

The Oily Rag!

Spring 2018 Issue No 133.



Photo Peter Nicholson

A “clutch” of diesels at Isle Abbots last year. Spring may have finally arrived by our next visit!

The Taunton Model Engineers’
magazine

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From the Editor

This edition of the “Oily Rag” covers a wide range of subjects. Cedric Norman, who edits the N2.5GA magazine and our past chairman, Mike Johns have contributed pieces on model engineering techniques. Ray Rolt describes an interesting project for those interested in the smaller gauges. The gap between model railways and model engineering is getting a lot smaller with railway modellers moving into larger scales and quite a number of model engineering societies building layouts to run 16mm scale and similar trains. If you are in favour of the TME doing something along these lines, how about writing an article on the subject or at least a letter in support. Phil Ashworth completes his “alphabet” with a rather dubious “Z” and “fireman MN retired” stays firmly on dry land.

The piece by Neville Watts of the Crowborough Locomotive Society about building the extension to their track is I think of particular interest at the moment. They enjoy good relations with the local council which is something we never managed to achieve at Creech. I understand the trick is to thrash out disagreements over a pint in the local. They have also got the support of other local organisations. I think this article gives a lot of food for thought

John

Chairman's Notes

By David Hartland

We have reached an important stage in the development of our Club the registration as a Charity. At the AGM the members voted unanimously to adopt the new Articles of Association, and the formal application has now been made to the Charity commission.

With luck we should become a Charity within three months. This will bring important financial benefits to the Club and will also benefit individual members under certain circumstances. It should also improve our standing within the community, as the phrase “registered charity” generally conveys an organisation based on the community.

Initial discussions with the Planning Officer at Taunton Deane on the new site have not been positive. This is a blow, but all is not lost and we are consulting a Planning Expert, as well as canvassing the local community for their support. We may yet be able to sway the planners; but meanwhile we continue to look for other sites which might work out better in the longer run. If you see, or hear, of any possibilities in your area, please let me know as soon as possible. Vivary public running is underway, with the cafe operating from our former Pavilion building. Do come and support these running sessions, they are great fun if plenty of helpers turn up. Don't forget the members running evenings, details at the back of this issue.

May is the last month at Stoke St Mary before the summer outings. Both meetings in this month give you a chance to show off things from your workshop. The first, on the 1st, sees the return of the Gadgetrap night where we all bring along an item of tooling, or jig, or favourite hand tool and to tell us the story of how it works and why it is useful. The cruder and older the item, and the more obscure, the better! Then 15th May is our Trophy night. Bring along any finished model or part completed model, or anything you have been working on in the last 12 months, for display and judging by the members present. Don't be shy prizes are not always won by the most perfect of models and there are lots of prizes to be won!

Keep track of the summer programme and all the events, there is lots going on and it is easy to miss them. All are listed at the back of this issue of “Oily Rag”. May I wish all members an active and enjoyable summer with the Club and all their model Engineering activities.

Vivary Report

By Diana Fathers

Easter day and it was great to be back and see the old crowd again for the first running of the season (thanks to Dave Wood and Bernard for transporting us to and from the park). Thanks also to Phil and the team who maintain the track in perfect running order throughout the year.

The Easter Egg hunt in the park - and, hopefully, the knowledge that trains would be running - brought out the crowds and the queue for trains stretched right to the end of the hut for most of the afternoon. Unfortunately, we were unable to run any steam trains as the newly opened tea room proprietor said she could not turn the tap that provides the outside hose for water! (Phil is sorting this out!) Thankfully, Dave Wood and Jon Freeman had brought their electric locos and they were both kept so busy that additional riding trolleys were needed. We sold 364 tickets, one of the highest amounts on record. Julie (whose birthday it was) and I had provided sweets for the children who, not content with just eggs, were more than happy to add to their collections while the TME workers were happy to tuck into the usual rock cakes.

The weather was reasonably good but very cold. Sadly, it did rain towards the end of the afternoon but by then we were all so frozen we were happy to abandon ship and get somewhere warmer!

On Sunday 15th April the running was cancelled because of the weather conditions. On a brighter note Harry had arranged for a boiler test to be carried out on his newly acquired "Tich". This was duly done, pressure and steam test and it passed on both. So as not to waste the rest of the afternoon a trolley was coupled up to the

loco and he spent quite a bit of time going back and forth along the track. It gave him experience and he went home happy.

A Boiler Test Adaptor

By Cedric Norman



It may be obvious to some, but when I was building my boiler it had not occurred to me that I could save myself some time and effort by testing my boiler at home until another member of our club suggested it. Basically, if you have built your tender with a

The “Ebay” gauge and the T-piece hand pump, you have the makings of a test rig. I purchased a gauge off eBay, where else, direct from China at the cost of £2.15 and as it stated that it needed a $\frac{1}{8}$ " NPT thread, a tap was purchased to suit, $\frac{1}{8}$ " - 27 HSS NPT Taper Pipe Tap at a cost of £1-78.



I then made a T-piece to insert the gauge midway along the high pressure hose and connected this to the tender pump and boiler, as can be seen in the photograph. I was now able to pressure test my boiler and establish where any leaks were, allowing me to correct any silver soldering problems.

The boiler under test

Once all was dry, I took it along to the boiler inspector for official testing.

I also made an adapter with a 1/4" ME40 thread to fit on the pipe end so that I could test the boiler fittings and valves independently.

Not difficult or expensive, but well worthwhile. I hope that if it was not too obvious and you will be able to use the idea.

21 ST CENTURY LIVE STEAM IN 'O' GAUGE !

By Ray Rolt

Rather a grandiose title!!! Following an appeal for articles for the "Oily Rag", I have been prompted to write this article very prematurely, as a possible way of plugging the gap. These are just thoughts that in the normal way would have been developed over time to see if they are actually feasible.

Introduction

An article in the "British Railway Modelling" for April 2000, caught my attention and I kept it. This was by Richard Hallam and described his successful attempt to build an "00" gauge live steam locomotive which was "electrically fired" and remotely controlled using normal 2 rail pickup. This used a "Hornby Dublo" Duchess Class Pacific, rebuilt with the boiler in the tender and the steam transferred to the loco. Here, housed in the diecast body, was an electric motor which controlled the steam to two outside double acting cylinders and operated a form of slip eccentric valve gear for direction control. With the small size of the cylinders, remote from the boiler and with the heat loss into the mass of metal, this was surely impossible!

The secret was a separate electric element which heated this mass of metal. The loco worked very successfully. A few years later, came the “Hornby” live steam “A4” I immediately recognised the design features and looked up the article which confirmed this. Initially, this appeared to be very successful but in a few years production ceased. Why did this happen?

Possibly this was a lack of a future development plan, the “A4” was sold in batches with different names and liveries and then developed into “Flying Scotsman”. The need to “shoe horn” the control gear into a small locomotive boiler must have presented problems. It would have been better to have extended the appeal by developing a “streamlined” L.M.S. Pacific and S.R. Merchant Navy, particularly as these were available as electric locos. Whatever the reason, a limited production of the “Flying Scotsman” marked the end of the “live steam” range. I bought a second hand one at a model exhibition which was from the initial batch supplied to “Hornby Agents” for demonstration purposes. I have not run it yet on the “rolling road” My “Mallard”, which I bought from new, performs well on this but has only been run a few times.

One other possibility is the small size? Whilst the development of commercial “live steam” in such a small scale is an incredible achievement, perhaps it is too small for youngsters to fully enjoy the full spectacle of live steam, seeing an 8 coach train running at high speed round a continuous circuit of track.

Years ago, “Hornby” launched a 3½” gauge gas fired live steam “Rocket”, which was not a commercial success! If they were to launch “0” gauge “live steam”, using the same technology as used in “00” gauge, reviving the “tinplate” era of Hornby in a modern form, this could have a universal appeal to railway modellers of all ages! If the ability to operate a layout in a realistic fashion using “live steam”, due to the larger scale, were a possibility, this could have quite an appeal.

Early '0' Gauge Electric Firing

The first attempts that I know of were in the early 50's, when several people started experimenting. Early attempts were with mains voltage of 240 volts!! This was with "outer third rail" supply, hopefully with a very low amp fuse protection!

One such person was M. Drinkwater, of Manchester, who had an article in three parts published in the "Model Railway Constructor". From memory, I think that this used a voltage of 60 volts, using a length of electric fire element encased in "Pyruma" fire cement supported by a central brass rod. This was housed in a tube through a simple "pot boiler". The heat output control was by a "heavy duty" variable resistance controller.

He used a "Basset Lowke" mogul 2-6-0, rebuilt as a "Fairburn" 2-6-4 T, with a 24V electric motor driven "leadscrew" to operate the combined "speed and direction" control valve. This was operated on "centre stud" supply, which was replacing the old "centre third rail". By all accounts, this performed well, but further developments seemed to have disappeared below the "radar"!

Present proposal using "Hornby" "00" components

The aim is to use the existing controller and transformer and boiler heater and superheater units. This presents possibly insurmountable problems which can be summarised as follows :-

- (a) The operating voltage is only 17 volts, which rules out a normal boiler as there would not be sufficient heat to keep the larger boiler required, in steam.
- b) Spare boilers and heater elements are not available as the Chinese manufacture has disposed of their stock of these.
- c) The only heater elements available are for the superheater, which

are available from suppliers of “Hornby” steam spares. It is highly likely that the heat output will be less than the boiler elements.

Given all these facts, there are two options, abandon the idea or work out devious ways to get around the problems. As I have decided on the latter, the first stage is to select the most suitable locomotive that can be “tailored” to suit these limitations. This will have to be of medium size, such as an 0-6-0 or 4-4-0 used on branch lines or other minor lines. that will trundle along pulling three coaches or six wagons and a brake van. It will require assisted starting, using an electric motor with a centrifugal clutch, running under its own power once on the move.

I have an old battery electric “4F” 0-6-0, made by Lima, which I have rebuilt as a “Johnson” class 3 4-4-0, which will be ideal as a



The loco to be used for the experiment

“guinea pig”, with its lift off plastic body for installing the batteries. This will require a new metal frame for the boiler and steam motor.

The boiler

The inspiration for this is the “electric steamer”, used for cooking vegetables, etc.. Using a small electric heater, it brings the large

water reservoir up to boiling point to produce the steam. This is done by isolating the heater from the water in the reservoir by a ring of plastic, with a small slot at the bottom to allow the water inside to rise to the same level as that in the reservoir.



The loco with the body removed to show the battery compartment.

The small volume of water inside the ring is rapidly turned into steam, with the water replaced via the small slot. Can this method be used to produce a small “flash steam” boiler, replenished from a water tank at the same pressure and linked by small balance pipes at high and low level?

The only way to find out is to build an experimental boiler on this principle to test this. What is required is a small continuous supply of steam at about 15 psi. to keep the loco running, once it has had an assisted start using the electric motor. To assist this, as in the “00” loco, the steam will be superheated.

The “Steam Motor”.

For maximum efficiency, this will be a single acting “oscillating cylinder” motor, with a “slip eccentric” to reverse the steam and exhaust ports, driving the axle through a 4:1 gear reduction. The “disc crank” flywheel will be acted on by an “expandable” flywheel, driven by the electric motor, restrained by an “O” ring on the perimeter. Rotation by the electric motor will cause it to expand and come in contact with the disc crank, via the “O” ring, acting as a centrifugal clutch to brake/start the steam motor. That is the theory!

Conclusion

Whether this can be made to work remains to be seen! As I have already said, in the normal way all this should have been verified before this article was written! If it did work, all that would be needed is a standard 0-6-0 power unit onto which injection moulded plastic bodies for a variety of tank/ tender locos could be fitted. This could be further developed as a 4-4-0/ 0-4-4T “power unit” to cover a further range of options. Ideally, the operating voltage could be increased to 24v, to give improved performance, with the electric motor circuit having a resistance in series to retain the 12v motor.

When I started working as a Volunteer in “Williton Workshop” on the West Somerset Railway twenty years ago, I built a small portable layout that fitted in the boot of my “Volvo 440” car, for use at “Open Days”. This could be used for running “0” Gauge “live steam” or electric locos. As the “Portakabin” on site, where it was stored, was being demolished, I have now bought it home and have erected an 8’ x 12’ shed in the back garden to house it. This will allow “undercover” running when it is not possible to use my outdoor railway. This is what has prompted me to look at “electric firing”!

Machining expansion links

By Mike Johns

Machining the curved slots in expansion links can be a tricky operation. For smaller models the traditional way is to mount the parent metal on a rotary table which can be rotated under the milling cutter on a vertical milling machine.

Difficulties can arise with medium size models with mounting the parent metal (which may overhang a small rotary table) robustly enough to minimise deflection when cutting and maintain accuracy. In my case such a set-up was not practical for the two links I needed for my 7 ¼” gauge locomotive.

On the prototype locomotive the radius of the slots was 6’ – 0”



The jig viewed from the right hand end.



And from the left.

which meant I had to provide for a 9” radius swing under the milling cutter when working in 1 ½” scale. The two photographs show how this was achieved :-

The carrying arm is a sturdy length of bar with a pivot at the LH end and a means of traversing it at the RH end when mounted on the machine table. The LH pivot is a roller bearing on a spigot set in a bearing block held in the machine vice on the machine table. Traverse of the RH end is by means of a spigot mounted on top of a length of angle mounted rigidly on the face of the subsidiary table (the vertical slide from my

Myford lathe) bolted to the side of the milling machine table. Adjacent to this drive a sturdy piece of steel plate is welded on the carrying arm to act as a table on which to mount the piece of ¼" gauge plate from which the links are machined. This plate is clamped to the table such that the required slots are machined on a pitch circle radius of 9" from the LH end pivot.

In use the slots can be machined by traversing the carrying bar under the milling cutter (shown in the machine collet) either to join up a series of holes drilled along the length of the required link, or by using a series of slot drills to progressively mill the slots from the solid. Very fine finishing cuts produce two curved slots accurate enough to allow a closely fitted die block to slide from one end to the other without any binding. In the photographs it is possible to see both the slots that were machined in the piece of gauge plate. The separate links were cut from this and suitably profiled for assembly and use on the model locomotive as can be seen in the third photograph.



The Gresley pacific for which the links were made.

Crowborough Locomotive Society Track extension

By Neville Watts

I have been reading with interest about your search for and, hopefully, successful finding of a new site to relocate your club's facilities and thought it might be of interest to you to hear of our endeavours.

Crowborough Locomotive Society has been running on a fairly small track for over 25 years and it has always been our ambition to increase the length. Four years ago the opportunity came up for us to persuade the

landowner of the field adjoining our site to sell an area of land to allow us to build an extension of the club track thus more than doubling the length to over 1000 ft. Our landlord, The Crowborough Town Council, appreciated

that our present facility was a very popular attraction in the town and, therefore, they were willing to purchase the extra land and lease the total area, including our existing site, to us for the next 25 years.

Club members drew up plans and submitted them for planning approval and, with the full support of the council, they were passed. Then the hard work started.



Lifting a viaduct beam.

First the new area had to be fenced off by us with the materials supplied by the council. Then we started to dig bases for the column supports. The big snag was a drop in some areas of up to 8 feet between our existing site and the new site! Columns of hollow concrete blocks filled with concrete started to appear out of the



Piers and beams in place on the new part of the site

ground. A decision was made to replicate the construction of the existing track i.e. insitu concrete beams resting on concrete piers. New shuttering was made with curved beams 8ft long reinforced with three 12mm HT bars. Spoil was imported to make up the levels and feature bridges were incorporated. After some three years, the new concrete support beams were completed but the bank account was empty so we went cap in hand to the Town Council again.

After some persuading, they agreed to finance the new trackwork at a cost of £3,500. Track laying started straight away and, by the end of last summer, was largely completed.

The running season was curtailed at the beginning of last September so we could break out the old circuit and connect up to the new. This winter has seen some of us working 2 days a week altering the station, making up a new swing bridge for access and starting on the alteration to the steaming bays as well as installing a lot of safety fencing on top of the embankments. A huge amount of work needed to be done as we intended to open on Good Friday.



The old track in the foreground with the new line disappearing through the fence.

We have been very lucky to have received a lot of support not only from the council but from the local Lions Club (who paid for the viaduct materials), the local Bonfire Society and a local civil engineering company, who not only supplied a lot of the soil but provided diggers (with driver) and dumpers when needed. Donations were also received from several individual members of the club.



Working on the viaduct

Hopefully, by the time you read this we will have had a successful Easter opening.

Crowborough Locomotive Society
Extension Programme
2014 – 2018

Key Achievements

Brokered the sale of land and its acquisition by The Crowborough Town Council

Designed the new track layout and secured planning permission

Built 60 reinforced concrete piers most in excess of 2m in height

Built 70 reinforced concrete beams of 2m length

Laid a 75mm thick layer of screed on the 70 beams

Designed and built 3 bridges (2 single span, 1 double span)

Acquired and positioned about 1000 cubic metres of soil for infilling

Planting and landscaping of the infill

Reinforced and revetted about 50 metres of earth banking

Made and erected about 100 metres of safety fencing

Extended the station platform

Rebuilt the steaming bay access track and mechanism

Rebuilt the 3 metre long swingbridge

Repositioned the signalling system

Assembled and laid 195 metres of new dual gauge track, 3½” and 5”

Rerouted the water supply for the steam engines

Society members have expended 3500+ hours of labour on the above

During the same period the society opened to the public as normal, carried about 3,600 passengers and hosted around 15 Birthday Parties.

Did they make it by Easter ?—picture on the back cover.

THE SORT OF ALPHABET YOU DIDN'T LEARN AT SCHOOL

New Taunton M.E.S boy Phil Ashworth presents tongue
in cheek, whimsical, ferroequillogical lexicography!

Part two

M is for Maroon or crimson lake.

I always thought my beloved "Catherine" was Crimson Lake it's still the original paint work from when it was built in 1982. But I was wrong. And dear me doesn't paint colour open a whole can of worms. Do you remember the fuss about "Flying Scotsman"? It was alleged it was the wrong colour for the smoke deflectors and the chimney was wrong for that colour. Ironic really because most of us would just be grateful to see it running any time soon in sky blue pink with yellow dots. I digress. I tried all sorts of paints to match and even taking thirty years of fading into account I couldn't get it right. Then I met the original builder, the prolific John Horsfield and asked him which railway based shade it was. "Oh," he said, "it's actually British Leyland Maroon B, because car paint was the only thing I could get at the time that was suitable." So Catherine's paintwork has outlasted British Leyland by many years!

N is for narrow gauge.

Even in the time I've been involved with minimum or miniature gauge railways things have been getting bigger. The smaller gauges seem to be less popular, although I recently enjoyed an exhilarating high speed run on the Leyland Society's raised level track behind a 3½" A4. My word the driver didn't hang about. But the owner of

one of the country's busiest 7¼" lines did confess to me that if he was starting again he'd be going for 10¼". And the number of privately owned lines in that gauge is rising, not dramatically but significantly. Each to their own of course. I can swoon over a Black Five in any gauge but its narrow gauge 7¼" that races my pulse. It's the principle that narrow gauge railways adhered to in the first place, as big as you can get without falling over or getting stuck under bridges. When you see some of the giants that haul on that gauge it is pretty awesome and, as old age and decrepitude takes over, sitting in rather than on is a big advantage.

P could be for "Prayer".

Who hasn't resorted to a little prayer when best engineering practice has failed?



Here, in the rural enclave of Shute, a native burgher is too deeply engaged in an ancient ritual to turn to face the camera.

Q is for quality.

Many business run miniature railways, many miniature railways try to run businesses. There are many railways in garden centres. So it's ironic really that the railway that wins my prize for neatness, tidiness and sheer visual beauty isn't a garden centre but a side-line to a model railway business.

I've yet to visit the Beer Heights Railway and see a ballast stone out of place or a flower that needs dead heading. And the railway itself is up amongst the best in the country. With the gentle chug of the line's fleet of steam locos and the distinctive sound of the aluminium track before turning the bend and gazing out over the sea on a beautiful day is enough to calm any fevered brow. Here John Edmonds and Otter pull in at the end of another successful run around the route at Beer.



R is for Roger Marsh.

One of my heroes. A man who has given so much to the hobby. If appreciation was paid in hard cash he'd be a wealthy man but life doesn't always reward the right people. How many Romuluses or should that be Romulii are running around the country? A superb combination of ruggedness, ease of build and the ability to run all

day. There can't be many clubs in the UK without their share of them. And as if that wasn't enough he went on to design the Tinkerbell, just about as narrow gauge as you could get. There's nothing 'model' about a Tink. It's a smaller, robust narrow gauge engine built for driver comfort and traction, that is when the frames are extended and the knees aren't toasting on the firebox! It's the Volvo of miniature locos. You can sit in one all day, driving mile after mile and still be able to walk. And to be pedantic it's not named after a character in Peter Pan but after Roger's cat. Okay I'm splitting hairs, cat hairs to be precise, as the cat itself was named after the little fairy, a term that could never be used to describe a Tink!



Here Roger Marsh sits proudly in the first Tinkerbell, now in the caring hands of the Moors Valley's Jim Haylock at a special gala in 2008 to celebrate the 40th anniversary

of the class. Good heavens was it that long ago? Something to celebrate in 2018, the fiftieth birthday is surely worth celebrating in style!

S is for stopping or brakes.

Most useful they are too. I won't name names, to protect the guilty! But one railway aficionado once told me that brakes "were for wossess".

That's one thing when your track is perfectly level but another thing altogether when gradients come into play. No one who has had that stomach turning moment when a swift stop is required but nothing is happening would ever disagree. I used to think that the real challenge with driving on a gradient was having the power to get up them. Wrong! It's having the ability to stop going down them. 1 in 35 down is a lot more daunting than 1 in 35 up. And, that moment of joy when the brakes work, is quickly replaced by sheer panic when they work so well that the train keeps moving and gathering pace even though all the wheels are fully braked. Not the sort of sliding that's fun!

T is for track bashers.

We must respect everyone's interest and passions. After all the man that collected the 3,000 different varieties of barbed wire in the museum I once visited probably finds minimum gauge steam engines a bit peculiar. So it's without prejudice that I mention the track bashers. I have to confess to once going on a brake van trip on closed lines in my native Lancashire but I've never felt the need to traverse every inch of siding. They will stop at nothing to travel over every last remaining bit of track, curves used once a year or platforms rarely used from a particular direction. And it doesn't just stop with standard gauge. At my old club track, Vames in Buckinghamshire, I was asked to take the loop at Denham and the avoiding line at the station so the participants can fulfil their ambition to cover every inch.

Once, visiting a friend's railway in East Budleigh, a major shunting exercise had to be undertaken to allow the throng to cover every last inch of track, even down to ensuring that the coach was propelled over the section so even the last five feet could be covered. As I say, each to their own!

U is for the unfailing rule.

Or how to make a small fortune out of miniature railways. Many people dream of combining their hobby with their job. Why stop at owning a loco, why not own the railway itself? Well it's certainly an attractive idea but there are dozens of people who will point out the harsh realities. So how do you make a small fortune out of running a railway?

Well make sure you start with a large fortune in the first place. Almost without exception a miniature railway won't make a living on its own. The ticket to ride may cost £2 but it is the £30 the family spends in the café or gift shop that makes the profit and keeps the railway afloat. The successful railway owner needs to know as much about 'pick's mix' as they do about Walschaert's valve gear!

V is for volunteers.

Our heritage lines and most miniature railways couldn't manage without them. Many clubs and railways are entirely volunteer run, even though for many those we rely upon to keep the railways going week in week out it's almost a full-time job. They are there frequently so the rest of us can enjoy the facilities infrequently. But it's the individuals who can control and manage volunteers that I applaud.

I've run an organisation with over fifty staff members and I like to think I was a good manager who worked hard at improving performance. But in the end I had the ultimate sanction, subject to strict adherence to Employment Law, of showing people the door. That's not a threat that works with volunteers. So I take my hat off to those who can inspire people who are giving their time free of charge to do more and do it when the railway needs it not just when the individual can turn up.

Y could be for “youth”.

It's vital we pass on our knowledge to the next generations, if that doesn't happen what has so much effort been for? As night falls a young loco man receives expert tuition away from the public at a Vames Club Night.



W is for water

Or injectors for that matter. Did you know that we have a French balloonist to thank for this seemingly logic defying invention? The first injector was designed in 1858 by the French physicist Henri Giffard to feed water into his steam powered dirigible balloon.

We all think we know how they work, some people really do. But it never ceases to amaze me that you can use steam pressure to force water into a boiler against the very pressure you are using.



A 12inch to the foot scale injector earns its keep at Llangollen.

It works, well most of the time. I know of one regular driver that carried a four pint milk carton filled with cold water on the footplate to pour on troublesome injectors.

I know the purists say an injector shouldn't sing because it's drawing in air. But it's always one of the most satisfying and reassuring things to hear and see when your injectors work.

X is for X rated.

It's important to remember, when visiting other people's railways that they are just that, other people. And they do what they like. I could mention but won't, lines that are open to the public but don't have boiler certificates or insurance. Others where even a rudimentary token system would ease a great deal of the tension! But nothing takes "la biscuit" more than some of the French heritage railways. On holiday a few years ago, we visited one standard gauge line that will remain nameless to protect the guilty. We were early and decided to seek out the workshop.

It was lunchtime, French style. There, in the centre of the shed, was a large trestle table with copious supplies of bread, pate, meat and other delicacies, washed down with the sort of wine that's bought in French supermarkets in plastic barrels and costs less than, but tastes worse than, toilet cleaner. I didn't breathalyse anyone but the whole gang was imbibing, driver, fireman, guard, the lot! Perhaps the French don't have a word for 'zero tolerance'

Y is for yellow.

Really it's for hi-viz yellow, which is a bit of a cheat because in railway circles it's usually orange anyway.

I think H&S is essential and any organisation that doesn't think through the risks and keep its people safe is worthy of contempt. It's the vests themselves that worry me. I was climbing a ladder once to take some aerial pictures for a client.

I was asked to wear a hi-viz vest. "Will it stop me falling off the ladder?" I asked helpfully.

The hi-viz often takes away the need for the individual to take responsibility for their own safety. 'I'm okay, cos I've got a hi-viz on!' and do we really need them on our sort of railways, getting in the way of every decent photo we attempt? Discuss!

Z is for` Zero.

Okay I am struggling a bit here but a little forgiveness goes a long way, Can you imagine a world with Zero steam or miniature railways? It doesn't bear thinking about. What would we do for amusement, the constant battle to keep that perfect balance of water, fire and steam pressure! The reassuring rhythmic sound of a steam engine. I don't know whether Freud ever analysed why we like the sound of a steam engine. If he did he'd have had a field day. I have my own theory but I'll leave it for now.



Z is also for zenith. The driver of this Great Central 'Fish' loco, Andrew Simkin, looks pretty happy in the picture below. And so he should. In 2006 the newly completed 10 ¼" loco was visiting Newby Hall in North Yorkshire. Okay "Z for Zenith" is a bit a stretch but it is a great picture by a friend of mine, Bob Avery, and so "Z "is a good excuse to enjoy it here!

Of Ships and Things

By

Fireman M.N Retired

Trying to get the hang of working what was known as continental shifts just didn't seem right, also it was seven to three, three to eleven and eleven to seven. The trains from London arrived at Greenford at half past six in the morning and most of the production staff came from Acton and Shepherds Bush, and to top it all I was down for two to eleven on Christmas Day and Boxing Day so my plan of Christmas with family was about to go the way all good plans go. Just to pile it on I was down to work over New Year as well. As it wasn't the best of jobs anyway I decided enough was enough so I went up to the docks to see what jobs were on offer. There was a fireman wanted on a timber ship going to Finland and Russia but it was cold enough here so I didn't fancy that so it was back home.

Time to look for another shore job. J Lyons and Co had a factory near where we lived at Greenford, producing tea, coffee, cocoa, and chocolate. Instead of going to the Labour exchange I went to the works job office. There wasn't much on offer but the chap said forklift driver, ever driven one? Yes I said, but what I didn't say was that it was after a night ashore in Auckland. This truck was standing there looking all lonely and unloved with the keys still in it and for a dare I gave it a go. I won't say where it ended up but life could have suddenly got very damp.

That's fine, start at eight o'clock tomorrow. The yard foreman said that's your truck there, take it to that shed across the yard and do whatever your asked to do, it was well knocked about so I thought

a few more dents wouldn't hurt. I was a bit uneasy at first but it was facing the right way to go forward so off I went, I had a good practice session going across the yard and into the shed. When I drove in there were about twelve women standing round and they started clapping and the boss lady said now we can get started. For the second time that morning I felt uneasy, thinking what the yard man had said, "do what ever you are asked to do".

Lyons had a bakery and ice cream plant at Hammersmith which had recently had suffered a big fire. One of the products was a liquid ice cream mixture for the "Mr Whippy" type vans, this was in sealed one-gallon cans and had to be kept for a month and each can shaken everyday to check that the seal was intact and they hadn't "blown". There was about one hundred tons of the stuff shipped down to Greenford and the women came down in a bus every day to carry out the checking. I thought of them as a lot of broody hens turning eggs. That was my job shifting these pallets of tins, they were a happy bunch to work with and time flew by.

One other bonus was a very good subsidized canteen and a reduced price staff sales shop.

At the end of February the building work was finished and the work went back to Hammersmith and that was the end of what had been a good little job.

Events Programme

May

Sunday 6th	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running
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Tuesday 8th	18:00-21:00	Club Evening, Vivary Park. An evening Club session
Tuesday 15th	19:30-21:30	TME Meeting Stoke St. Mary Village Hall Trophy Night
Sunday 20th	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running
Sunday 27th	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running
Monday 28th	14:00-17:00	Spring Bank Holiday Portable track at Stockland Fair.

If you would like to volunteer your help, please contact John Pickering. contact details inside the front cover

June

Sunday 3rd	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running
Tuesday 5th	16:00	Club Visit, Isle Abbot's Railway.

Visit to a member's private 7¼" railway. Hosted by Martin and Barbara Rickitt. Visiting locos welcome from 14:00. If possible, but not essential, please email Martin if you wish to bring your loco to run.

Tuesday 12th	18:00-21:00	Club Evening, Vivary Park. An evening Club session.
Sunday 17th	14:00-17:00	Vivary public Running

Tuesday 19th TBA Club Visit to Middlezoy

Club BBQ and Open Workshop.at Kestor, Nethermoor Rd.
Middlezoy, TA7 0PG. Hosted by Dave and Sue Wood.

July

Sunday 1st 14:00-17:00 Vivary Public Running

Tuesday 3rd TBA Club Visit to Shute Railway.

Visit to a member's private 7¼" railway. Hosted by Tony and Liz
Gosling

Sunday 8th 12:00-15:00 TME Portable Track. Combe St.
Nicholas School Summer Fair

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Tuesday 10th 18:00-21:00 Club Evening, Vivary Park. An
evening Club session.

Sunday 15th 14:00-17:00 Vivary Public Running

Tuesday 17th TBA Club Visit SS Freshspring and
L&B Railway

August

Tuesday 7th TBA Club Visit, Newberry Rail.

Visit to a member's private 7¼" railway. Hosted by Tony and Dina
Newberry

Sunday 12th	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running
Tuesday 14th	18:00-21:00	Club Evening, Vivary Park. An evening Club session.
Friday 17th	10:00-17:00	Bristol Model Engineering Exhibition
Saturday 18th	14:00-17:00	TME portable track at the Dalwood Summer Fair

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Saturday 18th	10:00-17:00	Bristol Model Engineering Exhibition
Sunday 19th	10:00-16:00	Bristol Model Engineering Exhibition
Tuesday 21st	19:30-21:30	Club Visit to CME Chard Visit hosted by Ian Marks
Sunday 26th	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running
Sunday 2nd	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running
Tuesday 4th	19:30-21:30	TME Meeting Stoke St. Mary, Village Hall Bits and Pieces. Open Forum
Tuesday 11th	18:00-21:00	Club Evening, Vivary Park. An evening Club session.

Sunday 16th	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running
Sunday 30th	TBA	TME CLUBLEC Vivary Park details nearer to event

October

Sunday 7th	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running
Tuesday 9th	18:00-21:00	Club Evening, Vivary Park. An evening Club session.
Sunday 21st	14:00-17:00	Vivary Public Running

Subscriptions

**Ordinary Membership is £30 with a further £5 for spouse or partner. Family membership £35 Junior Membership £5
Subscriptions are due on 1st January**

**Membership Secretary contact details—see inside front cover.
If renewing by post, please enclose S.A.E. for Membership Card**

The views and articles featured in this magazine do not necessarily represent the views of the Committee, Officers and Members.

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Yes they did!
A train on the new Crowborough track extension. During a very wet Easter



Photo Peter Nicholson

“Noel Whiting” on the “Summer House Loop” at Isle Abbots last year