

# The Oily Rag!



Spring 2015  
Issue No

**“CanItakeyourorders?”  
Samplerestaurantcarmenuinside**

The Taunton Model Engineers’  
magazine

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## From the Editor

As a member of a club where a disproportionate number of the members are grandparents it seems very appropriate that when we run for charity the money raised should go to charities caring for children. Our chosen charity for the Santa Specials was the South West Children's Hospice. The letter we received to thank us for our support is printed opposite.

Having heard many anecdotes about the late Robin Shirley Smith's railway at Gottonbank I thought an article about this idiosyncratic line and its locomotives would be of interest. The Thursday gang have taken to visiting the Bell at lunchtime and over a couple of pints various members contributed to the article in this issue.

Out of the blue, a few weeks ago, I received an article from David High. This describes the "Joy of Life Railway" at Bethesda and is a very worthwhile addition to the list of occasional features about the people's tracks. Take a look at their website it is a truly delightful miniature railway.

From an occasional contributor, Philip Innes, there is something which may be of interest to those giving up on steam. A petrol electric hybrid railcar which must be a bit out of the ordinary!

Mike John has submitted an article about tackling a problem he came across whilst making the smokebox for his Pacific. I hope others will follow his lead and that "how I did that" articles will become a regular feature.

To wind up, two pieces of nostalgia, one from Ray Rolt and the other from Fireman MN (retd.)

John



Please reply to Little Bridge House

Mr Phil Mortimer  
Teaton Madel Engineers  
Natty Ash  
& Hawthorne Road  
WELLINGTON  
TA21 8EU

L17332

19 January 2015

Dear Mr Mortimer,

I am writing to thank you for your wonderful donation of £,200.00 that you very kindly sent us from your collection at the Santa steam train rides in Vivary Park and Cwisch St Michael. We are so grateful to you for thinking of our special cause, enabling us to make such a difference to life limited children and their families.

The festive season was extremely busy at our three beautiful children's hospices and we were able to create so many magical memories for those families who were staying with us, those precious moments will endure during the difficult times to come. As the New Year begins we hope to see many of our valued supporters of Little Bridge House, Charlton Farm and Little Harbour as our public monthly open days. It is our chance when families aren't in residence to show people our amazing facilities and explain the vital service we provide - funded almost entirely by voluntary donations.

Last year thanks to the support of special people like you, we provided hospice care for more than seven hundred parents, six hundred brothers and sisters and over four hundred life limited children. We also provided ongoing help to four hundred bereaved parents and their children.

Our support means so much to those we care for "I feel like the care team are my extra big family and I can talk to them about things that might make my mummy sad."

If you would like to visit your local children's hospice to see first-hand how your donation is put to good use, we would love to see you - do contact our reception at the relevant hospice number below to book a tour.

Wishing you a very Happy New year and thank you for helping us make the most of short and precious lives.

Warmest wishes,

*We are so proud to have your support.*

Emma Bisswell-Howard  
Head of Fundraising Little Bridge House  
Children's Hospice South West

Your donation of £200.00 is a wonderful donation and is added to our support for children and young people who are in need of our help. Thank you for your time to visit to hospices established in partnership with Children's Hospice South West. Please inform us if you do not wish to be contacted.

Children's Hospice South West (Head Office)  
Little Bridge House, Radlands Road, Fremington,  
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Portgwan, St Austell Cornwall PL33 6AZ.  
Tel 01736 674980 Fax 01736 674811.

Children's Hospice South West providing children's hospice care at Little Bridge House (since 1975) Charlton Farm (since 1967) and Little Harbour (since 2011)  
None of registration. Company no: 320679. Address of registered office Little Bridge House, Radlands Road, Fremington, Barnstaple EX31 3PE. Issue Company limited by guarantee. Registered to 05-14-000-07.

Making the most of short and precious lives across the South West  
[www.chsw.org.uk](http://www.chsw.org.uk) [enquiries@chsw.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@chsw.org.uk)

# Chairman's Notes

By Mike Johns

Not only has the Creech lease not yet been finalised but the request for a meeting with the Parish Council Park Panel was at least acknowledged even though no other progress has been made with the council.

However the Parish Council does hold one public meeting a year and we have been invited to take part on Friday 24 April next. Our intention is to give a presentation on how we are, what we do and how we fit into the local community. This will be backed up by a small display centred on David Hartland's model of the park built as a basis for discussing potential developments that might be considered.

At least 6 of the TME Committee should be attending so we should be well able to deal with any queries that may arise. Should any other members wish to join us, the formal meeting is due to start at 19.00 in Creech Village Hall.

The Club's thanks are due particularly to David for his contributions with making the model and compiling the video presentation which he has also volunteered to present. He has also been in touch with Fields in Trust (the body in which the Park is vested) and they have indicated that they wish to see the new lease prior to signature when it is finalised.

After the meeting the next key event is the local elections from which an new Parish Council should emerge. It remains to be seen what impact this will have on our relationship with the community.

The new running season commenced over the Easter weekend when both railways should have been operational. Our thanks are due to all who have contributed to getting them ready over the winter months and to those who will now appear on a regular basis to ensure we continue to offer a service in most weather to our customers – the public.

## News from Cræch

By Mike Johns

As mentioned before the Thursday gang ensured that the site and track were ready for re-opening at Easter. The one unfortunate feature is that we have not been able to complete re-rendering the office building which consequently is looking a bit sad.

Some work has been done on the track replacing rotten wooden sleepers, a necessary evil these days with the variable qualities of wood used. Ideally we would like to replace with recycled plastic sleepers which have been shown to be very durable in miniature railway use. The limiting factors are cost – something over £1.00 each – and having the resource to carry out the work with several thousand to be replaced.

The opportunity has been taken to install a water pipe running under the track from the main building to the departure end of the station which should reduce the delays that have arisen when locomotives run short in service. A stand pipe has yet to be erected to complete the installation. Also in this area we have finally removed the steel farm gate which became superfluous when the play area was built and filled the gap between our timber fence and that around the station with a post and rail section and pedestrian gate.

The new wheel sets for the carriage bogies have now been completed and painted and associated ball bearings purchased. Fitting and machining of the axle box housings and then assembly in the bogie frames. The new steel wheels should have considerably longer life than the displaced cast iron ones, they are larger diameter which should give a better ride although the brake rigging also has to be modified to compensate.

Most of this work is being done on Thursdays when the gang are always pleased to see other members who can find the time to come along and lend a hand. There is a very sociable atmosphere!

## Report from Vivary Park

By Diana Fathers

The workers have been busy getting the track ship -shape in time for the first running at Easter. There were plenty of helpers for all three sessions but the second one turned out to be a party as it was raining too heavily to work. However, the crew were reworking so hard at the last session that they didn't even stop work for the eclipse and carried on working in the dark!

Many of the sleepers have been replaced and the first lift -out section repaired. The steaming bay traverser has been modified so that the locks and will not run away when least expected. The fixture at the end has also been modified.

It was decided not to split the big lift out section into two; instead, it has been modified, making it easier to lift out.

All the passenger trolleys have been checked and cleaned and there are plenty of new timetables now all ready for the Easter rush.

Time to make the hot cakes again!



These photos were taken by Simon Baynes who visited our Vivary track in 1983. A lot has changed since they were taken. Do you recognise the TME Members in the pictures?

## The Ticklers (Horological sub group)

By David Spicer

The build of the RAS Regulator is progressing, as we have now received the correct profile wheel cutters. We are now trying to get the best finish on the brass and will advise further when the tests are finished. A model of the RAS regulator called the Guernsey B. Clock has, under test, shown a performance of  $-1/4$  sec. in 250 days. This clock has been built using modern materials in certain areas and was completed by two clockmakers at Charles Frodsham in Sussex. It will be interesting to see how our clock using traditional materials will perform. Only time will tell.

## Dinner Menu

### First

WheelTappas  
SandwichFrames  
SpringRolls  
ViaDuckandBridgeRollswithBeaumont'sEgg

### Second

StakeandT runionPiewithPandrolclipsandSprocketSalad  
BrazedFishplatewithCastellatedNuts  
ColdTurnkeyandlocknutstuffing  
CathodeRayFishinaPickleBath  
KingPrawns,AtlanticCodandDuche ssPotatoes  
TopslideofLathewithGreasyPalmOilandSwarfChips  
CoalintheHolewithBurntFingers  
RoastCabooseandFusiblePlug  
LancashireHotBox

### Third

ChilledCastings  
Ohm-madeCurrentCakes  
ChocAbsorberwithFluxandSolderCream  
FlypressBiscuits  
LemonPoppettwithWaterscoopofIceCream

### Drinks

BAonTap                      LinesiderRailAle  
RedBullbar ImprovedDraught

InChargeoftheRestaurant -ourMetric'DiMention.  
LightingbyourElectricianMrD.C.Short  
EntertainmentbyCoachscrewandhisfourleggedassistantDogspike  
andafter9pmweintroduceTheBronzePaintstripper.

Allourfood ispreparedtoorderintheCookingOffice  
byourexperiencedchefsBurnettandFrazzle  
workingnonstopatthecountersink.

# NEW RESTAURANT CAR SERVICE

By Our food critic.

At Creech, a new restaurant car has entered service. It was first used at the Santa Steamings in December where the food on offer was displayed on a menu. (see opposite) Unfortunately, the standard of service did not meet expectations and many passengers went hungry...

## The Gotton Bank Railway.

By The Thursday gang & others.

The Railway was owned and constructed by Robin Shirley Smith at his home on the southern slopes of the Quantocks at Gotton, not far from Hestercombe House. Robin, at the time, was a practising Architect in Taunton and was well known in the town as part of the professional community. He had a distinguished wartime service career in the Fleet Air Arm, as a Swordfish Pilot, flying from "Woolworths" Aircraft Carrier on Atlantic Convoy duty. It was through his efforts as Secretary of TME that we obtained our presence in Vivary Park.

He built the railway in his garden, which was on sloping ground and as a result was a heavily graded. It started off on the level, adjacent to his front gate, at the lower station, Gotton Bank. The track then ran along, past his workshop, before climbing heavily in a short wooded section then coming out onto a high embankment with views to the west. Finally there was a severe short climb entered via a wicked "S" bend round the kitchen, after this train ran into the upper station.

Initially trains had to reverse back down the railway at the end of their run, since there was no means of turning. Later a turntable set into a bank and a run round loop made operation easier. The total length was about 100 yards.



Photo Tony Gosling

“Ruth” leaving Gotton Bank Station.

Material for the line was unusual, Robin had used his architectural connection to purchase a load of steel rolled sections from the Crittall Window Company, these were used for the rails which were spiked to wooden sleepers.

Operation of the line was straightforward with one locomotive in steam, but when there were more trains operating, some form of control was necessary, since the two stations were out of sight and out of hearing range of each other, a token system was employed with the requirement that the token be carried by any train departing either station. The token was not large and not obviously a token, it may have been a large spanner but no one can remember for sure. At the start of busy days there was always some hunting around for the token, so just in case it was lost, Robin had taken the precaution of making a second token, which could have led to problems!

His steam locomotive “Ruth” was four coupled, with the two axles coupled together by bicycle chains, inside the frames, it had a Hackworth Valve Gear and a marine boiler. The loco was built by the Dean of Wells Cathedral and was named “Ruth” after the Dean’s wife. The suspension was very soft so that it rolled and pitched in a most alarming fashion when in motion, it really took some getting used to!

The regulator handle was a piece of steel strip with a file handle on the end for the driver to hold, it fitted loosely on a square on the regulator shaft at the back of the boiler. The reverser worked the opposite way around from what you might expect – to go forwards, you pulled the lever back and to go in reverse you pushed it forwards! To many drivers, it was a frightening “beast” and it always paid to expect the unexpected when driving it. He also owned a petrol shunter which has evolved into “Robin” the club loco at Crech.

To travel along the Railway, it was necessary to set off and gain as



Photo David Hartland

Alec Hadfield driving his “Tich” along the embankment.

much speed as you could on the more level parts of the track so that you had some impetus when you reached the foot of the final incline. Here you entered the dreaded “S” bend and where as you would prefer to take this part of the run at a moderate speed, you were just then reaching your maximum, this was really not for the faint at heart.

Tony Gosling recalls an occasion when he was driving “Ruth”, he had just reached the “S” bend when the regulator handle left the end of the regulator shaft and came off in his hand. The engine had reached its maximum speed and the regulator was wide open, “Ruth” was rocking and rolling on her soft suspension, consequently it was enormously difficult to thread the handle back onto its shaft and the end of the track was becoming ever closer! He survived to tell the tale and was able to close the regulator just in time before the end was reached. Driving “Ruth” at Gotton Bank was not an experience Tony enjoyed!

Ian Grinter also has a memory of the "S" Bend. Ian was a passenger on the train travelling at speed when the violent swerve at the "S" bend threw him off the train, he rolled down the embankment and ended up in the bushes.

The Club had several memorable outings to the Gotton Bank Railway in the 1970's and 1980's. In 1977 it was the first railway



Steve Gosling driving "Tich"



Tim takes a turn

where Tony ran his newly completed "Tich" and his two boys then aged about 13 and 11 had their first drive of a steam locomotive.

At the end of his life Robin was sad not to have seen the G.W.R. 2-8-0 he was working on in steam. Alan Wellesley Millertook on the task of getting it running and was able to demonstrate the locomotive to its terminally ill builder a few days before he died.

Vic Doswell was one of the TME members present when a stained glass window to the memory of Robin Shirley Smith was dedicated in the church at Cheddon Fitzpaine. The window is of an abstract modern design. Its striking colours are said to symbolise the four elements of earth, air, fire and water - he thought the last three at least were a fitting theme for a model engineer! He went on to suggest it is well worth a visit.

More pictures on the back cover.

# Joys of Life Railway

by David High

The Joy of Life Railway is a 5" gauge ground level line in Bethesda, North Wales, literally at the foot of the waste tip of the Penrhyn slate quarry. It has several unusual aspects, not least being its pretension of grandeur; it likes to think of itself as 'a railway', rather than a running line for model engineers. Whether visitors see it as a big train set or a small railway has not been explored! This 'railway' ethos is a legacy of its creator, Terry Robinson and is generated in part by the track layout and also by what railway modellers would regard as 'attention to detail'.

Like a real railway the JoLR has had its ups and downs. It was first established over 30 years ago in the mid 1980s, when Terry operated an off-the-beat track tourist attraction, the Joy of Life, with the principle attraction being its railway, which evolved over a number of years. Terry sold up in the late 1990s and the railway ceased to operate. The new owners, Ieuan and Wendy Jones have developed a four star self-catering business in the buildings on the site and while the infrastructure, some coaches and a battery locomotive formed part of the sale, the loco was too small for passenger haulage. Slowly the railway became derelict.

Approximately half of the line is in a cutting, and a 5" gauge railway cutting is only a ditch with track in it. When the author first visited the derelict line much of the track in the cutting was below water.

Revival of the line was proper railway revival stuff, a teenager who had visited the line as a small child heard from a friend of a friend that the railway was still in existence and that the new owners would welcome interest in seeing trains running again.

A telephone call followed and Ieuan Jones admits that when a schoolboy turned up with his Mum he assumed that that would be that. The schoolboy was my son, Will and I have a lot of 'previous history' on the Ffestinog Railway, which includes five years fulltime employment with the track gang. I was cajoled into being the chauffeur for Wills' second visit.



Will High leaves Stokert on driving Atill at the Hunslet  
The loco in the loop is Uproar Castle

What stuck me was another part of Terry's legacy, the track which is formed of square steel bars welded to steel sleepers was both bomb proof and as it stood in over 2" of water, also ditch proof. The rest of the railway was there, sleeping beauty style; signal boxes with lever frames and block instruments, a turntable pit full of leaves, an engine shed with engine, carriages & signals, all very sad, but so well made that revival was certainly practical. You only need a shovel to clear a ditch. Inadvertently we made a start. Over the next year we spent several weekends with Wills' friends excavating the cutting, replacing

the top soil with chippings and trying to get a little Max track battery engine to pull one of the very heavy carriages full of boulders. Perseverance (something we are all told that the young lack) paid off and in 2008 a contact, made over the internet turned up with a steam locomotive. I then invested in a Rideon Railways 'Hercules', an engine with some hauling power and the JoLR was up and running again.

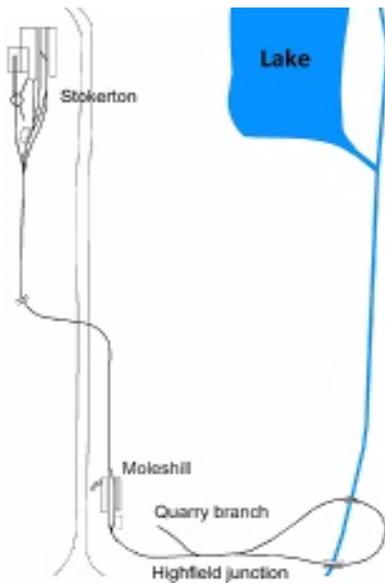


Stokerton shed yard with 'Moelwyn' on the departure road.

The next big step forward came in 2009, when Will was given an offer he could not refuse, the opportunity to acquire a steam loco. This was a Don Young design Quarry Hunslet, built by Gordon Bartlett who lives in Cerne Abbas. 'Atilla' the Hunslet is of course very much at home in the Welsh environment. Having no real idea about how to operate a steam loco, smaller than a real quarry Hunslet, Gordon gave us some excellent advice, join the local Model Engineering Society. By joining the North Wales Model Engineers we not only got the loco up, running and insured, it also introduced us to other members who were keen to see what was happening in Bethesda. Two gents in particular, Pete Etchells and Bill Winter were quite taken with the setup, Pete bringing and running his Sweet Pea, 'Natasha'.

Will & his friends might have spent 2 years sorting out the track but Bill & Pete were unimpressed. I don't know if they were looking for a challenge, but they found one. Their regular Tuesday working parties have put the track into good order, re-engineering the mechanical points, re-roofing the tunnel and extending the engine shed. Enough history! In good old railway biography style, let's stake a trip up the line.

The principal station is Stokerton. This is a two platform terminus with a run round loop and two sidings, one of which is a loop siding. A further line serves the locos shed. The shed yard has four roads, all



served by a turntable. Two of the roads are in ashed, which has a 'scale height' door, and a sunken floor for the giant stow work of the locos. The whole station area is controlled by a signal box with a 14 lever frame. The main line points are controlled by the frame, together with a comprehensive set of semaphore signals. The signal box has a telephone, bell & block instrument for communication with the next station, Moleshill. From the station the line climbs quite steeply, up Stokerton bank before turning left and entering a cutting. The line darts between two cuttings and across Bangor Road level

crossing, which is equipped with train controlled lights. Swinging round to the right the line runs in a cutting, parallel with the road, climbing all the way to Moleshill station.

Moleshill is a passing place with a signal box. While the points are trailable, the 'box contains a 7 lever frame. One of the projects for

Spring is to install Distant, Home & Starting signals for both directions controlled from the lever frame. After changing tokens at Moleshill the train enters the short Moleshill tunnel, located on a left hand bend. Beyond the tunnel the line is level, straight and flat, so it lets the engine go if you have any steam left after the climb. After rattling over the trailing point serving 'Quarry sidings' the train arrives at Highfield.

Highfield is a junction, at the start of a balloon loop. The loop itself is located on a dry stone embankment, very much in the Festiniog or Penrhyn Quarry railway style. It also includes two girder bridge crossings a small stream. Once back at Highfield the down journey commences, running back over the line in the opposite direction, often crossing another train at Moleshill. After the train has arrived back in the platform at Stoke Newington usually another engine comes off shed to take the train out again. Once released, the loco reverses out back past the signal box before running on to the shed to turn and take on water.

After making its first faltering steps in 2007, the revival of the JoLR has gone from strength to strength. As the project started as a railway revival the focus is very much the railway infrastructure rather than the engines, which makes it very easy for anyone to participate; you don't need an engine to make a contribution to the



'Pretoria' heads down train out of Highfield station.

activities of the club. On operating days we have a railway, and it operates best if it has a staff, 2 signalmen, a shed boy to turn engines, coal & water them, a station master to supervise dispatches and a station foreman to manage crises.

We are often asked how we keep the younger members interested, it's quite simple really, make them work! Use the good old stick and carrot, if they stick at clearing up the leaves, then let them have a drive of the battery locos and if they can count, then with some supervision they soon get the hang of the signal boxes on quieter days, although Stokerton on a busy day is more Clapham Junction than a bucolic branch line.

While Taunton is a long way from Bethesda, there are rather a lot of railway based attractions inside an hour of the site, it has its own caravan site and B&B so it makes the perfect holiday destination. All you have to do is figure out how to get the engine in the boot with the luggage and without the wife noticing. If you want to know more, the website <http://www.freewebs.com/joflrailway/> does have all you need to know in terms of current activities, operating dates and contact details. We'll be very pleased to hear from you.

## Project number 5.

by Philip Innes

Many years ago I made a charging set for the batteries on my father's boat. It consisted of a Villiers 541 T side valve engine and special equipment dynamo from a Jaguar XK120. I don't think he ever used it, since when he died I found it under the bench in his workshop, still with bright green Duckhams Q20/50 in the sump!

The question was what to do with it? Being interested in historic sports cars the dynamo was of more use for its original purpose and was removed, the wooden base was scrapped leaving the engine. A quick check with a tap measure showed that this would fit into a 7.25" gauge model of a standard gauge prototype, this caused the cog to start to grind and the idea of building a petrol electric loco started to take shape.

The original idea was to use direct drive. Here the engine would have driven an alternator connected, via a reversing relay, directly to a traction motor. Speed control would have been by varying the alternator field current using a suitable piece of electronics. The aim was to produce a relatively light loco which would haul its driver and a full carriage around our club track and which at the same time would not be too large or heavy to carry in the back of my car. My calculations suggested to meet the peak demand on the maximum gradient would need a minimum of around 300W at the wheels. The efficiencies of the alternator and traction motor, under the expected operating conditions are unknown, 80% was assumed for both to get a rough idea of power required. With the two in series around 64% of the power at the crankshaft would end up at the wheels, so the 300W would need 470W or 0.63bhp from the engine. I could not find a figure for the 541T output but comparing it with others similar Villiers engines an output of around 0.50bhp looked likely. So direct drive was going to be rather marginal.

I have seen hybrids dismissed as having the complexity and cost of both direct drive and battery/electric locos with no obvious advantage. A direct drive system has to have a motor capable of meeting the peak power demand, which means a relatively large motor. For a long afternoon in service the battery/electric has to have large batteries. A serial hybrid is a battery/electric with a motor/generator set charging its batteries and acting as a range extender. In our case the range is the distance to be covered in a session and there is no point in extending it, the advantage is that

smaller cheaper batteries can be used for the same range. The motor does not have to meet the peak demand so this can also be smaller, than with direct drive system and will be more likely to fit into a scale outline. The hybrid really comes into its own where there is a large difference between peak power demand and average power usage. On our track the ratio is greater than two to one, so a hybrid was going to have an advantage.

A scrap 12V 55A alternator was found and modified to give 24V. A frame was welded from angle iron and box section and the unit ended up as in the picture. It is 18" long, 12" high and 12" wide and can be shoehorned into a typical standard gauged diesel loco body. When tested it gave 12A which was much as predicted and should just about meet the average power requirement. Now a prototype was needed.



The first choice was a 350bhp LMS diesel shunter, but like most similar engines the "bonnet" was too narrow to accommodate the motor in the right place. Most of the full width engines are large bogie locomotives and would be too big to fit in the car.

As a teenager I lived close to the disused track bed of the Weston Clevedon & Portishead Railway. On one of my bookshelves was a slim volume about the railway and there I found Railcar No. 5. Built by Drewry in 1928 for the Southern Railway it was acquired by the W.C. & P.R. in 1934.

The luggage compartment will house the range extender and two 37Ahrc batteries will fit under the passenger compartment. The original did not have a trailer car but with a bit of artistic licence the model will have a rather oversized one!

The W.C.&P. still has a fascination for rail enthusiasts and is also of local interest, which adds to the project. The railway only had two railcars, both built by Drewry, so why No.5? Although S.R. was replaced by W.C.&P.R. the original number was never painted over!



Railcar No. 5

## Traction Engine encounters!

Our neighbour when we moved to Taunton was a Great Western 'driver' Percy Lowe and his wife and daughter. Originally from London, he had moved to Taunton where he had met his wife and they now had a grown up daughter. It was through his 'good offices' that I was introduced to the traction engine!

When I was about 12, he arranged an introduction to Dennis Chappell of Miller's Farm, West Buckland, a few miles out of Taunton. As a result, he took me to the Andover Traction Engine Rally for several years. This was one of the earliest events of its kind. Having a Daimler car, it was my first experience of going at 80, as the norm in those days was about 45-50!

Dennis was a keen traction engine enthusiast, having a “Garrett” Showmans Tractor in one of his barns which was stripped down for a major overhaul. Impatient to have something that could be driven, he had unsuccessfully tried to buy a “Burrell” Showmans Engine “King of the Belgians”, owned by “Tom Whitelegg” the Exeter ‘Fairground Showmen’.

Undeterred, he subsequently bought a two speed “Burrell” General Purpose compound traction engine located in North Devon. This was unusual in having a short canopy, as used on many steam rollers. With the aid of a “driver” this was driven to the farm under its own steam. This was then normal two cylinder form of compound and may have had the canopy for use by an “agricultural contractor” moving from farm to farm.



King of the Belgians

Shortly afterwards, he made another bid for “King of the Belgians” and this time was lucky as there were several others interested in buying it. I went to Exeter with him to help prepare it for its move to the farm which was subsequently achieved under its own steam with the help of his “driver” friend.

Hesteameditonthefarmandusedittopulloutahedgerowusing thewinchdrumbehindthelifthanddrivingwheel. Normally, both drivingwheelsarelockedtotherearaxlebylockingpins,withadifferentialincorporatedinthelargedrivepinion. Whenthe locking pintothelleftwheelisremovedandtheotherwheelchoked,the winchdrumrotatesattwicethespeedduetothe differential,with theaxleendrotatinginthehubbearing. Itmusthavebeenduringa schoolholidayasafriendofminewas stayingwithmeandwewere boththerefortheday.

Thefieldslopeddowntowardsthehedgewiththefrontofthe enginefacing uptheslope!Thecable'paidout'fromthetopofthe winchdrum. Oneoftherootsmusthavebeenwellanchored resultinginthe frontoftheengine liftingintotheair! Steamwas quicklyshutoffandtheleverreversed,allowingthefrontto gently returntotheground.

Dennisclimbeddownofftheengine lookingabitmortified. "Ithink thefrontoftheengine lifted offthegroundthen!"hesaid. Itlooked abouttwofeetfrommemoryanddemonstratedtheeffectof 'leverage'. Afterthis, care wastakentoensurethattheladingon thecablewaskepttoasafelimitandtherestofthehedgewas removedwithoutincident.

IthinkthatthisworkextendedovermorethanadayasIwasalso therewithoutmyfriend. Aswereturnedtothefarmacrossalarge fieldonarising slope, Dennisstoppedtheengine. "Justdriveupthe fieldwhileIlistentotheexhaust"hesaid. Havingtoldmewhatto do,heclimbeddownandwalkedashortdistanceaway.

Hisactions werenotas foolhardyastheymight seem! I hadagood knowledgeofhowtodrive, duetocarefulobservationofwhathe didandgeneralinstruction. Withthefirelow andabout80psi on the' clock', withthereverserinfullforwardgearIopenedthe

regulator and pressed the 'simpling valve' control to admit live steam into the low pressure cylinder and away we went. The 'simpling valve' is normally only used for starting compound engines and is spring loaded. Due to the low boiler pressure and the rising slope, I kept it depressed. After trundling along at a steady walking pace for a short while, I stopped the engine and Dennis climbed back on board. He then drove back to the farm. The end of a 'perfect day'!

With two working engines on his hands, Dennis made an amazing offer. If I would like to take over the restoration of his other "Burrell", he would pay all costs, give help and arrange specialist work. Only 16 and still at school, with no independent means of transport, I had to decline the offer.

He steamed up the engines specially so that I could have a ride on it! We set off on a lane that climbed up to Blagdon Hill to visit his cousin who ran a saw mill powered by a portable engine fuelled with the wood off cuts. Dennis was the 'steersman' and I was the 'driver'!

The route was chosen to avoid any traffic. Because it was narrow and undulating, we used the low gear. As we were descending a hill with a bend at the bottom, I shut off steam and used the reversing lever to check the speed. As we started descending the hill, we saw an open sports car descending the hill on the other side of the bend. I immediately pulled the lever back into full reverse, using the counter pressure in the cylinder to come to a stop. I would imagine it must have come as a shock to the driver as he came round the bend to be confronted by a traction engine stopped on the hill and blocking the lane! He was able to pull over and we trundled sedately past. We arrived at our destination without incident and I acted as 'steersman' when we negotiated the crossing of any busier roads. It is amazing what could be bought in those days. Knowing that one of my favourite traction engines was the "Burrell" Single Crank Compound, Dennis told me of one for sale with a bent front axle for

£30! A “Field Marshall” tractor with timber winch for £35!  
Still at school with 25p a week pocket money an impossible dream.

As a family, we regularly drove over to Minehead. On one occasion, I was surprised to see a “Marshall” Single Cylinder engine set up with a portable bench rack saw in the corner of a field near the road, close to the Rich’s Holford turning.

I mentioned about this to Percy and he arranged for me to see it! It belonged to Harold Strong who had a farm in Rich’s Holford and also did contract work for local farmers wanting trees sawn up for gate posts and other uses.

A week or so later on a Saturday, I duly caught the train to Crowcombe Station, as it was then called. On this occasion the train was hauled by an 0-6-0PT. I duly alighted and walked across the road into a farmyard, where the ‘engine’ and bench saw were set up. I introduced myself and spent the day ‘minding’ the ‘engine’. In reality, I didn’t do much as the feed pump ‘bypass’ valve was set to maintain the water level in the boiler and one of the men regularly checked the level and put wood on the fire. With the ‘governor’ in operation the engine looked after itself, responding to the demands of the saw. This left me to savour the smell of steam, hot oil and woodsmoke on a sunny day, returning on the train in the afternoon.

Though he also had three “Field Marshall” tractors, Harold Strong told me that he preferred using the “Marshall” on the rack saw as it was a ‘stronger’ engine! I think that this demonstrated the ‘latent’ power of steam. When suddenly under heavy load, the governor immediately admitted steam at boiler pressure into the cylinder.

There was not the dwell before response that occurs with an I.C. engine.

As a ‘postscript’ to the time that I knew Dennis Chapman, I lost

contact with him when I met my late wife Pamela and started work. He died some time ago and 'King of the Belgians' is now at the 'Sandy Bay Country Park', Exmouth.

## “How Do I Do That???”

Mike Johns

It is always very satisfying when you solve the problem of 'how do I do that?' within the limitations of the equipment we have in our workshops. This recently arose when I came to cut the hole in the smoke box for the chimney for my 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " gauge locomotive. For smaller models the recommendation is usually to stand the smoke box on one end on the lathe saddle or bed to drill and bore the hole. This can also be done if you have access to a horizontal or universal milling machine.

In my case the smoke box of some 9" outside diameter and of similar length required a 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " dia. hole to be bored near its centre. This was clearly outside the capacity of my trusty Myford lathe and borderline on my Harrison even had I seen a simple way of holding the smoke box in position. It had therefore to be done on my medium size vertical mill/drill.

To improve access when installing steam pipes etc. I have split the smoke box wrapper on the horizontal centre line so that only half had to be handled during machining. The wrapper is rolled from 3 mm steel plate so is fairly rigid in itself. It is wider than the machine bed so had to be mounted crosswise and clamped down. 2 straps were formed of 20x5 mm steel strip bent to a close fit on the curved plate with holes either end for holding down bolts.

When tightened the profiled strap strapped the plate without distorting it preventing movement along the mill bed while transverse security relied on the friction between it and the bed. It was then a simple matter to bore the required hole for the chimney.



The photograph shows the setup when the boring head was being used to finish the hole to size.

## OF SHIPS AND THINGS

BY FIREMAN M. N. RETIRED

The sports car that the Italians made such a fuss about didn't get the same treatment by the black dockers, they were just rolled onto the cargo nets and the crane hoisted onto the dockside, only two were damaged out of twenty which was acceptable odds. The main cargo for the U.K. was fruit and wine.

We spent six days in Cape Town together and then it was to be a quick dash for home, just a quick stop at Durban for passengers and mail, then twelve hours at Beira loading great slabs of copper brought by rail from Rhodesia. The only other stop of any length was Mombasa for coffee beans which actually were evil smelling green things.

One story worth telling concerned my “East African Cocktail”. Being on the 12 -4 watch three o’clock in the morning was a good time to go “walk about” to explore and believe me there were some strange goings on at times. In the area of the main galley was an alleyway where all the storerooms were located including the bonded store for all the tobacco and booze. This ship had five bars for the passengers and they were well used. At two A.M. when they closed down for the night the steward took all the crates of empty bottles and stacked them outside the bond room for dumping over the side in the morning. While on my “walk about” I thought I had better check this out because it could have been a fire hazard!.

Most of the spirit bottles were from the optics and still had a good slug in them. What to do with this sudden bounty in the Wilderness? There was only one answer to this question , get a drinking water bucket from the engine room and start up -ending the bottles, just wines and spirits, forget the beers and mixers. In about a quarter of an hour I had somewhere near half a gallon.

There were three watchkeepers sharing a cabin, mainly greaser (myself) fridge plant greaser and the fireman. When we finished at four o -clock it was usually too hot to get to sleep so I produced my “night cap” and sleep came so much easier, I can’t for the life of me think why. After that we took turns to go foraging each night.

The “Kenya Castle” in common with all the other liners in the fleet had a “sports and social club” to provide entertainment!! for the crews. All the names were put into a bag and picked out in pairs, this was the basic teams, but pairs could join up to form bigger teams for things like quizzes and such. I got paired off with a stewardess named Madeline and she was a good sport, we even had runs ashore from time to time. We entered the table -tennis, we were rubbish, darts, not much better but we actually won the cribbage competition, also it passed an hour or so most nights before going on watch at twelve.

As the saying goes, the good times just fly past and in no time at all we were entering the English Channel and going through the narrow straits of Dover, then the Thames estuary. We docked at Tilbury to drop off the passengers and mail and then upriver to the royal docks. As we were entering the locks I was leaning over the rail when I felt a hand on my shoulder, it was Madeline, what are you doing about leave? She asked, probably looking for another ship I said, so she came out with why not come and stay with me? As it turned out she shared a small flat at Clapham Common with her old dad. It took me all of two minutes to say yes please I would like to.

It ended up being most enjoyable week, we went to see a couple of west end shows and got to see a few of the sights I also hit it off with her dad, Tom, he was a real gent, the two of us would go round to the pub in the morning and swap a few tales, being retired he liked a bit of company, he was a merchant navy, had been sunk twice during the war and lost one of his lungs from swallowing fuel oil while trying to swim away.

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## Memories of Gotton Bank



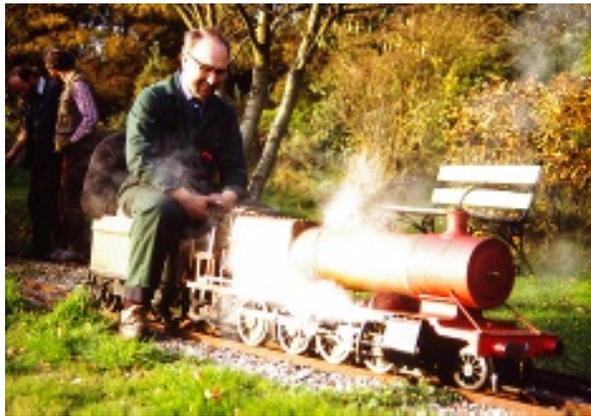
The memorial window in  
Cheddon Fitzpaine  
Parish church



When is the next train?



“Ruth” leaving Gotton Bank



Alan Wellesley Miller steams Robin's GWR2 -8-0