

Want to see this  
in full colour?  
Then visit  
[www.nlsme.co.uk](http://www.nlsme.co.uk)



# The News Sheet

*This Month...*

**NLSME Winter Work 2011 - 2012 (page 6)**

**Times they are a changing (page 12)**

**A Visit to St Albans South Signal Box (page 13)**



*Plus...*

**From the Chair (page 2), Treasurer's Report (page 3),  
Marine Mumbles (page 4), General Meetings Update (page 5)  
Fetes and Fairs (page 9), November General Meeting (page 10),  
Dates for Your Diary (page 15),**

**[www.nlsme.co.uk](http://www.nlsme.co.uk)**

## FROM THE CHAIR

I would firstly like to thank Mike Chrisp for running the General Meetings at HQ throughout the year. There have been many and varied interesting topics to stimulate attendees' attention. These meetings are General Meetings for the whole Society, so it is disappointing that it is usually only locomotive lads, plus one or two others, who bother to attend. The last General Meeting of the year was, of course, the Society Christmas party, again organised by Mike and Jean. There was a goodly spread of food and drink and a convivial atmosphere to the evening. Thanks to Mike and Jean for their efforts.

This December News Sheet is, of course, the last for 2011, and our next News Sheet will be published in February 2012. This arrangement gives our Editor, Nick Griffin, and his many contributors of the articles a well earned rest!! Thank you Nick for your contribution to the life of the Society. When the News Sheet returns, we shall be well into 2012 and time will speed away towards our AGM in May, and the prior preparations for that meeting.

These next two months see the Society having a stand at two exhibitions. The Model Engineer at Sandown, 9-11 December, organised on our behalf by Chris Vousden and Derek Franklin, and the London Model Engineering Exhibition at Alexandra Palace, 20-22 January, organised by Ian Johnston. Our thanks to these chaps for their efforts, and thanks too to all who support them by displaying their models, or by acting as stand stewards.

Finally, may I wish all members and their families a very pleasant Christmas, and hope that you will continue to have an active and busy New Year on your many projects.

*David Harris*

Front cover: N2 at Warley Model Railway Exhibition 2011.

Photo: Mike Foreman

Right: St Albans South Signal box

Photo: Jim MacDonald

## TREASURER'S REPORT

At the last Council Meeting we were pleased to accepted one new member into our Society,

Mr John Judson, interested in Locomotives and Gauge 1 Garden Railway

With the Christmas period rapidly approaching I can advise that the Raised Track is fully usable and we are planning to have a New Year's Day run on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012, kicking off at about 10.00. All are welcome and maybe we will be able to rustle up some hot mince pies etc., apart from a few trains.

Wishing everybody a Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year.

*Mike Foreman*



## Marine Mumbles (Rides Again)

No Dave and I haven't forgotten to put the pond nets on this year. After a long and in depth discussion (about 30 seconds) we decided to do something different. The last two years we have found it was taking all afternoon to pull the things off, and it wasn't very easy. Just ask the Garden Railway boys who did it the year before. It was more like Keel-Hauling! So what are we going to do this year? Pleased you asked. Well we are going to leave them off this time. Dave's Mk1 ½ wide bottom trawl net is very efficient at picking up sunken rubbish. That equates to one barrow load per cross pond drag. In previous years we still had to do this, as a fair number of leaves still got onto the bottom. We stake our reputation (what reputation!) on it working, or we are both going to become Nuns. Can you imagine me joining a Silent Order? The good thing to come out of this is that sailing can be all year now. Except, you guessed it, when it's frozen!

Now for a cautionary tale. Steve Jones and I had an interesting talk, while I was on Sunday public running gate duty, about a painting. He had bought some (never heard of it before) Acrylic-Enamel paint on the internet. This paint could be thinned using either water or enamel thinners (white spirit) as per instructions. It gave a very bubbly finish. Not what you want! After much discussion (more than 30 seconds) I think we came to the same conclusion. Use either Acrylic thinned with water/isopropyl alcohol or Enamel thinned with white spirit. I would be interested to know if anybody else has used this mixed media paint, and what they used to thin it down.

We hope, weather permitting, to continue our HQ meetings on the second Friday in February 2012. That's the 10<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm in old money.

All that is left to do is to wish everybody in The Society a Happy Christmas and wonderful New Year from the Marine Section. Have a good one, and see you all next year.

Peter Stern

## **GENERAL MEETINGS 2011 – FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME**

Unless otherwise indicated, General Meetings are held 8-10pm at our Legion Way Headquarters in North Finchley. Peter Davies usually presides over our raffle - for which all donations of suitable prizes are always appreciated, while Dave Lawrence provides us with tea and biscuits at around 9pm. Our thanks to Dave and Peter. Profits from meetings go directly to club funds. All members are welcome at any of our General Meetings and we are always happy to see members' friends and family, too. Hoping for a good attendance to support our speakers, we look forward to your company.

Suggestions (and volunteers) for suitable General Meeting topics are always welcome.

### **2 DECEMBER 2011**

An informal time together in convivial company with food and drinks 'on the house'. Last year some of us showed a little 'something' to amaze or amuse. Nothing formal - just something on which you've been working, or maybe something you've just come across, or even had around for a while. All members, families and friends are welcome to join us for a guaranteed stress-free sociable evening among like-minded friends and colleagues.

### **6 JANUARY 2012 – A DIFFERENT VIEW**

Our Video Team present an evening revealing aspects of Society activities.

### **3 FEBRUARY 2012 – MODEL ENGINEERING FORUM**

Hints, tips and techniques.

### **2 MARCH 2012 – KEN BRERETON – THE INFLUENCE OF EFFLUENT**

All you should know about the Markfield Beam Engine and Museum.

## NLSME Winter Work 2011-2012

The following list indicates the range and variety of jobs both large and small currently being addressed at our Tyttenhanger Track Site. If you enjoy the facilities at the track during the summer, are available on Sunday mornings during the winter from around 0900 hours and would like to participate in the important business of routine maintenance and site improvement, we would be very glad to see you there. Please approach the named Section Leader or Project Manager if you have a particular job in mind, otherwise please find our interim TSC Chairman, Mike Chrisp on site who will be happy to help you choose something from the list.

### **Raised Track Maintenance: Mike Foreman**

1. Check all main sleepers.
2. Remedy bump in return straight.
3. Check super-elevation around entire track.
4. Investigate kink inside tunnel.
5. Check tightness of rail/sleeper screws and adjust spacing of sleepers.
6. Using a template, paint a black panel on each pier to facilitate painting pier numbers starting at station.

### **Raised Track Extension Project: Grahame Gardner**

1. Transport materials up / down the site as required.
2. Landscape soil around columns as and when transported.
3. Clear away rubbish, debris and left-over materials from area adjacent to track.

### **Ground Level Railway Maintenance: Peter Funk**

1. Check and replace sleepers as necessary; check gauge.
2. Track ballasting and levelling; greasing fishplates.
3. Fit rails in containers.
4. Make and fit locator and brake to traverser.
5. Make and fit hand / push rail to traverser.
6. Make and fit locator to turntable.
7. Align 5in. rails to turntable.
8. Make and fit direction levers to points, grease blade mechanism to points.
9. Motorise 3-way point to Orchard Junction.
10. Replace 2 old points.
11. Remove heaps of soil from car park, Henley Halt and P line.
12. Re-lay bed to Cuckoo Line taking out hump.
13. Remove sharp bends past narrows.
14. Finish roof ends to steaming bay.
15. Finish installing services to steaming bay, air, electrics, etc.
16. Make up bank to fence alongside container No.1.
17. Re-align long straight to new land.
18. Ongoing signalling installations, including mounting post and new controls

for 3-way point.

19. Make up wooden stakes for marking out Plan B in new land approx 100 off.

### **Ground Level Railway Extension Project: Peter Brewster**

I do not anticipate the GLR extension project will create Sunday jobs during the coming winter, any potential victims should be directed to the section leader - see above

### **Site Maintenance: David Harris**

1. Junk behind carriage shed (by gate) should be removed / scrapped.
2. Bench at car park station needs repair and painting.
3. Station at car park – painting to be completed.
4. Station at car park – fencing needs repair.
5. Station car park – barge board completion.
6. Steaming bay shelter needs completing.
7. Fence off the Tyttenhanger loco yard.
8. Huge pile of soil to be moved to new land.
9. Containers need painting.
10. Store roller doors for future use.
11. Dispose of hoist.
12. Repair roadway on car park.
13. Repair signal shed (by station slope).
14. Re-treat woodwork of signal shed.
15. Paint main station canopy.
16. Repair coach interior.
17. Repair coach exterior cladding.
18. Refurnish the main benches by station.
19. Repair station platform lamp.
20. Repair window of coach.
21. Question the future of the Dingley Dell area.
22. Remove Dingley Dell fencing – rotten.
23. Remove junk at Dingley Dell.
24. Remove wooden seat at Dingley Dell – rotten.
25. Fencing around tree needs to be rebuilt.
26. All hard wood seats need to be oiled.
27. General clearing up of the site to remove junk, scrap metal, and unwanted items.

### **Grounds Maintenance: Nigel Griffiths**

1. Collect discarded metal from around the site and move to the identified central location for possible disposal as scrap or removal from site by owner.
2. Plant up raised bank area behind the pond with any plants which are donated by members.
3. Barrier off, lightly dig over and grass seed the bare area adjacent to the station platform.
4. Collect leaves from around the station and pond areas and burn as appropriate.

5. Collect branches in the area of the new raised track extension and burn as appropriate.
6. Remove dead branches from apple trees and any other trees and burn as appropriate.
7. Remove pile of soil between cuckoo line and ground level track and transport to raised track extension for use in building up embankments.
8. Carry out any maintenance required on grounds equipment – ride on lawnmower, powered lawnmowers, strimmers etc.
9. In springtime spray emerging weeds and nettles.
10. Remove and burn tree stumps in lane and remould soil banks in this area in readiness for 2012 running season.

**Steaming Bays Project: Chris Vousden**

1. Design purpose built structure to hold compressor and changing facilities.
2. Tidy edge to rear of containers, by installing dwarf wall and paving slab top.
3. Re-assess design access hatch to rear of end container and complete internal trackwork for club loco storage and service to existing steaming bays. (Storage may be extended to include members' locos) subject to agreement.
4. Agree costs and develop design of roof covering to containers, procure second hand timber and commence works.
5. Develop design for infill, floor and walls, obtain approval, subject for subsequent meetings.
6. Develop design for switching track and link to steaming bays, this is detail design work as approval for development already gained.

## Fetes and Fairs

Yet another successful year for the Fetes and Fairs section comes to an end with only one date left later in December. A large sum of money has been raised and will be distributed to projects at both Colney Heath and Headquarters by members of the section according to the number of points gained during the year.

The year started with the traditional St Georges Day celebrations in Cheshunt an event we have attended for the second time. New venues this year included the Donkey Derby held at Cherry Tree Wood as part of the Muswell Hill festival, Baldock Beer festival, St Andrews church Ware, St Mary's school Enfield and Highfield Fun Day in St Albans. 24 events were attended altogether. Bookings are already coming in for next year but we are likely to limit the number of events attended as members would like to run their locos at



Colney Heath and attend other events at some weekends during the year.  
Tony Dunbar driving Sweet Pea at the Muswell Hill Festival

# November General Meeting

By OMAH II

The discussion evening got off to a cracking start with an opening by Mike Chrisp addressing a rather large group of members who chanced to be passing by on that auspicious occasion. Preliminaries were soon dispensed with by the appointment of a fire marshal, the employment of David as tea czar and Peter with the task of organising the raffle.

The Club seems to be no less active now that autumn is here. A sizeable contingent visited the Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition and the Fetes & Fairs group have been only slightly less occupied recently than in the summer. The Garden Railway Section acquitted itself with honours at an exhibition held at the National Railway Museum in York, and certainly made its mark on behalf of the Society.

Future activities were introduced including a forthcoming meeting of the Locomotive Section which will be a field visit to the Signal Box at St Albans. A maximum number of members can be entertained, so it is by application only. This will be the **last formal meeting of the Locomotive Section** until someone comes forward to run meetings at headquarters. The task is not onerous and members will support wholeheartedly whoever wishes to take on the job. All that is needed is a blend of home grown speakers, some entertaining visiting experts, a few 'work in progress' evenings and of course the summer filled with barbecues at Colney Heath.

Our Christmas gathering at headquarters for all members was promoted by Mike C and those present approved a New Year's Day Steam Up proposed by Mike F.

## **A synopsis of the harmonious discussion follows:**

The position of the Society today was reviewed in that it is a premier club with a large and diverse membership from all walks of life. That membership has flourished and many sections have been welcomed into the Society. The HQ now houses the Slot Car, OO, North American HO, Gauge O, and Video Sections, as well as a large library, a very adequate meeting room and a small kitchen. The site at Colney Heath is developing well and accommodates the Marine, Ground Level, Stationary Steam and Locomotive Sections plus the illustrious Garden Railway Section as well as a facility for the provision for refreshments. The club exhibits at both the London Model Engineering Exhibitions. In other words the Society is varied and energetic and therein lies its strength. With two sites and such a variety of activities, it is important that the club continues to be cohesive with mutual support in order to remain a leading club giving enjoyment and fulfilment to members and their wider

families. Not, of course, forgetting the many charitable activities that involve the support of the Society.

David L provided a pleasant break of Darjeeling tea with chocolate biscuits. Peter D's raffle prizes were drawn, with even the winner of a gallon of aftershave modestly secreting the container below his seat.

The evening was then skilfully drawn to a conclusion with a vote of thanks to Mike for his cohesive navigation of a meeting where those present were able to express their views and opinions concerning the Club; past, present and future in a most harmonious manner.

## **Times they are a changing.**

Recently John Burden, a friend of Garden Railway member Chris Dean lent me a copy of a Ministry of Transport report into an accident that occurred on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 1968 at Sandridge near St. Albans. John was a passenger in the seventh car of the train. It is worthy of précising the eight pages and one diagram of this report.

The 07.40 am eight car DMU was travelling from Bedford to St Pancras, on the Up Fast line, when a fire broke out under the seventh coach, spreading rapidly to the underside of the eighth. The fire alarm bells sounded and the train was rapidly brought to a stand. However, before it had stopped a number of passengers had jumped out, unfortunately one was killed and another sustained fatal injuries. Ten others were injured, six being detained in hospital. Everybody in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> cars evacuated onto the ballast, made extremely difficult by the lack of steps below the doors not to mention the smoke and flames.

The fire was caused by the gearbox of the diesel engine underneath the seventh car seizing up through lack of lubrication; causing the prop-shaft to shear and flailing around ruptured the fuel tank releasing about one hundred gallons of fuel, which burst into flames.

The train had been travelling at about 65 mph, when the accident occurred at about 08.20. The Fire and Ambulance services were alerted and reached the site by 08.29 and the fire was extinguished by 08.45. All lines were closed whilst the fire was being fought and then a stopping passenger train from Luton to Moorgate was admitted to the section under caution on the Up Slow line to pick up the stranded passengers.

(Those members of the Society who visited the St Albans South Signal Box last month will be able to appreciate this description better.) All lines except the Up Fast were re-opened to traffic at 09.16, (56 minutes after the accident). The disabled train was moved at extreme caution under its own power to St Albans and stabled by 10.20. (120 minutes after the accident), enabling the Up Fast to re-open. So in the space of two hours not only did the authorities deal with the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, but they removed the body of the unfortunate fatality from the line-side and all the injured passengers, together with recording all the details needed of the location of the accident.

Compare this accident report to the present day reporting of incidents by three separate organisations, Network Rail, the Police, the Rail Accident Investigation Bureau, the days taken to record the scene and the total disruption caused to all lines and services.

Somewhere we seem to have lost track of how to deal with things....

# A visit to St. Albans South Signal Box

by Roger Bell

Jim Macdonald had kindly arranged the visit and seventeen of us met at the box at 7.30pm on Friday 18 November where we were greeted by the Chairman of the Preservation Trust who described the museum articles to us in the garden and the modern signalling system with the use of colour signals, the green, double amber, amber and red to protect trains. A repeater signal indicates what the next signal is set to. In the days of steam it took a train three quarters of a mile to stop nowadays it's half a mile. Trains were 3 ½ miles apart, they are a lot closer now. The main signal box is at West Hampstead, a new box is being built at Derby to replace it. Originally the go signal was white but this could not be seen with the new electric lighting on station platforms so it was changed to green, and not legally enforced until 1931. A diamond on a signal post indicates to the driver that he is on a track circuit and the signalman knows he is there. The lamp hut is where the lamps were maintained, the wicks trimmed and lamps filled with oil; six were replaced at a time. The hand and signal lamp, were the same basic lamp, but the signal one was focussed giving it a visibility of half a mile.

The Midland Railway was the first to get rid of second class, it was the first to have sleeper cars and restaurant cars. The company was well organised and able to buy up smaller companies; it was rich due in part to the coal traffic from the Midlands. In 1844 it was the biggest railway in the UK with 90 locomotives. By 1895 it had 3000 locomotives. It did not have a station in London and had to move coal to other railways to getting it there, and so it was decided to build an extension from Bedford into London. A slum at St Pancras was purchased by the directors. The residents were living ten to a room in a four room house, yes that's 40 to a house, were evicted. That was the last time this has happened as Parliament passed a law to prevent that in the future. The preferred route into St. Pancras was under the Regents Canal but another railway prevented that. Going over the canal meant it was one floor up into St. Pancras. At that time Burtons Brewery were looking for somewhere to store their beer destined for London. London beers were warm and dark. Burton had developed a light and cool beer that was very popular, so the ground floor was used as a beer cellar; the columns were 14 feet and half an inch apart to allow three barrels to fit in place.

A rare video was shown of the box in operation in the 1960s normally no one else would be allowed in the box apart from the signalman. At this time they were not recruiting and one signalman came from Manchester to operate the box for a week. Railway staff could belong to the coal club which bought bulk coal cheaper selling it on to employees.

We were then led outside and up the steps into the operating deck of the 44

lever signal box; which was prefabricated in Derby as a type 2a and erected here in 1892. It was built as part of an upgrade from goods only to slow lines carrying stopping passenger trains as well as goods traffic while the passenger lines were redesignated as fast lines. This arrangement still exists today. In October 1979 control of the trains was transferred to the new signal box at West Hampstead. The station announcer used the box for a while after. It was during this time that the box and lever frame were listed as Grade 2. It was in 2002 that the present preservation group was founded. A limited company was formed in January 2003, a grant from the architectural Heritage fund was obtained to part fund a feasibility study into the repairs and possible future of the box it concluded that fully restored it could be used as a railway heritage and museum attraction. In 2005 Lafarge Aggregates Ltd granted the trust some money towards its restoration and landscaping around the box. Heritage lottery funding was also agreed. Network Rail erected the fence around the box and in the spring of 2006 the trust and network rail signed a 25 year lease over the site and work began in earnest. In September 2006 the site was opened to the public for the first time during the National Heritage open weekend.

We were shown how the box was used in operation. It covers the track from Harpenden through St Albans to Napsbury. Levers are numbered and correspond to their position on the diagram board above the frame. The bell codes operate on an offer and acceptance situation. Harpenden would offer a train to us using the bell, our box replies and offers it in turn to Napsbury. Levers are pulled to set the signals and points and the block instruments above the frame are also used. When the train is in our section levers are released to protect the train from the rear and Harpenden advised it is in our section. Red levers are stop signals, yellow caution, a shorter yellow lever with the top cut off is just a switch and it indicates a hard pull is not required. Black levers are points, blue are facing points and are locked by a bolt; black and white chevrons levers are for detonators. We were all given the opportunity of operating the signals and block instruments to signal a train through, fortunately none of it is connected to the main line outside.

It seemed a very complicated system with the bell codes to learn and in those days 12 trains an hour to manage. Each movement was recorded in a log book on the desk.

This was a really enjoyable fascinating evening and we are grateful to the members of the St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust for giving up their evening and showing it all to us.

The box is regularly open to the public; the next date is Sunday 11 December from 2pm until 5 pm.

## 📖 Dates for your Diary 📖

Friday 4 Nov	8.00pm General Meeting; Review, look back on a busy season and forward to a productive winter; HQ, Legion Way, Nth Finchley
Saturday 5 Nov	Fetes & Fair section at Southgate, Contact J McDonald
Monday 7 Nov	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Tuesday 8 Nov	8.00pm TSC meeting; Colney Heath
<b>Monday 21 Nov</b>	<b><i>Deadline for copy to Editor for December News Sheet</i></b>
Friday 25 Nov	8.00pm Workshop evening; HQ, Legion Way, Nth Finchley
Friday 2 Dec	8.00pm General Meeting; Pre Christmas Social; HQ, Legion Way, Nth Finchley
Saturday 3 Dec	Fetes & Fair section at Berkhamstead, Contact J McDonald
Monday 5 Dec	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
Wednesday 14 Dec	HO section Pre-Christmas Open House; HQ; Legion Way; Nth Finchley
Wednesday 28 Dec	HO Section running session from 1300; HQ; Legion Way; Nth Finchley
Friday 6 Jan	8.00pm General Meeting; A Different View, Our Video Team present an evening revealing aspects of Society activities.; HQ, Legion Way, Nth Finchley
Monday 9 Jan	8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley
<b>Friday 20 Jan</b>	<b><i>Deadline for copy to Editor for February News Sheet</i></b>
Friday 27 Jan	8.00pm Workshop evening; HQ, Legion Way, Nth Finchley
Friday 3 Feb	8.00pm General Meeting; Model Engineering Forum, Hints, tips and techniques.; HQ, Legion Way, Nth Finchley

Every Wednesday	Garden Railway Section at Colney Heath (11am - 4pm); OO and HO Model Railway Groups and Video Group at HQ (evening)
Every Thursday	Slot Cars Section at HQ (evening)
Every Saturday	Morning working party on GLR including junior section.
Every Sunday	Morning working parties at Colney Heath (start 9.00am).

**NB: Please remember to notify all meetings, events & exhibitions, in advance, to Owen and Rachael Chapman, who act as Keepers of the Society Calendar and Tyttenhanger Site Events Co-ordinators.**

