

The Oily Rag!



All quiet on the Western front, Andy Cooke's McLaren
At Abbey Hill

The Taunton Model Engineers'
magazine

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From the Editor

If you only read one thing in this issue of the "Oily Rag" make sure it is the chairman's report. This lays out the situation with regard to our tenancy at the Creech site which could have a serious effect on the club as a whole. Relations with parish councils can be difficult. The membership of these councils changes frequently, their views even more so and there is no requirement for councillors to have any administrative or business experience to help them make rational decisions. As a result the actions of parish councils are often perverse and difficult for those outside to understand. Miniature railways are generally viewed as assets by their landlords. So it is rather sad that the parish council consider a short term "charity shop" lease as the right way to control our tenancy. To add to this the Parish Council have tried to force us to sign this inappropriate document by using threats. Maybe Perec Rachman is alive and well and living in Creech St. Michael!

The village needs improved leisure facilities to cope with the rapidly increasing local population. Money is available from the extensive residential development in the area. The recreation park could become a sports and leisure centre any parish would be proud of. Should this development go ahead it would be in the best interests of all concerned. I have no doubt that with goodwill on both sides and a bit of flair and imagination our railway could be an integral and valued part of any future plan. I sincerely hope common sense prevails.

When you have read Mike's report, have a look at the rest of your magazine. I hope you enjoy it!

John

Chairman's notes Including report from Creech

By Mike Johns

I am combining my notes with the regular Creech report this time as they are solely about the situation we have reached in trying to agree a revised tenancy agreement.

Members will recall that we have been in discussions with the Parish Council (PC) for some 3 years since they decided to take direct control of the recreation field instead of through a management committee as it is the right. In the process they indicated that our previous tenancy agreement signed in 2003 with this management committee needed to be revised to reflect the changed circumstances as it was considered no longer valid. Our discussions therefore have been based on updating the original agreement taking into account the terms and conditions it contained which we continued to honour by maintaining the rent payment over the time scale that has elapsed. Our view was also that as a landlord the PC should continue to honour these terms to reflect our position as sitting tenants.

Over several meetings a joint working party of 3 Parish Councillors and 2 TME members met to discuss and had agreed the changes needed by the second half of 2013. This followed on us having received a formal statement from the PC in May that our original tenancy agreement had no validity as their management committee did not have authority to sub-let any land under the terms of the Trust Deed under which they operated. The Deed itself had also expired and not been renewed. This effectively nullified the terms of our original agreement and the provision for progressive tenancy renewals for up to 20 years.

Although the PC were still raising invoices for the rent twice yearly! It also conflicted with TME as the tenancy having been invited by the PC to be joint applicants for the designation of the field as a 'Field in Trust' under the protection of the National Playing Fields Association. This was approved last year and is now formally recorded at the Land Registry.

The last joint working party meeting in late 2013 confirmed that we were in agreement on the basis for a revised tenancy agreement which the PC would put to their solicitor to produce a formal legal document that both the PC and TME Committee members could approve and sign. At that stage it was expected that this tenancy agreement would be laid out in a format similar to the original agreement on 4 pages of paper.

The document that actually arrived turned out to be 14 pages of a formal lease plus 3 pages of a document that required TME to relinquish 'security of tenure' of the site beyond the 5 year term of the lease. At this point your Committee decided that legal advice was needed before proceeding further.

Following discussion with a friendly solicitor TME sent a formal letter to the PC asking for an explanation of their change in approach and in particular why they now considered a formal lease was required in place of a simple tenancy agreement or licences such as weenjoy for Vivary Park. The response on 2 June was that the PC wished a more formal document with specific limitations to preserve their right to 'regain control of the whole field' should it be desired at some stage.

However the following day an email was received from the PC demanding that TME sign the lease within 2 weeks or else! Following an emergency committee meeting the next day and further discussion with the solicitor TME have formally rejected the PC's ultimatum on 2 counts –

The lease was incorrect in referring to TME as being charity; The action proposed did not comply with the PC's own recorded minute of June 2013 that the draft lease be jointly agreed between them and TME solicitors before signature.

We also asked that the PC instruct their solicitor to send a formal copy of the lease to the solicitor we have now formally asked to act on TME's behalf for the outstanding consultation to take place. A briefing meeting with our solicitor takes place on 30 June to cover the aspects where we think changes are needed.

In view of the action we are now taking, your Committee has had to sanction payment of legal fees up to a specified amount but, depending on the progress made, it may be that we have to call an EGM of TME if these costs escalate. We intend to call an EGM in any event for TME membership in due course to approve the finally agreed terms of the lease before committing TME to the initial 5 year term we expect will apply.

Mike

Report from Vivary Park

By Diana Fathers

It's been mixed fortune so far, with the weather either so wet that running was not possible or glorious sunshine bringing in big crowds.

Sadly, Easter Sunday was a washout. Usually there are long queues all afternoon as Vivary Park hosts their annual Easter Egg Hunt, It was very disappointing for both the organisers and for TME but the good news is that they are hoping to stage the hunt during the summer – weather permitting!

On 1st June, good weather prevailed and several members brought their locos, which both shared the load for the drivers and gave the children a lovely choice of which train to choose.

All we can do is to hope that the weather is kind to us and shines every 1st and 3rd Sunday until the end of October.

We are looking forward to the monthly Tuesday evening runnings a chance not only to run the locos without customers but also to get together for a good natter.

We hope to see you there.

PS

This year the Flower Show clashes with other events which are of interest to some of those who regularly support activities at Vivary. As a result we may be short of members to run on Friday 1st August and Saturday 2nd. Since these are all day events, 9am to 5pm, we need a larger crew than normal. If you can help please contact Phil Mortimer, contact details inside front cover.

Ed.

The Ticklers (Horological Sub Group)

By Graham Barford

David Spicer continues to attend meetings involved with the Harrison clock, but putting his house together after the winter floods has taken precedence. Graham Barford has been making housings for ball races, before deepening his clock plates and fitting the rain which now spins freely.

The engine's first rally

By Andy Cooke

After eleven years of leisure time, the McLaren is finally complete and even painted. I decided to paint the engine in First World War livery as the original was ordered by the War Office for service in that conflict to accompany several other McLaren engines which were being used to haul 8 and 9 inch howitzers, although this particular example never actually went into service, not being completed until 1919. This colour scheme seemed particularly appropriate given that this year is the centenary of the outbreak.



(That's my story and I'm sticking to it! Nothing to do with my dislike of lining out engines and looking for excuses not to do so.)

Anyway, I was generously given a tin of correct colour paint by a well-known member who shall be nameless save that he has several First World War lorries. The painting proceeded without undue problems, then I came to the question of how was it painted in the WD and the arrow typical of such livery? After considerable thought I drew them on the computer, printed them,

cut round them with a scalpel and stuck this "stencil" to the engine with pv glue. When dry it was a simple matter to paint over them with white Humbrol and subsequently peel off the paper.

I had previously had a hydraulic test carried out so all that remained was the steam test. This was performed and the engine was declared fit for use. With the date of the first rally rapidly approaching I held my breath as to whether the insurance would come through in time, as members will be aware to use a traction engine in a public place Road Traffic Act compliant insurance is required by law. The documentation together with the requisite NTET disc duly turned up so we set off for the Abbey Hill Steam Rally in Yeovil.

Although I had steamed the engine several times I had never actually driven it so it was with some trepidation I engaged a gear and set off. It is remarkable what a turn of speed this engine has, top gear (of three) can be alarmingly fast so I spent most of the weekend using second gear.

On the first morning I was approached by a chap who said to me "I have built a 3 inch scale model of an 8 inch howitzer, it looks the part but does not fire. Would you like to hitch it up to your engine and see what it looks like?" (See pictures of the two models.) He said he thought this paint did not look as authentic as mine so I told him the story of the old lorries, he was most impressed and asked for the manufacturer and name of the paint, I was able to enlighten him, following consultation.

We eventually put the two items together and what an interest this generated! Photographic enthusiasts appeared from all over the place and we had quite a crowd around. The builder of the gun intends to create an ammunition box on the limber and sit on this to drive his traction engine when he has finished building it. I look forward to seeing him and it again in the future.

Meanwhile, I am re-painting my Fowler A7 and look forward to being able to have a choice of engine in season to come, or taking both engines and having another driver. Both engines seem to refuse to pass the beer test - can't think why!

2.5" gauge at Vivary?

By John Pickering.

At a recent committee meeting it was decided to ask the members if they were in favour of adding an extra rail to give us a 2.5" gauge track at Vivary Park. The fortunes of 2.5" gauge have changed wildly over the last 70 years. After the last war 2.5" gauge was still the gauge of choice of most miniature locomotive builders, but greater affluence resulted in a steady migration to larger scales. By the 1970's it looked as though the gauge could go the same way as gauge 2 and become virtually extinct. Now largely due to the activities of the "National 2.5" Gauge Association" the number of model engineers building and running locomotives in this gauge is steadily increasing. Adding the extra line would give the TME members building 2.5" gauge engines somewhere to run and would almost certainly attract new members with an interest in the gauge.



Photo G. Chandler

Steve Eaton's KUR Garratt

A common objection to 2.5" gauge is that it is not seen as suitable for passenger hauling. In fact, some doubt that a 2.5" gauge engine could haul a live load at all. In practice, all but the smallest 2.5" gauge engines will haul their drivers and at a pinch, larger models could even be considered for hauling the public.



Photo G. Chandler

Paul Wooton driving his Toby

Small simple locos such as "Toby" are ideal for beginners and more experienced builders who want something they can build quickly. At the other end of the scale huge prototypes result in models which are far more easy to handle than they would be in larger scales.

It is impossible to predict the amount of use the new track would get. But there does seem to be more interest now in smaller gauge than was the case a few years ago. Only in

this gauge can you take a locomotive to a rally on a Saturday and enjoy driving it around a raised track, then visit a friend on the Sunday with a gauge 3 layout and use the same engine to haul a scale train on a scenic railway. On arriving home, you can then place it on a piece of display track on your bookcase, rather than it becoming something to trip over in the garage.

The cost of the project would be kept down by using lighter section steel for the new rail. But clearly there will be work required.

Please let me or other committee members know how you feel about this suggested project.



Photo M Manners

Peter Gardener driving his LNER P2

The Isle Abbots Railway

By Martin Rickitt

Many TME members will by now have visited the railway in Isle Abbots, and as the annual club gathering is now rapidly approaching, you editor has offered me the opportunity to say a bit more about how the railway came about.

In 1980 we moved from our Victorian "Semi" near Dorking to Isle Abbots here in rural Somerset. In those days there was a huge price difference between houses in London's commuter belt and the countryside, so we were lucky to purchase a stone farmhouse and a five-acre field, which even then I mentally earmarked for a future railway.

Sometwenty years of running a business and family-rearing then ensued, although I clung onto the dream of building my own railway, spurred on by visits to Paul and Sylvia Mash's Chaldon Light railway in Surrey, Bob Washington's now closed railway at Eckington, Gloucestershire, and of course, Pecorama at nearby Beer.



Isle Abbots central station.

Two events were the final catalyst for commencing construction of the Isle Abbots Railway. First, I managed to dispose of my business in September 2000, and then in May 2001 our first grandson, Max, arrived. Rather rashly, I promised that enough of the railway would be open to give rides at Max's first birthday party.

I joined the 7¼" Gauge Society and placed an advertisement in their magazine appealing for information on railway building and some basic equipment. I also wrote for all the trade price lists then on offer. One of the respondents to my advertisement was the ever helpful Tony Gosling. He invited me to a Taunton Model Engineers open evening at his house in Shute. Tony has since been the source of much help and encouragement, and has also helped me locate some of the rolling stock now resident on the line.

I made two decisions quite early on. Firstly, I wanted to give a long ride as the land available allowed, and in order to keep everything

feeling as "big" as possible, I would adopt a "narrow gauge" standard. Luckily the field adjoining our house is fairly flat, and I eventually produced a six-stage construction plan. This gave a circuit of around half a mile with an additional "panhandle" loop through a dense plantation of fast trees close to the engine shed that I had planted some 20 years earlier. This was designed as a turning circle but is also now often incorporated into the complete running circuit.



A train leaving the "panhandle"

Isle Abbots Central station, close to the house, has three platforms,

nominally one in each direction, with a bi-directional track in the centre, although for TME running days all three platforms are normally used in the same direction. Platform one has direct access to the engine shed and depot fan, so locomotives in need of servicing can be directed out of service down this road. At the point in the circuit most distant from the station there is a very wide passing loop with a circle enclosed within it, in what is known as Great Wood (planted by me in 1982);

this offers the choice of returning back to Isle Abbots Central in the opposite direction rather than doing a complete circuit. There is an additional passing loop at Oak Tree Halt – this is a summerhouse that a neighbour was about to consign to the bonfire and was quickly rescued! Our maximum gradient is 1 in 50 and the curves are usually 60ft down to a minimum of 30ft radius.

In 2001 Cromar White was switching to supplying plastic sleepers, and I was given an attractive price to clear all the existing stock of hardwood sleepers, together with 32mm high aluminium rail, for stages 1-3 of my plan. They also rolled some of the rail to 30ft radius.

Having decided on a basic track layout, I set about clearing an area of barnto make an 18ft long bench on which to construct my 15ft track panels. I used templates with slot and drop pins sleepers, which I creosoted (ugh!) and pre-drilled to take track screws. After some earlier experiments, track screws have been standardised on 32mm roofing sheet-to-timber screws from Screwfix, which are proving very satisfactory. I have two track templates, one straight, and one to make up a 30ft radius curve. In my yearly attempts at track laying, all lines are either straight, or to a 30ft radius curve, a bit like Hornby Dublo. Later experience has shown that by combining straight and pre-rolled 30 and 60ft radii rails, any radius curve, together with a quite nice transition, can be made up. More complex items like points and crossovers have been fabricated with the help of an old friend, Richard Pickett, who has the necessary workshop

facilities including the milling machine necessary to produce point blades.

My next purchase was housing for the future rolling stock. Luckily the existing wall of a redundant milking parlour was available as one side of a lean-to structure, so a 40ft long shed wide enough to accommodate three tracks was ordered from Foresters Garden Buildings, Hatch Beauchamp. I still have vivid memories of trying to erect this in the teeth of a gale in January 2002.



Martin driving "Alderney" his other Romulus.

Although I had read up all the literature I could find on track construction, much still depends on individual conditions, and in particular the composition of the land on which the track rests. Most of my railway was to be on a fairly well-drained meadow, which had not been ploughed for over 30 years, so digging too deeply did not really make sense, especially as the spoil removed had to be replaced with expensive ballast. Other parts of the route had to be cleared of a forest of brambles, and a bridge was constructed over a storm overflow behind a pond.

A motorway engineer who lives nearby showed me how to survey levels on the proposed route, banging in pegs at 5-metre intervals and using a laser level to produce a grade profile. By using an exaggerated vertical scale, I managed to frighten myself by producing a gradient profile resembling the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway rather than my relatively flat field!

Having re-checked my measurements, I set about preparing the track-bed. Many members will be familiar with geotextile, more usually known as Terram, which is available in 14mx1m rolls. With a 10cm margin each side, this gives a convenient ballast width of 80cm. Having mowed the meadow as short as possible, I marked out the track bed with spray-marker road paint and hired a turf-cutter to remove varying depths of turf with a minimum of 3". I traded the turf thus produced for paving slabs with a neighbour who was re-designing her garden. The slabs now form station platforms.

The geotextile was laid in the resultant trench and this was then filled with 20mm Mendip limestone chippings and compacted with an industrial compactor plate. Eventually we got through some 180 tons of ballast. Initially the ballast was not edged, but this was a major error, as grass and weeds quickly invaded from the sides. When an attempt was made to rectify this by trimming the edges, not only the vegetation, but also the ballast, was flung in all directions! This was remedied by inserting Tanalised 100x10mm edging boards, a process achieved far more easily during construction than afterwards, and a technique adopted for subsequent phases. Laying the track panels and ballasting proved to be the easy bit, and the railway opened in stages, with Michael Pritchard from Pecora making kindly performing a formal opening for us on 20th July 2004.

Inspired by Paul & Sylvia Mash's Chaldon Light railway, I initially had planned to install a signal box, together with power-operated points.

Subsequent experience has shown that sprung points, together with manual point levers operated from the locomotive, are a far more practical option for the type of minimally staffed operation my railway usually sees. Most of the levers are set about 12ft back from the points, and I have added a route indicator by the blade mechanism so other routes set can be seen by drivers some way before the points are reached.

Isle Abbots is a small and friendly village, and many of the residents have helped with their various skills; surveying, electrical knowledge, loan of various equipment, etc. In return, several village fund-raising efforts have benefited financially from railway open days. One downside of these events has been the pressure on our own domestic facilities at Isle Abbots Station House (we carried over 400 passengers on a garden sopen day).



Turning a loco at the village hall station

To help resolve this, with the permission of the farmer on whose land it runs, a branch line was constructed to the back of Isle Abbots Village Hall, which has its own toilet and refreshment facilities.

This new line involved branching off the turning circle in Great Wood, a diamond crossing over the existing circuit, the construction of a 15ft bridge over a stream, 400 feet of additional track and a new 3-platform station at the rear of the village hall. We installed a second-hand 10ft turntable from Pecorama (rendered surplus by their new 12ft installation) at the end of the Village Hall station. Use of the Village Hall branch by more than one train made signalling very desirable, as this section of track is bidirectional and so we now have a small automatic colour light signal system to control this part of the system.

For a bit of added interest to the line, we are in the process of completing a 40ft tunnel – overground of course; in Isle Abbots an underground tunnel would be full of water for most of the winter! The tunnel has been made from pallets and is lined with black geotextile to maximise the gloom and terrify our younger passengers! Ultra-violet lights and skeletons add to the effect at Halloween!



The new tunnel under construction

Last year we built a new 2-road 40ft engine/carriage shed. This currently houses an ex-Hilton Valley Lister diesel-electric together with its two covered carriages, which is currently on loan and looking for a new home. Whilst it is an impressive beast, it is really out of proportion to the rest of the system and the occasional derailment presents a major challenge!

Werecently transported100 weddingguests bytrainto a receptionbehind thevillagehall, andithastobe saidthatthe Listermadean impressivesight bedeckedwith whiteribbonsand bows!



“Getmetothechurchontime”

Sowhatofthefuture?Withthepossibleexceptionofafewminor additions,trackbuilding,whichhasnowreachedaround $\frac{3}{4}$ mile,has probablycometoanend,atleastforthetimebeing.Keepingthe existingtrackingoodshapeandweed-freeisnowquitedemanding. Certainlythereisscopeforfurtherlandscaping,treeplanting,and theaddingofmore“railway”features.

Iamespeciallygratefultomylong-sufferingwife,Barbarawho, likeme,didn’trealisethatbuildingarailwaywasdestinedtotake overmylife!

ThenextofficialTMEeventatIsleAbbotsison19thAugustfrom midafternoononwards.Iwouldverymuchwelcomevisitinglocos, andespeciallytractionengines;wehave a5-acre meadowtogive themagoodrun.

BromesHouseiseasilyfoundfromIsleAbbotsvillagecentre, howeverifusingGPS,be suretoenter“BromesLane”,notour postcode!Iwouldpleasedtoansweranyquestionson01460 281226–mrickitt@hotmail.com

Swansa, year two.

By Michael Callaghan

Well I must say that I have been looking forward to this trip to Swansa from the very first read of Bill's e-mail. I have not had much success in getting driving time in over the year and therefore for me it was my third reason to look forward to the day. My first reason was a chance to meet again that group of welcoming cheerful members of Swansa club. The second was because I knew this time how great their company and helpfulness would be. And the third was a second go on their great track with all its twists and turns, tunnels and hills.

I was hoping to take my Royal Scot, but the idea of towing a trailer all the way to Swansa was not too pleasing and my Polly was in the repair shop after my taking a few months to pull it apart and refit it.



Mike and the "MofK"
Approaching the station

only for me to trip over our new walking dog. (for years our pet Pug has not been able to walk due to the actions of its first owners using him as a football) The new dog can walk and I was just not used to that idea. Damage to the cab and rear buffer which will all need replacing and a bent chimney was not good. Oh well back to the bench Polly.

So the Maid of Kent was taken out to play. I did not make this loco, just repainted it and played around with it a bit, as it had never been steamed by me, it would be a first for us both.

A bit like my Polly outing last year, so it would be interesting to see how these two locos compare



Bob Richards and his Sweet Pea
On the same curve.

The day was overcast with at times heavy rain showers most of the drive to Swansea, but the welcome once at the Swansea club more than made up for it. I think I was the first person on site from Taunton and help was given to put the MoK on the track and with a bacon roll in hand I got down to the business of steaming up.

Last year I just copied Dave Wood who was firing up his Polly in the next bay. This year I just had to remember what I had done before. Swansea members freely give of their supply of paraffin soaked charcoal, and very good it was too, I had steam up in no time, unlike last year when Polly took a full half hour.

By this time other members of Taunton had started to turn up, along with two members from Yeovil club. Well the weather improved a bit and taking full advantage I was first out onto the track. Well it was just as great as I remember. With the track dropping down from the station in to a left hand bend. Then into the first tunnel, back out into daylight and the slow climb to the next bend. More bends and a further tunnel and I found myself back at the small station I must say at this point things went a bit wrong. The Maid of Kent as sliding door to the firebox and a bit of coal had become stuck under one of the doors and I could not open it on the move.

The loss of steam pressure soon slowed the loc to stop. There I was busy clearing out the firebox doors and hoping that no one had noticed my mishap. I found that the MoK fired up a lot more willingly than the Polly, even if it used a lot more coal once on the move. Maybe around 40 percent more in fact, I had a lot less coal at the end of the day than I remembered from last year. With a further few laps under my belt and with water in the tender getting very low, it was all too soon to withdraw and allow someone else to get onto the track. From the warm cheery atmosphere of the clubhouse complete with a welcome pot belly stove and lots of bacon rolls and drinks of all types, cakes and homemade biscuits.

I watched as Barry took Bob's loco out for a run, sad to say it was a repeat of last year's performance and all did not go well. Lack of steam pressure forced Barry off the track soon after when I think he would have wished. I can't remember seeing Bill out on the track, but thanks to Bill for arranging, yet again, a great day's outing for the club. John Pickering was seen enjoying himself and I think I am correct in saying that John was the last off the track. Mike from Yeovil was more than happy to show the power of his 5 inch gauge King locomotive, a fine looking engine that I have seen in action a few times. Thanks to the Swansealub members for being so very welcoming and helpful.



“Salome” handles well
In the wet!

The Yeovil club will soon be picking up the gauntlet and have invited members of both the Swansealub and the TME. To track day on 13th September. Full details in “Club Visits” if one is looking forward to it.

Raise the Gigantic.

By Dr. Spin.

One of the issues at Creech is that we have no means of lifting heavy items, and the problem with 7 1/4 inch gauge is that everything is heavy. The carriage shed was originally built very substantially with two heavy concrete piers in the centre – just right for a beam across the width of the building, and most fortunately, a suitable steel beam recently appeared in the scrap pile of a local engineering company. This was cut to the exact length and brought to Creech. A suitable recess was cut in each side of the building to accommodate the beam ends, and then it was onto the tricky subject of how to raise this steel, weighing 3 cwt, into place.



Lift under way

The Thursday gang spends some time talking about this, (the Thursday gang seem to spend a lot of time talking about everything!) and the pros and cons of which was the best way of doing the job.

It would be easier with a large group of helpers of course, but even then the lift would be well above head height and rather high in the sky.



Almost there

In the end, as usual for such things, the actual work took a lot less time than we had spent musing over it. The beam was lifted bit by bit, one end at a time, making use of the benches, a cupboard, and part of a scaffold tower, before sliding the raised beam effortlessly into place in the recesses.

The operation took just over 40 minutes. The beam is now concreted into place and is capable of taking a point load at its centre of two tons with a considerable safety factor, and this should be ample for anything we need to lift at Creech!

Of SHIPS AND THINGS.

By FIREMAN MN retired.

Naturally I was devastated at losing such a good job, OYeah!! There was one thing I had omitted to say, that I had met up with an old girlfriend and that was why I decided to have a spell ashore. This was fine to start with but after a while she got to be a bit "clingy" and wanted us to get somewhere to live together, in reality she was having trouble at home and wanted out and I happened to be handy. Fortunately for me I had a telegram to join the Paraguay Stars so I was off the hook.

I signed on as a main greaser and we sailed on the 3rd May. This ship was a sistership to the Uruguay Star (my first ship) so I knew the layout of the engine room, I was on the 12-4 watch. Also the greasers had to look after the donkey boiler as well as the generators when in port.

It was early evening when we got to Las Palmas to take on fuel oil and we were to stay overnight and sail in the morning. Just before midnight I went down below to relieve the 8-12 man and I had just finished checking ground when the 2nd engineer came down and said to me would I rather be going ashore? I thought what a strange thing to say, but I said yes. Off you go then he said, me and the 3rd have a job to do so we can watch the boiler for you. I didn't need telling twice so I was off before he could change his mind.

We set off in the morning on the eight day jaunt to Rio. When I went on watch midday the 8-12 man said what happened to you last night? So I told him, all he said was, I thought that 2nd is a strange one and we left it at that. After an uneventful trip we got to the river plate and tied up at the New Port dock more or less in the centre of Buenos Aires this was for the passengers and baggage to be unloaded. At least it was quiet, not like a year or so ago when we almost became a casualty of the revolution.

Just before we left for South Dock the customs searchers came aboard but as usual they opened a few cupboards and lifted a few mattresses then disappeared. It was a well known fact that the shipping agent paid them to put their "blindfolds" on.

Next morning with the boilers shutdown the cleaning and scaling begun, this time I missed all that as I kept to sea watch to tend the donkey boiler, generators and any pumps still running. At about 12.30 all the hands were still at lunch.

I heard a lot of shouting up above (the donkey boiler was down in

the lower level) so I went up to see what was going on. This was a proper customs "rumble squad". Ten men in overalls with crow bars, mirror on poles and torches also two armed dock police, to me they looked serious so being no hero I suddenly had to check the water level in the boiler.

In Oily Rango. 107 I mentioned the large funnel on the Blue Star ships, this one being a sister ship to the Uruguay Star also had an emergency feed water tank in the funnel just the same holding six tons of water.

What happened was this, one of the customs men walking past the tank caught it glancing blow with his bar and it sounded hollow a second blow sounded the same, next he checked the sight glass and it was full of water, then on opening the drain cock water ran out and the glass remained empty, so he called the boss - man and one of the guards. The chief engineer was called down as well and the inspection door was unbolted. The tank was crammed full with cases of cigarettes. That was the job the 2nd and 3rd engine room had to do in Las Palmas.

The outcome was they were charged not with smuggling but seriously endangering the ship.

The 2nd engineer was stripped of all his certificates including his chief ticket for that would have been his next move, also he was put on a plane for the U.K. at his own expense and told he would never go to sea again. The 3rd was instantly dismissed but had to work his passage home and it was said he would be hard pressed to get a job on the Woolwich Ferry. The two of them had invested a lot of money in the scheme and naturally they lost it all of that as well. The only person to come up smelling of roses was the 12-4 greaser who had a night ashore in Las Palmas.

Club Visits.

By Bill Edmondson

SWANSEA MODEL ENGINEERSTO VISIT THE SW

Saturday 13th September 2014

Following visits by members of Taunton and Yeovil model engineers to run on the Swansea track in 2013 and 2014, Yeovil are to host a return visit this September. Arranged as a joint venture between Taunton and Yeovil clubs, this will provide a welcome to Swansea members and bring two SW clubs together socially.

Swansea have twice put on a very warm welcome which includes food and teas, soft drinks and soon. The same will be offered to them at Yeovil. For Taunton members who haven't previously visited the Yeovil track, it is somewhat tucked away. Find Preston Road (ASDA at the western end, Hospital at the east end); turning south into Watercombe Lane, then Westbourne Grove. Look for sign to Westland Social Club. (Satnav: BA202DD/ST544159)

This should take you to the Westland Helicopter Co social club and carpark. At the far end of the social club building is a steep driveway with double chain link gates. If you have a locomotive to deliver, open these, drive through and close them. Drive along side the allotment to another pair of chain link gates. Again drive through and close behind you. You are now in the model engineer track site; carpark in front of you. Please contact Bill if you need a map sending with directions. If you are not bringing a loco, please park in the spacious social club carpark and walk up. This is a day for members of Swansea and Taunton to run their locomotives; members of Yeovil will not run.

The track is 2½"/3½"/5" gauge. There is no 7¼". Nineteen members

of Yeovil are each building a 2½" gauge locomotive to the Toby design. Are there any Taunton members with a 2½" gauge loco they could run?

Contact:

Bill Edmondson 01823442393

Mike Watson secretary Yeovil SME 01935891009

BROMSGROVESOCIETYOFMODELENGINEERS

Private visit for members of Taunton ME on Saturday 20th September 2014

This relatively new club to the ranks of model engineering clubs is based in the grounds of Avoncroft Museum near Bromsgrove. Covering over 19 acres of beautiful Worcestershire countryside, the Museum is home to over 30 different historic buildings and structures which have been rescued and re-built.

The Society's raised 3½" gauge track is 1260 feet long. IMLEC was held here in 2011 and it is reported that the track caught out many drivers. The Society have very kindly agreed to host a private visit by members of Taunton ME on 20th September. Bring your own packed lunch and boiler certificate; tea available on site.

How to find the track site:

If you have a satnav, the post code for the museum is B604JR. The OS grid reference is SO954683. The museum is situated off the A38 Bromsgrove bypass. From the south, it is signposted from junction 5 of the M5. Once you've returned off the road and into the museum, you'll find the club's private entrance gate to the left of Avoncroft's main entrance.

Any questions contact Bill Edmondson
Cz115@btinternet.com or 01823442393

Vivary Park Running Days

August

Friday 1st Public Running (Flower Show) 9am — 6pm

Saturday 2nd Public Running (Flower Show) 9am — 5pm

Sunday 3rd Public Running

Tuesday 12th Club Running 6pm

Sunday 17th Public Running

Sunday 24th Public Running (Bank Holiday)

September

Sunday 7th Public Running

Tuesday 9th Club Running 6pm

Tuesday 9th Wellington preschool (provisional) 9am — noon.

Tuesday 16th Wellington preschool (provisional) 9am — noon.

Thursday 18th Brean Steamers (provisional) 9am — 4pm

Sunday 21st Public Running

October

Sunday 5th Public Running

Sunday 19th Public Running

December

Sunday 14th Public Running

Santa Special 12noon - 3pm

Crzech Running Days

August

Sunday10th	PublicRunning
Monday25th	PublicRunning(BankHoliday)

September

Sunday14th	PublicRunning
Sunday28th	PublicRunning

October

Sunday12th	PublicRunning
Sunday26th	PublicRunning

December

Sunday21st	PublicRunning
SantaSpecial	12noon -3pm

**Publicrunningwillnormallytakeplace
between
2.00pm.and5.00pm.Weather permitting.**

Meetings Programme

Tues 5th August **Visit to Launceston Steam Railway**
Tues 19th August **Visit to Isle Abbots Railway**
Martin Rickitt

This year, At Isle Abbots, a mown area will be available for those wishing to run traction engines.

Tues 2nd September **Bits and pieces - work in progress**
Tues 16th September **Tether cars - David Giles**
Tues 7th October **Engraving, talk and demonstration**
Roy Cooney
Tues 21st October **Lifeboat launcher project**
Simon Turner, Supacat.
Tues 4th November **Auction Night - Mark Davis**
Tues 18th November **Quiz Night - Dick W hittington**
Tues 2nd December **Narrow Gauge Britain.**
Peter Triggs
Tues 16th December **Mince Pies and Natter**

**Meetings will be held at the Village Hall, Stoke St. Mary,
Taunton, commencing at 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.**

Subscriptions

Ordinary Membership is £30 with a further £5 for spouse or partner.

Junior Membership —£5

Larcombes Coal

Coal and Solid Fuel Supplies

Suppliers of fuel to Taunton Model Engineers

Telephone — Chard 01460 221217

The Society is very grateful for their sponsorship.





Roy Fathers gets up steam also at Isle Abbots.



Photo G Chandler

More 2.5" gauge passenger hauling
at LBSC Fayette with train.