

Issue No. 828 November 2020

The News Sheet

North London Society of
Model Engineers



You can see this News Sheet in colour by visiting our web site
at www.nlsme.co.uk

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Front cover photo

Preparing for a busy day on the Leighton Buzzard railway, 0-4-0 Saddle tank Kidbrooke with 0-6-0 Elf in the background.

The railway is a 2-foot, (610mm) gauge light railway built for industrial use. It is believed to be the only remaining line which owed its existence to the ready availability of surplus materials and equipment from the First World War battlefield supply lines.

Picture by . John gives a potted history of this local line in his article on page 24



Your editor is most grateful to those who have contributed to this edition.
My sincere thanks to all.

If you have any photographs taken either recently or in the past showing club activities, people or models that would be of interest please send them to your editor.

Articles long or short on any subject which would be of interest to members of NLSME will be gratefully received for inclusion in future editions.

Your news sheet is only as good as the contributions from members.



**IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING NLSME ACTIVITIES
RELATING TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC**

This news sheet, being a monthly issue, can never provide members with up to date decisions on how the pandemic impacts on our club activities. It is therefore important that members always follow the latest government advice.

Please note the following restrictions currently apply to our activities.

Head Quarters

All meetings at HQ are cancelled until further notice.

Tyttenhanger

All public running days, events and functions are cancelled. The site is open for use by members and their families only but subject to interim rules contained in this edition of the news sheet (page 5).

Fetes and Fairs

All events have been cancelled.





Chairman's Comments

Les

At the October Council meeting Tony announced that, after 33 years on the Council, including long spells as HO Section Leader and then our Chairman, he wished to step down. Given the many years continuous service he has provided to the society we could hardly twist his arm to continue. Tony joined the Society on formation of our HO section and as its Section Leader was immediately seconded to the council. In point of fact Tony has never been an ordinary member of the NLSME - a truly astonishing achievement. Council express our thanks to Tony on behalf

of all members and expect him to enjoy now his membership from the back benches.

The wretched coronavirus continues to disrupt activities. The introduction and application of Tier Two requirement for London, that no two persons from different households can mix indoors, means that the carefully managed and limited section activities at HQ are at an end. Council are grateful to the HQ Section Leaders for their prompt response to the latest government regulations.

At time of writing our interim rules for Tyttenhanger remain appropriate and activities, in groups of not more than six persons, continue. Remember however that any change in government regulations would apply.

A period of continuous eight day working at Tyttenhanger has all but completed the ground works required for the washroom project. We were keen to complete this before winter sets in though we were unlucky to have sufficient rain to make the trench excavation and back filling heavy work. As a result, the picnic area is not as clean as we hoped but this will recover as it always does. The completed work includes new power, water and drainage to/from the washroom and the bothy plus 90 m of 63mm MDPE pipe comprising the grey water waste main, from a packaged grey water pump/sump combination, connecting to the foul sewer. In undertaking this we uncovered services of power and water that crossed the trench routes and have been able to update our site records accordingly. Probably most surprising was finding the cable (a run of domestic twin core and earth that Ted Moon installed around 1963) which supplied the original engine shed until its replacement in the 1990s with an armoured cable. Thanks are due to the stalwarts who helped with the work, either on occasion or every day. Sadly, since it is all buried, there is little evidence of the work you performed! However, I have been informed that a few pictures were taken and a selection of these can be found elsewhere in this news sheet.

I have had some comments regarding items and junk left in the workshop. As mentioned in last month's news sheet we will be clearing the workshop and fitting it out with useful tools and equipment for general use. Any items the society does not require will be disposed, so please identify your personal items in there.

Keep well and healthy, see you at track or HQ, CV 19 permitting!

Les , Chairman

The Steaming bay project.



Following the decision by Council to approve the next phase of the steaming bay project, work started in earnest during October with the replacement of the rather basic toilet facilities. It is worth reflecting however on what is to be replaced.

As can be seen from the photograph and sign the existing facilities have been in use for some considerable time.

This Superloo Conceived
And Constructed By
David Green
18 June 1983

David Green constructed this wonderful oasis for those of a mature age who need to get to the loo frequently. I think that Ron was instrumental in getting the plaque put in place much to David's embarrassment.

The new building will replace the existing facilities and also provide a hand basin finally dispensing with the unenviable task of regularly emptying the porta-loo.

The new toilet block will be connected directly to the sewage system and this is what has been the focus of the works to date. Several members spent part or all of the week installing the pipework and power supply needed. The base for the new building has also been laid. The pictures that follow tell the story.





TYTTENHANGER INTERIM RULES

EFFCTIVE 12th SEPTEMBER 2020 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE OR AS MAY BE AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME (Issue: Rev 2)

The Interim Rules for Tyttenhanger have been reviewed following the recent changes introduced by the UK Government on Monday 14th September. These changes to the rules have been approved by NLSME council. There are two changes, both shown in italics. This change relates to maximum groupings of six persons as per new UK regulation.

Tyttenhanger remains open provided there is compliance with the rules set out below.

1. General

- Members only and their families allowed on site as permitted by UK Government guidelines.
- ***Persons present must not gather into groups of more than six***
- Site is closed to the public and ***organised visits from*** other clubs or societies
- Gate to remain closed at all times.
- Maintain social distancing.
- Use sanitizers provided at steaming bays, bothy, RT station and old running shed.
- Members to provide their own masks and gloves if required or in accordance with government guidelines.
- Only one person in coach, bothy, toilet block or any other building at any one time.
- Members at higher risk advised not to come to site. Those that insist on attending should remain in the general areas where social distancing can be achieved.
- The carriage or other buildings not to be used for cooking. Storage of food in fridges not permitted in any buildings on site. Members should bring their own food and drinks to be consumed in open areas only.
- All seating areas shall be arranged to comply with social distancing guidelines.

Continued on next page

2. Running – Boating area

- Number of persons using the boating area shall only be limited by compliance with social distancing guidelines

3. Running - Raised Track

- Members not involved with the preparation or disposal of locomotives should remain outside the steaming bay fences to maintain social distancing.
- Alternate steaming bays shall be used to ensure social distancing guidelines can be maintained between club members preparing or disposing of locomotives
- Members riding on passenger cars to be socially distanced from each other and driver

4. Running – Ground Level

- Members not involved with the preparation or disposal of locomotives should remain outside the steaming bay fences and GL steaming shed to maintain social distancing guidelines. (note steaming shed is to be defined as a building for the purposes of this assessment).
- One loco at a time to be prepared/disposed on GR steaming bays to maintain social distance.
- Members riding on passenger cars to be socially distanced from each other and driver

5. G1 and Narrow Gauge

- Use gloves to set out tables and chairs. Only two persons per bench or table. (based on 2m (6ft) rule.)
- On G1 only one train per circuit. If middle circuit is used the start time to be staggered in relation to inner & outer circuits. (this restricts raising steam to one person at a time).
- A Track Marshall for G1 railway shall maintain a running list to ensure no sharing of general equipment
- Numbers of persons inside G1 and Narrow-Gauge railways to be limited to ensure social distancing is maintained

6. Grounds Maintenance

- One club member or family group only to enter the equipment store at any one time Sanitize controls after use.

7. Caution

- Any club member not willing to comply with these or government guidelines will be asked to leave the site

Grounds Maintenance Update

by Nigel



As can be seen from the photograph below another rabbit superhighway has appeared under the fence along the back straight. The ongoing battle between the ground's maintenance team and the local rabbit population continues.



There has been steady progress each week during the summer months with the usual grass cutting trimming back vegetation and general weeding and tidying up. As a result, the site is still looking fantastic in the autumn sunshine. My thanks to all those who have helped with this. Now we start the annual clearance of leaves that will fall over the next month. This year we will be placing the collected leaves at various points along the fence line to mulch down where they will

provide habitat for various bugs and insects. It is also hoped that this will discourage the local rabbits and it is of course a much more environmentally friendly alternative to the previous practice of burning.

If you would like to help the grounds maintenance team or with any of the other groups you would be most welcome.



We are also well aware that the Covid pandemic has kept a some of our vulnerable members away. We all look forward to when we can meet again and enjoy the site together under more normal circumstances.

Treasurer's Report

By Mike

This time last year I was writing my report for the November 2019 issue and I commented upon the Midland Model Engineering exhibition and also suggested that next year (2020) perhaps we could dedicate the funds raised by a particular Sunday to supporting a chosen charity. Little did I know the catastrophe which was about to befall the country as a whole, no exhibition and no funds being raised for anything. Instead we have been pacing our socially distanced contacts with fellow members, whilst making the most of the facilities that we are allowed to occupy. In the case of HQ, this has been dealt a blow by the new Tier Two lockdown imposed upon the London area. Family pods only or solitary visits are now the order of the day until further notice. However, if the weather improves it shouldn't stop us getting up some ladders to finish the HQ outside painting... Call me if you are interested in helping out.



Meanwhile at Tyttenhanger, a sterling bunch of members have spent the last week, 19th to 24th October, come rain or shine and more rain, progressing the ground-works for the Steaming Bay washroom and additional facilities for the Gauge One Bothy. The stalwarts of the whole week were Chairman Les, Mick and Jonathan, plus the hire of a mini-digger ably driven by Grahame. This enabled us to have trenched, laid soil pipes, water and power cables and back filled the whole route from the SBP site right up to the connection into the existing soil-pipe near the toilet block level crossing. Other members also assisted or gave the appropriate NLSME advice. . . See photos elsewhere in this issue.

Apart from the purchase of materials for the Steaming Bay Washroom & Urinal project, this month has included payment of our rent, £1,300 for HQ for another year. The recent Council Meeting approved a new Project by the Gauge One Section to create a shelter beside their Bothy to keep them out of the rain / sun / wind as appropriate, also a new power mower and electric strimmer for the site maintenance team for use in particular on the new land.

In the meantime, remember to keep your social distance from fellow members in your groups of six, which I know is hard at times. Make use of the hand sanitisers provided around the site and keep safe.

Mike

Hon. Treasurer

Bookworm writes:

I awoke the other morning to find myself floating on air, only to find my bed (Volume 100) was being picked up and looked through. Seems my owner was enthused by last month's LBSC Miscellany by Bookworm (he doesn't know it's me!) and was rummaging through to find any other special gadgets that he could use on his own engine.

Truth be told I had found something else that I didn't include last time, so was delighted to be able to let him enjoy it now as much as I did when I first tasted it. Have you ever experienced a dribble from your blow-down, does the escape not always flow as freely you may wish? (From your boiler of course). The answer offered by our friend LBSC was the "Everlasting" Blowdown-valve, a miniature version of the full-size item manufactured in England by F.S. Lovick-Johnson. Their Managing Director (of the same name) who himself did a bit of engineering in miniature supplied a sixteenth full-size copy from which the drawings were taken. A valve positioned on the boiler blow-down outlet operated a bit like a course regulator going from closed to open in 60 degrees of swing of the little handle...mind ya boots! With full construction details provided by LBSC this must bring a smile to the face of my owner.

Once again, I heard a little voice from the other shelf say "would the modern eye of HSE consider it safe, would it fulfill, keep it Simple, Keep it safe"?

Source: ME 1949 Feb 10 and 17 page(s) 158 & 191

If your rate of progress in the workshop is measured in years, you may wish to skip this one. Why? Because in 1949 the lads of the Malden and District Society of Model Engineers may have set a record time for building a loco. Such was their confidence in their collective ability and output, they announced to the world that at that year's Model Engineer Exhibition they would set themselves the challenge of building a 5" gauge Maid of Kent locomotive from scratch in the 10 days the exhibition was open. Wow!

.....I wonder if they achieved it?

Source: ME 1949 July 21 page 65

Talking of staying power, how does running your 7.25 inch loco for 100 miles 614 yards non-stop sound? Mr Albert Balmforth achieved this feat with assistance from Mr F. Hepworth and Mr D. Hollings at the Blackgates, Bradford track in 1954. The engine, LNER 2-6-4 tank ran for 10 hours and 29 minutes and pulled driver and relief driver astride a special tank car containing the coal and water.

They don't breed them like that anymore!

Source: ME 1954 Oct 28 page 509

Work in Progress from club members workshops.

With the current restrictions in place we thought it a good idea to find out what project's members are working on with all this enforced spare time. So, we asked and several have responded. In this issue we have contributions from Martin Cooper and Craig Lowes

If you have a project or just a picture or two of your latest projects please send them to the editor.

Lockdown

By Craig

As the dreaded Corona virus struck - because I have asthma, my wife Julie and I were faced with being stuck at home for a while. What could we do?

My sparse 1960's (ish) N-gauge layout, which I had started 6 years ago had given grandsons Eli and Tom a lot of fun - mainly around the station announcements in funny voices, but when Isaac came along at about 3yrs old, with his love of buses, I just had to add an additional layout to the side based on the Japanese Tomytec roadway with inbuilt tracks that the little bus followed,(eventually).



Taking advantage of Julie's artistic skills, the layout could perhaps benefit from some of her talent. Almost immediately the previously non-existent backscene became a riot of hills, trees, sky and clouds. Magnificent!

Fortunately, Hattons were still able to send stuff out during lockdown, so, various orders were placed and a row of houses, a pub and a shop were received. After building the kits, Julie used her brushes to paint the doors different colours, add curtains to the windows and generally make them look more interesting.

A second-hand water tower and a locomotive shed were bought and track laid to connect it to the railway side of the layout. I also bought a couple of bags of static grass.

Inspired by a YouTube video I got an ion generator, a metal tea-strainer and after a bit of soldering I created a basic static grass applicator - enabling us to add more natural looking green spaces.



The Tomytec bus stop was ok but the figures were isolated from the “town” - a subway was required. As luck would have it, Tony had given me some magazines, one of which had plans of the subway at Lower Tyndrum - a place that will forever live in my memory!

Inspired, I measured a staircase and, micrometer in hand, looked for some material that could be scale steps. I discovered that old CD's were perfect. I

started cutting treads from them and glued them together with quick-setting Araldite - I then started to create angled treads to allow it to go under the roadway. Many hours later I had



created a staircase which I set into the board and (with a lamp at the lower end) it looks pretty realistic.

In the meantime, Julie had arranged the farm buildings with her hot glue gun and added the surfaces. This prompted a thought that the farmer might have employed a gardener to keep everything nice, so a printed striped "lawn" was added with borders and a gardener with his lawnmower! Hedges, made from pan scourers finished it off.

We have left the tracks pretty much as they were but have really enjoyed getting various "scenes" with stuff that I had bought at shows over the years: an "arc welder" chip was fitted in the local garage; street lamps around the bus route; lights in the bus garages; a yard lamp in the farm and lights in the village church.

About this time, I found a small electronic chip with two wires attached, another show purchase which turned out to be a fire simulation chip. With the grandchildren in mind I installed it under one

of the sheds and with a reduced voltage it looks like the shed is on fire! This results in Granddad getting very concerned - until the Grandchildren arrive with a period fire engine! They love it!



We had bought some small plaster gardens at one of the shows and Julie's steady hand got them painted to look realistic. These were distributed around the layout - some of which are

near the nice garden fence panels from Hattons, and we still have some flowers and trees to finish it off.



The Club 500

By Martin

The Club 500 boat is intended for someone who is looking for a quick build, basic model boat that can be used for club competitions in a one class race or just for a general sail.

As the name suggests the Club 500 boats are approximately 500mm long. The basic model is supplied with a styrene hull and deck, several styrene mouldings

to make up the cabin, battery tray, motor mount, rudder support, and boat stand.



The propellor, prop shaft, rudder, tiller arm, drive motor and coupling are also included. You have to supply RC gear and 7.2v nicad batteries.

If you plan to go club racing then nothing may be changed or modified. Instructions are supplied with the kit for construction, basically cutting out all the parts with scissors, bit of sanding to shape and epoxy together. Hull and deck are joined using bathroom sealant. I managed it successively and I've never built a boat before.

I use my Club 500 in competitions, luckily, they are not that fast for the beginner like me, on calm water the boat planes, tracks nicely but doesn't like right hand turns, must be the torque from the motor, and can submarines if your corner too sharply. Being small and light the boat is less stable when going through choppy water, so you have to learn a bit of race craft.



In summary I think the kit is good value for money, it's simple to build, gave me an insight into radio control which I had never toyed with before and the racing is fun, as no one takes it too seriously.



Tyttenhanger Light Railway

By Peter

Autumn is upon us it's that time of year when nature puts its coat of many colours on and gently slides us towards winter; I find it most enjoyable at the track during this time when nature shuts up shop for a rest, hopefully not to inflict too severe a winter on us that may curtail our activities at Tyttenhanger.

Last month a comrade of mine Rodger just happened to pay me a visit citing my unfortunate accident as an excuse to show me his broken top slide .The slide was off a small jewellers lathe that I had given him some time ago, and had an American type tool post as shown in the catalogue that coincidentally Brian had brought round to me when I was immobilised some weeks previous. It was also a coincidence that I just happened to have a nice chunk of Meehanite and said to Rodger I will make you a new top slide!! All I need is a dovetail cutter and guess what another comrade Derek coincidentally had two spares one of which he gave me. Never having used a dovetail cutter before and having been warned not to take too big a cut away I went and started to make swarf and chips, A most pleasurable experience was had making the new slide as the cast iron machined up very smoothly without any mishaps, with an allowance for a new gib strip and adjusting screws, and because I had plenty of time I also made a new bronze feed nut to replace the old worn out nut to complete the job.



Coincidentally Rodger is the best brick layer I have ever used during my years of contracting now wasn't that a coincidence! All I did was mention that due to my knee injury I could not lay the bricks at the club and as can be seen in the photo without hesitation Rodger stepped up to the task.

The coincident's don't stop there as a week later George ask if I could do a (little job) for him and to my surprise he asked could I machine up the dovetails on a adjustable tool holder for him and just like a seasoned pro I said "sixty degree dovetails" I have the exact tool (thanks Derek) I am beginning to

think that life is one big COINCIDENCE. The upshot is that Rodger has a new top slide, George has a refurbished tool holder, the club has a new brick wall, The P way gang are creaming themselves, and I have learned a little more and consolidated four of my friendships all over a dislocated knee cap and probably will not cut another dove tail for the rest of my naturals.

Track Maintenance

The P way gang at their finest couldn't wait to finish this section that has now been levelled and slightly elevated. I am delighted to see that the P Way gang are working so well together, the resultant look and feel of the newly maintained ground level track is evidence of their dedication. Long may you reign and continue to improve one of the club's premiere assets.



It is also worth a mention and a thank you to Cheryl and Richard who I can loosely attach to the P way gang for mowing the pathways along the track.

Many people have commented on how nice and tidy the new land looks especially the mown paths through the wild flowers.

Fence update.

A big thank you to Mike and Brian and their helpers, again a small team working in harmony looking good and on track to be finished before spring 2021. All post holes have been drilled and dug out, the post sockets' have been cemented in and we are now painting the posts before erecting them and threading up the wires.

Tyttenhanger Light Railway at the moment is very well staffed and with this in mind I have been keeping an eye on the social distancing in the group, we have on many occasions had to split into two or more groups especially on Thursdays occasionally some forget including me and get a little too close to one another, so please in view of the rise in the R rate all around let's try to keep to the new rules and stay safer.



Roy took delivery of his long-awaited new 7 ¼ gauge petrol hydraulic Loco from CMD engineering in October but he took it out in the rain and it shrunk?

But it is a great loco addition to the GLR and worth the wait in the persistent rain with Brian, George, Roy's wife Jean and myself all getting soaked to the skin.

This chap asked to join in with the GLR crew for a day to see if it would be something, he would



like to get more involved with.

By the end of the day for some reason he decided to try the G1 group next time.

Stay safe and keep well.

As ever in the muck.

How I got involved in Model Engineering.

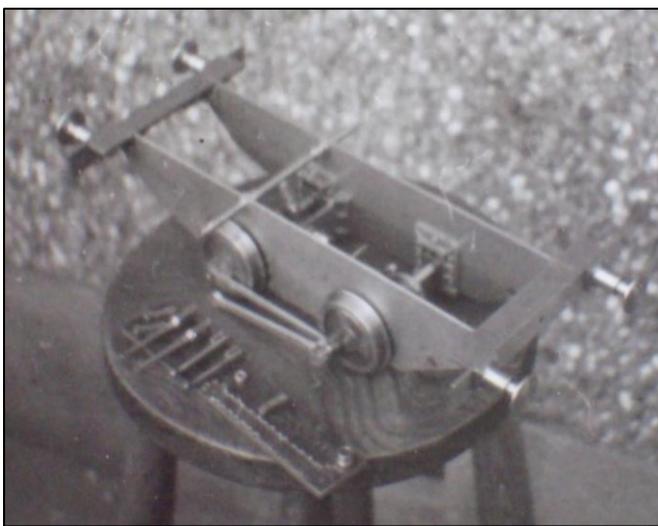
Your editor asked a few members if they would like to tell of how they got into this fascinating hobby. This is Colin's story. He moved to Sleights near Whitby in North Yorkshire some years ago but is still a member of our club.

If you feel able to put pen to paper for a future edition please let your editor know.

A personal journey into Model Engineering – Part 2

By Colin

Tich progressed pretty swiftly by my standards of today and developed to a chassis with valve gear and most of the components of the cylinders machined but not finished when I seemed to run into treacle.



Tich takes shape 1975

During this period Dad and I had made fairly regular trips to the track at Colney Heath and seeing so many engines running (and being spoiled when Geoff Wren allowed me to drive his Atlantic one day) had really fired my enthusiasm.

Eventually though Dad had to be away more with his work. With nothing of our own ready or likely to be ready to run in the near future, he did

what I suspect a lot people do in these circumstances and 'pushed the boat out' and bought from an advert in the ME an engine – in this case LBSC's Invicta - in a semi-dismantled state from a chap in Swindon. This should have meant that in short time we would have had something to run, but as it turned out a couple of the parts needed replacing and it required a lubrication system making and fitting before it would be ready to steam. So, with Dad away and with other distractions for me looming, exams then work, I somehow lost the drive I once had to get stuck in, and things started to fade out for me.

From this point on Tich was parked, Invicta was put under the bench and time became devoted to me finishing school and starting work. Not so long after that Dad retired and was looking to move house and that along with my own working

life becoming established meant I lost touch with Model Engineering for the next 15 odd years.

Looking back now it was to be a simple (perhaps curious) happening that brought me back to the fold. Just prior to my parents retiring Dad had bought a Myford Super7 and retired his beloved EXE lathe to the care of my brother who at the time thought he might like to take up Model Engineering. After 4 years of the lathe laying in his garage still in a dismantled state he, (my Brother) concluded the idea wasn't going to take off for him after all; fortunately by this time my Dad felt he was now in a position to house it in his new workshop so arrangements were made for me to drive it up to him in the North.

Having transported what I imagine was several hundredweight of lathe and stand 240 miles northwards I thought that was that. However not so long after that trip I found myself day-dreaming while commuting and sitting in the London traffic, of days gone by spent at Colney Heath as a boy and of the people and engines I used to see – Geoff Wren with his Atlantic, Bert Mead and City of Sarum, Ernie Millington with Britannia, Arthur Marsh's Butch and Nigel Gresley, Peter Roach with Mona and Ron andthe rest of the lads. Funnily enough it wasn't the thought of owning and running an engine that appealed to me, but really the creativity of making bits and pieces with a lathe once more and the friendly atmosphere that I remembered of the Club. The thought of having a lathe at this time was laughable though for I lived in a one bed flat on the first floor of a small block of flats in Welham Green.

The idea however wouldn't go away so around 1992 I made contact with the Club with a view to re-joining. Upon attending my first meeting I knew I had made the right decision because of the sheer warmth of the reception I received. In the intervening years some of the older members I remembered had died but of those remaining that had either known me in 1970s or my father made me feel very welcome once more. Geoff Wren in particular extended an invitation to visit him

and to do work in his workshop if I wished, which as it turned out was to be the start of a very happy friendship and period for me, and I like to think was for the both of us.



The home workshop idea developed from just having a bench and a few hand tools to having a lathe after all after seeing a Myford ML10 in the flesh for the first time. Because Dads EXE lathe was so heavy, I had assumed all lathes around 3.5"

where equally so, so to discover the ML10 was so compact and relatively light-weight gave me hope. The lads at work thought I was completely mad when I said I was going to have a lathe in the flat – in the bedroom no less – as they nursed visions of all the lights in the adjoining flats dimming when I turned it on.....they did but only slightly!

I was also originally going to buy a small drilling machine to augment the lathe but somehow became distracted when I learnt of a compact BCA Jig borer /milling machine for sale locally, and bought that instead. The jig borer however whilst very compact was very heavy, a fact I hadn't fully appreciated until I was trying to

get it up the stairs to my flat without drawing too much attention to either myself or what it was I was bringing into the flats (flat dwellers are notoriously cautious of neighbours' who bring in great lumps of machinery – especially those living above them). By comparison the lathe had gone up virtually "under my arm" and but for the odd chip of paint on doorframes, no-one was any the wiser. I did eventually purchase a mill/drill from an ad on one of the stands at St Albans Club Exhibition – good place to advertise by the way – and this did the needful for several years. Getting this up to the flat was more straight forward mainly because by now I knew the wrinkles (wait until everyone is out).



*Mill/Drill bedroom workshop.
The bed was in front of this machine!*

This then was my workshop for the years until I moved 'North' with only the ML10 giving way to a Myford ML7 bought from an ad in the coach at the track – another good place to advertise. I wish I could tell you at this point that this was the place where I built half a dozen engines; unfortunately, this was not the case. I have never lacked the motivation to build but seem to lack the time, or at least the results from that time. I have concluded after many years that if you give two Model Engineers the same amount of time and a pile of materials, the rate of progress from each will be very different.

I have now over many years been building (on and off) LBSCs Maisie in 3.5inch gauge which I do still hope will be finished one day. But what I lack in output has been more than made up for in meeting fellow model engineers over the years and the sheer joy of being in the workshop and progressing at a rate that is my

own. Needless to say, I do now have one or two engines to run that I didn't build but have come from members no longer with us whom I admired. As the maintenance of these engines allows me to see the result of my workshop endeavours more quickly and I am keeping something running that others made to be used and enjoyed, I feel I have found a perfect balance in my Model Engineering life. I look forward to the day when I will have something to run that I built myself, but if it turns out to be the only engine I build before the great Workshop in the sky beckons then so be it. The journey will have been every bit as enjoyable as arriving at the destination!



One of my happiest memories, when I drove Geoff Wren around the track behind his speedy which hadn't run for several years.

As this article has been about my personal journey into Model Engineering, I will finish by saying that I wish I could convey to those outside of the hobby that if only they could feel a fraction of the satisfaction and pleasure I have had from it over the years, time in the workshop, working parties at the track, the company and banter of other members and of course running an engine, then they too could come to find fulfillment by taking up this great hobby.



Narrow Gauge Garden Railway

By John

Greetings narrow gauge enthusiasts and welcome to November's edition. Recently myself and Mrs. Narrow-Gauge had a week in Cornwall so I was hoping to bring you an article on a heritage railway or a tin mine museum however we couldn't find anything that was open! Due to you-know-what. Though funnily enough Mrs. N-G didn't seem too upset about that..... But driving around and every so often spotting a disused tin mine was very evocative of

a bygone age and the next time I'm that way there will be no escape! There was one place I would recommend if you're ever that way, and that is Port Isaac where Doc. Martin is filmed, I thought it was one of the most beautiful places I've been too, a perfect Cornish fishing village it's also where the movie "Fisherman's friends" was filmed. A semi-factual portrayal of the formation of a sea shanty singing group of the same name. In reality they now perform on tours, Glastonbury etc.... it's worth a watch.

Anyway, instead I thought this month I would bring a short, potted history of a narrow gauge "heritage" railway not a million miles away from us, The Leighton Buzzard railway.

Even by the end of the 19th century the quarrying of sand in the Leighton buzzard area was well established. The quarries were close to the Grand union canal and later the LNWR branch line from Leighton Buzzard to Dunstable. The quarrying companies were never very competitive as large amounts of sand was imported as ships ballast which was then dumped onto the market, and a lot of this was from Belgium. Of course, almost immediately at the start of World War 1 this supply was cut off and with the increasing demand for foundry sand which Leighton Buzzard sand was found to be very suitable, production was greatly increased.

Up to this point the sand had been transported by horse and cart but with the new demand steam tractors were introduced. These gave the local roads a terrible pounding but of course this was tolerated due to the national emergency. On cessation of hostilities the local council informed the sand companies that they would be liable to any future costs arising from using these vehicles. So, in 1919 all the steam tractors were sold and plans for a narrow-gauge railway were formulated by the sand companies. By May the survey was complete construction was started soon after and the line was formally opened in November ...quick work!

It was built to 2-foot gauge using mostly surplus war department materials and was just over 3.5 miles long. Initially it was worked by two Hudswell Clarke steam

locos which barely lasted 2 years before being replaced by locally built "simplex" locos sourced again from the WD (see previous newsletter!) so was this the first railway in the world to convert from steam to internal-combustion?

And so, this little railway continued working without any fuss or fanfare during the 1940's and '50's. At its peak over 20 trains of sand were dispatched a day and when you consider the return empties etc this was a fantastic performance for a single line railway.

Of course, the usual suspects of main line rationalisation and road competition took its toll and the last through working was in 1969 with small quarry branch working finally ending in 1981.

But all was not lost, in 1967 permission was given to a small band of enthusiasts to run passenger trains or "fan trips" originally their plan was to create an American theme and they called themselves "the iron horse preservation society" but this soon became the Leighton Buzzard narrow gauge railway society...thank goodness!

So, for a period of time there was commercial running and preservation society running so the railway didn't close during its transition to its new role. At first the society ran diesel only locos but in 1968 steam was introduced and of course continues to this day. Today the lines main station is at Pages Park and runs to Stonehenge works some 3 miles away but there are plans to extend it another ½ a mile to its original length. A lot of the route is through housing and industrial estates so it's far from a rural idyll setting but somehow, I think for an industrial railway that's appropriate.



Why not pay a visit at some time there is a great collection of locos and rolling-stock?

With grateful thanks to our fellow club member Jim for the photographs

Paddington to Birmingham the GWR way.

(Not the Bear stupid, the Train!)

By Ian

Having written for the *News Sheet* over the summer months about the Euston to New Street route of the London Birmingham Railway; I wondered if the GWR route from Paddington to Snow Hill would be acceptable to the Editor and gregarious readers of the *News Sheet*. The Editor tactfully stated that it would be acceptable, but not yet!



So here we are, having researched for some time and the 'not yet' having expired we can now start the journey from Paddington to Birmingham via the Great Western Railway sometimes called God's Wonderful Railway or the Great Way Round.

This is the story of the line from Paddington to Birkenhead via Banbury, Birmingham and Wales. The Cinderella line.

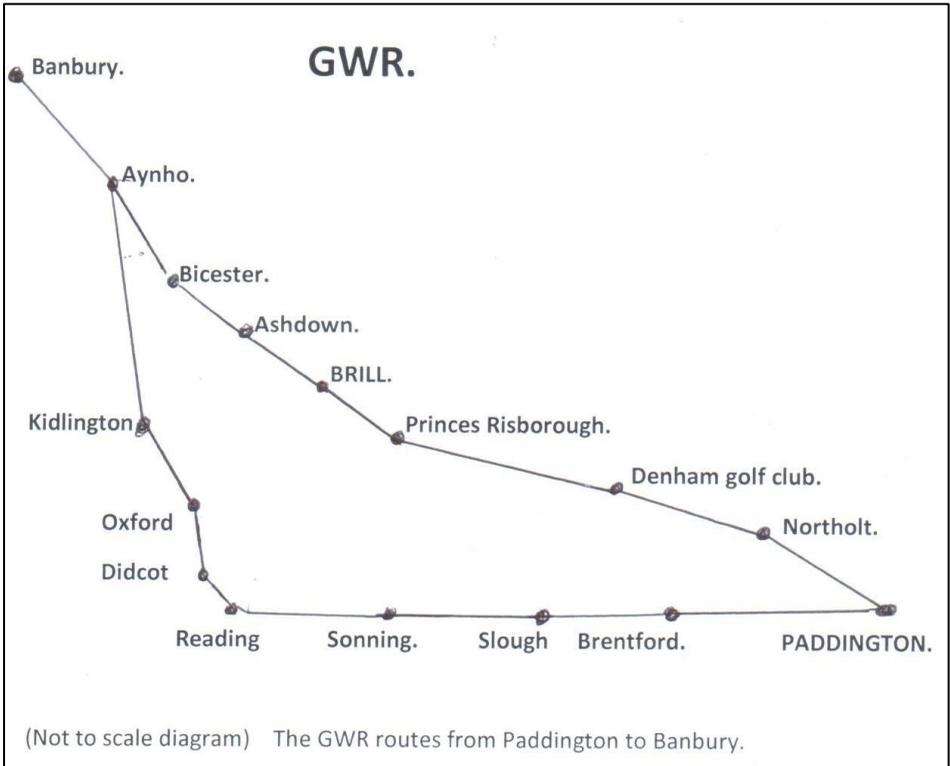
Introduction

I first gained knowledge of the route years ago when I was a sea in the Merchant Navy. I would spend my leave in Banbury which was on the GWR main line route to Birmingham and then on to Birkenhead where I would join cargo liners of the Blue Funnel Line to sail to the Far East and Australia. GWR was very proud of its service to Brum from Banbury which took one hour and also the service from Banbury to London which also took one hour.

At that time my 12yr old sister would take the journey on her own from Banbury to Birkenhead via GWR then cross the Mersey on the Ferry and then get the train to Southport where she attended as a 'charity girl' a boarding School called *Brentwood*. In those days it was Hobson's choice for my sister Hettie but was actually fairly normal for youngsters to travel alone especially on the GWR. On one journey south her compartment was 'invaded' by Army squaddies and poor Hettie sat squashed between them. The ticket collector came by and spotted my sister sitting rather embarrassingly in the compartment. He asked Hettie to follow him and he showed her to an empty First-Class compartment where she enjoyed the rest of the journey in peace. I had a feeling that that compassionate action could only happen on the GWR.

At that time, our family were virtually homeless and charity funds paid for my sister's boarding. I was an indentured apprentice at sea with the Blue Funnel

Line so I had accommodation, work, fellowship and education on the ships and was even paid a small amount for the privilege.



The Great Way Round; Paddington to Banbury.

Brunel was engaged as engineer to the route from Paddington in 1835. It was to be broad gauge and true to the nickname it was really the **Great Way Round**. None of Stephenson's 'longest railway tunnels in the World' or cuttings where five million tons of spoil had to be lifted for Brunel. But several notable engineering challenges faced Brunel on the route. The first being crossing the Brent Valley.



The **Wharncliffe Viaduct** crossed the valley and was brick-built at an elevation of 66 feet, built in 1836. The viaduct was the first major structural design by I K Brunel, It was also the first railway viaduct to be built with hollow piers.

Brunel simply followed river valleys to get to his destination with as little civil engineering as possible. The Sonning cutting was fairly massive but not a patch on Stephenson's Tring or Roade cuttings. The railway took in Slough (North Windsor for the snobs) and Reading, which was easy because it was already Brunel's main route to the West and followed the Thames Valley. The GWR saw their future in getting folk to Bristol, an Atlantic port and off to New York. I suppose Birkenhead was a large port and had possibilities for America although the cattle trade from Eire and dry cargo to the Far East and India was the best it could do.

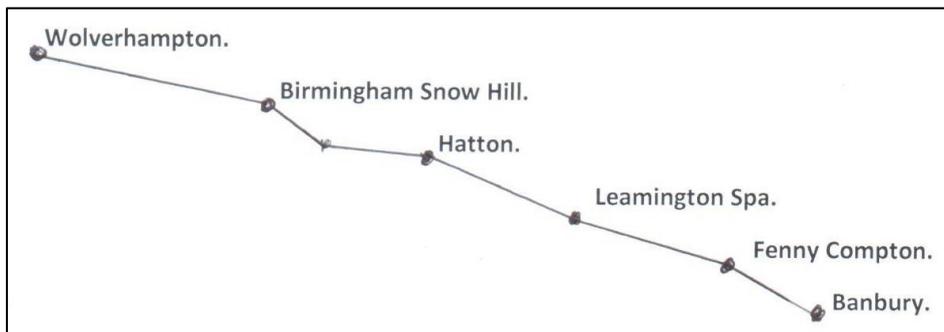
At Reading Brunel headed north along the Thames Valley and up through the Goring Gap (remember that from your school-days?) to Didcot and followed the Thames to Oxford; easy! Didcot is now a fantastic Railway Centre with a cornucopia of GWR locomotives in all states of restoration it was originally a loco shed for locomotives from the *Halls* down.

“Didcot Railway Centre. A delightful day out amongst steam trains - Such a relaxed friendly place to wander amongst amazing pieces of history. You don't need to be a huge steam train fan to just enjoy a fun day. Explore trains, carriages, ride in beautiful old carriages behind glorious old steam trains and just enjoy being left to wander around. Wonderful photo opportunities and just a benign atmosphere.” (from the brochure).

The River Cherwell joins the Thames at Oxford and Brunel found that it was an easy romp up the Cherwell Valley to Banbury. Up until Beeching, Banbury was quite a busy railway centre. The main line GWR for Birmingham went through Banbury; the LNER from the Great Central came in from Woodford Halse and the LMS came in from Verney Junction and Northampton. Banbury also had the largest cattle mart in the UK. Thousands of heads of beef came via Birkenhead in railway cattle vans from Eire. All gone now. And perhaps for the better. As far as I can make out the cattle were taken to Dublin put on ships to Birkenhead and then herded into cattle wagons at Birkenhead Docks. The cattle wagons were taken to Banbury Mart where the cattle were given water; I hope. Held till the auction started and then, when sold shipped off to their new owners, poor things. That was after at least 48 hrs of no sustenance or rest.

From Banbury the GWR then travelled up to Leamington Spa on a fairly easy route and on to Snow Hill (Birmingham). There were no steep inclines, no tunnels of consequence and no vast embankments on this route so that the broad-gauge railway could achieve high speeds and good timings all the way. The Great Western became well known for the speedy transits and was at one time the possessors of World record timings. All down to Brunel and his broad gauge and to Gooch who designed very reliable heavy and speedy locomotives such as

Lord of the Isles. Incidentally very little is written of IKB's involvement with the Paddington to Birkenhead Railway; possibly the Clifton Bridge, the Thames



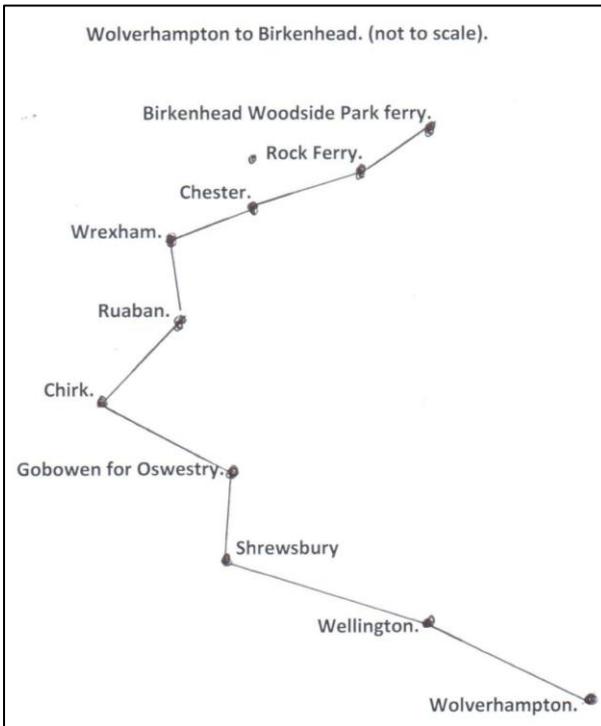
Tunnel, the Atmospheric Railway, the Gauge War and Transatlantic Ships dominated the chronicles of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's life story.

Cutting the Corner. The Paddington to Birmingham route via Oxford was the 'Great Way Round' and so with recognition of the fast Euston LNWR route to New Street a short cut via the Great Central Railway was made. It went from Paddington to Princes Risborough and then onto Bicester and Aynho where it joined the old route by the use of a 'fly-over'. This was fairly fast but there were many impediments to a non-stop record making passage. The drivers and of course the firemen had to be very skilled at recovering speed after frequent enforced restrictions and gradients of 1:170 in a number of places whereas Stephenson wanted nothing less than 1:330! But GWR nevertheless were able to make Birmingham Snow Hill non-stop in two hours flat.

GWR then carried on to Wolverhampton Low level where engines were changed. The Castle or King class locomotive was taken for a freshen up prior to its return journey to Paddington. Wolverhampton was the scene of the many legal battles that GWR had with the LNWR. Even after a compromise the bitterness persisted to the extent that passengers discovered that the train timings were deliberately disjoined so that it was almost impossible to transfer from one train line to the other!

Wolverhampton to Birkenhead.

Perhaps at this juncture mention should be made of **Captain Mark Huish** not of GWR but of the LNWR! Mark was sent to India when just 16 years of age. He went to work for the East India Company and when in India he joined the 67th Bengal Native Infantry. After 10 years in India he was eligible for three years leave and returned to the UK where he found he had been gazetted and promoted to Captain in the Native Infantry. He kept that entitlement for the rest of his life, perhaps the Native Infantry were glad that Mark never returned to India. Mark's hutzpah was outstanding and he seemed to climb the railway



management ladder very successfully so much so that he landed the General Managers Job of LNWR on an annual Salary of about £200,000 (Today's money.) which was extremely high by the standards of the day.

There is no doubt that **Captain Mark Huish** was good at his job and caused a revolution both in railway management and accountancy which were so worthy that they were copied by other railway companies. However, to the GWR he was like a Rottweiler in opposing everything that the GWR wanted to do. What GWR saved on civil engineering it had to

spend on lawyers and court cases both in civil courts and the Houses of Parliament in its struggle to Birkenhead. It seemed that every sleeper had to be fought over. But Mark Huish was a known bully, his style of management and arrogance won him few friends. In 1858 he was forced to resign with a Golden Pass but no pension from the LNWR which was at that time the largest joint stock company in the world. The Managers of the GWR must have, at the least, breathed a sigh of relief.

While we are discussing personalities mention should be made of **Sir Felix Pole**, the General Manager of GWR in a slightly later era. When he left school he became a signal box messenger (Just like our George Case who rose to be Station Master at Kings Cross) and with Felix's talent rose to be General Manager not by being a Rottweiler but by being a genuinely good guy who thought about his men and the difficult work they were doing as well as pushing GWR's management, image and reputation forward without aggression or bullying.

Felix Pole reinforced the image of '**God's Wonderful Railway**' so much so that men really idolised the organisation so much that working for the *Western* was a job for life and an end all of end all's. Frank Booker in his 'History of the GWR' tells of men sent to change the gauge from broad to 'narrow' at the 'end of broad-gauge era'. The men came from all over Britain to help, many had never seen

the sea before. They were temporarily billeted in all sorts of conditions and when they saw the sea and tide tables on Dawlish Station and they thought that even the sea was controlled by Gods Wonderful Railway!

The battle with the LNWR to get from **Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury** was long and bitter and very expensive. But the GWR did it in the end even if they had to share the tracks with other companies. The Battle of the Gauges was nothing compared with the conflicts with other railway companies. This was at the time of The Railway Mania where multiple companies saw an opportunity to make a bob or two by building multiple short rail lines between one place and another and calling it a 'railway'. So, the GWR had to deal with the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway, the Stour Valley Railway, the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway, the Shropshire Union and of course the LNWR! Even when the GWR achieved running powers from Birkenhead to Birmingham the conflict was not over! Captain Huish hired a flotilla tugs and flat-bottomed barges and was able to carry cargo from the Mersey to Shrewsbury undercutting the GWR. Fleets of omnibuses and coaches were employed to carry passengers from Birkenhead to Shrewsbury, Ruabon and Wrexham again undercutting the GWR.

The extremely confusing situation had to stop. No-one was going to win with ruinous rate cutting and competition on all sides was a point that had not escaped the rail investors who forced a settlement. It may have been at this point that Captain Mark Huish got the 'red card' and had to leave the game to the grown-ups. Childish competition carried on for years but eventually settled down after at least three years of strenuous belligerence.

To return to the journey. At Wolverhampton the powerful *King* or Castle was uncoupled as was the Restaurant set which was a three-coach articulated job rather like Gresley's LNER coaching stock. The remaining five carriages were



coupled up to a 4-4-0 Churchward County class locomotive ready for the next 72 miles to Chester. Wellington, Shrewsbury Gobowen and Wrexham were short intervals on this route which was lucrative to GWR on account of the coal and iron ore traffic from Wrexham. I well remember waiting on a homeward bound train one sunny afternoon rather like Adlestrop when birds were singing and with

the poor fireman coaxing with poor coal the boiler ready to steam the climb to Chirk!

It seems that a couple of attractive civil engineering features on this route were two great viaducts; one at Chirk and one at Cefn. The viaduct at Cefn over the Dee had nineteen arches and was 510 yards in length built by the famous contractor Thomas Brassey, it was visually perfect for the environment and was at one time thought to be the longest in the country. The Chirk viaduct was shorter but equally visually pleasing to the eye with twelve arches.

On arrival at Chester trains had to reverse but at least GWR had access to the route to Birkenhead. Shared with the LMS; normally a neat Stanier 2-6-4T would take the reduced train to Birkenhead. Some passengers who had not travelled to the Wirral before would sit up thinking that the train was on its way back to Paddington!

All to soon the journey from Paddington was complete. The final stage to Birkenhead completed the passage of 211 miles in just five hours flat. A place where Brunel had dreams in the 1850's of creating a great Atlantic port to make the GWR truly Great Western. A dream that can now never come true because Beeching closed Woodside Station at Birkenhead and singled up many tracks from Shrewsbury north. Hence my calling the line from Paddington to Birkenhead the Cinderella Line because it appeared to have been neglected right from the time of its original painful gestation.

Post Script;

When I was perusing the 1948 maps of British Railways, I was surprised to see an LNER line from Wrexham to Birkenhead! The line called at Shotton, with a spur to Chester, and Bidston Dock. I wonder about its history and whether any reader with more knowledge of railways in that area than me can explain why it there is a duplicating of the route that GWR bitterly fought over for years? Was it the work of Watkin and the GCR?

Ian Johnston.

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Paddington Station train shed.

Years ago, it was possible to drive onto the platform to pick up passengers.

ADVERTISEMENT

I have a small well-equipped workshop which I have to downsize. I had a stroke last year and I wonder if any of your members would be interested in some of the tools. I have a large range of drills etc.

Please give me a call to arrange a visit if you are interested. I live in Hatfield

Gerald

OO Railway Section

By Geoff

Building can be seen all over the UK and this railway town is no exception. Despite the restrictions placed on activities at HQ the OO section have taken a few photos of work on the railway which continues to be developed. These illustrate some of the continuing and ongoing work on the town scene being added to the 'shed' board which, to date, has not been named.



Opposite the church are a row of 10 houses, built late Victorian era with front doors straight onto the pavement, in similar manner as those in many industrial towns.

This picture shows the rear of the same row of houses, illustrating the small back yards which connect to a rear alley.

The tracks under the retaining wall lead to the loco shed itself, so this area would have been very sooty with the loco smoke!





Beyond the footbridge in the picture above are 2 small industrial units. Not sure what line of goods manufactured in either or who actually occupies the smaller of building. Below and tucked around the corner is the site of the diesel stabling and refuelling point - an omen of things to come following the demise of the steam loco power.

Opposite the larger of the two industrial units there is a row of 4 shops, these being in addition to the Fish & chip shop shown in the February news sheet. Three of these shops are useful to us as their trades are (from left to right) - Hardware and Ironmongers, Model shop, Off-licence plus the one we would prefer not be a customer of - the Undertaker.



Geoff

An hour by the boating lake and Captain Robert Redmill

By Gregory Metcalf

A couple of months ago when Covid restrictions were lifted, brother David, son Michael and myself had a few hours out with our model boats.



The first model is the Nadjine. This example is named Lady Starling.

All plastic, a nice runner and good-looking boat.



The next boat is an American PT boat. This is one of the Higgins class, based on the British armed patrol boats. Once plans were agreed within a year, they had built over 100! The model is based on number 212 which spent the entire second world war in the Mediterranean.



The last photograph is of David's Range Safety Launch, scratch built. The nice thing about making a model boat is the amount of information on the internet - photos, articles etc. One can print off and have a folder full of information. In the model boat world when entering competitions, the more info the better. Especially if you can get on to the real thing.

While writing soon after we moved to Stevenage, I found out that one of the Captains who served under Nelson at Trafalgar was buried about half a mile from

here in the graveyard of St Nicholas Church, I found a book called The Trafalgar Captains, and sure enough there he was Captain Robert Redmill, Captain of HMS Polyphemus.

The Polyphemus was the last to engage at Trafalgar, being the last boat in the van, however she arrived when it was nearly all over. Her claim to fame was towing the Victory to Gibraltar as she was so shot up, she could not sail herself.

The book has a short history of all the Captains, regrettably his gravestone is so badly eroded, coupled with a fire many years ago which burnt all the church records, that we cannot pinpoint his stone. Another book I bought is called the Captain Class Frigates; this class was built by the Americans for the Royal Navy - our yards were too busy to be able to take them on - during the second World War. Many of the class were called after the Trafalgar Captains, including DE89, HMS Redmill.

Forthcoming General Meetings

General Meetings at our Legion Way Headquarters in North Finchley are now cancelled until further notice.

Any questions please ring, Ian Johnston

Ian

– General Meetings Co-ordinator

Dates for your Diary

The current government restrictions resulting from the COV-19 virus has resulted in all NLSME organised events being cancelled until further notice.

November	2020
<i>Tue 3rd Nov</i>	<i>Council meeting Location & Time TBC (see note below)</i>
<i>Thur 19th Nov</i>	<i>Deadline for copy to Editor for December News Sheet</i>

The Government's rule of six has had an impact on Council meetings which at present comprise four officers and five Council members. We are implementing a rota system to ensure the limit of six is met. It also follows that, for the time being, any member's request to attend Council meetings will have to be declined. We may for future meetings have to consider on line formats.