for themselves.

Winter Working Parties, not a party really, are progressing on many fronts with the endless round of maintenance tasks that need to be completed before all the tracks, and the lake, are open for use again by all members. We all know that the weather on Sunday mornings has been a bit grim recently but as the weather improves it would be great to see some more of you on Sundays to wield an axe, lift a spade, dabble with a paint brush or just drink tea. There is such a lot to be completed before the start of May so please come and help. It may not be related to your particular interest or section but it is for the good of all of our Society.

As usual a great big thank you to those who do come and help out with ALL the working parties, on various days of the week making efforts to keep the site looking pristine and useable in all areas, many thanks to you all.

Robin T. Chairman.

Raised Track Report

Work is proceeding well on the raised track maintenance schedule. Six step-overs have been made and one of the sets of steps at the Steaming Bay area has been raised to assist drivers and Garden Railway Section members to cross the track. The second set of steps will now be treated in a similar manner regards height, but this time wider as well. Next job is checking and adjusting alignment and cant etc. Meanwhile Martin C has been working his way around the track oiling all the fishplates, which unlike full-size do not have to be completely dismantled, greased and re-assembled. Thank you Martin.

Elsewhere on site, we still have to sort out the kitchen worktop and the workshop roof also needs the new fascia boards and guttering fitted. For the latter all the materials are to hand, so it only needs a few hardy souls to get stuck in and out of mischief on a Thursday and Sunday mornings, so please come along and join us.

Mike F

Frank Hills

I have some very sad news I am afraid. I took a telephone call from Gerald Hills, Frank's son, who told me that Frank passed away today very suddenly. He was a good friend to me and I am sure that you will all remember his efforts as joint loco' section leader when he was a member of the society.

Nigel G. 17th Feb. 2017

Forthcoming General Meetings

Unless otherwise indicated General Meetings begin at 8pm at our Legion Way Headquarters in North Finchley, usually ending at about 10pm. All members are welcome and we are always happy to see friends and family attending. We hope for a good attendance to support speakers. Please remember that many of the meetings depend on the club to provide the catalyst for a stupendous evening.

For more information please ring me.

Friday 3rd March. Work in Progress. Your chance to show us what you were up to in the winter. So if you were not ready in November, now is the time to show the Club your prowess and progress. Bits of Locomotives please but this is a General Meeting so any general engineering is most welcome.

Friday 7th April. Edward the Compressor returns to provide a breath of air to resuscitate your forgotten and not so forgotten machines. So please ransack your bottom drawers and bring something along to hold us all spell bound when it springs into life. (We hope.)

Friday 5th May. AGM. The Annual General Meeting. This is a most important meeting where we summarize what great progress the Club has achieved in the past year. Where we plan for the future of the Club and where we elect members to take up various offices to run the Society for the forthcoming year. **Members only please.**

Friday 2nd June. A visit to St. Albans signal box. A treat for those who have been before and even more for those who are to be initiated. The signal box at St. Albans is one of the very few left in the hands of enthusiasts that has been successfully restored. Route and timing from our own Jim M.

Ian J

The Apsley 'Piddler'

Workshop Therapy!

Total knee replacement is followed by physiotherapy. Finding it difficult to spend much time in my workshop I devised a schedule of workshop therapy sessions too!

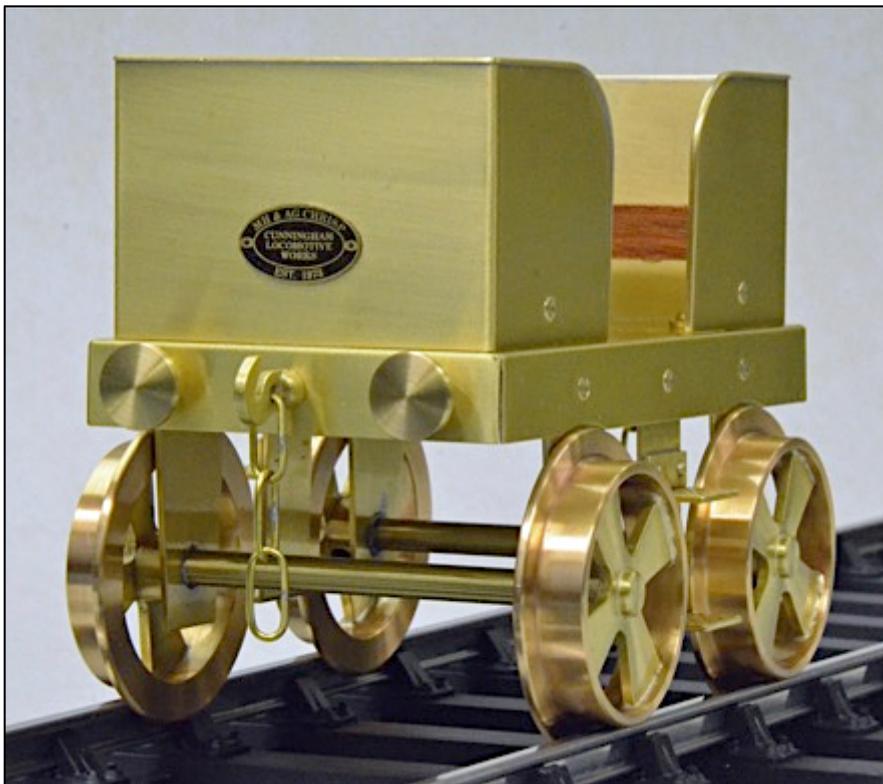
I'd always fancied owning a Birmingham 'Piddler' so decided my therapy would be to make one. I recalled seeing versions at Harrogate on the York stand and contacted fellow SMEE member Alan H. Alan put me in touch with Don Bowerman who kindly provided me with lots of information and sent me his own engine, copied from John Dickins' original.



John Dickins' Schönner locomotive refurbished by Don Bowerman.

Choosing to start small, I began work on a copy of Don's truck using techniques demonstrated during the SMEE 'Polly' courses. All materials came from stock,

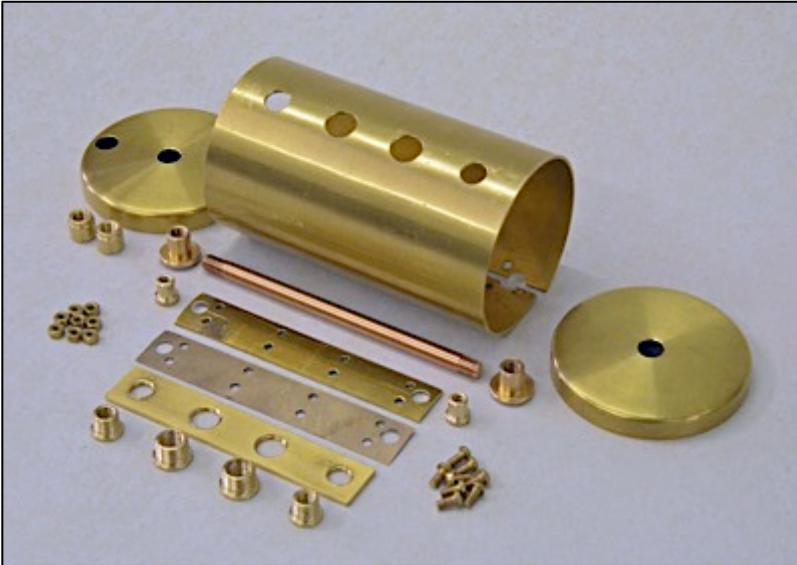
my only purchases being the 1.5mm half round brass beading and etched makers' plates supplied by Guilplates.



My first job was to make a truck.

With the truck successfully completed, work on the boiler was started. Rolled from brass sheet, the seam was silver brazed using EasyFlo shim. The end caps and bushes were silver brazed in place with the top bushes aligned and held in position by means of a threaded internal strip. Probably surplus to requirements, a longitudinal centre stay was fitted.

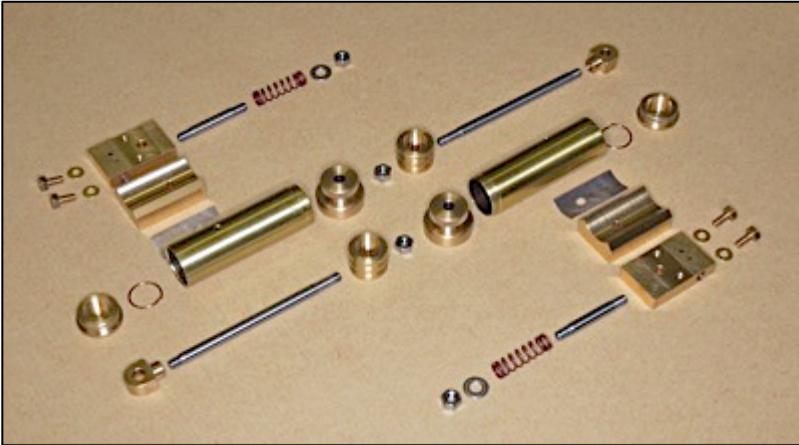
Fittings were made and fitted. These included a gauge glass, banjo feed for the steam supply to the cylinders, a safety valve, a whistle and a purely decorative chimney.



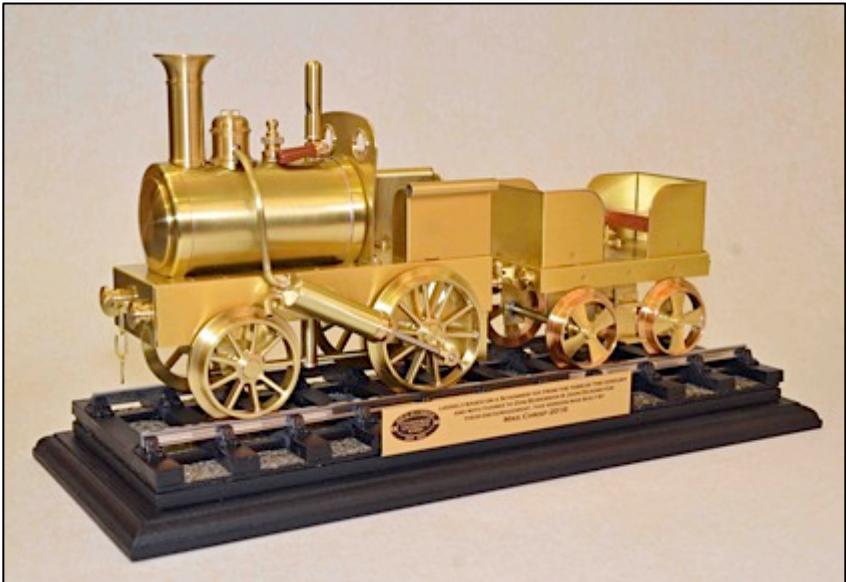
The boiler shell was rolled from brass sheet and fitted with a centre stay.



Wheels were fabricated from materials to hand, including a short length of thick walled brass tube for the driving wheel rims.



Cylinders were cut from thin-wall brass tube with a high quality finish in the bore.



The finished model is displayed on Gauge 3 track with a home-made plaque acknowledging encouragement from Don Bowerman and John Dickins.

The wheels were an interesting exercise! Fabricated from three main components, each wheel required a rim, spokes and hub. The driving wheels also required crankpins. Spokes were cut from brass discs using a 3mm slot drill. The top corners were radiused using a home-made silver steel cutter.

The finished spoke discs locate against a register inside the rim for assembly by silver brazing followed by a lot of polishing.

The single acting cylinders are fitted with supporting bushes at their outer ends. Top caps were silver brazed in place using EasyFlo wire rings in grooves. Cylinder port faces were silver brazed using EasyFlo shim.

Mike C

An open letter to the Erstwhile members of the NLSME.

You may have noticed that some altruistic member of the Club has left a whole stack of back copies of the News Sheet in the coach at Tyttenhanger. I had a glance at them after supplying teas, coffees and chock biscuits to thirty thirsty and hungry Sunday morning volunteer workers at the tracks.

The first thing that I noticed was that the journal had got smaller from A4 to A5! But the main surprise I had was that the items sent in for publication had come from many sources. There were accounts of visits to railway scenes abroad, items from ALL sections of the Club and hints on how to do 'things' about their locomotives and cars of all gauges. Like articles by Bill Camp (God bless his soul) about the composition of cylinder lubricating oil or the design of safety valves or the prowess of the Slot Car Section. Those were the days of the floppy disc that had to be transported to our editor, dear Angela.

Nowadays we can just switch on our PC type out a letter attach a few photos send it to our excellent editor and bobs your uncle. Anyone can do it and I must admit that I would not be able to do a thing without the SPELL CHECK. In fact spellcheck has changed my life it makes everything so much more easy and gives confidence.

So most of us enjoy reading the News Sheet. So why not take the plunge and send an item to Derek for next month's News Sheet and change your life and what's more make it an even more interesting read for all.

Ian J

'Fetes and Fairs' in Enfield.

On Saturday the 3rd December 2016 the regular gang assembled the track and 'station' in a school playground in Enfield. St. Andrews Primary School were having their Christmas Fete. Many stall holders set up, mostly inside the school utilising halls and corridors. Amongst the many items for sale were home made cakes, sweets and craft items. Outside, kiddies swing boats, a roundabout and other attractions were set out – and of course our Railway !



In the photo above the track has been set out across the school playground and Peter and Matt are 'walking the line' with a spirit level on a wagon to check for horizontal alignment of the railhead prior to the opening of the event. Much care is given to the levelling and straightness of the track to ensure comfortable and safe operation of the trains.

The volunteers for today's event were Tony, Keith, Mike F, Mike H, Matt, Peter, Derek (your humble editor) and of course Jim, our section leader.



With the track set out, the 'station' and boarding area assembled, Mike H was despatched to search for hot tea. Whilst waiting for refreshments Tony is checking the controls of his loco (above). There then followed a number of dummy runs to test the track and equipment. Team members unfortunately have to ride up and down a few times to check that all is well before the general public arrive ! At this point, volunteers of the St. John ambulance team and also fellow stall holders also participate in the testing of the railway much to the amusement of onlookers.

The clock struck 12, the Fete was open. At first we were without visitors at all; patrons obviously having been captured by the stall holders inside the school, where it was nice and warm. We were outside shivering, hugging hot tea mugs wondering if we would give any rides at all !

We need not have worried as visitors eventually found their way out into the

playground and discovered the cup and saucer roundabout ride, the swing boats, the hit the stump with a hammer to ring the bell stand and our railway. At last, they came!

The first rides are usually given using an electric loco; today kindly supplied by Tony as shown in the previous photo. Whilst these rides are taking place, Jim, our section leader is preparing our club loco 'Simplex' in readiness for steam train rides. Photo below, the first steam hauled service of the day with Jim driving. Keith and Peter in the background looking on.



After a slow start the passengers were many and kept coming and so a good amount of money was raised for the school and the North London Society of Model Engineers.

Jim and his team attend many events throughout the year and always welcome new and existing helpers to the Fete and Fair events. The events are listed under the 'Diary dates' in each News Sheet. If you would like to help at an event just give Jim a call beforehand for details, you will be made most welcome. Next event is 18th/19th March at St. Albans.



Photo above. Mike H on the water pump filling tanks with Jim operating the hand pump supplying the boiler with water. Mike F, the driver at this time, looking on in anticipation of a good run.



Photo left and front cover. Matt steaming down the line driving 'Simplex' with a full load of happy passengers in tow.

NLSME General Meeting February 2017.
A pleasant evening of discussion regarding the NLSME.
Led and directed by Les B.

On such an inclement evening it was pleasant to see so many members turn out to take part in the discussion about where the Club is now and to gain information regarding where it could go. Ian J welcomed the ardent group, displayed the cornucopia of raffle prizes and related the safety procedures for the building in case of a catastrophe.

Les B introduced himself and told the gathering that he had been a member for many years but recently had worked abroad a great deal of the time. (Who can forget his inspiring talk about water purification in Egypt? We must be waiting for one on China.) He said that the Club had perceptively altered a great deal during his membership. At the Colney Heath site for instance; a single loop of raised track had added to it:- the Cuckoo line, a boating lake, two garden rail layouts with extensive accoutrements, an wide-ranging dual gauge ground level railway, a toilet block and a whole gamut of storage facilities. The governance of the site had also morphed into the Tyttenhanger Site Committee (The TSC) complete with Secretary and Treasurer meeting on a regular basis with representatives from all of the above except the toilet block.

Les reminded all present that the meeting was to be an open discussion on any matters that members wanted to raise and informed the meeting that he had received prior requests to include the proposed ground level railway loop across the car park, feedback on decision making, meeting agenda to web site and an offer from Garden Railway group to provide an update on their plans.



The first subject open for discussion was **Stewarding/public admittance**. Over the years the scene had changed dramatically. At one time the Colney site was

open to the public every Sunday from Easter to Halloween between two-o'clock to five pm. Only two stewards were needed (one at the steaming bays and one at the station with often a husband and wife team serving teas in the coach. The public were not charged for the rides and they were given willingly by members who just turned up at the site. Les said that the situation had changed dramatically with the site being opened twice a month charges made for rides and needing twelve stewards to manage. A factor that had spurred Les into this discursive action occurred when he was Senior Steward. The crowds of folk attending got so great that it became almost impossible to manage them and their cars.

Several sensible ideas and suggestions were made with the knowledge that the Club can no longer return to the 'good old days'.

1. The group was informed that Church at the end of the road has given the Club permission to use their car park on open days.
2. The sale of tickets from the station instead of the coach to avoid congestion.
3. The sale of multiple tickets to be abandoned so that folk don't return week after week to use the tickets up.
4. There were no suggestions that the Club should close to the public at all times but one observation that in New Zealand many Clubs opened only once a month but for the whole day.
5. A suggestion was made that the gate should be closed if the numbers of visitors became too great but no suggestion as to what number that was, or how it could be achieved.
6. The hard working secretary announced that in the forthcoming season that the number of Stewards will be reduced to ten on open days unless rostered twice.
7. It was observed that stewards are drawn from other sections in line with the agreement the members made when they joined the Society.
8. It was commented that the Club is a model engineering society for **all** to enjoy and not a miniature railway.

The second Subject for discussion was **Ground Level Railway/ operation**. Unfortunately there were no representatives of the GLR present able to inform the meeting of the scheme proposed or its operation/marshalling. The meeting

was informed by some that if a proposed line were to run across the car park forming a running loop then the GLR would be complete but no-one could remember if that was part of the original GLR extension plan. Others indicated their opposition to any such extension expressing the view that the GLR had grown like Topsy, from a straight run out and back with a turntable at each end to the magnificent layout that exists at present which was a perfectly viable railway comprising two existing loops for continuous running.

There was then a welcome break for a **cup of tea and chocky biscuit** provided by Mr David L, for profound chats between members and the presentation of Raffle prizes.



Raised track Steaming bays and traverser, was the next topic for discussion. Alan M gave an excellent presentation of the history of the scheme explaining the project had grown out of the Millennium plan to modernise the bays. Now there was an extensive system of converted containers for storage of locos and stock a traverser for the Ground Level chaps and a reserved space for a future workshop housing steaming bay services equipment. For the raised track a traverser would be built to carry locomotives from the raised steaming bays to a Launching traverser where the locomotive in steam would meet one or two coaches and be transported onto the main line to steam away into the horizon to return some time later for the procedure to be repeated in reverse. A new building was proposed as a Machine shop to house the donated lathes/mill etc. and which would also house the signing in lectern and, possibly, an eco friendly urinal. This and alternative building layouts were currently under debate in the

TSC. A few commented that the members had not been informed of developments or changes to the original plan, put to a meeting some time ago for example the proposed removal of the existing traverser; with the reply that information had been published in the News Sheet. So proving the Corcoran adage that if something needs to be kept secret then publish it in the News Sheet!!

David M gave a pleasant account of progress in the **Garden Railway Section**. Members were steaming their Gauge One locomotives on Tuesdays Wednesdays and Thursdays. Clubs from without London were also invited to attend as reciprocal invites were received. Needs for the Section were an underpass and a water supply but as the Section had a water diviner in its ranks that would cause no problem!

Pond was next up for discussion with the comment prompted by Les from leader George C that it was wet. The scribe taking that to mean that 'all's well' in the pool and that there was no need to borrow David's water diviner.

Finally **A moratorium** was suggested by Les, that when the present projects were complete there should be little building work accomplished and that apart from maintenance, the Club should get on with enjoying the hobby.

The members present expressed a generally unanimous opinion that it had been an informative discussion which should be repeated at intervals to enable members to be updated and contribute to discussion/decision taking.

The time had crept to ten-o'clock and it was time to return home to that warm cup of Horlicks and bed or did the members have something else in mind?

Ian J thanked Les for so ably and skilfully conducting the meeting, and David for the teas and Peter for the raffle and of course the members for showing such an interest and attending.

Ian J

The N.L.S.M.E. visit to Fareham has been arranged for Saturday the 17th. of June. I would be obliged if members intending to go would let me know by the 1st. of June so that Fareham can make the appropriate arrangements regarding catering etc. Fareham have an excellent pond, a Gauge "0" track as well as the usual 3 1/2", 5" and 7 1/4" railways. To round the day off we usually gather at a local (Kings Langley) hostelry for a meal on the way home. I can be contacted by telephone, e-mail, or at the usual meeting places. Thank you, **Mick A.**

Draft Stewards List for 2017

The following draft of the stewards' list is published in order for members to check their allocated dates to avoid any clashes that might occur with holidays or other arrangements they have made. Please advise the Secretary if the date you are scheduled to attend is unsuitable for you and any other date that might prevent your attendance. The final list will be published next month.

Note there are only 10 stewards scheduled each month without having to ask members to do two duties as we have insufficient able members. However Council have agreed that rather than randomly select members to do two duties a call for volunteers is made to do the extra duty. In the roster these will be identified as (VOL) and so far I have a few. Please let me know if you are willing to do an extra duty and preferred date. Thank you.

Alan M.



'Tornado' just north of Alexandra Palace on a 1Z63 Stewarts Lane to Doncaster move 13th Feb, it was travelling north in connection with the 3 days of scheduled steam timetabled diagrams on the Settle and Carlisle line. Photo Bill B.

Dates for your Diary

MARCH	2017
Fri 3rd Mar	General Meeting. Work in Progress.
Sun 5th Mar	Working party at CH, 9am – 12:30
Tues 7th Mar	Council Meeting. 8pm at HQ.
Sun 12th Mar	Working party at CH, 9am – 12:30
<i>Fri 17th March</i>	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for April News Sheet</i>
18th/19th Mar	Fetes & Fairs at the Lambing Festival, Oaklands College, St Albans.
Sun 19th Mar	Working party at CH, 9am – 12:30
Tues 21st Mar	TSC Meeting at St Mark's Church Centre. 8pm
Fri 24th Mar	Workshop meeting. 8pm HQ. Tooling, Mike H.
Sun 26th Mar	Working party at CH, 9am – 12:30
APRIL	2017
1st/2nd April	Fetes & Fairs at Signal Box Heritage weekend, St. Albans
Sun 2nd April	Working party at CH, 9am – 12:30
Tues 4th April	Council Meeting. 8pm at HQ.
Sun 9th April	Working party at CH, 9am – 12:30
Sun 16th April	Working party at CH, 9am – 12:30
Tues 18th April	TSC Meeting at St Mark's Church Centre. 8pm
<i>Fri 21st April</i>	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for May News Sheet</i>
Sat 22nd April	Fetes & Fairs at Sports Centre, Broxbourne, Herts.
Sun 23rd April	Working party at CH, 9am – 12:30
Fri 28th April	Workshop meeting. 8pm HQ. Tooling, Mike H.

NB. Please notify Alan M (Secretary) of all meetings and other Society events for inclusion in the Society Calendar. Approval for special events still rests with Council and/or the Tyttenhanger Site Committee.