

Issue No. 892 September 2026

The News Sheet

North London Society of Model Engineers

**September
2026**



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

Contents

Chairman's Comments	Page 3
Cheers to 60 Years! Invite for All	Page 5
Steaming Bay, Progress Update	Page 6
Semaphore Signal & Battery Loco Reminder	Page 7
Bookworm Writes	Page 8
Gauge 1 Update	Page 11
Safety Notice! Regarding Public Running Days	Page 13
Drivers Approved for Public Running (Draft list)	Page 14
Track Stewards Reminders & Rota	Page 17
Club Dates for your Diary	Page 19
Updated Contacts list	Rear Page

Front cover;

Rotary snowplough No 1 on display in Skagway, Alaska. Taken from a larger submission from Geoff to be featured next month.

Picture by Geoff

Your editor is very grateful to all those who have contributed to this edition. Your efforts are much appreciated by all the members of NLSME. This News Sheet would not be possible without you.

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. If you don't want to put pen to paper but have a suggestion for a topic which is of interest let the editor know and we will do the rest.

Chairman's Comments



Les

It will have come as no surprise that due to fire risks at Tyttenhanger we had to ban steaming of coal and methylated spirit fired models. Whilst in many respects it has been a glorious summer, the prolonged drought is an unwanted consequence. Furthermore, areas of the site around car park, station and picnic area are bare earth. I wonder if they will ever recover.

Whilst this is an ideal time for use of our two raised track electric locos, both are, at time of writing, out of service. The green one (class 31) lost drive on three of its four driven wheel sets. Keith has repair in hand. The blue one (Class 37) has a seized axle and resulting flat on one wheel. These two locos done a huge amount of running and we must be grateful to George and others that have kept them going for so many years. After the current visits to Keith works, they should be ready for more years of service. However, members should check all is well with them before and after running, reporting problems and not let the present sorry state develop again.

Continued progress at HQ with partitioning for the new WC is under way. The team have proposed a small modification to the planned layout which will improve access to the WC, maintain privacy and avoid clashes of doors in the lobby area.

Visitors to Tyttenhanger will notice the old workshop has been re roofed and very smart it is too. Thanks to all who assisted with this but in particular David with Jon and Mick who toiled through the heat on each of three consecutive days to install it.

Thoughts are now turning to completion of remaining aspects of the steaming bay project, the swing point, the traverser modifications and the canopy. We expect to start each of these in November after the final event of the year, our members friends and family's afternoon, Sunday 25th October.

Reminder that the St Albans exhibition is on last weekend of this month. Please contact Peter or myself if you have a model you are prepared to display and want to discuss arrangements for it. As advised previously we are exhibiting Midsomer Norton from our OO section. John is exhibiting a GN15 layout, not an OO layout as I incorrectly stated last month. The difference has

been explained to me, again! I do not trust myself to explain it to others, but it relates to narrow gauge modelling and scales in mm/ft. I have seen evidence of John's work and this, plus Midsommer Norton, will be worth the admission price on their own.

Please see the note in this news sheet from Jean, inviting all members to Tyttenhanger on Saturday 12th September to celebrate Mike's 60 years of NLSME membership.

Finally, but importantly, I can advise that Following my comments in May we are close to formalising our Safeguarding Policy. This will replace our existing Child Protection Policy. I am very pleased that Alan has agreed to be our Safeguarding Officer. Any concerns relating to matters under the policy should in first instance be referred to Alan.

See you at track or HQ. Les

Editor's Comments

Jack

Nothing from Mike this month, normal service to resume in next month's edition.

By now I hope you have received your August Newsletter, I was late to edit and send it off then following a change of staff at the Newsletter printing company, it was further delayed as they settled into their new roles. Going forward I am setting myself a target of editing earlier in the month, if I can get a seat I will start editing on my EMR Commuter train in the mornings,

I would like to ask that people continue to *submit your submissions to me before to the 24th of each month*, which should on average give me enough time alongside my full time job to edit & distribute the Newsletter to hopefully bring the delivery date closer to a more regular pattern,

Everyone has been great so far but for those who don't see the Whatsapp reminders I have been asked to feature it here as a reminder too.





Sixty Years – Saturday 12 September 2026

Our Treasurer has noticed that Mike will have been a NLSME member for 60 years in September this year.

We're arranging an informal gathering at the track on Saturday 12 September from 12.00pm to provide an opportunity for members to reminisce and enjoy our wonderful facilities there.

Martin has organised his 3½ Gauge Event for the same day but has kindly agreed both events can run side-by-side. Maybe one or two locomotives may be available for rides on the Raised Track.

Paul has kindly agreed to arrange available GLR team members to provide rides on the Ground Level Railway.

It would be great to have your company that afternoon. You may wish to bring your own picnic but we will provide tea and cake.

Hope to see you there! Mike and Jean
Best wishes, Jean

Steaming Hot, Steaming Not!

Diesels now reign, they rule the roost!
No longer are steam trains running loose!
No more flames from her firebox,
No steam from her boiler,
No more greasing to do.
No need to oil Her!

These steam engines are retired,
And the hot weather is to blame...
But many of us may lament
On, losing an old flame!

By John

Raised Track Steaming Bay & Semaphore Signal

Keith

Work has continued during July and August between running sessions. The most significant job completed was the complete replacement of the roof on the old workshop. The old corrugated steel roof was still watertight but condensation on the inside resulted in items stored below getting damp and corrosion was becoming a problem. The intention is to store the RT coaches in this building and the decision was taken to replace the roof with corrugated insulated roof panels. The hot dry period presented a great opportunity to do the job which was completed over a 5 day period. All that remains to be done is the new guttering which should have been done by the time you are reading this. The beams to support the steaming bay roof reported in last months news sheet are now complete.

The next stage is the steaming bay roof and the new swing section. Neither of these tasks can be started until the end of the running season. So please all note that from Sunday the 1st November the steaming bays and raised track will be out of use. It is hoped we will be in a position to allow the New Year's Day run but this cannot be guaranteed. So if you want to enjoy a run on the raised track you have until 31st October.

Thanks to all who have helped on these two projects.

Please note in your diaries Raised track closed from Sunday 1st November until further notice



In the spring of 2020 we replaced the wooden post which had completely rotted away at its base. A new oak beam was installed, painted and all the original fittings bolted back on. But the signal could now do with a little bit of maintenance. The wood has fully dried out and a few cracks have appeared. The paint is also flaking in places.

We need a volunteer or two to take on the task of a bit of rubbing down and repainting the signal before the winter weather gets to bad. So if you could help with this task please let Keith know. The club will meet any expenses for consumables, paint etc. We have a tower scaffold to allow access above head height. Please help if you can.



Both of the clubs battery electric locomotives are currently out of use. They have both suffered from severe wearing of components and require extensive repairs. It is hoped that by the first public running session in September at least one will be available. These locos are available to be used by members at any time. We only ask that you carry out some basic checks before using them and at the end of your run put a note in the signing on sheet if there are any problems. If possible also advise the RT section leader. From the damage found when the blue class 37 had finally failed it is very apparent it had run a considerable distance with a seized axle. The extent of the damage has required the complete replacement of the whole wheel motor and mounting frame assembly.

On Public running days these locomotives must not be used on the Sunday morning as they cannot be recharged in time for the afternoon public running session.

Bookworm Writes – Heatwave Special (Subject to Change) Could a Stanley Help?

Well, it's official. This year has been 40 days unbroken heat. Not since the summer of 1976 has my owner's workshop shed been so hot. The roofing felt has been melting, panels have been bending, and the surfaces of machines once so cold to the touch in winter have been hot enough to fry an egg on at certain times of the day; even the woodworm has been abandoning the ship(lap) – that's a little woodworking joke for those in the know – for fear of being entombed by boiling hot tar sealing their way out.



Stanley with builder at the controls. ***Image source at bottom of text**

Some are saying it's been worse than '76, and surprisingly my owner is one of them. For this time it is unquestionably 40 days continuous since he last wore his string vest, in 1976 it was only 25! It should be said by the way that he is possibly the only person left in north London to wear such a garment; in fact it was widely rumoured that the Wolsey factory in Leicester had all but given up hope of ever shutting its doors, that is until they put their foot down and told him his last order just HAD to be the last! Since then despite constant badgering by companies of lesser quality (according to him) he has held the modern age at bay and fought off all attempts to coax him into T-shirts, much to Mrs Owner's chagrin...as she would so eloquently put it.

Water of course is such a rare commodity at the moment *one* has to do *ones bit* and it hasn't taken long for my owner to get back into the spirit of 1976 by insisting on drinking more beer to save on tap water (so he says), switching off the dishwasher and using the washing up water from the sink instead to water the borders; even pea water (saved from cooking the vegetables) is doing sterling work on Mrs Owner's greenhouse plants.

Of course not everything is the same as fifty years ago, for then August proved to be the most challenging month for them both when at one point they had to take it in turns to go to the corner of the street and collect water from a stand-pipe. All

restrictions were of course followed to the Government's letter, and after Mrs Owner had pointed out the brick in the toilet was supposed to be put in the cistern things got settled into a routine. The 5 inches of water in the bath rule was eagerly anticipated by him after he heard about the idea of bathing with a friend. However despite all the heat, the air was distinctly chilly the afternoon he put the idea to the test by asking the young barmaid at the *Billet* if she would like to join him in his bath later, not realising Mrs Owner was seated at the table just behind him.....I wondered why he stopped going to the *Billet* around that time and changed his allegiance to the *Barley Mow* instead...

Of course Colney Heath at that time emulated the full-size railways with its snaking rails and lack of water but with the added possibility of fires being started by passing locos - spark- arresters were largely unheard of at the time - for once any fire had started it could only be put out using the small 'Fire' buckets that were dotted around the track. But from difficulties come ideas and with them comes the possibility to think outside of the shed, which for some meant having a crack at one of those otherwise rare birds, an electric loco.

Such locos were thin on the ground (so to speak) in the Club in those far-off days, even petrol engines were conspicuous by their absence. For then only the most dedicated model engineer would have considered transplanting such a unit from the family motor-mower.

In fact your guide to the past would struggle to steer you to a reference for any other electric loco in the Club in the mid 1970s other than *Stanley*. (Hands up those who remember *Stanley*? Answers and photos to our worthy Sir Ed the Editor).

Stanley was a muscular model in 5" gauge that was based on the 'Western Region' design of diesel- hydraulic locomotive that in the early 1970s was pounding the rails between Paddington and the West Country on a daily basis. Now for those who know their railway history will readily appreciate that if *Stanley* existed today he would be a celebrity loco because British Railways didn't continue with diesel-hydraulics and with our *Stanley* having been a product of that era would have given him extra kudos.

Unfortunately it is believed *Stanley* met his end sometime later after taking a dive off the traverser at Colney Heath one afternoon (?) and finding the concrete underneath not to his liking; a sad end then for the saviour of the steam-less afternoon running and stalwart of the cold, dark, damp (proper winter's then) Bonfire nights.

But for my owner not being able to run a steam loco that summer was proving too much, so putting aside all prejudice he too decided to have a go at making an electric engine.

Now, in a time when the grunt of a motor was measured by how much it weighed and how much current it drew, choices for the novice builder were limited. Speed control for heavy low voltage motors had also progressed very little at this point beyond the brutal strangulation of innocent volts and amps and logic control was something only talked about in science fiction TV series like *Star Trek*.

The perceived wisdom of the day was to try and use one or two car starter motors suitably lashed to a wheeled chassis with one if not two, car batteries to provide the voltaic heft – so far so good. But then there was the question of how to transfer the torque from the vertical motor shaft(s) through to the axles below, whilst not overlooking the small matter of how to make it move in a manner slightly more sophisticated than just a simple on/off switch that put the power, either full on or completely off resulting in everything coming to an undignified dead stop.

A visit to New Southgate's Mecca for the 1970s discerning car tinkerer, that holy land for cars and vans departed, got the project nicely off the ground. And after taking his life in both hands (without the aid of a safety rope by the way) he extracted two eminently suitable but filthy starter motors from a pair of old Ford Cortina's.

A chat with his mates back at track elicited the further information that suitable bevel gears capable of transferring the drive from the motors through the required 90 degrees, could be had by butchering (historic term, that is re-purposing for my younger readers) one or two of the country's most popular makes of hand drill, made by 'Stanley' – I wonder if that's where our *Stanley* got his name from? – And for speed control all he would need was some serious gauge wire to make a rheostat.

Rheostat was but an exotic sounding name to my owner at the start, but the discovery that the wire used in Mrs Owner's electric Belling room heater would be perfect for the job and the donation of a slab of Paxolin from a fellow club member really got things moving (in more ways than one).

Experiment after experiment followed as he waded through ever longer bits of wire and ever larger fuses, but eventually he got the wheels turning in a fashion that kept it all just the right side of being banned by the London Electricity Board.

However the first test run at the track didn't go too well, for without the aid of a fitted ammeter the control handle got so hot he couldn't turn it down and instead succeeded in welding it to the rheostats resistance wires; but ten minutes with a hacksaw and a nut and bolt later he got it going again. People with long memories still talk of watching the red glow from that rheostat as he roared off into the distance, and how if it hadn't been for the bright sun that day it would probably have given him a half decent suntan. In fact legend has it one or two of the lads optimistically brought out a couple of slices of bread in the hope of having them toasted....

50 years later and Mrs Owner has just about forgiven him for pinching the heater bar from her electric fire but it took until the end of the 1970s and the arrival of the central heating for her feet and ankles to feel warm again in winter.

Amazingly after the long hot summer of 1976 nature sought to rebalance itself quickly for there were torrential downpours in the early autumn and the winter that followed was also pretty heavy.

Modern conditions however are looking to be very be different, and until nature properly catches up and the rain starts raining and the snow starts falling once more or we just stop using as much water every year, maybe we all should think about having a *Stanley* (or electric steam outline?) tucked under the bench ready to come out to keep the flag flying. Possibly we could also consider doing even more to save water and at the same time help to promote community spirit by offering to bath (or shower) with a friend. How say you?

Bookworm 2026

***Picture Source: Model Engineer Vol 137 Page 658

Gauge 1 Update

Section Leader Geoff

We started the month with the first Friday meet at the track, where a number of us enjoyed the lovely evening weather and continued running until after dark. The evening gloom added to the event and it culminated in our enjoyment of Mike's Valley Flyer, complete with lighting in the carriages. It was such a good evening we are hoping to repeat it at the September gathering. Hope the weather plays ball!

As we all know this year, we have had some lovely warm (ney hot!) weather. But its been very comfortable underneath our tree canopy. The downside is that it has led to a ban on coal & meths fired locomotives.

Not to be out done, the Gauge 1 section have been putting on electric and gas firing for running at our weekly meets.

The good weather has brought back a few of our non-regular attendees which is great to see them again. If you have not been able to attend, why not make the effort and come along. There is always a cup of tea and biscuit.



Mike's "Valley Flyer
complete with
illuminated carriages

Below, Dave's A4

Norman's 08 Shunter



Geoff's GWR railcar

Vic's Class 20 diesel.



Raised Track Public Running

Keith writes

On public running days it is imperative that all drivers are aware of the various aspects of operation to ensure we run safely. The safety guidelines (HS 2020) issued by the HSE set out the health and safety guidelines for passenger carrying miniature railways.

One of the guidelines covers the competency of drivers. We have implemented a competency assessment for all drivers on the GLR and GLR have documented those assessments. The Competences required for RT drivers were published in the March 2024 news sheet with a copy on notice board.

NLSME Council allow that grandfather rights apply to members who have done public running on RT and have shown the necessary competencies. Hitherto we have not listed those members. Recent members have had a practical assessment but until now this has not been documented. To comply with the HS2020 guidelines, we will now be listing all drivers authorised to pull non-member passengers on the RT during public running days. The draft list is included on the following page. If we have inadvertently missed anyone from the list, or if you want your name removed, let the Raised Track section leader know by 31st October.

The final approved list will be published before the start of the 2027 running season. This list will be updated when required and all council members and senior stewards will receive an updated version.

NLSME Competences required operating passenger carrying (non-member) trains on Raised Track.

Comply with the Tyttenhanger Rules and Regulations, current issue dated 1st March 2021.

Raised Track Drivers

Understands meaning and use of three aspect signals

Understands meaning and use of four aspect signal at Dingly Dell

Understands meaning and use of calling on signal at station approach

Understands meaning and use of Summersault signal approaching traverser

Understands meaning and use of audible alarm bell in steaming bay

Understands need to pull forward in station precinct.

Understands principle of “line of sight” running if signal/signals are inoperable

Understands where to use whistle and/or horn

Drives safely under all circumstances

Requires a guard when using more than one passenger coach

NLSME - DRAFT LIST FOR COMMENT

RAISED TRACK DRIVERS APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RUNNING

Members under 16 years old cannot passenger haul non-members

Any member not listed below must undertake a competency assessment and their name added to the list of approved RT drivers

Brian	Mike	David
Jonathan	Peter	John
Mike	Ray	Alan
Colin	Peter	Chris
Brian	Grahame	John
Malcolm	Michael	Harry
Bill	Paul	James
John	Waz,	Timothy
Roger	Paul	Richard
James	Adam	Ron
Les	Dave	Adrian
Robbie	Nigel	Ian
Peter	Roy	Chris
George	David	John
Owen	Keith	Peter
Dave	Paul	Jack
Mike	Tracey	Derek

Roger
Brendan
Donal
Kieran
Nigel
Mathew
John
Chris
David
Derek
Gareth
Tony

Ian
Stephen
Gordon
Jeremy
Brian
Craig
Bryan
Jim
Peter
Alan
George

Dave
Geoff
Michael
Peter
Cheryl
Richard
Chris
Timothy
Michael
John
Terry

Dudley

For questions about any of this please contact Keith,
Contact details can be found on rear page for printed editions.



White Pass & Yukon Railway

Geoff has sent a fantastic article in regarding his recent (ish) trip abroad which also included seeing vast amounts of the **White Pass & Yukon Railway**.

Jack the Editor here sadly I can't

squeeze it into this Newsletter without trimming it down excessively and not doing it justice, so the detailed article will feature in next month's Newsletter instead.



TRACK STEWARDS ROTA FOR 2026
+ OCTOBER FAMILY AND FRIENDS DAY

Having now reached September we are now down to the last two months of the public running season. As you will see from the Track Steward Rota on both public running dates in September we are one steward down. So, if you have already carried out a track steward duty this year or your name is not listed on the following rota pages or you would be willing to do an additional duty, please contact me. My contact details can be found on the back sheet of the News Sheet.

I have already written a number of times in the News Sheet about the importance of attending on the date you are allocated, because if you do not it places an extra burden on the other stewards. You are reminded that being a member of the North London Society of Model Engineers does require you to commit to do at least one rota duty when you join or re-join each year (confirmed on your membership form). If, however, you are unable to perform the duty on the date shown on the rota **it is your responsibility** to arrange a swap with another member and to advise the two Senior Stewards of the change. A phone call or email allows the Senior Steward to plan for the number of stewards who will be there. If a swap has been arranged, I would also appreciate being notified by the individual or Senior Steward concerned so that I can update the rota which will be regularly published in the News Sheet.

It is important that Track Stewards arrive on site by 1.00pm to ensure that all preparations have been completed before the arrival of the public.

AND FINALLY

To celebrate the end of the public running season for this year and also to give members a more or less last opportunity to run on the raised track before the winter work on it starts on 1st November on Sunday 25th October 2026 our Colney Heath Site will be open for a **Society Members and their family and friends only** running day. The site will be open from 2.00 to 5.00 pm for us to enjoy. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided (assistance in helping to dispense these will be warmly welcomed) and it is hoped members and their families and friends will bring picnics along to enjoy our site. Hopefully, by then we will have had sufficient rain such that the ban on coal fired and meth's fired locomotives will have been lifted.

Nigel September 2026

As always it is your responsibility to arrange a swap. Please arrive by 1pm.
Nigel

6 September 2026**Les B – Senior Steward**

1. Brian B
2. Malcolm B
3. Steve C
4. Grahame G
5. Rob J
6. Steve K
7. Gordon L
8. John P
9. Michael T

10. Volunteer required

Ground Level Despatcher

TBA

20 September 2026**Martin C– Senior Steward**

1. Bill B
2. John B
3. James B
4. Robbie B
5. Peter F
6. Peter F
7. Gerald M
8. Edward O'L
9. Daniel P

10. Volunteer required

Ground Level Despatcher

TBA

4 October 2026**Derek E – Senior Steward**

1. Derek D
2. Susie F
3. Michael G
4. Mark H
5. Casimir Iw
6. Craig L
7. Christopher O
8. Tim P
9. Harry P
10. James P

Ground Level Despatcher

TBA

18 October 2026**Keith H – Senior Steward**

1. Billy A
2. David B
3. Joe F
4. Peter F
5. Adam G
6. Andrew L
7. Chris M
8. Graham P
9. Tim W
10. Antony Y

Ground Level Despatcher

TBA

Booking an Event at Colney Heath?

Tyttenhanger site is open to all members at all times.

However, on certain pre-arranged days members access is subject to some restrictions. This does not prohibit members running/sailing but should note booking requirements and priorities are as follows; -

Public running days 2pm – 5pm

Set by council. Managed by Senior Steward. Notified in news sheet

Priority given to public passenger hauling

On site parking for members and disabled badge holders only

Event Days

Proposed by members, approved by council. Managed by sponsoring member. Notified in news sheet

Priority given to event passenger hauling.

On site parking for visitors at sponsor's discretion

Private parties

Proposed by members, approved by council. Managed by sponsoring member. Notified in news sheet

Priority given to party passenger hauling.

On site parking for visitors at sponsor's discretion

PLEASE NOTE:- SIGNS ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO PLACE AT THE GATE INDICATING IT IS A PRIVATE PARTY AND NOT A PUBLIC RUNNING DAY

Members days

Ad hoc events do not require council approval. No notice in news sheet

No priorities apply

All public, event, parties or members days to be in accordance with the Rules and Regulations for the Tyttenhanger Site. (copies have been provided to all members)

Club Dates For Your 2026 Diary

<u>Every Wednesday</u> G1 group meet at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Thursday</u> Working groups, and general conversation at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Saturday</u> Ground Level Rly at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Wednesday evening</u> O, OO and HO Gauges - Groups meet at HQ	
September 2026	
Friday 4 th September	Evening meet/run at Tyttenhanger 6pm
Friday 4 th September	Mamod models evening run, (subject to removal of fire risk) at Tyttenhanger from 6pm.
Sunday 6 th September	Public Running Day. 2 – 5pm
Wednesday 9 th Sept	Chelmsford G1 group, Sponsor Geoff
Saturday 12 th Sept	Mike's celebration of 60 years NLSME membership. Midday onwards. Sponsor Les
Saturday 12 th Sept	3.5 Inch Running Day, Sponsor Martin
Sunday 13 th Sept	St Marks church visit. Sponsor Les
Sunday 13 th Sept	Vintage Model yacht group, all day. Sponsor Pete
Sunday 20 th September	Public Running Day. 2 – 5pm
<i>Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th</i>	<i>St Albans Model Exhibition, Townsend School St Albans. AL3 6DR</i>
October 2026	
Friday 2 nd October	General meeting HQ 8pm
Sunday 4 th October	Public Running Day. 2 – 5pm
Sunday 18 th October	Public Running Day. 2 – 5pm
Sunday 25 th October	Family & Friends Members Day. 2-5pm Tyttenhanger

NORTH LONDON SOCIETY OF MODEL ENGINEERS
Officers, Council Members & Section Leaders

contact details removed for the web edition

The views expressed in this News Sheet are not necessarily those of the
Chairman or Council of the NLSME.
The telephone number of the Tyttenhanger site is 01727 827389