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Thoughts of Chairman Dell

Well at last we seem to be getting some decent weather after all the rain.

The season is well under way and everything seems to be running smoothly. I've had three rallies so far; one wet and abandoned – Enfield, the other two glorious sunshine – Leighton Buzzard and Whitwell. We had visits from Mike and Beryl Collingwood, Keith Bartlam, Dave Chisnall, Nigel Griffiths, William Mason, Derek Perham, the Greenish family, Brendan Corcoran and Pam, Peter Davies, Mike Hodgson, Alec James and family, Dan the man (I can't remember the surname) and his wife. I've mentioned all these names because it's nice that other Sections show such an interest in other activities within the Society – i.e. Stationary Steam.

On arriving back at the track with the roller I was impressed with the progress that the Fete Section had made during my absence; the caravan painted a nice maroon and white – very smart, and many sections of the new track made and assembled. It's all looking very good. I know we all wish them every success during the coming season. Well done lads!

The Marine Section seems to go from strength to strength. Thursday is a good day to see some wonderful boats – steam, sail, submarine and powered electric models. You never know what you're going to see. The other Thursday we had a submarine-type model in the shape of a fish, belonging to Malcolm Deal, son of Dick, one of our members from St Albans. It had eyes that lit up and the acrobatics it performed were unbelievable. It leapt out of the water and then spiraled the length of the pond. Malcolm told me that given a good depth of water it would describe a loop the loop (very exciting)!

I have visited other Sections, i.e. 00,H0 and Video on a Wednesday evening and they all seem very busy and enjoying themselves.

We have coal being delivered on Thursday 15th June. So we will have plenty of coal don't forget at £5.00 a bag.

The Sunday working parties are in full swing. I can't remember working parties in the

summer before but it seems an ideal time; far better than being frozen stiff in the winter.

I'm sorry it's a bit short this month but I've been very busy. Do I hear cries of "Thank God for that!"?

Don't forget the Birthday parties – a good source of income for the Loco Section. If you've a couple of hours to spare do give Jim a ring. You'll be very welcome, especially if you bring a loco.

Frank Dell

Chairman's Report to the 56th Annual General Meeting

Sadly there have been two deaths during the year. The first was "Mac" Barnes who died last Autumn, and the second - earlier this year - was Graham Balcombe, honorary member and Society benefactor. The last of Graham's workshop effects will be available for members to buy at the June General Meeting.

The VIDEO GROUP had a successful year, with an average attendance of 10-12 members, and all their visitors were very impressed with the group's projection equipment. For only the third time they qualified for the finals of the Triangle competition - the Lesley Gillam Trophy - to be held this summer. During the year they enjoyed a mystery tour, a country walk, and a visit to Laycock Abbey (home of the late Fox Talbot), but would like to see members from other sections joining them on these occasions. An enjoyable barbecue was held at Colney Heath when Loco Section members provided train rides in exchange for cans of beer! The Group Leader attended most Council Meetings despite the main topic of conversation invariably centring on Loco matters and problems. The Group's "second headquarters" - the British Legion - where a pint could be enjoyed, will have to be rebuilt following a disastrous fire. Finally any Society member can be assured of a welcome on a Wednesday evening by this friendly group of people.

The MARINE SECTION is going from strength to strength. Last season's Open Day was most successful, the pond was thoroughly cleaned of debris and mulch, and a bridge over the Cuckoo Line has just been finished thanks largely to one member - Bernard Lambert - and the current season should see this being well used. A temporary lighting system to illuminate the pond on dull evenings has been tried and the main cable has been laid, supplied by Jim Macdonald. A seat from Chester Station, given to the Society by the St Albans DMES, has been refurbished and repainted in its traditional dark red. The second Pop Pop Boat competition recently took place and once again was well attended, and the Marine winter meetings have been enjoyed by an increasing number of members, but speakers on boat subjects are still required for future meetings. At least two Video members have become boat enthusiasts, and the Section can boast a fleet of some 7 or more submarines (a Wolf pack!). Derek Perham has raised a substantial sum of money for the Marine Section, largely from raffles held at his winter Workshop meetings. All in all a successful season.

The NORTH AMERICAN SECTION are finding it increasingly difficult to fit any more track into their room, with little spare space for members, and are now turning to other aspects of their layout. Some imaginative scenery proposals are being attempted

especially for parts of the layout which run at eye level, for example viewing out through structures. It is early days for results but as a Model Engineering Society they consider we should experiment in every area of our interests. One of their members uses digital computer control (DCC) on his own layout, and his practical demonstration of two locomotives recently drew considerable verbal admiration and he was also a co-presenter at a DCC clinic at the recent British Region Convention. The Convention, which was held at Peterborough last October, was organised by a group of our members and was acclaimed as one of the best. As a result of that convention, the Section's Young Street Yard layout was shown at the Southend-on-Sea MRC exhibition in February, and is to be shown at the De Havilland exhibition in November.

00 SECTION members have had another enjoyable year, getting some useful and interesting information on their main interest - the Somerset & Dorset line. The Bath Green Park layout wiring has been tidied up, finishing touches are being put to the station area, small buildings have been added based on information gathered from large-scale Ordnance Survey maps and photos, even including a gasometer. A 6-ft. long control panel is currently being built by Mike Avery, Dave Green and Dudley Willan.. In past months the Section's permanent layout has been run on regular monthly sessions. On all occasions, Peter Shewry attends to members' liquid refreshments (tea!), provides the biscuits, and generally keeps everything tidy.

The STATIONARY STEAM AND TRACTION ENGINE SECTION is a very mobile section, and over the past year has attended 3 school fetes (all for charity, not financial gain), 3 birthday parties, provided steam experiences when both Cine and North American members enjoyed their outings to Colney Heath. The Society was represented by 3 traction engines at the St Stephens Millennium Fete, giving rides to lots of children; we all enjoyed a pub run with the steam roller, the steam lorry, and again 3 engines. The Baxter, Badger and Squire families, together with your Chairman and John West, spent a pleasant weekend at Bressingham model traction engine rally; and we had another full house at Trent Park when quite a few more Society members turned up to enjoy themselves. Other rallies attended were at Leighton Buzzard, Whipsnade Zoo, Enfield, and Barleylands, with the final highlight being actively taking part in the London Millennium Parade. Though sadly, Mac Barnes died this year we have all been pleased to learn that his beautiful show engine will be displayed at the Burrell Museum in Norfolk.

For the LOCO SECTION regrettably it has not been one of our best years but we hope our problems are now behind us. Jim Macdonald took over as Acting Section Leader at Colney Heath, and Derek Perham also as Acting Section Leader organised the Section's monthly meetings at Headquarters. In recent months work has been going well at Colney Heath - the tunnel now has fine new portals thanks to Ron Todd's skills, lights have been installed at the steaming bays, signs have been repainted, and a transporter is now in place between the mainline and the cuckoo line.

I conclude by thanking everyone who has helped during the year, particularly the Council officers and members, Beryl Collingwood, Angela Perham, Grahame Ainge, Peter Shewry, the Auditors, and all the Section Leaders.

Frank Dell

Addition to Chairman's Report

Through a misunderstanding, the following report from the SLOT CAR SECTION was received from Ian Fisher after the AGM and is reproduced here for everyone to read.

During 1999 two teams contested the European series. The first round at Uden Holland was won by our "Walmington on Sea" team of Bob Hallams, John Secchi, Mark Harwood and ex-member John Newton. The second round was at Riverside, Newcastle, when the Walmington team was joined by the North London team Dan and Tony Condon, James Cleave, and Ian Fisher, who led home Walmington for a 1-2 result. As only the best 2 out of 3 rounds counted both teams went to the final round in Brussels with a good chance - North London had to win, Walmington needed to stop them. Walmington had trouble in the race slipping to 4th, and North London fell back over 200 laps from the home team but caught it back gradually over about 10 hours to lead the final hour 0-50 and take the championship. The NLSME's two teams had achieved two firsts for British teams - 1st foreign win, 1st European Championship win.

At the Club attendances have been steady rather than excellent. Average is around 10 every Thursday from a semi-regular pool of around 15-16. We welcome back Steve Francis who had been living in Northern Ireland, and new member Philip Conn. Actually Philip had been a brief member at Church Farm in about 1979! More recently Paul Harwood has returned from almost two years working in Newcastle and has nearly saved up his year's membership fee to rejoin!

To round the year 1999 off, James Cleave won the British Open Championship, based on a series of Open Meetings held around the country.

Just completed has been the Annual National Championship, held this year 2000 in Douglas, Isle of Man. NLSME were represented by:

Ian Fisher - best result 2nd in Saloon.
 Dan Condon - best result 7th in Saloon.
 Mark Harwood - best result 7th in Sports.
 Greg Harwood - an excellent final position, forgot exactly where!
 Steven Kearey - too many off's in semi-finals!

The latter 4 also formed the NLSME team for the 3-hour team race, with Ian Fisher acting as mechanic/manager, leaving the youth team to drive! Starting in the 2 slow lanes we fell over 60 laps back, and as the lane bias unwound we started to pass other teams until we were second. Despite Mark Harwood's best efforts, catching almost 40 laps in 40 minutes and leading momentarily, the Isle of Man team drove a good fast race too and gave us the closest finish in the 35-year history of the event. The Isle of Man won by just 1 metre (3-ft) as the power went off at the end of 3 hours.

Frank Dell

Editorial

The Spotlight this month falls on one of the longest standing and most active members of our Society, Tom Luxford. So well known is he that he needs no introduction. However some of our newer members may not be aware that in 1993 Tom received from the Southern Federation of Model Engineers the award for the person who in the judgement of the Committee had done most for the hobby. (A fact that Tom modestly left out of his article). The Address accompanying the award was so fitting and as true

today as it was then that I'd like to draw heavily on it.

Those who have the pleasure of knowing Tom are all aware that despite his protestations to the contrary he is the archetypal model engineer. He has the happy knack of being able to interpret drawings and designs so that they suit him and his methods to produce a finished product which not only functions but works reliably.

Tom's model engineering reflects his good nature – his work is often for the benefit and pleasure of others. I wonder just how many have had their first experience of driving a steam locomotive at the regulator of City of London or one of his other engines. The streamlined B17 has performed at countless fetes giving pleasure to many and earning substantial income for the NLSME. Over many years he has devoted much time and effort not only working but organising and co-ordinating work at Tyttenhanger. Tom loves the site at Colney Heath and equally has loved running the portable track at fetes. He is a past Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Loco Section Leader of the Society. Naturally he has much to tell and so I have divided the account that he and Ruth have given into two parts.

No one genuinely in need of assistance or advice is ever turned away from Tom's door. Not only is he a prolific and competent model engineer, it would be difficult to find anyone who has done more to introduce and encourage others whether young, or not so young, to our hobby. I hope you enjoy reading his story.

Grahame Ainge

Loco Section News

At our last meeting the election of Frank Hills and myself as joint Loco Section Leaders took place. This was followed by a Track Committee meeting on Sunday morning. Topics for discussion ranged from continuing projects such as the ground level railway to the toilet facilities at Colney Heath. One subject, 'Driver Training' held on the 10th June was so popular that a repeat run took place the following Saturday. Certificates are to be issued to those drivers who have successfully completed the familiarisation session and feel confident in driving with the public as passengers.

During the summer months the Loco Section meetings will be at the track. The traditional BBQ will be available and the running of locos or sailing of boats will be encouraged. We will also have a mini auction and table sale.

As many already know there won't be any general Open Days this year. Instead, Saturday the 29th July will be made available to the Three Valleys Water Company employees and their families. The second on 12th August is a private invitation to selected societies with arrangements made by Brian Apthorpe and Mike Chrisp.

Saturday birthday parties are now booked up until October. If you are at a loose end on a Saturday afternoon please come and help. Sunday morning working parties continue with grass cutting and general maintenance taking priority.

Sunday afternoons have attracted many members of the public, which has meant putting the electric loco (Class 37) into service on many occasions. This would not be worth a mention other than with birthday parties on the Saturday a second set of batteries will have to be purchased.

I am glad to say the stewarding so far this year is working well. So far members that found they were unable to work their allotted duty have managed to find replacements. Please check the roster and allow plenty of time to make changes if necessary.

The Ground Level Track Extension Committee has held its first meeting. It will report back to the Tyttenhanger Committee next month. I have been warned that they have many questions that need answering before they can continue the planning of the extension. We are about to start planning the format for the headquarters meetings starting in September. Members who wish to give a presentation or would like to see a specific subject covered please contact me.

Jim Macdonald

[Tyttenhanger Gazette](#) [Early History of the Bicycle](#)

Our planned speaker for the June Loco Section meeting was unable to come due to illness and at short notice Allan Hawkes, a Society member, came along complete with slides and a 1907 bicycle, to give a talk on bicycles.

Allan's great-grandfather was born in 1864 at a time when the railways were starting. There were no cars, no aeroplanes and no bicycles. In 1865 a Paris coachbuilder produced the Velocipede. Over here the Coventry based Singer Sewing Machine Company bought one, copied it and sold them as a side line. It had wooden wheels with an iron rim shrunk over the wood, with a square or rectangular section wrought iron frame. The cranks were on the front wheel. A friend of Allan's has ridden one to Brighton although the design is such that on a road with a camber they tend to vibrate their way into the gutter!

The Penny Farthing came next, called a bicycle, with radial spokes and solid rubber tyres. To get on one's left foot would be placed on a step, pushing off with the right foot and getting on as it went forward. This was in 1884. In 1892 an American rode around the world on one which took him two and a half years. They were dangerous due to the high riding position and there were many fatalities.

A safer option came on the market with the tricycle having either two large rear wheels and one small front which steered or two large front and one small rear which steered. Another configuration was the tandem trike in which one sat side by side with large rear wheels driven by a chain which had a fixed wheel and a small front wheel for steering. This design was called a Sociable.

It was often hard work and a rough ride during this period as with the coming of the railways, the roads were left to go to 'rack and ruin'.

We then saw a most interesting photograph; three cyclists, loaded up, on a tour. It was thought that the building behind them was a station as a railway timetable could be seen on the wall but apparently due to the importance of the railways, timetables would be placed at many locations. Whilst the photograph was taken about 120 years ago their dress was similar to that of today. As a cyclist myself, I changed the jacket for an anorak or pullover in the 1960s and now wear a yellow top, but the plus two trousers, long socks and cycle shoes, I still wear today. One of the cycles was a 'Facile' made in

London by Ellis and Company, the larger front wheel being driven by cranks and levers. The movement of the pedals was up and down in a narrow ellipse. One of the other cycles was made by Starley and Sutter which eventually became Rover. It had a modern diamond frame design with equal size wheels.

When riding downhill on the fixed wheel Penny Farthing, riders would place their knees over the handlebars and if they should run into a pig asleep on the road they would go over the handlebars and land on their feet. A friend of Allan's can demonstrate this manoeuvre from a low speed!

Mr Gamage was an enthusiastic cyclist and sold them from his shops. The customers' cycle Park at Gamage's was patrolled by a commissionaire to look after the bicycles. Very few were stolen; a cycle thief would go to prison for three months.

One advert we saw from the Bamboo Cycle Company had a frame made from bamboo with steel lugs! It bore the phrase 'Patronised by the Nobility'.

Extra power could come from the use of the Britnell hand gear, where the handlebars rocked up and down which rotated a crank and drove the front wheel as well.

The cycle that Allan brought along was built about 1907 – a Dursley Pedersen. Michael Pedersen started the cycle business in 1895 from the royalties he made from his invention of a centrifugal separator for making cream. There were 8000 of these cycles made. It has a three speed hub gear which was the forerunner of the Sturmey Archer hub. The Sturmey Archer hub was invented by William Reilly. The wheels have been rebuilt using stainless rims. The brake levers are inverted and cables pass through the handlebars. The machine was a joy to look at and had an acetylene lamp which ran off a block of carbide, a solder-like substance upon which water would drip to give off acetylene gas and a very bright light with which one could find one's way along the winding unlit roads at night.

It was interesting to follow the path of the cycle designer over the years and to compare those early inventions with those of today.

We thanked Allan for giving us a superb presentation.

Roger Bell

Slot Car News July 2000

The fascination for powered model cars is almost as old as the automobile itself. In the 1890s Lehmann, a German company made a sand powered toy car using gravity to move the car. In 1908 an American toy manufacturer produced a circular layout with a wind-up car running on rails similar in principle to a toy train. Electric power came shortly after when the famous toy maker Marklin produced a layout in tinplate, the chassis of the cars taken from trains.

The first proper racing car set arrived on the scene in 1912 featuring a raised rail to guide the car round the track. Power was provided by adjustable transformers to control the cars. During the 1930s a number of companies from different countries produced racing sets on this principle with varying degrees of success.

In the magazine Model Maker, December 1954, a practical rail system was explained and from this the Southport Model Engineering Society was inspired to build a track. By 1955 they had a six lane circuit built for the first electric model car meeting. To commemorate this event the organisers at the Brooklands Museum are proposing to construct a 1/32nd railtrack and invite interested parties to build and race some cars. The organizers have been in touch and will be sending us details.

They are also interested in the fact that we race retro slot cars so hopefully they can be included as well. There is even talk of BBC Television coming along as well. I shall keep you all up to date with developments.

For those of you not familiar with our section of the Society, retro cars are slot cars that were generally available before 1972. We race with hard plastic, GRP or balsa body shells and chassis and motors available before the cut-off date, and we use hard vinyl tyres as opposed to the soft black sponge we now use on modern slot cars.

By the time you read this, Le Mans will have been and gone and this year four of us will have made the trip to France, (and hopefully back again). John Newton, Tony and Dan Condon and myself will have eaten too much, ditto drink, spent a night in a muddy car park and watched a bit of motor racing. I will tell you all about it soon.

Steve Francis

[Spotlight on Tom Luxford](#) **[Over 75 Years of Model Engineering!](#)**

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Tom & Ruth Luxford

[Letters Page](#)

[An Appreciation of the "Britannia" Articles.](#)

Can I pass on my thanks to both Peter Kearon and Bob Fitzhugh for their most interesting BRITANNIA articles. I was at my train spotting peak a decade or so before the Britannias so was unable to observe their work at first hand. I was brought up on the LNER in the Wood Green area so was conditioned on Gresley, and Bob Fitzhugh's reference to early days on the footplate with top link drivers from Leeds and Kings Cross were mouth watering. I wonder if Bob could be persuaded to tell us more in another article - or even better, if he does venture this way at any time from distant Powys a talk at Headquarters would command a most appreciative audience.

Thank you gentlemen for articles which could well have graced the pages of "The Railway Magazine" in its heyday of steam.

Yours sincerely
Mike Collingwood

The opinions and views expressed in this News Sheet are not necessarily those of the Society or editor.

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