

The Chairman's Notes

The 'Curly Bowl' was a great success and I would like to thank all those involved in the very hard work that makes these events we put on so good. They say success is its own reward so the organisers should feel well rewarded.

We have had yet another successful day providing rides for Mencap. This is an annual event and goes from strength to strength thanks to the members' support. The Council meeting fell due on the 11th September and in the light of the dreadful events taking place in the USA the meeting was postponed until the following week. I have sent a message of sympathy to the North American Model Railway Association on behalf of our club and the many members of the NMRA in the H0 section.

John Squire



Annual Halloween Celebration

**A Spooky Night at Colney Heath from
7.00pm Onwards, Saturday 27th October**

**Night Rides by Steam and Diesel
Illuminations and Bonfire
Fun and Ghosts
Hot Soup and Rolls**

From the Membership Secretary

Membership currently stands at 227, consisting of: 12 honorary, 120 full, 60 OAP, 13 junior and 22 country members

New Members

This month we welcome six new members approved at the September Council Meeting.

Harold Barrow

Geoffrey Mogg

David Foster

John Sandwell

Philip Hyde

Mervyn Smith

Rejoined

Charles Ledden

Change of Address

Steven Don

Bernard Lambert

**Not to be missed! – The First General Meeting Talk
of the Winter Season.**



Mosquito Bombers

A talk at 8.00pm at HQ, Summers Lane, Finchley

By Hugh Fairhead on his extraordinary experiences with Mosquito bombers

Workshop Evenings Again

With Mike Hodgson

There will be workshop evening meetings this winter and a 'Club Thing' to build. Derek Perham who has done such a fine job in running these evenings in the past has finally said, 'no more' to standing at the front. In a moment of weakness I agreed to take over.

Now, for these meetings to be worthwhile, we need something to build so that we suffer the same problems in our separate workshops. My own choice would have been some sort of tooling or instrumentation – I seem to be that sort of person. However by popular demand, this year's build will be 'so help me' a steam locomotive – the gauge 1 spirit fired 0-6-0 'Project'. This follows on from the success of the Garden Railway where I noted that the enthusiasm seems to be inversely proportional to the gauge, i.e. it's big. A general arrangement drawing of the chassis is shown over page. So for my own build I shall have to content myself with tools, jigs and fixtures for the project.

I must ask you all to be patient with me while I learn the language of model railway gauges and the ways and practises of model steam.

So the first 'date for your diary' will be Friday 26th October at 8pm. And the workshop nights will continue on the fourth Friday of each month. Looking ahead at my diary for November I see that it has no less than five Fridays. Since by that time there will be much work on the table, some of it for certain running on air, we could use another meeting so I intend to claim 'squatters rights' on that fifth Friday (i.e. 30th November) for an extra meeting.

So here's to happy metal cutting.

Mike Hodgson

Small Steam Boiler Tests

I am delighted to say that due to the success of our garden railway our boiler testers have been inundated with extra work. John West has kindly volunteered to act as a boiler tester for these smaller boilers. This has been agreed and his name will now be added to the list of boiler testers.

John will be able to test boilers for 0 Gauge, Gauge 1 and Model Boats. He will not test the larger boilers of locos from 2.5" gauge upwards.

May I also take this opportunity on your behalf to thank the boiler testers for their hard work and to remind all members that they need to contact a boiler tester to arrange for a test. They are not available on demand.

Finally, may I remind you that it is the owner's responsibility to have suitable plugs and adapters ready for the test.

John Squire, Chairman

Make the most of the good times as I will be back in mid-October to do the Sunday working parties' teas and coffees again. That will make a horrible difference once again to the present happy time you are having

Peter Tea Boy

Marine Mutterings

From Bernard Lambert

John Morgan is reporting next month on our September Open Day, which was a great success and achieved a good turnout of both visitors and members.

John has breathed life into the Marine activities this year and deserves a hearty vote of thanks from all of us. I think the Lake and the Marine Section are now established as an active part of the Society.

The Winter Season is fast approaching and indoor meetings will take place at H Q on the third Friday in each month starting on the 19th. October. We hope to combine our evenings with the Garden Railway Section as we have many common members and common interests. A bigger audience would permit us to seek outside speakers – more on this next month.

Winter working parties will take place on Sunday mornings from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. starting on Sunday 4th. November. There are plenty of jobs available on Lake improvements and we need a little more effort if we are to complete them - all will be welcome!

Finally, thank you Sam Skuce for taking over my track steward duties and leaving me free for the Marine Open Day.

Happy boating - Bernard Lambert

Welcome back Peter Shewry

from the Editor

As many members will know, Peter Shewry has been incapacitated for several months and has been unable to attend Society events. Unfortunately Peter developed a septic toe that just seemed to refuse to heal and eventually infected the bone. Ultimately it meant a visit to the hospital and his toe was amputated.

But I'm happy to say that Peter is now well on the way to recovery and I'm sure everyone wishes him well for the future.

Just to prove that he really is feeling his old self again, Peter has put his tongue in his cheek and penned the following poem:

Watch Out

Up at Headquarters where the big-wigs all go
To Council meetings where they seldom say, 'no'
There's a horrible rumour doing the rounds.
I wonder if it will be as bad as it sounds.

It seems Peter the tea boy could be on his way back
To do work party teas up at Colney Heath Track.
Jim Robson was better it must be said,
So why not let me stay in my bed.

Most people say Jim makes a good cup of tea.
All people say my efforts just look like wee.
At least Jim stood in. He did his turn
Of boiling the tea water up in the urn.

If Peter comes back the workers will leave.
Then there will be no one to work, dig and heave.
Oh dear what a pity it was so much better
With me out the way. I was just like a fetter.

I'm a miserable fella. I'm a miserable sod.
I treat everybody as if I was God.
I don't say a word, even grin or smile.
My innerds must definitely be filled up with bile.

It would be much better to get someone new
To do this fine job. It could even be you.
At least you'd be warm and dry when it blows and rains
And you'd be helping the squad to keep playing trains.

Help!!

It doesn't bode good for the Colney Heath Track..
It seems that the tea boy is soon coming back..

A Day to Remember: The 2001 Curly Bowl

By Jim Macdonald

8.55am on September 2nd 2001 was the time for me to relax and tell myself, 'if it isn't done now, it isn't going to be done.' But as far as I could tell all was well and everyone who volunteered for a key job was in position and all appeared to be working well. At this point you start to worry about the rest of the day. What if it rains and keeps everyone away? Would anyone come from other Societies? Would the public come? Another concern was the promised publicity from my colleague at the BBC. Would he turn up? And if he did would he get anything on air that day? After

all, the last I heard from Ian Pearce was, 'I'll be there as soon as I can.' That was three weeks ago. I needn't have worried. As promised, around eleven in the morning Ian appeared jogging from the school car park in the light drizzle we had in the early part of the day. After a quick introduction to Mike Chrisp I left them to talk about the event, I never saw Ian again. The story from the studio is that he arrived ready to do his programme three minutes before he was due on air, with five minutes of news and an extender signature tune he played the interview (all 20 mins of it) straight from the disk as recorded: A very brave and confident broadcaster to attempt that. I have a copy if anyone is interested in listening to it.

It was good to see all our railways at Colney Heath operating with both raised track and ground level pulling passengers. The catering department did exceptional business all day. Even the bar did brisk business (surprise, surprise)! Visitors to the exhibitions in the marquee and the station areas were treated to a very high standard of exhibit with a range of models from all sections including the ladies who showed their skills in lace and card making.

It would be unfair to mention any individual in this account but special thanks must go to all who helped with the catering, car park duty and transport to and from, passenger rides and not least the running of the competition itself. They all know who they are and if you were there so do you. A very special **Thank You**.

Was the day a success? It's not for me to say, except to say all who attended seemed to have a good time. Those participating in the competition went home happy having had a good day out with lots of chatting about model engineering. We can only speculate on the attendance but one estimate is that over six hundred members and visitors came through the gate on the day.

Financially we did well, although we have not yet received the final account. We hope to cover the cost of our new marquee and the three gazebos purchased for the Society and we are grateful to the 9th St Albans Scout Troop for the loan of their large catering marquee. It is true that we could have sold more raffle tickets had we bought a bigger book, but the day was not about making money, not even proving to the rest of the world that we are one of the top model engineering societies. No, it was just to prove we can still enjoy ourselves and run an international competition on the side.

Nuff said.

The LBSC Memorial Bowl

By Donal Corcoran

The LBSC Bowl started at around 9am on September 2nd. The Judges arrived and more importantly so did most of the entrants, our own Ian Murray being last. A comment about the shortest journey taking the longest time might be appropriate, but maybe later.

The poor old entrants had a scary welcome to the site, as the first person that most of them met was me. For those of you who missed my face at around 9am it was covered in all of the remains of Susan's ash pan, and to be completely honest it didn't improve.

While our entrants arrived the good old British weather went from cold to pouring down. Jim Macdonald obviously didn't pay enough money for the good weather and we made do with the on and off rain and shine.

An introduction as to why I am writing this may be appropriate. The main reason is that I got what is arguably the second best job of the day, second only behind the judges. I organised the entrants running order and tried to make sure that they and their colleagues had a great day out.

The competition started with our own Vice Chairman Dick Payne. Well that was the idea anyway but Dick had problems steaming up his recently acquired 'Eva May', which to his dismay had steamed perfectly the day before, so in stepped David Jones and his 'Tich', who therefore kicked off the competition with what David described as a good run which he was pleased with. And he should have been as it eventually gained him third place.

Dick managed to solve his steaming problems 'with a little help from his friends' and got onto the Cuckoo Line where he did himself proud, which meant he didn't finish in the top three. At this point I feel I should point out that I have about as much idea as to the final positions outside the top three as anybody. Although I should point out, (now that he is not speaking to me) that Dick did deserve an award for then going on to the main line and hauling passenger after passenger.

The third entrant to take part was Peter De-Salis Johnston our first visitor and a member of the 2.5" Gauge Association. His engine the 2.5" gauge 'Fayette' called 'Millennium Faye' was stunning, and ran fantastically well with the exception that the front bogie kept derailing. This was later found to have most likely been caused by a couple of small defects in the track which Peter found after his run.

Peter got an extended run as 'Mac' Miles had a clack problem on his 'Maid of Kent' which meant his run had to be delayed until after lunch. This posed a slight problem to us as Mac was due to be the last run before lunch, the entrants were now getting ready to have their lunch and Mac's 'Maid' had to be taken down to the mainline steaming bays to ease the dropping of his grate. This presented something of a

nightmare because trains had to be stopped on the Mainline whilst the 'Maid' was transferred onto the mainline and another 'Maid' had to be transferred onto the Cuckoo Line steaming bays.

The competition, being a similar test of each engine took place on the Cuckoo Line so that all the gauges could be run on the same section of track. This meant that had Mac's 'Maid' (try saying that fast, three times) not had its problem, 'Millennium Faye' would only have had a thirty minute run which would have been very unfortunate.

The 'Maid' transferred onto the Cuckoo line steaming bays belonged to Chris Dawe, Chris came down from Cambridge MES and it turns out that he had not told anyone other than his wife and friend whom accompanied him that he was attending the event.

The engine was acquired from an elderly gentleman, who was unable to maintain her. Chris had done some work to transform her into the engine she is now, and to my amazement it was only their fifth or sixth attempt at steaming her. They did brilliantly well however and carried on running through the lunch break, and onto the main line when the competition resumed.

Mac Miles and Brian Apthorpe had managed to fix Mac's 'Maid of Kent's' clack just before lunch which meant once lunch had ended the 'Maid' had to be reverse run back up the track to the Cuckoo line and again the traffic had to be stopped so that we could quickly achieve our aim.

Mac's 'Maid' didn't have a problem the second time round. The problem had been solved allowing him to take part in the competition, his grin now firmly secured on his face, showing that he was having a great day, even though the tea could not come round often enough for him. After his run he too went onto the main line where he enjoyed a good afternoon's run.

Tony Hueck was next on with his 3.5" gauge 'Mona', Tony reckoned that it was a pocket rocket and judging by the way it went on the mainline after his competition run, I would find it hard to disagree. Tony came down from Derby MES, the same Society our head judge Denis Monk comes from.

Tony and his 'Mona' was the only run that I watched from start to finish. In fact I spent most of the time sitting on the traverser talking to a rather nervous owner, and it shows that even in a friendly environment like the LBSC Bowl when they pass their pride and joy over to the judges they still worry about what will spoil a perfect run.

The penultimate entrant was Peter Brown, who came all the way up from the Isle of Wight MES, although he did stop overnight in Harpenden. Harpenden is the one direction that is least well signed so naturally it took him some time to get here, but you can never win them all. Peter's engine was a 5" gauge 'Speedy', which 'volunteer' Les Brimson and I moved onto the Cuckoo Line steaming bay. It's a heavy beast and with people walking around the area all day the ground was rather slippery. I for one was glad it went onto the mainline after its run.

I missed Peter's run whilst trying to organise a driving truck for Tony and his 'Mona'. I eventually succeeded but got back only in time to move the Speedy onto the Mainline. With Ian Murrey using his own driving truck Peter was given the competition driving truck. Ian's truck would later cause all sorts of problems.

Ian being the last entrant to run meant the atmosphere was even more relaxed, unless of course you were Ian, whose finger nails can't be very long even this long after the event. Ian got his 3.5" gauge 'Britannia' fired up well, too well almost, as Ian's problems were only just beginning.

Once on the Cuckoo line he tried to put the engine into forward gear. He couldn't. It turned out that the universal joint under the running board was a plastic spigot joint which melted, apparently he had had a similar problem with the one in the cab and had changed it over last winter, but had thought that the one under the running board would not have got so hot.

Then just as Ian thought it could not get any worse he went to pull away, but the only thing that happened was the driving wheels spun. It seemed almost as if there was a brake on stopping the driving truck from moving, but all appeared to be moving freely - well until weight was placed on the truck and the body of the driving truck drove down onto the wheels and stopped them from turning.

This meant that I had to pinch the driving truck from Tony, which I had just spent the last twenty minutes trying to find! Tony's run was over for the day as a result but it did mean that Ian could have his go at the competition. This he did and it went fantastically well and all seemed to be pleased with it.

I think that it would be fair to say that there was not one person on the site whom would disagree with the judges' decision, so Peter De-Salis Johnston and his 'Millennium Faye' walked away with the Memorial Bowl, even though in his excitement he forgot the carrying case.

Lastly, this short half page has run on long enough, but I must thank Jonathan Avery for his fantastic plaques which were well worth all his running about, Jim Macdonald for co-ordinating the whole event, Frank Hills for the excellent exhibition, the Ladies for their display (which I wasn't allowed within ten feet) and the catering, Mike Chrisp for something or other, the Judges and most importantly the entrants. It was a great day; I hope you all enjoyed it!

The 2001 Curly Bowl: A Competitor's View

By Ian Murrey

When I was press-ganged into entering this auspicious event by Messrs. Macdonald, Corcoran family and others, who shall remain nameless for fear of reprisals, I had no idea what I was letting myself in for.

I spent several days sprucing up the loco - cleaning, touching up paintwork, checking injectors until I was blue in the face and turning new wheels and axles for my driving truck. Having collected all my various traps (trying frantically not to forget anything too important) I arrived at the track on the Sunday morning just as the rain began to fall. Being a competitor I had the privilege of being able to drive onto the site and all the way up to the coach, by which time I was beginning to feel that competing might just have its compensations. This was reinforced when I had a lunch ticket thrust into my hot little hand. I summoned help to take the loco from the car boot to the official competition area, where the various competing locos were lined up on raised parallel tracks under a pair of gazebos (gazebei?). We competitors, in our engineman's overalls and greasetop hats, stared imperiously at lesser mortals outwith the gazebos where the, by now, incessant warm autumn rain was threatening to raise more steam from damp personages than the competing locomotives themselves. I smiled a thin, grim, knowing smile at my fellow competitors and slipped out from under the shelter of the twin gazebos to read the plastic covered notes about the competitors and their locos. I read and tried to memorise the notes about me and my loco in case I was asked any difficult questions.

There was a small amount of desultory and rather stilted conversation between competitors and I tried to laugh in all the right places and make comment about clacks, clearances, couplings and other things I have read about in LBSC's 'Shop Shed and Road.'

By now the competition proper was well under way. I noticed that the front bogie of one loco kept derailing, another man had trouble raising steam, yet another had injector troubles and had to repair to the steaming bays for emergency treatment. By this time I felt thoroughly at home and decided it was just like a normal Sunday! I then went onto the track to find that my reverser had fallen apart and the new wheels on my driving truck would not go round - so that was alright then!

In due course I found myself the subject of the judges undivided attention (or rather my loco did!). I was asked the history, had I made it in whole or part and were there any special features that the judges should be aware of? I ran through the building history (myself and John Shawe finishing a retirement project), the fact that the running plates, deflectors, cab and steps etc. are all constructed from steel sheet and that the loco has two injectors but no axle pump. The judging parameters for the Curly Bowl, as explained to me, are interesting in themselves in that the winning loco is the one which the judges feel would have appealed to Curly the most. That makes the whole competition completely subjective, which to my mind is brilliant and means that each competitor can look at the other competing locos and know that he stands just as good a chance as anyone else, regardless of how poor he may feel his own

engine is by comparison. The judges answered "Hmm" or " I see " or " Thank you" to each question, which made it feel a little like the driving test I took many years ago.

All in all it was great fun. The competitors were a grand bunch, the judges did a sterling job overcoming all the obstacles thrown at them by the competitors and the winning loco was a truly worthy winner and from what little I know of Curly I have no doubt that he would have approved. Thanks are due also to the ladies for the excellent lunch and to Mike Chrisp whose omni-presence and quiet good humour kept the competition moving over the several hours needed to test all the locos

Confessions of an Itinerant Bartender

By Jim Robson, AA

Shortly before the ‘Curly Bowl’ event I was informed that I was to be in charge of the beer tent; none of this ‘would you like to be?’ or anything rash like that, just ‘you will be’! Possibly my many years of experience as a customer and an inadvertent knack of being first to the bar was deemed sufficient qualification. Fortunately, Alistair Macdonald, a man with an honours degree in after hours drinking was there, theoretically to assist, but in practice to do all the actual running while I discoursed with the customers on model engineering problems, the scope of my knowledge increasing with every pint. We had, by the courtesy of Mike at the ‘Plough’, Tyttenhanger, been given a free keg of Arkell’s bitter and I had been further charged to make sure that it was all consumed. It was in very good order and I did my best, even to the extent of having the odd pint myself, (one must be prepared to make the occasional sacrifice). I have to confess that I failed in this endeavour, but not for lack of trying. I should like to express my gratitude to Alistair for all his hard work.

‘50 Years Ago’

by Grahame Ainge

1951, like so many years in the 20th century was full of important national and international events which might make the activities of the North London Society of Model Engineers seem unimportant by comparison. But modelling was an important part of the daily lives of members of the Society. Just as it provides today an escape from depressing aspects of the world around us, so it must have been then. As always there was plenty of news of war and warfare with the testing of the first H-bomb and the continuing war in Korea. Austin and Morris agreed to merge in what was to be a progressive and depressing reduction in the number of independent car manufacturers in Britain. Even the newborn National Health Service was having teething problems. So there was every reason for members to indulge their hobby even though that in itself sometimes led to friction and bad feeling.

The Saga of the Badge Continues

Readers will remember from last year's '50 Years Ago' that in 1950, especially in the latter part of the year the Society's badge was discussed after criticism of it had been voiced. However, at a General meeting in October 1950, since the great majority of members were not in favour of changing the design nothing more was heard of it. That is until the beginning of 1951, when a 'Badge Committee' was formed whose task was 'to prepare a report for the Council as to whether or not any change is desirable in the Society's badge'. Reading between the lines it seems that because a few influential members did not like the majority decision they formed a Committee to investigate a change in spite of the wishes of the majority! Perhaps I'm doing these people a disservice here but in 1950 a similar change of events had occurred over competition in the Society, so it does make one wonder.

For all that, the Badge Committee decided after due deliberation to keep the design the same and dissolved itself. The badge in question of course is the badge we still have today.

Self-Appointed 'Brains' of the Society!

One of the first events of 1951 was the January General Meeting that took the form of a 'Brains Trust' based on the well-known radio programme of the day, 'Any Questions.' Four prominent members of the Society made up the panel. The first question came from a Mr DE Gordon who wanted to know what information the 'Brains Trust' could offer on swinging field dynamometers. Without hesitation, the team replied they knew nothing about the subject and admitted being 'clean bowled by the first ball!' However Mr ME (Ted) Moon came to their rescue with a comprehensive reply. With such an inauspicious start it was not surprising that the evening developed more as a discussion forum than a formal questioning of the 'Brains Trust'. There were no more 'Brains Trusts' in 1951.

Thrills and Spills of Model Cars

Model cars had proved a great attraction at the Christmas Party for local Sunday school children held at St John's Hall, N20. Although this event had taken place in 1950, it was not reported to the Society until February 1951. Such was the attraction of the Model Cars Section's show at the party that running the cars had to be stopped during the party games because the children were more thrilled with the car racing than with the party games! Later, during the party tea-break interval, a plate of sandwiches and cakes was upset on the Nordromo racing track!

By the middle of the year the Section seemed to have recovered well after the spate of resignations that had occurred at the end of 1950. There were now ten members, all of whom had 1cc cars. The 'new track' was discussed and although the Council's blessing had been obtained and there was plenty of enthusiasm it was found impossible to get materials for its construction.

Science and Research

The Science and Research Section was still discussing the possibility of building a wind tunnel for the Aero Section in 1951 although their 'round the pole' boat timing equipment was finally unveiled to the Society. This apparatus had already been tested in the 1950 Regatta at Victoria Park and its most interesting feature was that each performance of a boat was recorded as a permanent read-out, a feature which was considered of great value to competitors in boat races.

Spurred on by the boat timing device the Section started a 'Skylon' which it was hoped could be used at the 1951 NLSME exhibition for 'round the pole' flights by model aircraft. The intention was that later it would form the basis of a measuring instrument for determining the performance of aeroplanes and model aircraft components. Presumably the name 'Skylon' was borrowed from the structure built recently (1951) for the Festival of Britain. The Festival Skylon was like a big aluminium exclamation mark with no visible means of support – 'symbolising Britain', as one wag put it.

U-turns on the Miniature Railway

The Miniature Railway Section reported that attendance at its meetings was very poor due to the distance and expense involved for members to travel to the venue at Elm Court, Potters Bar. As a result it was unanimously decided at the Section AGM that somewhere else would have to be found to house the layout even if it meant making it smaller.

At that AGM Mr Frank Dyer was elected Section Leader for the ensuing year. Many members will remember the name of Frank Dyer because certainly during the early 60s he was one of the most highly respected 4mm railway modellers in the country. In the Society, he had several years before made a plea to members to build their model railways 'more like the real railway.' This was at a time when fidelity to the prototype was quite rare and later Frank Dyer became famous with his inspiring model of Borchester which at the time was quite unique and I think it is fair to say marked a turning point in 00 gauge model railways. He truly was one of the founding fathers of the standards seen in model railways today.

Not all members of the Section were modelling in 4mm scale: Some were modelling in 0-gauge and gauge-1 although the Section did not have layouts to accommodate them.

By the middle of the year the Miniature Railway Section announced that it would be replacing the existing layout, based on Wood Green, with a new end-to-end layout depicting a branch terminus which would run into a tunnel. It was felt that this would fit into the Section's proposed new premises better. A room behind the Barnet and District Water Company's Offices was the proposed venue. Also an end-to-end layout could easily be lengthened and consequently allow a bigger viewing area at exhibitions.

Up to this time the Section had relied on accumulators for the model railway but by the middle of the year they acquired a new 'mains-unit' – a robust affair which supplied 12 volts, 10 amps DC and 20 volts, 10 amps AC.

By September it was decided that the layout would not be moved from Elm Court as earlier planned because meeting attendance had improved considerably at Potters Bar. In addition it was noted that a large number of the Society's junior members were attracted to the Section and Frank Dyer was planning to organise instruction classes to train some of them as track operators.

Such fortunes of the Section did not last, however, because by November the Section was again reporting poor attendance at meetings and it was felt that the plans for the new layout would have to be abandoned and modifications made to the old layout instead.

Club Outings

Society visits continued in 1951 with the highlight being a visit to the Guinness brewery especially because of the refreshments which were made available by the Company! Other visits enjoyed were to Becton Gas Works (the world's biggest gas works with its own internal railway) and BR's Brighton Works.

Lean Times

It is easy today to forget the privations of people in the UK in 1951. Food was still rationed. Indeed the Government had even announced a *reduction* of the meat ration early in the year. Materials were often unobtainable for building models. Premises for clubs and societies lacked heating and personal finances did not allow most people to travel except by bicycle. People often grew their own vegetables and even in the heart of cities chickens were kept in the back garden although that was not always successful as was reported in the News Sheet.

Dr. Ashby Gets a Fox

The ability of model engineers to deal effectively with most situations is well known. A recent example was the capture of a fox by our member, Dr. Ashby, of Highgate. Reports concerning the event appeared in the "Evening Standard" and the "Hornsey Gazette."

Many chickens had been lost by local residents, and Dr. Ashby had himself lost several. When the Doctor noticed a burrow being made under his hen house, he decided it was time to do something about it. A simple but effective plan was devised, consisting of a trap door arranged over the entrance to the burrow and a wire cage fixed where the burrow would enter the hen house. A trip wire was fitted and held in place by four pulley wheels, and a strut, which supported a weight, was so placed that any movement of the trip wire caused the weight to fall. This did two things; it caused the door to close the only exit, and it set off an

alarm bell. About midnight Dr. Ashby was awakened by the clamour of the bell, and there was the thief well and truly caught.

But despite all the difficulties the NLSME was still flourishing with 163 members. Twenty of these were juniors which does seem to indicate that it was easier to recruit juniors than it is today. The turnover of members was quite surprising however in 1951: 36 members were lost whilst 47 were elected to membership.

Members looked to the future and the Council appointed a 'Ways and Means' committee with the aim of getting eventually our own headquarters. There was plenty of other activity too although the construction of the Club loco seemed to be dragging on. Nevertheless the tender was practically complete. Mr Wuidart, Leader of the Loco Section felt that the protracted building of the loco was because active members with workshops were all very busy with their own jobs.

Other projects being undertaken at the time were a new model car track, which was unfortunately being hampered due to difficulties in obtaining suitable materials and a design by Mr Weaver for a 1cc engine suitable for aeroplanes, cars and boats. In addition plans for an easily transported and inexpensive boat were being drawn up, also by Mr Weaver, with the hope that many members might be able to construct their own versions. And the Loco Section were discussing the idea of a new, permanent, continuous track to be built at Arkley.

Although Curly's Corner seemed to have disappeared several members were still very much in touch with our Patron as is evident from the two reports below.

Visit to Curly

MESSRS. A.E.W.Simes, E.W.Simes and H.C.Henley have paid a visit to Curly, our Patron. Like all who have sampled Curly's hospitality, they too, thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It is not common knowledge that Mr. Henley, who was the instigator of the Society and is a Past President, is an experienced driver of full-size locomotives. As may be supposed, Mr. Henley and Curly found plenty to talk about. Great fun was had driving "Olga," especially when it got really dark.

Visit to Curly

Quite recently, J.Calderbank, A.Gudger, A.E.W.Simes, and A.J.Bradley were the guests of Curly, our Patron. Those who have been privileged to enjoy Curly's hospitality will know what a good time they had. Arriving in the early afternoon, they inspected the workshop, and saw additions to the already beautifully equipped locomotive works. On the bench under construction, was "Britannia" Curly's latest. A new acquisition was a "hungry lion" emblem, especially painted for Curly by British Railways.

After inspecting the locomotives, Curly invited his visitors to choose an engine to run. Not surprising, perhaps, “Ayesha” was their choice.

On the track the new signalling was admired. Then steam was raised, and turns were taken at the regulator.

During the afternoon, what Curly calls “a footplate tea” was enjoyed. This is an informal meal, partaken in the workshop. Piles of sandwiches are followed by plates of luscious homemade cakes, and the conversation is mainly “locos.”

Planning for the annual exhibition started in April and one of the intentions was to offer the public refreshments at the event. ‘However, this will only be possible if co-operation is forthcoming from members. Unfortunately a ration from the Food Office would be inadequate. It is proposed, therefore, that at each General meeting up until the end of August, two containers will be placed in strategic positions and it is hoped that members will fill them with tea and sugar. Even if each member contributes only a spoonful each month, the Committee believe the plan will succeed.’ Such was the nature of Society life in 1951!

To be continued...

The views expressed in this News Sheet are not necessarily those of the Chairman or Council of the NLSME