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Thoughts of Chairman Dell

A couple of weeks ago I bumped into an old work mate whom I worked with many years ago in the 1940s and 1950s. We both joined W.WATSON and SON microscope makers EST. 1837. on a 3 year apprenticeship. As it was still wartime, 2 years were taken off - before the war, it was always 5 years. I was 16 years old when I started my time and it was pointed out that you won't go onto full rate until you're 21.

As usual with apprenticeships, I went through the various shops. The shops were as follows - 3 optical shops; machine shop and tool room; mounting shop where the lenses were fitted into the metal mounts; the framing shop, which was final assembly.

I didn't like my stay in the machine shop very much, so by mutual consent I was transferred back to the optical shop which I liked very much. I spent more time in the optical shop than the other apprentices. Anyway, management had no doubts about where my interests lay. The optical shops employed about 125 men most of them skilled tradesman. We also had a smattering of women to perform the less exacting tasks. I hope that doesn't sound sexist but it was true at the time.

The optical shops numbered 3. No.1 made field and eye piece lenses; No.2 made objective lenses - these were quite small - 10 mm dia down to 2mm oil immersion fronts - it took a man of special quality to produce these lenses or so we thought at the time; No.3 shop was the big lens shop, 50mm dia up to 250mm dia and beyond. On some occasions this was the shop I liked most. Contained in this shop was a small section known as the hand figuring section. Let me explain, a polishing machine can only bring a large lens up to a certain standard; from then it had to be finished by hand, sometimes a very slow and laborious business. They also made all the master test plates for all the shops. Another thing which appealed at the time, was that in all other shops the jobs were timed quite tightly - big lenses are more affected by temperature and other factors, no air conditioning and temperature control in those days - they did try to time jobs, but in the end gave it up as a bad job, so the pace was a little more laid back, although you still had to keep your end up. Whether I would be able to join this section, I could but hope.

When I finished my time, I went into the big lens shop. I still wanted to join the hand fig section and my luck held good and my ambitions were realised sooner than I dared hope. One of the men on the hand fig section was on the fiddle and he was found out. He was called to the foreman's office and sacked on the spot. News of a sacking spreads like wild fire, and on Monday morning I was outside the foreman's office at 8 am sharp. I asked him if he would consider me for the hand fig section, and after a lot of talk, he agreed to give me a month's trial, stressing that no extra money would be forthcoming until I proved myself.

I've roughed in the back ground, and next month I will tell you what life was really like on the shop floor, good times and bad.

Frank Dell

Off the Cuff

We had a good, well attended, February Council Meeting. I'd made a mistake in the Minutes which was noted and corrected. The final polish was given to the changes to the Constitution which the Council will propose to members for their consideration and perhaps amendment at an Extraordinary General Meeting preceding the Annual General Meeting on Friday 7th May. Meantime I have a bit of titivating to do to the typescript and every member will receive a copy of the Constitution incorporating the suggested changes with the April News Sheet which will give you plenty of time to consider and digest the document before the AGM. I will leave any reference to the proposed subscription increases to other Council members to comment upon.

Your Chairman confirmed that more paving stones and cement were being obtained so the hard edge round the boat pool can be completed. Never fear - that won't be the end of the work as the whole area will then have to be tidied up, landscaped, and grass seed sown in time for the glorious Spring weather we are all looking forward to. There is a slight hitch to obtaining a container which we hope will soon be resolved as the sooner we get it, the sooner we will have our secure store.

I am beginning to receive information from other Societies about open days etc., and elsewhere in this News Sheet you will find details of a forthcoming talk at the Royston Society about the Isle of Man Railways & Tramways which may interest some of you. For my sins I then raised the subject of birthday parties and fetes. We want to home in on birthday parties which are easier to organise as they are held "on site" at Colney Heath - so if any of you have friends with young children who might be interested then PLEASE put them in touch with me. As far as fetes are concerned I will leave this to Rod Pomeroy to put you in the picture - suffice to say, we are going to pay our annual visit to Colney Heath School when John Squire will take his traction engine along. This will be on Saturday 19th June (Prince Edward's wedding day, in case you're interested!) from noon to 4pm in case any of you want to give John a hand.

The Treasurer tabled a membership application which was approved and a change of address for the Baxter Family - details elsewhere in this issue, and said subscription forms would be sent out with the March News Sheet.

A risk assessment document for Headquarters has been started. The usual Section reports followed, with little for Marine to report until the pond is finished and the boating season starts: Cine members are shortly hosting the annual Triangle

Competition and meantime are buying a new projection screen - 50:50 funding with the Society: 00 members are checking over their Binnegar layout ready for display at exhibitions: HO members are due to host the annual meeting of the North American Railway Association which, this year, will be held at a Peterborough hotel: on the Loco front the recently elected Track Committee have held their first meeting which no doubt Rod Pomeroy will report on, and maintenance and other work continues at Colney Heath every Sunday morning when more help will always be appreciated: finally Stationary Steam members are beginning to feel tempted by various forthcoming events.

That about wraps it up for February. Spring is on the horizon and summer won't be far behind so we've got plenty to look forward to.

Beryl Collingwood

[Tyttenhanger Gazette](#)

The February Loco Meeting topic was a surprise organised by Mike Chrisp, and what unfolded was a video interview he had produced with Ted Jolliffe speaking to Martin Evans, who, as we know, was editor of the Model Engineer magazine and seen by many as a successor to LBSC.

Martin spoke about joining the Model Railway Club at the age of sixteen and going on club visits to Kings Cross and Paddington, where a driver would allow him to pull down the regulator and move the loco a few yards down the yard. He felt that he had always had a railway spirit. At the age of nineteen, and keen to get into the railways, he wrote to Nigel Gresley himself. A letter back from one of his lower ranks offered him an interview at Kings Cross station. Whilst he did not speak to Gresley, he did see him in the office. Back home, after discussing the technical and financial details with his father, the whole idea just fizzled out. So he never did work on the railways, but considers himself a close observer.

Asked about his family, Martin spoke of his father, who came from Leicester, where he met his mother and then moved down to West Hackney where he was born. His father was a doctor in general service, who had plenty of wealthy patients and used to do quite well. Martin found new places for loco spotting near Springfield Park and the Leyton Marshes by the G.E.R.

After the war, he started a shop specialising in '00' gauge, with larger gauges coming in later. The shop really got him into model engineering, which, he said, he lapped up straight away. In 1951 he closed the shop and worked for Lines Brothers as a charge engineer with small model components. Eventually they decided to move from London to a new factory between Margate and Broadstairs. It was interesting work and Martin took a flat down there. His next move was back to East London working for a Swiss firm as a sales engineer. His employer, whilst being very successful, was difficult to get along with, which prompted an application to work for the Model Engineer magazine. He was taken on along with Oliver Smith, in the seven floor building in London's Noel Street. There was a workshop in the basement, a terrible mess and run down, with old lathes, although there was a gas-fired stationary boiler of 100 psi capability which was to prove useful. A brand new Myford Super Seven lathe was bought, and shortly after, a 'Senior' milling machine, second hand this time. Norman Maskelyne worked part time and had designed a gauge one loco called 'Newbury'. Martin's job was to build one for Percival Marshall Ltd.. His first major project was a 2-6-4 LMS tank called Jubilee, as it

was the Jubilee of the 'Model Engineer' at that time. He had sent to BR for the works drawings and had a whole pile come back, which he scaled down. He did not find it difficult to redesign it in this smaller scale so that it would be successful, as he had read the work of K.N.Harris and also of Greenly, so he knew a bit about it.

When asked about his colleagues he spoke of Maskelyne as a railway enthusiast and an outstanding craftsman. He would come up to Martin's board and offer suggestions. A charming old chap, rather Edwardian, always perfectly dressed, he was about 64 years of age then, and would be seen out carrying a black rolled umbrella. His grandfather had invented the typewriter. Martin had never met Percival Marshall, who had died before Martin joined the Company.

Leslie Howard was Martin's boss, a clever journalist but without a knowledge of engineering, which often led him to Martin with queries. At that time, Maskelyne was part time and Edgar Westbury was the Technical Editor. A draughtsman, two sub-editors and a photographer made up the team.

The Model Engineer was not the Company's only product - there was Model Aircraft News, Model Railway News and the Woodworker magazines. However, life was far too easy, the staff could come and go as they pleased and Martin could do more or less what he liked in the workshop. The magazine could not be paying its way. It was then taken over by the Electrical Press, a printers with a head office in Maidenhead; they in turn were taken over by the British Electric Traction Company, a large firm, quoted on the Stock Exchange. One day a chauffeur driven limousine arrived carrying the Company Chairman. He walked around asking questions and it was felt that something big was about to happen. Sure enough, six months later the Company moved to Maidenhead. The staff were paid travelling expenses and could arrive for work at 9.30 am and leave early. Martin travelled daily by car from his home in Stewkely near Leighton Buzzard. The Model Engineer was situated in one big room.

Eighteen months later there was another uproar when MAP took control and practically the whole staff was sacked. Under Laidlaw-Dickinson, Martin worked as Editor with Vic Smeed on the managerial side; one draughtsman and a secretary completed the whole staff.

The printing process was discussed, being a paste up system, completely different from today. The paste up articles went to the printer who made the blocks from the photographs. There was a bit of to and fro here but the system worked well - all before litho'.

There was always a stack of articles awaiting publication from various authors, namely Edgar Westbury, Norman Maskelyne, Bill Hughes the traction engine specialist, Geoffrey King noted for stationary steam and Ted Jeynes. Martin was asked of his recollections of Model Engineering Exhibitions, which started in the Horticultural Hall, the judges being Professor Chaddock and K.N.Harris and himself. Martin has judged at every one since then. For some reason the exhibitions stopped and were restarted under Laidlaw-Dickinson at the Cora Hotel in Russell Square, which was a small exhibition with no trade stands. Bill Carter's Atlantic won first prize, followed by Peter Dupen's 4-4-0 Midland inside cylinder locomotive. Seymour Hall was the next venue, complete with trade stands. Martin felt that, in those days, the local papers were far more interested in reporting the exhibitions.

Martin was asked of his colleagues and what he remembers of them. He spoke of Edgar Westbury as owning a motorcycle and sidecar and being a friend of Lawrence of Arabia,

that is, T.E.Shaw, who was killed in a motor cycle accident. He was also a friend of Frank Whittle and had done some work on his jet engine. Greenly was a man who was kindly thought of until LBSC came along. He once he saw Greenly on a stand at an exhibition with his drawings spread out, but as Martin was quite a junior at the time, he did not like to approach the great man.

He got to know LBSC and visited his house. His small workshop was packed full of machinery, a track was in the garden, a bedroom in the house had a drawing board in it, some photographs on the walls and nothing else in it. He got on quite well with LBSC and recalled being offered a cup of tea. It was made with tinned milk, and this was many years after the war with its food shortages! - that was one of those simple things which one tends to remember.

Martin then talked about the row which caused LBSC to stop writing in the Model Engineer magazine for some two or three years. As LBSC's articles on one loco had come to an end, Les Howard of the ME requested LBSC to do a simple locomotive, but he had already sent a 4-6-4 3 ½ " gauge new design loco general assembly drawing to the ME, and he had other drawings underway. Les Howard stressed that, as Editor, he decided what would go into the magazine. LBSC wrote to British Electric Traction stating his case and it was not until the MAP take over that Laidlaw-Dickinson phoned LBSC saying, 'You can come back now, Curly'.

An amusing incident came as a result of a query in the ME on how one fits the return crank to its shaft on Walchaerts valve gear. In full size, it was a sort of tongue and groove, held with four bolts, making a positive location. This was where LBSC was sometimes wrong on his technical details. He claimed the return crank was held on solely with four bolts. The ME pointed out that it would be difficult tapping for four 10 BA bolts into the end of the silver steel shaft. LBSC wrote back saying, nonsense, and Martin refused to print it, and against Laidlaw-Dickinson's wishes, put in the original copy and not the LBSC corrected one. An altercation followed, and Martin said that he could not print incorrect information.

Finally, of I.M.L.E.C., how did this start? Martin had originally suggested to Les Howard that we had this type of competition and he turned it down. Later, after discussions, Laidlaw-Dickinson thought it was a good idea, and Martin eventually ran it single handed for the first three years. Since then it has been followed up with great enthusiasm.

It is with thanks to Mike for creating the video which has captured Martin in the annals of our Model Engineering history.

Roger Bell

Marine Mumbles strikes again

Before I start my report for the January Marine meeting, I would like to say how pleasing it was to see so many attending considering the state of the weather.

The first topic of conversation was the Model Engineering Exhibition. Our stand was the most original of all the stands there. Congratulations to the Society for winning the best stand award. I was sorry to see so few ships in the competition. Forty eight in all categories, when you consider how many were in each category years ago.

Derek Perham gave us an extremely informative talk on casting using a medium he called "Dip It" as a mould. "Dip It" is used by machine tool makers as the gel protector that covers the cutting surface. It is easily liquefied by heat. A "master" is inserted while still liquid and removed when set. Derek used a two part epoxy glue to make the mouldings. His first attempts had air bubbles trapped, but the demon tobacco tin (which all model engineers seem to have unlimited stocks of), was brought into play. Put outlet tube in lid, pour and make mould in tin base, add epoxy glue, put lid on, attach tube to vacuum pump. No bubbles. Easy.

The beauty of the "Dip It" medium is that you can use it over and over again by heating it to liquid form again. There was then an open discussion on sail winches and where to put them (in a boat, that is). Frank then produced a vast quantity of rigging cord that he acquired legally. Enough to have his own car boot sale.

He then concluded the meeting with a report on the last Council meeting. Next month, Frank is going to show a video on airbrushing, which he did get from a car boot sale, honest!

And finally I want to mention the incredible bargain Gazebo Tom Luxford and Frank Inman were able to purchase for the Society so we can sail our boats, even if it's raining. It really is made of top quality material which will last a very long time.

Peter Stern

[Track News](#)

Welcome to March, with just one month to go before the start of the season we still have many jobs to do at the track, and so more help is required.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the March Loco meeting will now be a Work in Progress, so I look forward to seeing many items on the table. At the February meeting Derek Perham informed us that the Pop-Pop Boat Championships would be held at the Track on the 3rd Friday in April (16th) with a Trophy provided by David Jones, for the winner. Another Club competition to watch out for this season will be the Arkley Cup, for those of you who don't know, Tom Luxford can give you a good idea of what to expect but be prepared for some surprises.

So far we have two provisional Birthday Party bookings for the coming season, both for members.

Other bookings for this year are as follows:

Sat. 19th June - Colney Heath School :- John Squire

Sun. 11th July Greenwood Park, Chiswell Green, St.Albans

Both of the above dates have been covered by Traction Engines, and I feel sure that any help would be greatly appreciated.

The 1999 Track Rota has changed slightly from the one published last month so please check to see if this affects you.

Rod Pomeroy

Stationary Steam, Traction Engines & Road Locomotives

Firstly as SS section leader, I must tell you that Terry Baxter is moving to Sudbury and wish Lyndsay, Jenny and Terry every happiness in their new home.

The new season is coming and the dates in the diary are already beginning to arrive. Three particular dates for the SSTE&RL section.

First:-

The annual boiler testing date for those with steel boilers or in need of a new disc for the 1999 season will be Sunday 21st March, when Terry will be present.

Second:-

The Colney Heath School Fete. We have run two successful though damp fetes for the local school using traction engines to give the rides. Last year we steamed at Colney Heath and drove to the school which makes all more fun. The date is Saturday 19th June the fete runs from 12 - 4 pm so put it in your diary now.

Third:-

We have been invited to take part in an event to celebrate the coming millennium on Sunday 11th July. This is the St Stephen's Parish Council Millennium Pageant to be held at Greenwood Park Chiswell Green. Times etc. nearer the day.

John Squire

Railways & Tramways on the Isle of Man

Railways & Tramways on the Isle of Man The Royston Model Engineering Society is holding an "open evening" on Wednesday 7th April, at 7.30pm at Meldreth Manor School, Fenny Lane, Meldreth, nr Royston, when Alan Denny will give an illustrated talk on the above subject. The lecture room will be sign-posted from the school car park, and admission will be free though a collection will be made towards the rebuild of the Isle of Man locomotive No.4 "Loch".

"Loch" was built by Beyer Peacock of Manchester in 1874, delivered in time for the opening of the Port Erin line and continued in operation until 1955, having completed 1,523,510 miles. Around 1967 restoration work started, a new boiler was fitted, and "Loch" came back into service in 1968. "Loch" was again withdrawn from service in 1996, becoming a static exhibit in the Port Erin Railway Museum, and now the locomotive is to be overhauled and brought back into service once again on the Port Erin line.

Mike Collingwood

The Gutteridge Cup

At the January council meeting it was decided to reinstate the Gutteridge Cup. It is to be

presented at the A.G.M.to a member in appreciation of outstanding service to the Society. This is in lieu of the Honorary Membership which has been our practice.

Extract from the Society's News Sheet No 10 Dated November 1946

"A cup has been given to the Society by the Hon Secretary, Mr. E. Guttridge. This cup, to be awarded annually and held for one year by the member who, in the opinion of the Council, has to the greatest extent aided the society to achieve its objects as laid down in Clause 2 of the Constitution"

Clause 2.~ The objects of the Society.shall be ~

- (a) the encouragement and practice of the craft of designing, making and using models of all classes.
- (b) The fostering of interest in hand and machine tools, scientific, electrical,and radio apparatus and the like, and there making and use.
- (c) The bringing together of individuals with similar interests, and co-operation with societies with similar aims for the mutual benefit of all.
- (d) The encouragement among the members, and in particular among the younger members, of craftsmanship and pride in their work.

This is a list of the recipients engraved thereon, (with a short note by T.G.L.):-

- 1947. A.J.Bradley Editor of the news sheet
- 1948. W.H. Vaughan Leader of the Scientific and Experimental Section
- 1949. A.E.Simes Our contact on the Barnet District Gas and Water Company.
- 1950. The Society.
- 1951. The Society.
- 1952. J.E.R.Wuidart Instrumental in the construction of the Portable and Fixed Tracks
- 1953. A Gudgar Stationary steam and workshop manager.
- 1954. A.R.W. Pinnoc Drove his Loco round the track on his Ninetieth birthday.
- 1955. G.A. Langdell
- 1956. E Stace Managing Director of the B.D.G.W. Co
- 1957. W.R.Lee. The main mind behind the construction of the Cockran Boiler.
- 1958. G Cashmore A builder of fine Locos and a great worker for the good of the Society.
- 1959. W.W.Ransom
- 1960. E.J.Pritchard An exponent of radio controlled Aircraft and Model boats
- 1961 T.W.Pinnock A leader of the Rail Car and Slot car Section .Solicitor for the Society
- 1962 S.Hutchins Caretaker of Head Quarters
- 1963 S.Hutchins ditto
- 1964 The Workers at Colney Heath As named on the plaque on the side of the Track
- 1965 L.E.Brooks. Chairman of the Society
- 1966 J.Calderbank Long time Treasurer A Precise Model Engineer

Submitted by Tom Luxford

Unusual Fastenings!!

I found this very useful line in fastenings, which I thought, may be of particular use to our membership and may be worth publishing. I'm not sure how easy they are to obtain as they of American origin, but if members contact me I'll do my best to obtain supplies.

 Unusual Fastenings!!

John Squire

Wooden hulled RAF Rescue Launch For Sale

For Sale

Wooden hulled RAF Rescue Launch, with drawings £ 35 o.n.o.

Email Rod - care of the administrator at bluematter@comports.com



Rod

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