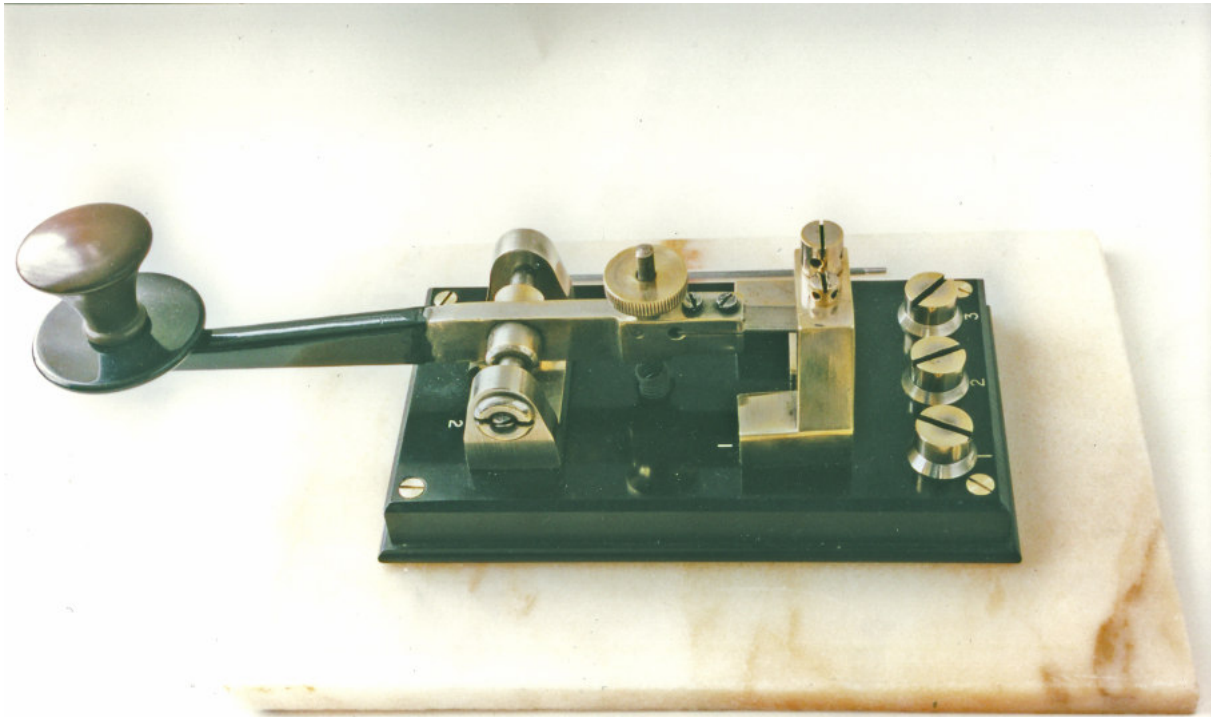


# The News Sheet

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## The Chairman's Notes

Before I start my first Chairman's Notes of my second term as Chairman I unfortunately have to report the passing of Alan Harmer who died in May following a long battle with cancer. The Society's condolences go out to Alan's family at this sad time.

Hello again! The Society held an interesting EGM on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2006 and following the discussions it was decided that another EGM would be arranged in the near future to discuss the issues raised. Matters on the agenda for this meeting will include the election of the remaining officers of the Society that were not filled during the AGM; for those of you who were unable to attend the AGM you may not be aware that the Society is currently running without a Vice-Chairman or a Secretary.

This meeting is a very important part of Society management as without membership interaction with the Society's Council the Society will not and cannot run in the manner to which the membership wants the Society to run. With this in mind the EGM's main focus will be on the Society concession rate, as there is a percentage of the Society who are unhappy with the Society's position on this matter following the May 2005 EGM.

Unfortunately I need to state that any decision taken at this meeting **will not** affect the subscription rate for the current financial year (2006/2007); however on a more positive note I am confident that this issue can be resolved in a manner that the whole Society can be happy about as well as safeguarding the North London S.M.E. future.

Having read the previous paragraphs you may have gathered that Ian Johnston, David Harris, Tony Dunbar and Chris Platford have stood down from the Council, and I hope you will join me in thanking them for the efforts that they have put in over the past year and years. I have also received notice that Maurice Cummins has resigned as Tyttenhanger Committee Treasurer and from the Committee as a whole, and I would also like to thank him for his effort over the years.

Moving on to the Society activities, when I was recently at HQ I was impressed by the level of activity

and progress that is being made on an almost weekly basis; this is of course most notable with the 'OO' layout where the basic scenery to the new layout is making huge leaps forward with its completed debut fast approaching - good luck guys but I don't think you need it.

The slot car boys are expanding their activities and have started a new race series on Wednesday nights where I am lead to believe that the cars are all scratch or at least mostly scratch built (apologies if I am wrong); lets hope that this series is a great success.

With all this progress at HQ, and there is more than the two bits I have just mentioned, it would be easy to say that nothing is changing at Colney Heath now that the running season is well and truly upon us, but that would be wrong!

I have just spent an hour or so (after most of the work was done) with the Railway Development Group (RDG) in the new land acquired at Colney Heath. Thanks to the efforts of the RDG we now have part of the proposed future extension of the Mainline marked out as well as the first phase of the Ground Level Railway.

I encourage you to go up to Colney Heath and have a good look around at what is proposed (I can't yet tell you the colour coding of the posts as they are yet to be painted but hopefully they will have been by the time you get to read this). See what you think; after all one person cannot make a railway. If they are up at Colney Heath and most importantly if they are free, grab (not literally) a member of the RDG and have a chat with them, and let them know your thoughts on the marked out railways or clear up any questions you may have. In case you do not know the RDG are Les Brimson, Tony Dunbar, Jim MacDonald and Adrian Reddish.

To borrow an overused slogan, just remember the future is bright the future is the North London Society of Model Engineers. Have a good month and enjoy whatever activity you want within our Society, after all there are so many.

*Donal Corcoran*



## Chairman's Report 2005-06

The 61<sup>st</sup> year for the North London Society of Model Engineers has been one of consolidation. There have been no block-busting exhibitions or shows to commemorate anything in particular or special, mainly because there has been not much in the way of anything particular or special to commemorate. But our estate has been considerably enlarged by the good grace of the Water Board and the hard work and planning of a few of our erstwhile members; we could have perhaps had an event to celebrate that fact. Perhaps we will be able to do something about it in the forthcoming year to mark the occasion of the acquisition's first anniversary. Needless to say we should invite the President and staff of the Water Board to our Gala Event.

The Society has two sites one at Finchley and the other at Colney Heath. I will deal with the Finchley site first.

The Headquarters at Finchley is in good shape; the electrics and fire equipment have been surveyed and the building itself seems to have deteriorated little in the past year. The Slot Car Section, the Cine Section the 00 Section and the North American sections are situated there in their own dedicated rooms and areas. Our fairly extensive library honouring model engineering in all its facets is housed in the 'lecture' theatre and has been added to with books and magazines from members and annotated by the librarian. The new kitchen has stood up to the making of hundreds of cups of char during the year; no four-course meals have been produced yet, but a number of well received festive buffets have emanated from the area.

The Cine Section has had a year of quiet consolidation and is looking for new interested members. The new projector has been the section's responsibility and we have all benefited from the efficiency and lumens that it produces. One of the themes of this report is that members should interchange between sections and in this case we all have a lot to learn from the cine folk.

The 00 Section seems to really have surged forward this year. They have enjoyed a busy year. They took the new layout, *Midsomer* to John Keeble School in April to operate with plenty of basic buildings but not complete with scenery and small details. They started amending the Club Room layout to incorporate a lifting flap, so that they do not have to crawl under the layout to reach the centre operating area. This has taken a long time and Dudley has spent much skill in looping the electrics to bridge the newly created gap. One member had a brilliant idea to build a new junc-

tion to travel on a continuous incline around the inside edge of the room and eventually join up to the new *Midsomer* layout.

Geoff, Jonathan and Mick have been putting the scenic details to the new layout and it now looks very realistic. Ian, Dave and Mick have been putting in tunnels, embankments to make the new incline blend into the Club Layout.

On 21<sup>st</sup> January the North American section held a meeting at HQ for the NMRA (BR) from all over London. About eighty members turned up to view their layout so the 00 members spent a couple of energetic evenings tidying up the three layouts and running trains on all three. This was the first time for many months and on Saturday it was fantastic seeing several full length trains of coaches and modern image freight running.

The North American Section continues to develop their permanent layout and to use some of the technological developments of their hobby. They remain impressed by the efforts of the NMRA based in America to ensure common standards among HO model manufacturers. Through their NMRA contacts from time to time they receive guests from North America. When visiting North America they have been welcomed into model railway clubs there, spreading the word of the Society further afield.

Permanent Layout: They have now extended the DCC (digital computer control) facility over virtually their entire permanent layout. Sounds like brake squeal, whistles and bells may be heard, in addition to the more traditional and anguished "Oi, who's taken over my train!" They are delighted with the standard of model building achieved by the Wakefield family; next time you come to HQ look out for the NLSME (North Lima Sewing Machine Engineers) establishment on the layout. Some thought is still given to alternative controller technology to avoid the need to disentangle the long leads from walk around controllers (Maypole dancing?)

Exhibitions: In November they exhibited their portable layout at Ipswich, once again their unusual features attracted more attention than the more standard layouts. Early in 2006 the section organised the NMRA British Region winter meet at HQ which gave greater publicity to the society as the 00 group took the opportunity to show their own permanent layout to visitors coming through to see our own Woodside Union Terminal 3 permanent layout. They expect to be participating in two exhibitions later this year.

The Slot Car Section continues to thrive and the year kicked off with Production 32 and ten folk attending to make it a competitive night's racing. Paul TQ into the final from Greg, Mark and Ian joining them for the semi. Mark

took the win by two laps from Ian, Paul and Greg.

The first Saloon night of the year produced a cracking night's racing with Bob Hallums making a welcome return and Brian Church racing for the first time in 2006. Paul wins the final from Mark Greg and Ian. Brian was 5<sup>th</sup> and Bob 6<sup>th</sup>.

During the Formula One week, Mark won from Ian, Paul and Michael Ovens. Sports GT or Eurosport night had ten enthusiasts attending making a fine nights racing with Paul the victor of the evening at 44.60.

The North London GP series was the first time they had a club class; all cars 1/24 and powered by Wasp armatures which produced close racing and a good laugh.

So with most classes underway at the club it looks like another close year. The build up to this year's National finals is underway having already had one round at Luton with wins for Mark in Formula One and James in Saloon sets the section on course for the National's at Bedford.

The 'lecture' theatre has been the venue for many Friday evening talks. All have been fairly well attended. To name but just two, Keith Catchpole's supreme talk and demonstration of Edison Phonographs leaves one still humming *I must go home tonight*. Gordon Massey's splendid 'Steam in China' left us all gasping at the power of the steam locomotive that we all had thought had gone forever. Needless to say the accounts of the meetings have been written up by our diligent scribes and the members served with hot tea and biscuits in the intervals. The Workshop evenings have been excellent and inventive; they deserve far greater congregations than they obtain.

This brings me to some other facets of the Club where excellence is standard. That of *The News Sheet* and the web site. Throughout the year all members have enjoyed reading and visiting these publications and I hope that many more of you will enjoy contributing to them. The editors are to be commended for all their skills and hard work.

During the year the Society was able to put on some cracking club stands at Sandown, Alexandra Palace and at St Albans model engineering exhibitions. The hard work and planning paid off, with stands that were well up to the high standards that the club has come to expect as normal.

The **Locomotive section** at our other site in Colney Heath has not been idle. As has been mentioned previously the Society was able to acquire more land from the Water Board and a *Railway Development Group* formed to carefully plan future exciting developments in that area. The raised track has had rail replacement (but not busses) and the guard rail is now progressing relentlessly round the edge. Now members don't have to climb over the Cuckoo Line to gain entry to the pond area because the Cuckoo Line has been supplied with a lifting bridge. The coach has now almost been completely refurbished and it is a pleasure to use the kitchen and to relax in the meeting area, a great improvement on what was there before. A constant team have worked like beavers and have almost finished the construction of the ground level station which hits you in the eye (not literally I hope) as soon as you pass the width restriction posts that control the entrance to the site.

The Tyttenhanger Site has been host to a number of birthday parties which have all been well received by the youngsters and their charges; the willing members manning locomotives seem to have enjoyed the events also. The club has also happily welcomed the youngsters from MENCAP and Chernobyl as well as from St Luke's School all of whom enjoyed the afternoons tremendously. Sunday afternoons will never be the same again for the young folk who have been entertained and fed by the resolute staff at Tyttenhanger. Several other clubs have been fortunate enough to enjoy our extensive facilities on Saturdays and have enjoyed the experience so much that they seem to want to visit year after year. The celebrated steaming of *Kimbolton Castle* one glorious Saturday afternoon was an event not easily forgotten especially as it was accompanied with good food, beer and a jazz band.

The **Garden Railway section** is attracting a lot of newcomers, with members running both British and US Gauge One locos and stock. During the year further changes have been made to the track, which have led to improved and easier running. Weather permitting, Wednesdays at Colney Heath have become a regular fixture for those members who enjoy the small gauges, a BBQ and occasionally a burnt sausage, along with lots of gentle banter. If you have some spare time on a fine Wednesday, come and join us – if you want a day of laughter, some dodgy cooking and a great rail layout!

With regard to the **Marine Section** there have been a small number of successful regattas and open day events, which were enjoyed by both the Marine Section and a number of other sections. The Open Day for Submarines was a winner and ably managed by Andrew Lawrence. John Morgan enhanced the open days by providing his 'harbour' to form an attraction for the vessels. Derek Perham has led a team to maintain the pool and pool area. All members have enjoyed informal sailing sessions during the week as well as on Sunday afternoons but there has been little interest in reviving the Friday evening sessions at HQ in Finchley during the winter. However this is not important if the members prefer to sail on the pool during the greater part of the year. Perhaps in the future a small team could visit one or two other Societies during the year.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Officers and council members for their help during the past year, also the many members who consistently do a tremendous amount of work for the Society, I think we all do as much as we can but there are some who seem to be present and active all the time and I thank them very much for keeping the Club in the shape it is in.

*Ian Johnston*

## Extraordinary General Meeting Notice

Following discussion at the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) held on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2006 an EGM has been called for the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2006, at 8pm at HQ.

This meeting will discuss the Society's subscription rate as well as, but not limited to, amending Rule 4 of the Society Constitution.

If any member wishes to put forward a matter for discussion at the EGM please supply the details of your proposal to the Chairman by the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2006.

**Donal Corcoran**  
**Chairman, N.L.S.M.E.**

## General Meetings Update

Unless otherwise stated, General Meetings are held at our Headquarters in Legion Way, North Finchley, 8 - 10pm. Ron Thorogood dons his chef's hat to provide welcome tea, coffee and biscuits at around 9pm for which our many thanks, Ron.

### **2 JUNE 2006 – MALCOLM STRIDE: BRUSH ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING Co. Ltd. – A DIFFERENT VIEW**

Many model engineers and railway enthusiasts will know of the Brush Electrical Engineering Company for its range of diesel electric locomotives which culminated in the very successful Brush Type 4, which became the BR class 47. What they may not know is that during its long history Brush made many other things besides locomotives.

Malcolm Stride began his working life as an engineering apprentice with Brush in the early 1960s and went on to work for the company for fifteen years in various positions. On leaving Brush, and before 'escaping' a few years ago, Malcolm joined the then fledgling computer industry as a business consultant. In due course he joined the Model Engineer editorial team and currently holds the position of Associate Editor.

Malcolm describes his illustrated presentation as 'An Insider's View of the History of Brush' and will outline the early history of the company before dealing with some of the lesser known locomotive developments and revealing selected personal experiences during his time with the company.

### **7 JULY 2006 – FORUM: SOLDERING, BRAZING AND WELDING**

The joining of materials is a fascinating and sometimes challenging business. For many applications and for a variety of reasons, some model engineers consider a fabricated assembly to be superior to a casting.

The aims of this presentation are to review some of the available processes and, perhaps more importantly, to discuss and resolve any difficulties experienced by those present at the meeting. Our NLSME membership is rich in knowledge and expertise and this evening should provide a unique opportunity to tap into it.

### **4 AUGUST 2006 – AN EVENING AT TYTTENHANGER**

Our summer General Meeting at our Tyttenhanger track site will be an opportunity to gather for an informal sociable evening with friends, family and colleagues. Few clubs or societies are blessed with the superb facilities we enjoy at our track site and an evening at this time of year can be very pleasant indeed. All are very welcome to play an active part in this gathering or to simply sit, chat and watch what's going on!

I hope that some of our members will wish to run their locomotives on the track(s) and that others may choose to steam a traction engine or two. It would be specially good if some were to organise something of a marine nature on our boating lake as well.

The barbecue will be lit, so feel free to bring something along to cook and enjoy. Most of us like to cook steaks, sausages and burgers, but why not try barbecued fish, or sweetcorn, or bananas? Mmmm! Tea and coffee will be available throughout the evening but if you want it, I'm afraid you'll have to bring your own wine or beer.

*Mike Chrisp*



Although not entered in competition, this delightful 1:8 scale fen wagon by Joe Cartledge was featured centre stage among many other exhibits on the Guild of Model Wheelwrights' stand at the thirteenth Annual National Model Engineering and Modelling Exhibition at Harrogate. Not only was the wagon itself beautifully made, the array of items set out beside it repaid long and careful study.



Augmented by a great many locomotives on club stands, ranging in style from good solid working engines to superb examples of the builders' craftsmanship and ability, eight locomotives in gauges '0', 5in. and 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in. were entered into competition at the three day event held in the Flower Hall of the Yorkshire showground. Well made and featuring a petrol engine made by builder D. L. Faulkner, this 5in. gauge Hunslet 0-6-0 diesel locomotive was a little out of the ordinary.

## Pictures from an Exhibition

### The 2006 Harrogate Show

Photos and text by Mike Crisp

The Harrogate Exhibition is noted for its large number of agricultural and road vehicles of all scales and sizes. Surgeon Robin Knox brought his beautifully restored full size showmans' road locomotive to the event on Saturday while at the other end of the scale, this delightful 1:12 scale Minnie to (our own) Len Mason's original design was featured on the Wrexham DME stand coupled to a thrashing machine. A great many visitors were fascinated by the action of the thrasher mechanism to be seen working throughout this popular event.



Brian Waldman (left) and colleague demonstrated a unique 1:6 scale roadmaking diorama throughout the exhibition. Power is supplied to this fully working model of a Baxter 6 x 12in. stone breaker by a 20cc vertical twin-cylinder petrol engine to Brian's own design and manufacture. Ignition for this water-cooled four-stroke engine with push rod overhead valves is by means of a flywheel magneto. The model was demonstrated breaking magnesium limestone obtained from the Jackdaw Crag Quarry in Tadcaster. A perforated rotary screen grades the broken stone into the three sizes required for road repair and discharges into three different miniature wheelbarrows of contemporary style.



	Track Steward Rota 2006			NO SHOW
Date	Senior Steward	Track Steward	Track Steward	Track Steward
16-Apr	Ron Price	Maurice Cummins	Graham Price	Steven Don
23-Apr	Nigel Griffiths	John Amos	Mark Braley	John Waldoek
30-Apr	David Harris	Adrian Newson	Derrick Franklin	Keith Ashman
07-May	Brian Apthorpe	<b>Nicholas Bone*</b>	David Jones	John Fitzgerald
14-May	Jack Edwards	David Spencer	Kevin Wilson	Adam Gorski
21-May	Grahame Ainge	Peter Foreman	Simon Pearson	<b>Peter Brown*</b>
28-May	Grahame Gardner	Peter Precious	<b>Ian Johnston*</b>	David Burman
04-Jun	Robert Oldfield	Frank Hills	Richard Castle	Michael Dear
11-Jun	Les Brimson	Roy Hall	Roger Brown	Jack Sanson
18-Jun	Keith Hughes	Jim Robson	Victor Burgess	Philip Rowe
25-Jun		Ian Buswell	John Riches	Richard Cross
02-Jul	Ian Johnston	David Snellgrove	John L Morgan	Naughton Morgan
09-Jul	Mike Avery	John Winson	Jonathan Avery	Mike Hodgson
16-Jul	Roy Chapman	Nick Rudoe	Peter Brewster	Anthony Mason
23-Jul	Ian Clifft	Peter Lancaster	John West	Bob Gamble
30-Jul	Keith Bartlam	John Cattle	Gerald Moore	Peter Fraser
06-Aug	Mike Chrisp	Ian Reddish	Alex Chapman	David Foster
13-Aug	Mike Ruffell	Brian Baker	David Marsden	Brian Kennedy
20-Aug	Mike Foreman	Alan Marshall	Peter Berkley	Mike Franklin
27-Aug	Donal Corcoran	Lawrence Steers	Philip Hyde	R. Thompson
03-Sep	Tony Dunbar	Colin Thomson	Geoffrey Eccles	Owen Chapman
10-Sep	Brendan Corcoran	Peter Davies	Peter Brown	Larry Cheeseman
17-Sep	Jim MacDonald	Chris Reynolds	Peter MacDonald	Peter Badger
24-Sep	Adrian Reddish	Dick Payne	Nicholas Bone	Martin Ginger
01-Oct	Stephen Smith	Roger Bell	Paul Lacey	Barrie Davies
08-Oct	Kieran Corcoran	Gavin Lang	John Mills	Roger Wollett
15-Oct	Chris Vousden	John Sandwell	Ron Todd	Malcolm Reid
22-Oct	Terry Baxter	Peter Weeks	Derek Smith	Derek Eldridge

**NB:** For any selected date/row, please read across both pages to obtain the names of all designated stewards.

## Loco Section & Tyttenhanger Committee News

### Tyttenhanger Committee

Maurice has decided to stand down as Treasurer of the Tyttenhanger Committee. Maurice has been a valuable member of the committee and has worked hard for quite some time helping us to run the Tyttenhanger site. His dedication to the role has been of great value to the club and we would like to thank him for all the effort he has made over this long period. Thanks Maurice.

### Steward Rota

For us to carry out our “**Duty of Care**” for our members and visitors it is imperative that all Stewards turn up **or make alternative arrangement.**

There are a few changes and additions. A few more have agreed to a second duty, which is very much appreciated. For us to achieve a full six track stewards and two tea stewards each week a few more

such volunteers will be needed to fill the spaces. Please pick an empty slot and let me know as soon as possible.

- 1 If you cannot attend on your allocated slot for whatever reason, **arrange a swap with another member. BUT PLEASE LET ME KNOW** so I can amend the published list.
- 2 If you appear on the list and you do have a valid reason why you should not. **PLEASE LET ME KNOW**
- 3 If you notice someone who has left or has a valid reason not to be on the list **PLEASE LET ME KNOW**
- 4 Most importantly if you do not appear on the list and should be **PLEASE LET ME KNOW**

I also ask that **ALL TRACK and TEA STEWARDS SIGN THE RUNNING BOOK** for monitoring and insurance purposes.



Date	Track Steward	Track Steward	Tea Steward	Tea Steward
16-Apr	Jack Edwards*	Peter Weeks*	Ron Thorogood	Mrs Thorogood
23-Apr	John Shawe	Dick Payne*	David Metcalf	Mrs.Griffiths
30-Apr	William Mason	David Snellgrove*	R Lidzey	Mrs Harris
07-May			Mervyn Smith	Mrs Aphorpe
14-May	Reg Piper	Mike Foreman*	Robert Hatton	Raymond Goss
21-May	Jeremy Deans	Frank Hills*	Ray Smiles	
28-May	Mike Avery*	Jonathan Avery*	George Case	Mike Chrisp*
04-Jun	Geoffrey Bullock	John Sandwell*	Ron Thorogood*	Mrs Thorogood*
11-Jun	Arthur Rixon	Derek Eldridge*	Ken Wils her	Mrs Reddish*
18-Jun	Reginald Axton		Dave Lawrence	Frank Inman
25-Jun	Frank Adams	Brian Baker*	Peter Prior	Nicholas Griffin
02-Jul	Geoffrey Mogg	Owen Chapman*	John Morgan (M)	Mrs J Morgan
09-Jul	Chris Platford		Colin Bainbridge	Ron Peirce
16-Jul	John Beesley		Graeme Brown	Mrs Brewster
23-Jul		Alan Marshall *	Harry Henderson	Mrs Clift
30-Jul	Jeffrey Bolton	Maurice Cummins*	Raymond Randal	Harold Barrow
06-Aug	Paul Godin	David Burman*	Alexander Robinson	Jim Robson*
13-Aug	Peter Sheen	Guy Ellerby	Chris Dean	
20-Aug	David Broom	Chris Vousden*	David Morgan	Mrs Foreman
27-Aug	Lawrence Wood		Peter Funk	
03-Sep	Peter Lancaster*	Derrick Franklin*	Maxim Sarche	
10-Sep	Dave Green		L Brooks	Mrs P Corcoran
17-Sep		Ian Reddish*	Mrs. Mac Donald	Mrs Badger
24-Sep	Peter Fox	Mike Franklin*	Mrs Reddish	Laura Reddish
01-Oct	Alex James		Mrs Smith	Julie Davies
08-Oct	Richard Hesketh		Rai Fenton	Mrs Betty Fenton
15-Oct	Tim Clementson	Brian Aphorpe*	Derek Perham	Richard Hall
22-Oct	David Harris*	Roger Bell*	Mrs Baxter	Jenny Baxter

It is not much to ask to do your duty, **but to just not turn up is unreasonable.** It is your responsibility to yourself and your club to make sure this season runs smoothly, so we can carry out our responsibility for

health and safety for all those that visit and enjoy our wonderful facility. The Tyttenhanger Committee thank you all, in advance for your help.

### Events

- Mon 29<sup>th</sup> May Private running day  
 Sat 10<sup>th</sup> June: Club Day visit by Chingford & Chelmsford SME  
 Fri 16<sup>th</sup> June: **Loco Section Meeting 8pm @ HQ. The British Owned railways of Argentina by Ralph Copnall** who lived his early life in Argentina and has returned on visits. He will give us a brief background to Argentine railway history, leading up to comments on the preservation scene. He will enliven the talk with personal reminiscences illustrated with stills spanning sixty years. This is a must for all sections of the Society.  
 Sat 17<sup>th</sup> June: **Birthday Party.** Help would be appreciated.  
 Sat 24<sup>th</sup> June: North American Section Open Day at Colney Heath.  
 Sat 1<sup>st</sup> July: Colney Heath School Fete  
 Tues 18 July: Visit by Children from St Luke's School (Help required)  
 Thur 20 July: Visit by the Chernobyl Children( Help required)  
 Fri 21<sup>st</sup> July: **Loco Section BBQ @ Colney Heath.**  
 Sat 29<sup>th</sup> July: Club Day visit by Northolt SME.

### *Adrian*

(Loco Section Leader)

## The Life of a Ship's Radio Operator

We have been told the fascinating stories of two men's first world-wide trips in the Merchant Navy; many thanks to you both Peter, and Ian.

This is a story of the same kind, from a generation earlier, written at the time, a man writing home to his girl. You will find, Ian, the Blue Funnel Line Features here again. The letter was passed to me by Beth G2XG, a good friend in the Southgate Radio Club, the daughter of the couple in the letter. Beth now proudly holds the amateur radio call-sign of her father, G2XG.

*Mike Hodgson (M0NOE)*

This is a letter written to my mother by my father, James McIntosh Davie  
G2XG as he became,  
on his "First Ship" **S.S.Dalia**. (South African Merchant Navy)  
as Wireless Operator ("Sparks")  
1300 miles from Ceylon.  
22-1-32.

Dear Chum,

Wish you could see me now, I am on my last watch of the day.

I must say, very long hours. The trouble is they are spread over the whole of the day. I, of course, work or keep watch according to Greenwich time regardless of the local time. For instance, when I go on watch at 4pm, local time is 8pm.

According to Greenwich time, I start at 4am-6am, off 'till 8am, on 'till 10am, then on from 12md-2pm, and last watch from 4pm-6pm. Then I am up for about 10 minutes again at 9.45pm and 12.45am in the morning. I have to snatch a few hours sleep when I am off, even during the day.

I am sitting in the "Operating Room" with the phones on. Ships going like fun, but not one to be seen. I am listening to land stations at Karachi (India), Colombo (Ceylon), and the Dutch East Indies.

Ships of all nationalities working, Italian, American, Dutch, German, Japanese, English, French, and tons of others. This last watch of the day is always the busiest.

We left Durban on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Jan. in perfect weather, and believe me I got quite a real thrill when I used the apparatus for the first time, and a ship called me. Believe me I was all thumbs to get the outfit working. However by now I am so used to it that I hardly notice what I am doing, but I must say I am more than ever pleased with the outfit. I get about 2000 miles when the weather is clear, especially in the early morning about 5 or 6am. I have covered practically the whole of the globe with this receiver.

Music from anywhere, that reminds me, the funniest music or singing I have ever heard in my life, was what I heard this evening. Indian singing in a monotone all the time, it sounded most weird. I also hear Bombay, Rangoon and Calcutta on music.

All the way up here we have been having glorious weather, when we came up the Strait of Madagascar there were fine lightning displays over the Island of Madagascar and the northern point, Cape Amber.

Last Sunday the sea was like glass, not even a ripple on the surface, and we are on the Indian Ocean. Have had a few showers during the last few days but we can expect that, as this is the Indian monsoon season. The rain we have had has been typical tropical showers. Lashed down but only for a very short while.

We are gradually getting closer to "The Line" and are going to cross it at a tangent. Our position today is only 5.3/4 degrees South of the line and it will be another thirteen or fourteen days before we have crossed it and our position will be about 4 degrees North. So you see, we are crossing the line very broadly, practically sailing parallel with it.

We are making about 230 miles per day, which is not so bad for this ship as she is only designed to do 11 Knots.

Since coming on this boat I have been in places passengers never go and I am never asked what I want. I've been down the Engine Room dozens of times, in fact I go down about twice a day. I have to go down to get certain electrical readings for my daily log. It's great fun down there watching all the box of tricks going round. All the engineers are great friends of mine now. The chap who came up with me in the train is now the Chief Engineer, so I have the run of the engine room whenever I like.

I go up to the Bridge about a dozen times per day. Of course I am treated like an Officer.

25.1.32

The food is very good, a bit of a sameness about it, but one can expect that as we are not carrying passengers, so the old cook dishes us out just what is easiest for him to get

together. It's funny, but when one is a passenger one hardly feels like all the meals that are dished out, as one gets no exercise or chance to make up for it, but on board here, although I do not do any manual labour, but have mostly head work, I sure feel like my meals.

We are having wonderful weather for this part of the globe, we are about 2 degrees South of the line now, and it's quite cool. I suppose it must be on account of the monsoon season. It's raining quite a bit during the nights, but the Mate on watch usually runs between the clouds to dodge the rain.

This boat was built in a hurry with the result that the timber used for the deck planking was not properly seasoned, and when it was in service out east for a while and the deck got a touch of the sun, the boards started to shrink. When they washed down the deck or it rained, the water came through into the cabins. Although she was caulked when we left Durban there are still places where the water gets through.

Our engines have been having a beautiful time, what with the water and the coal dust. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineer's cabin leaks in about fourteen places, he has managed to stop the leaks in about ten places, but some still persist in leaking. I have no complaints in that direction, my cabin, and operating room are dry as a bone. The best of the joke is the Captains' cabin and sitting room leaks like a sieve. The water drops right down on his writing desk.

He is a very nice man, but I must say he leads a lonely life all by himself, and when anybody speaks to him it's "Sir" this and "Sir" that. Nobody wants to go and have a talk with him, as the atmosphere is always too stiff to be comfortable. I get on fine with all the others.

The Chief Officer and myself are great pals. He gave me some soap this morning to do some washing. Have about four shirts, three singlets, and a few handkerchiefs to clean up.

I go round in a vest and pants most of the day; it's too warm for anything else although the sun is not shining brightly but the air is very muggy. Typically tropical if I can use that phrase. We should be crossing "the line" today some time. No interest to us for all of us on board have been over before.

Most of the Mates and Petty Officers are not South African. The First Mate is a Scot, the Second Mate is French (born in the Seychelles), and the Third Mate is English. The Captain is Australian, and the Bosun is a Scot. The Bosun is a fine old fellow, just full of fun, ready for a laugh at any time. I keep good friends with him as he is a useful man to be friendly with, knows practically every port, and he is the

one on board who can do all the favours for you. If you stay friendly with the Chief Steward, the First Mate and the Bosun you can get practically anything you want or want done. All three are great pals of mine.

#### 27.1.32

During the last two days it has been raining great guns, and both my cabin and the Operating Room have been shedding water on me. I don't mind my cabin so much but I don't want it in the Operating Room. Have been chasing round trying to mend the holes and stop the water coming through. This Transmitter has been on fire twice now owing to the water leaking through the roof. It's no good saying anything as the whole ship leaks wherever there is a wooden deck above. Of course the main deck is iron plated so the water doesn't get through there.

The weather as I say has been very damp and with the wind the rollers have started and the old ship does the usual, from side to side she goes like a drunken thing. Of course with this rain the atmospheric have been pretty bad. Do you know that if ever I am sorry about anything it is not bringing my box of wireless parts and tools with me, I miss them every day, I'm always doing some little job and fixing up something.

#### 29.1.32

The weather today has cleared up considerably; in fact it is becoming too warm and muggy to be comfortable, so I am again dressed in the minimum of clothing. Nobody worries, no passengers on board. I am quite into the run of things now, what with time signals, weather reports and lookout reports, I know just when and where to get them.

I get mixed up with the time, today

we are about three hours ahead of your time and five hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

That reminds me as I was stretching myself this morning, I am up at 5am, I just rubbed my chin and woke up to the fact that I have a beard half an inch long. I gave up shaving about four days out from Durban. All the Mates are growing beards, they usually do on voyages like this. So, wearing short pants and a singlet you can guess what I look like.

Fat chance of going round in "blues" all day, you would be roasted. Going to get a few "white suits" when I get to HongKong or Singapore. Another thirteen days to our first port then things move very rapidly. I am going to get a whole lot of snaps this trip, as I won't get the chance of seeing these places again.

After this it will be Manila, you will be able to write to Lorenzo Marques. The boat will be there about the 25<sup>th</sup> April, then she is going straight through to Capetown.



*James McIntosh Davie*

One of the Mates dropped his fan on the floor and bent it so I have the job after this watch of fixing it up. Anything wrong electrically on the boat "Go and tell Sparks, he'll fix you up." You would think I was a qualified electrician the jobs I have to do. Run wires, replace lights, adjust fans and starters, replace fuses and a thousand other jobs in that line.

We will be going through the Malacca Straits in another few days, about time we saw a bit of land somewhere.

Nearly three weeks now, and passed one boat and one lighthouse, yet on the radio I count every day about forty or fifty boats on the go. Anywhere from fifty to fifteen hundred miles from me, but I am not so lonesome as the others. All they see is water, but I hear something fresh every day. Just beginning to make out the Dutch East Indies stations now.

#### 2.2.32.

It's a few days now since my last entry. Saw land yesterday and have it with us all the time now. Saw Sumatra and passed a place called Sabang yesterday afternoon. It's right up at the North end of Sumatra on an island, "We Island", a very pretty spot, very lonely of course. I should think the palm trees grow right down to the waters' edge and so does all the other vegetation. We passed it about a mile off so saw the place well.

Going down the Strait of Malacca now on the way to Singapore, not stopping there now but will do so on the way back. The weather is average, fine days and rainy days. It's raining this morning but we can expect that as it is winter season this side of "the line". So far we have not had a real scorcher yet, some warm days but nothing startling.

Not making very good time as the "old tub" should have gone in for a scraping so the daily run is only about 230 miles. Why worry, we will get there before long.

What do you think of this affair in China? We get the news through over the wireless, and the best of it is we are to go up the river nearly to Canton to off-load our coal. Expect to be in HongKong and thereabouts for about a week. Our date of arrival there is now the 11<sup>th</sup>, so we will be lucky to get back to South Africa by the end of May. I'm not worrying as long as I get back.

From what I can gather we will be going up the river at HongKong about a few miles from Canton, so will see the Chinaman in all his glory and as he is. Sure going to see a bit of the world now.

However the weather has fined up nicely, seems as if it is going to be a nice day. The coastline is showing up clearly, very flat with plenty of green on it. We should be passing some ships now as the Straits are usually busy.

#### 3.2.32.

Another day and we expect to see Singapore tomorrow morning. Passed three ships during the evening and we were passed by two today. A French Mail ship, and a Blue Funnel boat called the "Eurylochus". Our old tub only does about ten knots while the others do up to fifteen and over. The weather is keeping fine; if it was not for the shiver of the ship owing to the engines we would hardly know we were moving.

The sea is like glass and the air as clear as crystal. Dozens and dozens of small fishing craft all around us, funny boats and sails.

#### 4.2.32.

We have had land in sight now since yesterday morning, but hardly see a ship now but on the wireless there are dozens to be heard. I heard the luxury liner "Empress of Britain", she is on a world cruise, talking to HongKong and Bangkok in Siam.

You should see me now, thin vest, a pair of short pants and a belt, no shoes or stockings on. The Captain is going round in Silk Pyjama pants, a vest and a pair of open work slippers. You can get them in Hongkong for about a shilling a pair. Expect when we go round the corner at Singapore the weather will change.

#### 5.2.32.

We went through Singapore harbour yesterday morning, very hazy so could not see much of it, but what was to be seen promises to be very interesting when we return. The harbour is simply full of islands and a perfect natural harbour.

As I thought the weather is starting to change, it is still warm but a cool breeze seems to be trying to spring up. We have lost sight of land again but it will not be very long before we sight it again.

I can hear our destination calling me on the radio but I can't seem to get him to hear me. I shall have to try at it again at 4.30am tomorrow. Yes, I am up very early every morning about 4am. I get up to get our Press news but the Japanese stations are starting to blot out signals from Rugby.

#### 8.2.32.

As you can see by the date the time is going very fast. We struck our first bit of a roll on Sunday, just enough to let us know we were at sea. It rained a bit but cleared up nicely in the afternoon. We have passed a few ships since then, some of them bound for Singapore, and one overtook us on the way to HongKong.

I still have some of my fudge left and am going to get some lollies when we tie up. I want to try and get some of the coins of the different places we go to, it will be interesting to get them first hand.

I am sitting here in an old shirt, short khaki pants, no socks and my feet stuck into my slippers. A pair of phones on my head, ships going on all around me with a loud speaker going full blast into the bargain. I'm thinking of something altogether different.

I hear them going and I can take it all in, and am writing part of this letter.

Most of the ships are going to Shanghai and other parts of China and are getting advice to stay away until further advice received. I am longing to get hold of a paper again as have had no news for the last few days due to too much interference from Japanese high-powered stations. This is a very busy route for ships and they jam and interfere with each other.

I got some music the other night from Bangkok in Siam, they were playing a selection from "Merrie England", what a mix up. Never heard anything so funny in all my life. Then they gave a "countries" selection. Heaven knows





## 📖 Dates for your Diary 📖

Friday 2 June	8.00pm General Meeting; Malcolm Stride: A History of Brush Electrical Engineering; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Saturday 10 June	Club day for Chingford/Chelmsford SME; contact D Harris/M Chrisp
Monday 12 June	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Friday 16 June	8.00pm Loco Section meeting; Ralph Copnall on Argentine Railways; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Saturday 17 June	Birthday party (Hibbitt - help required)
Sunday 18 June	Marine Section; Submarine Day at Colney Heath
Friday 23 June	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for July News Sheet</i>
Saturday 24 June	North American Section Open Day at Colney Heath
Tuesday 27 June	8.00pm Tyttenhanger Committee Meeting; Colney Heath (in the coach)
Saturday 1 July	Colney Heath School Fete; contact D Harris
Friday 7 July	8.00pm General Meeting; Forum: Soldering, brazing & welding; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Sunday 9 July	Toy Boat Regatta, Colney Heath
Monday 10 July	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
<b>Friday 14 July</b>	<b>8.00pm Extraordinary General Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley</b>
Tuesday 18 July	Visit by children from St Luke's School (help required) Contact: Pam Corcoran
Thursday 20 July	Visit by the Chernobyl Children (help required)
Friday 21 July	Loco Section BBQ at Colney Heath
Friday 21 July	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for August News Sheet</i>
Tuesday 25 July	8.00pm Tyttenhanger Committee Meeting; Colney Heath (in the coach)
Saturday 29 July	Club day for Northolt SME; contact Ian Johnston
Friday 4 August	7.00pm General Meeting; BBQ at Colney Heath; contact Mike Chrisp
Saturday 12 August	Private Function
Monday 14 August	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Friday 18 August	Loco Section BBQ at Colney Heath
Friday 18 August	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for September News Sheet</i>
Tuesday 22 August	8.00pm Tyttenhanger Committee Meeting; Colney Heath (in the coach)
Saturday 26 August	Private Function
Monday 28 August	Bank Holiday—members' running day at Colney Heath
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Every Wednesday	Miniature Railways, British and American and Video Group at HQ
Every Thursday	Slot Cars Section at HQ
Every Sunday	Morning work parties at Colney Heath (start 9.00am).

(Continued from bottom of previous page)

The engineer took the frog out of his pocket, smiled at it and returned it to the pocket. The frog then cried out, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a Princess, I'll stay with you for one week and do ANYTHING you want." Again, the engineer took the frog out, smiled at it and put it back into his pocket. Finally, the frog asked, "What is the matter? I've told you I'm a beautiful princess, and that I'll stay with you for one week and do anything you want. Why won't you kiss me?" The engineer said, "Look, I'm an engineer. I don't have time for a girlfriend, but a talking frog, now that's cool."

IV. What is the difference between mechanical engineers and civil engineers?  
 Mechanical engineers build weapons and civil engineers build targets.