

The Oily Rag!

Winter 2017 Issue No 132.



Santa stokes his “sleigh” during the Santa Special

**The Taunton Model Engineers’
magazine**

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From the Editor

My impassioned plea for something to print has borne fruit and I am now in the position of having enough copy not only to complete this issue but to make a good start with the next. But do not think this means you are off the hook, there are three more issues to come this year alone!

The articles submitted cover a wide range of topics and some have already appeared elsewhere. Phil Ashworth's alphabet has been seen before but has been "fine tuned" for your good selves. Neil Evans is not only a member of our club but also edits the magazine of "The Welsh Highland Railway" he has contributed a salutary tale from the pages of this publication which is published with their permission.

But not all is "recycled" and I am pleased that several new contributors have put pen to paper as well as the stalwarts. Many thanks to all who have helped

Chairman's Notes

By David Hartland

We start the new year with exciting developments for the Club. We have found a new site which comes close to meeting all our requirements, in a location which suits most of the members. The vendor is patient and helpful, and we are now in the process of discussing issues with the local Planning Department, all being well we will make a formal planning application shortly. If this is successful, then the next stage will be an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Club to discuss the purchase of the land.

The pledges of funds from members have been dramatic and overwhelming – we have basically enough money promised to fund most of the new site purchase. I would like to thank each and every one of you that has pledged money, for it is your generosity that has been the impetus to move forward. We have a once-in-a-lifetime chance here to be one of a very small number of clubs around the country owning our own site – this is a tremendous opportunity for us all. Many members have already visited the location and there will be further chances in the next few weeks.

Our indoor meetings throughout the winter have been well attended and enjoyed. A good series of evenings is planned this year, along with some exciting summer trips. I must thank Dave Wood for standing in as caretaker Programme Secretary and doing such a good job. One of the themes this year will be encouraging beginners – we have a few evenings dedicated to starting out on various topics.

It is noticeable that we have a significant increase in the number of younger members at the moment. It is essential that these youngsters are encouraged and helped into the hobby. The Model Engineering world needs them, but our own Club needs them especially as we move forward with our own Big Project. Please do your best to talk to them and boost their keen attitudes.

Communication with members is important and I would like to ensure that all members are kept informed in these next few months. If you are on Email, you should be receiving a message from Mike Pinkney every week or two – if you are not, please contact him (address inside the cover) and update him with your contact details. If you are not on Email, then you will receive an occasional letter with these messages printed out.

This will be an exciting year for the Club – make sure you are part of it.

News from ?

By Tim Griffiths

Well here we are, arrived at another New Year, with our departure from Creech we are now actively seeking clarity on where we go.

On Thursday 11th January many of you visited a field in an undisclosed location with the view of creating a new miniature railway there. All the signs are good and there is much promise. A preliminary survey of the site has been carried out from which we all hope that the Phoenix will arise. I am sure we all look forward to the opportunity of assisting with the gigantic task. There are of course many hurdles to get over before we are able to start the real work. Planning has to be approved, services need to be sorted, and even simple things like fencing have to be set out.

David Hartland made a request for your rooted Christmas Trees not to be thrown away but saved for use on this site, I hope a few of you have. To save having to keep watering them, if you set these about 6 inches down in the soil they will water themselves.

Those of you that have seen the proposed new site will realise the tremendous potential, not only for us but for those that come behind us, there are younger Members out here, let us leave a legacy that is worthy of Taunton Model Engineers.

Whilst we were on site that Thursday one or two local residents came by and voiced an opinion of the current tenant and will hopefully appreciate a tidier and less noisy occupant of this site, so let's keep them sweet, to ease our request for Planning on the site.

Well Tuesday 16th January bought us more news that the vendor

has now suggested it would be good for the Club to go forward with our planning application. This is good news as this now means our proposed time scale will be accelerated, bringing us much closer to our ultimate aim.

The Thursday Gang will be resurrected, from hibernation (I hope), fully re-energised to get on with all the things we know will need doing. Fencing, concreting, building, site clearing, and so forth, all this before the real work can begin, the ultimate aim, to make a home for the Taunton Model Engineers.

Be prepared for the call to arms, there will be things to do before we are in possession of the site, so keep your eyes open for E-mails keeping you informed of developments as time goes on. This is a momentous time to be in the Taunton Model Engineers, we have seen much, learnt much, and about to learn even more, so join in, don't be left out.

Santa Special Report

By Diana

The weather on 10th December was diabolical, to say the least. A few intrepid members turned up but it was impossible to run any trains so a note was put on the old hut door advising people that the Santa Special would now take place on 17th.

Roy, Chloe and I turned up a little while after the others had left, bearing tins with seven dozen sausage rolls and six dozen mince pies. The only people we saw were Tim, Fred, new member Harry and Sean the park keeper, plus a couple of families who had hopefully turned up. I went around begging them all to take some

food home as my freezers at home were full and I knew it would not keep until the next week. When we came home, the neighbours were only able to relieve us of a few so the birds had a great Christmas feast on the rest! Did you ever notice that starlings have a brilliant communication system? We usually have around half a dozen regulars, which try to scare off the other birds as soon as the feeders are filled. But obviously they enjoyed the sausage rolls so much that word got around and the sky went black as they all descended and scooped up every crumb.

Ever hopeful, the following Sunday, we set out for the track again, this time with only mince pies as I hadn't had time to make another batch of sausage rolls as well. Despite the forecast, the rain held off and the weather wasn't too bad at all. Lots of members turned up wearing Christmassy outfits (Thank you all!), including Phil as Santa, with his new loco (which, sadly, developed a fault had and to be taken off after half an hour of running). The station was decorated and hundreds of presents and sweets ready for the crowds. Jon had his Cheddar Flyer (Wedge) if required.

Andrew Prentice did a very good job of running for the whole session. Although we were fairly busy all day, many people had not realised that the date had changed and we were running. Those that did come were generous with their charity donations and we took £90 for the Children's Hospice South West. This total including a few pounds which were put into a container as a thank you for Barry playing the organ. Thank you Barry, it brightened up the day for everyone.

Many thanks to everyone who made the effort to ensure the Santa Special was special.

It's not that long until Easter so we'll see you all again at Vivary Park on Easter Sunday!

LBSC remembered.

By Chris Orchard

The Model Engineer magazine devoted much space in its 27 October 2017 issue to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of LBSC. He was a remarkable man, being a prolific designer, describer and constructor of miniature live steam locomotives. He had the ability to make building such things seem easy and by his writing, persuaded many people to have a go, myself included, by following his “Words and Music”.

Whilst reading the ME report of The LBSC Memorial Golden Jubilee Rally held by the North West Leicestershire MES, I was reminded of the time I found myself in the works vehicle maintenance fitter’s workshop, standing in front of a large bench pillar drill. In the machine vice, a gunmetal axle box for a 3½ inch gauge Tich locomotive, in the drill chuck a 23/64-in drill. With a large quantity of trepidation the machine was switched on and the drill advanced downwards towards its victim. I must have been very lucky for it was not until the drill was nearly through that it grabbed. The axle box left my hand and the heavy machine vice rose rapidly, hitting the still rotating chuck and falling back down onto the machine table with a resounding bang. With a much increased heartbeat, I reached out and switched off the machine.

But the stressful times were not yet over, for attracted by the noise, who should walk in through the workshop door but the boss he said. What are you doing here? As I was an office wallah and not supposed to be in the workshop, let alone operating machinery, I felt the truth was by far the best option, so I told him. Well, be careful he said as he turned and left.

Had I followed the master's instructions? Well sort of ——— He had said to drill a No. 30 pilot hole but to drill two axle boxes at the same time, without a pilot hole in the second lower one. That locomotive was never finished!

So a lesson was learned, but whether it was to be careful when allowing sharp cutting tools anywhere near to copper and tin based materials, or to avoid being caught by the boss, I am still not sure!

I leave you to judge if lessons were learnt more pictures of Chris's latest loco on the back cover (Ed.)

A Geometric chuck

By Mark Davis

Some of you may have seen the Geometric Chuck which I made many moons ago, it generally only gets out of its box for club exhibitions where the oft heard comment is "Oh look a Spirograph" from the less mechanically minded visitor.

Whenever it was out I told myself I should get my finger out and set it up to do more than just drawings. Original thoughts about setting it up on an engraving machine didn't come to anything as it involved serious mods. to the engraver.

The other candidate was my Dore Westbury milling machine, I could clamp the hand turning device on the table no problem, but I didn't fancy running the spindle for any length of time at the speed engraving cutters require. However looking at the engraver (for something else) I realised that I could use the cutter head if I could figure a way of mounting it to my milling machine.

The scrap bin produced suitable bits of ally so I was able to machine a holder for the cutter head which clamps to the quill.

The resulting Heath Robinson arrangement can be seen in the image.

It worked surprisingly well but I soon remembered why the chuck usually lives in a box under the workshop bench. It is a terrible time waster, the need to see what happens to the pattern with any alteration to the slides and /or gear ratios can easily eat up a week of workshop time.

It is now back in the box.!



The chuck mounted on the Mill



And an example of the work

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 One

A is for America, two nations divided by a common language and
some slightly different
ideas about railroading.

How quickly can a nation
forget that its prosperity in
2018 depends on two
things; the development of
the railroads and barbed
wire. As this is a magazine
for rail lovers I'll let that
latter part go! But it's a
railway enthusiast with
veins of ice that fails to be
stirred by a Baldwin's



A Baldwin K36

K36's in full flight. One and a half times the power of a Black Five
on 3ft gauge track. To ride the Cumbres and Toltec Railroad behind
one should be on everyone's bucket list. But failing that we are
blessed in this country with some magnificent 7¼" versions. And
what wonderful beasts they are with more power than many a track
can test. Alas one did escape to Australia when Dobwalls closed but
its twin is alive and well in Herefordshire. (Photo above; on the
occasion of a visit to Comrie in 2011 the K36 didn't disappoint its
fans!)

B is for boiler tests. Considering the close proximity of extremely important parts of the anatomy to the loco boiler in our gauges it's surprising that anyone sees a boiler test as anything but a comfort and reassurance.

C is for Catherine, my first love, strictly in the locomotive sense you realise! A Milner designed 0-4-0 Quarry third scale Hunslet that my wife allowed me to buy 'while the balance of her mind was disturbed'. She was feeling sorry for me as I lay in agony waiting to go into hospital for an op. There was an inviting advert in Steam Railway and the call was made. "Come and see it as soon as you can" Chris Hassall said. And so three days after the op my late

father-in-law drove me to Brookside in Cheshire where she was in steam. 'I thought you'd want a drive' Chris said. I smiled and said to myself 'the surgeon said I couldn't drive a car for a month, he didn't say anything about steam engines'.



"Catherine" in the evening sun,
photo by Neville Knight

The rest is history. Several years after I bought her I found a set of photos I'd taken on a visit to Brookside some five years earlier. There were several of "Catherine". It must have been love at first sight.

D is for disesals as the Rev Awdry would say. I know they float some people's boats but its steam that seduces me. But even I have to admit any railway, be it 12 inches to the foot or 7¼" needs one for instant response. These locos are the mainstay of many miniature railways, available at the flick of a switch and as this picture proves they can be fun as Jim and Helen Shackell showed with "Sludge" at the 15" gauge railway they built at Evesham Vale.



"Sludge" the "Disesal".

E is for engineers. Some people are born as engineers, we know who they are and have cause to be grateful. And then there are those like me who are too impatient and lack the skills; "did you build this yourself?" I'm often asked and reply "no but I could have done, it's just that I would be 187 years old when it was finished."

F is for friendship, or fraternity. Wherever you are in the world the fact that you love railways is enough to open doors, to be on the receiving end of unimaginable generosity from people who, until a few moments ago, were total strangers. And it's a more powerful thing than anything the NHS can provide for people who are feeling a little hacked off with life and their lot.

G is for Gas fired. In the north of Nova Scotia, Canada, around Cape Bretton are millions of tons of coal. It's readily available to buy, but only if you are prepared to take a 2,000 ton train load of it. So the Model Engineers at Windsor, N.S. are reliant on what they called 'onion-bag' coal. Fuel handpicked from the sides of railway tracks or from waste heaps and packed in orange-coloured onion sacks.

The only way you can get hold of loco coal. So it's not surprising that there's a huge demand for propane or gas fired steam trains on club tracks. Lindsay McDonnell, doyen of the Burnaby Railway in Vancouver, Canada says "The loco in the picture is Great Northern



Rly 2-8-2 built by Al Von Rueden of Seattle. Al designed and built the first prototype burner which I have copied with slight modifications. Just about all the steam locos in our club are propane fired. Good coal is expensive to get, oil is dirty and noisy and much more finickerty to drive. Propane is so clean and is the least expensive for us. Train Mountain is going to ban coal and oil burning locos due to forest fires. We have been running propane for 30 years in our club locos without incident. No tubes to clean, instant shutdown, no sparks on passengers clothes, quiet, no smell and it's easy to regulate" How long before it happens in the UK?

H is for hard work. Sadly, in some respects but luckily for my sanity. I don't get involved in Thomas Weekends as much as I used to. It's by far the hardest work I've done in my life without the reward of a pay cheque at the end of it. Train after train of families. Round the track into the station, unload, load again. Keep moving. Is there enough steam on the clock to get away? Will pressure have built up by the time you need to do hard work? But there are rewards, the joy on the face of the young riders contrasting with the greed of the licence holders. Oh and those idiotic rules. I'm quite happy to be CRB checked but I never realised how depraving it could be for a child if their engine driver was seen eating a sandwich or, heaven forbid, drinking a cup of tea in public.

But it's the character that gets children hooked on trains and who knows, that toddler riding behind you on your train may one day, as an adult, be up the business end driving.

I is for 'I think you'll find' The encyclopaedic put down delivered in that particular and peculiar voice we all know and don't love, often delivered by the man with four biros in his top pocket. 'I think you'll find the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway didn't build narrow gauge engines in crimson lake'. It's sheer determination and depth of character than prevents you from responding. 'No but it's my engine and I'll have it in any blankety-blank colour I like'.

In 2000 a friend of mine, David Humphreys, launched the new build Heywood loco "Effie" at Ravenglass over the Easter weekend. On the following Wednesday we were busy loading it up to go back to the North East when the very chap I've just described above came up to me and demanded to know why the loco was going. I said it was going back to Middlesbrough. He then told me we'd no business taking it away. I replied it was only meant to be there until Easter Monday. It was now Wednesday. He then told me we should stop loading it.



When I asked him how much he'd contributed to the building of it he harrumphed and went away! I don't think he was at Eaton Hall in August 2007 when Neville Knight captured her on camera in the picture above

J is for juniors. At last it seems that many more railways are realising that something inevitable is going to happen to their railway or club. It's called *anno domini* and unless we 'replenish' our hobby will, quite literally die out. I once asked a railway society official if they had many younger members, 'Oh yes' he said, 'some are in their fifties.' It's so rewarding to see people I first knew at my model engineering club as kids bringing their own children up to the track, even going as far as buying a three year old size boiler suit. That's the way to do it!

K is for knowledge, line knowledge. You think you know a railway, after all you've visited several times and travelled round and round. But it's only when your hand is on that regulator that you really learn a line. The eye can be deceptive. A railway may appear flat but you can't take it for granted at any stage. And have you noticed how any lapse in steaming concentration is seen by the maximum number of the cognoscenti?

No one witnessed the way you coped with the greasy rail and the unexpected wheel slip... but they saw you stall on the bends! I can honestly say that one of the few occasions I've run out of steam was with a train load of friends behind. Hey ho!

L is for lubrication. For those of us who wear spectacles there is always that bitter sweet moment part way through a driving day when you realise that you can't see anymore. There's the need to resist the urge just to wipe them, nothing less than soap and warm water will restore vision. But the real positive is that it shows the cylinder lubricators are working. Oiling round in our scales is one thing but spare a thought for the mainline loco crew who had to climb out from their cabs, often in pitch darkness and make their way along the running board to oil their express engine at speed. In fact it was the direct cause of a crash on the Settle-Carlisle line when a driver missed a red signal because he was clinging on to the boiler rail with a lamp in one hand and oil can in the other. What a way to earn a living.

To be concluded in the next edition of the Oily Rag.

A Bumpy Ride.

By "Blastpipe"

Whilst working as a fitter on a preserved steam railway we encountered an alarming number of broken springs on our resident Hunslet J94 Austerity. Blame was apportioned to rather severe dipped rail joints and as the line had seven miles worth of them, at 20 yard intervals something had to be done since it got to the point we were changing one a day. By the end of the week we became quite slick at it. ——So, which were the worst joints?

The solution came by way of a brainwave from one of my colleagues. Clearly the dodgy joints were creating excess travel of the axlebox in the horns.

How was this excess travel measured?



The J94 in question, now resident in Belgium.

A simple electrical circuit was set up with battery and bulbs on the footplate and three contacts- 1 on the axlebox and 2 (adjustable) on the horns to measure maximum travel, up and down the axlebox. With everything installed we set off down the branch. Very soon we had the bulbs flashing like a strobe light in a disco!

After stopping and making adjustments we soon had things “tuned in”. It soon became apparent where the worst offenders were to be found. Location of joints were noted and PW gang dispatched to deal with them. Net result, a lot fewer broken springs and at £300 a spring a much happier general manager, not to mention us fitters!

A shocking accident at Beddgelert Sidings, September 1904.

By Geoff Jenkins

As a result of the favourable response received to my article about the transhipment shed at the Beddgelert Siding, the Editors have requested something further and so I have set down some more notes about the flour mill traffic and in particular, an accident that occurred on Thursday 15 September 1904.

At that time, grain for the Portmadoc Flour Mills Company either arrived at Portmadoc Harbour by ship or was delivered to the Beddgelert Siding by the Cambrian Railways. A great deal of the flour that was produced also left Portmadoc the same way. The Flour Mill Company had an agreement with the Croesor Railway to allow it, on payment of an annual fee, to use the relevant part of the line. It had its own narrow gauge wagons to move the materials and provided the horses and men to operate the trains. There was a loading platform, as well as the transhipment shed, at the Beddgelert Siding and the Flour Mill staff dealt with the loading and unloading of the standard gauge wagons.

John Jones was a labourer employed by the Portmadoc Flour Mills Company. He had been born in Tremadoc. In September 1904 he was thirty two years old and lived with his wife and two young children at 7 Sawmill Terrace, Portmadoc. On the morning of the accident, Flour Mills staff loaded three standard gauge wagons with bags of flour. Jones had been working in the mill during the morning but in the afternoon he went to the Beddgelert Siding to assist with the sheeting over of the loads on the wagons with tarpaulins. He was working with Robert Evans of 58 New Street,

Portmadoc, who was a flour checker employed by the Cambrian Railways. They were about seventy feet from the transshipment shed. Jones was standing in the space between the two railway lines beside the wagon being sheeted up. Evans was on the loading platform side of the wagon. They could not see each other as the wagon was loaded high with flour bags. On the other line a locomotive was shunting wagons. It had passed up and down past the stationary wagons a number of times.

However, on the final occasion that it passed the train struck Jones and he fell backwards onto the line and three wagons ran over both of his legs at the thigh, practically severing both limbs. Evans heard cries from Jones and going round the wagon saw him lying on the line that the train had just passed over. In order to fetch a doctor he boarded the locomotive which then ran to the Cambrian Railways Station.

Walter Williams was the first doctor to arrive. He said that he was called at about three o'clock. Jones was lying where the train had run over him. He was just conscious and moaning, "Oh, my legs". Doctor Jones Morris arrived shortly afterwards and agreed with Dr. Williams that it would not be wise to move the casualty. All that could be done at that point was to try to keep his circulation going and alleviate the pain. Dr. Harry Griffith came some time later. After discussing the situation the three doctors agreed to move Jones to his home. This was carried out by ambulance staff and he appeared to cope with the journey very well. However, at six o'clock that evening Jones died from heart failure and shock as a result of his injuries.

The inquest into the death of John Jones was held on the evening of Friday 16 September 1904, the day after the accident. Mr. O Robyns Owen, the South Carnarvon coroner, was in charge of the proceedings.

Mr. Caer Jones represented the family of the deceased and Mr. J Humphreys was present on behalf of the Flour Mill Company. Mr. W Minshall, the Cambrian Railways Solicitor, was also in attendance.

Evidence was given by Griffith Humphreys of 46 East Avenue, Portmadoc, a pointsman with the Cambrian Railways Company. He said that he had been riding on a wagon in the train. When this wagon passed he did not think that Jones was in a dangerous position as there was plenty of room between the two lines. It was not customary to warn those employed on stationary wagons of the approach of a train. It transpired that the space between the wagons forming the train and the one being sheeted up was three feet four inches.

George Pheby, a shunter, who had been six or seven wagons away when the accident occurred, held the same opinion as the previous witness in that he did not consider that Jones was standing in a dangerous position.

The Coroner summed up, saying that it was clear that the death was accidental and that there was no blame attached to anyone. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

The funeral of John Jones took place on the following Monday afternoon. However, it was interrupted by an incident that could have had disastrous consequences. When the cortege was on the way to the cemetery it encountered a runaway horse and cart coming from the other direction at great speed. There was a large crowd of mourners behind the horse-drawn hearse and it appeared that a collision with them was inevitable. Hugh Griffith, the driver of the hearse and a Flour Mill Company employee, turned his horse and blocked the road. The two horses collided and after a struggle, it was possible to subdue the runaway animal and lead it into an

adjacent field. The horse pulling the hearse was injured. It belonged to the Flour Mills Company. Although the horse managed to reach the cemetery and return home to the Flour Mills it died two days later.

The funeral of John Jones was not the end of the matter. Ann Jones, his widow, sued the Portmadoc Flour Mills Company for damages in respect of the accident. The case was heard at the County Court on Wednesday 2 November 1904 by His Honour Judge William Evans and Mr. T Jones, Registrar. Mr. S Moss M.P. represented Ann Jones. His case was that the Flour Mill was a factory and that, as they had the use of the Croesor Railway, it too would be covered by the relevant Act. The Act referred to was probably the Factory and Workshop Act 1895.

Mr. Cuthbert Smith, appearing for the Flour Mills Company, stated that the accident took place on Cambrian Railways property. Various witnesses were called and there was some questioning about who should have been responsible for sheeting up the wagons. However, it seemed that what was done owed more to local custom and practice than to any agreement between the Companies as to responsibilities. The sheeting up was carried out by the Flour Mills employees, even though the tarpaulins belonged to the Railway Company. Cambrian Railways staff would sometimes assist with the task.

The Judge ruled that he was satisfied from the evidence that the accident did not happen in, on or about a place that would make the Flour Mills Company liable. His view was that the Railway Company was under an obligation to cover the goods in the wagons. However, they allowed men employed by the Flour Mills Company to assist with covering the wagons with tarpaulins. The case was dismissed.

The law and attitudes towards safety have changed a great deal since 1904. However, shunting, even with narrow gauge wagons, is still an activity where competence and care are required. Even at low speeds there is only going to be one winner in a collision between a train and a person. Next time that you are travelling along the line in the vicinity of the present bypass bridge spare a thought for John Jones and his tragic fate.



The site of the transshipment shed with Welsh Highland Railway wagons in the distance.

Two Sheds and a Molg

by Gopher

You the reader may recall, but there again why should you, that an article appeared some years ago in a previous edition of the OR! Mag. about the intended restoration of a railway. Has this turned out to be a work of fiction? What follows is in part an update to that report, so if you can contain your excitement for just one moment, please permit me first to share with you a bit of the railway's history.

So let's turn back the clocks, back passed the turn of the new millennium and return to the twentieth century to a time when some of us had a lot more hair of a somewhat darker colour.

My tale begins when a narrow strip of land between our neighbour's property and our own was chosen as the site for a first foray into miniature railway building. Narrow? well approximately twelve feet wide by fifty feet long. Not a huge amount of space in which to build a 10¼" Gauge railway, but you have to start somewhere. This was restricted even further because this twelve foot width had to be split into two levels, the lower accommodating a pathway and retaining wall to hold back the soil from the upper part where the track was to be laid. This top strip of land approximately 4 feet wide, gave a reasonable clearance either side of the track for trains to run without any hindrance from line side objects. However, at one end of the line a loco shed was required and it is the size and location of this that has been a source of irritation and inconvenience ever since. It has to be said that it has been all my own fault, mainly in part down to, an initial lack of any long term planning, expediency and being a bit of a cheapskate.



Reminds me a bit of Roland Emmett
(sorry Mike)

To say the least the shed is a snug fit into the available space,

having an external width of only 4 feet 3 inches. The loco has a width of 28 inches across the buffer beam, well you do the arithmetic, there's not a great amount of space, when the loco is in the shed, to move about; even for a small skinny individual like myself. Any remedial work on the loco has always required it to be removed from the shed by pushing it to a suitable location along the line where any work could be undertaken. Even with the use of a gazebo this activity has always been subject to the vagaries of the British weather.

However, the shed as far as sheds go, has been good. Having been placed on top of a solid concrete base with a proper damp proof membrane underneath, it has kept my loco dry for the best part of twenty five years or more. Only over the last couple of years has it started to show the signs of age with the lowest shiplap panels beginning to deteriorate and signs towards the back that a wee tim'rous beastie has managed to get in and take up residence.

Since these early years the railway has of course been extended, out into a field that borders our house and original garden. The railway is now in its third reincarnation, although not in any sense of the word has it ever been finished in either of its previous lives. Often a question is asked as to the length of the line which on the face of it is not an unreasonable enquiry. However, the answer to this can be a struggle as there has never been many periods of time when all of the rail sections have been joined up together. Even at the time of writing it is split into two main parts, a new section which will be described later on and an old station section with rotting sleeper timbers and distorted rail; all of which will need replacing – reincarnation four perhaps?

So what is the current thrust and direction for the development of the railway? Not before time a decision was taken a couple of years ago to house the loco in a new shed and workshop.

One large enough to comfortably take the loco, provide room to work on it and have space for workshop equipment, all under a single roof. This time around compared to the time when the railway was first started there were many more possibilities for its location. A perfect place was found next to the boundary of our land alongside an outbuilding belonging to our neighbour. The floor area chosen was the maximum allowed within the 'Permitted Development' rules which at that time was 15 sq. metres. Research into the cost and availability of ready made sheds and garages of suitable size resulted in a list of disappointingly expensive choices. None of them exactly met my desired specification and all therefore, would have required further modification. The only option left was the DIY route – well how difficult could it be? At least this way money could be saved and the result would meet all the design requirements.

One good thing was that the materials required to construct the concrete base for the new shed were already to hand. A few concrete blocks, some bricks and a damp proof membrane left over from a previous project plus some hardcore from my treasured collection of broken bricks, blocks and assorted concrete chunks - sad isn't it that in life's autumn years that collecting rubble can be described as one's hobby.



Starting the base

All that was required now was a few bags of cement to stick it all together. Actually, quite a bit more than a few, the precise number has faded from memory but the concrete floor had to be completed

in three stages in order that this writer could survive the experience.

The shed was constructed using 4" x 2" timber sections for the frame throughout and covered with 4" shiplap cladding; exterior ply sheets were used for the roof which was then covered with a double layer of felt. Each frame joint was held together using two 100mm screws, the cladding attached using nail gun and 50mm brads and the whole thing anchored to the concrete base with a dozen or so 12mm x 150mm self tapping concrete screws. Two non opening window frames were made and fitted with laminated glass for extra security.



The framework takes shape

All timbers were treated with preservative during the construction period and the outside has now been completely painted. It is now entering its second winter and is standing up well to what ever the elements throw at it. However, it has not been completely finished.

From the final photo you will see that a low embankment to support a new section of track has yet to be built up to the shed side where a doorway allowing the loco access will be cut. This will be priority number one for the forthcoming season.



Ready for the sides and roof

Hopefully by this time next year my loco will be warm and snug in its new home. Also, an electrical supply has yet to be provided and is awaiting an armoured cable to be laid.

But what has any of this got to do with a mole? Well in truth very little. These last few months has seen increased evidence of mole activity. Small mounds of earth suddenly appearing overnight, steadily creeping nearer and nearer towards the house. Even appearing between some railway sleepers. Steps have been taken to dissuade these little critters from their unwelcome activity with the strategic installation of some electronic repelling devices. However, it occurs to me that with the right sort of training one of our mole friends might be persuaded to dig me a tunnel from the house out to the shed to take my armoured cable.

Is there a mole whisperer in the Club?

The final photo shows the next phase; to build a line back from this point to the shed side where the new door for the loco to enter will



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be cut. The spade in the foreground should not be construed as a sign of recent activity, it's just there to frame the photo!

Of Ships and Things

By

Fireman M.N Retired

Having committed myself to being home for Christmas it dawned on me, that was a month away, what was I going to do for all that time, plus having been paid off the “Rhodesia Castle” with the grand sum of sixty five pounds fifteen shillings and eleven pence that wasn’t going to last very long.

So it was a trip to the local labour exchange to see what was on offer, plenty of seasonal work until Christmas, the Post Office, delivery driving or warehouse work. I said I would come back at the end of the week. On my way out I had a look at the cards pinned on the wall.

Rockware glass wanted an ash man/ furnace man, sounded like something I could do, so I spoke to the clerk who looked at me a bit strange and said O.K. it’s an immediate start, take your P45 with you. So I was off on another adventure.

The works was about two miles away, not like roll out of your bunk, stroll across the deck and into the engine room, but then I had had it easy.

The works was spread over about twenty acres with four main production buildings each with a furnace at one end where sand, silica and broken glass was fed into a great cauldron of molten glass, this was heated by a range of gas burners. The molten glass was led away through a series of channels to serve the moulding machines, ten to each furnace spewing out bottles and jars at thousands per hour.

The range was phenomenal from scent and ink bottles, a range of medicine bottles in all shapes and sizes, milk and lemonade bottles also jars, small ones for fish paste etc up to small and large jam jars, then there was beer bottles these were amber, not brown, half pint, pint and quart. This was all before the age of plastic containers and on the side of the lorries (good things come in glass). The gas supply for the burners was a huge pipe three feet in diameter.

That's enough about bottles and jars. To keep this 36 inch pipe supplied there were two gas producers (retorts), which were fed with coal from an overhead conveyor and hopper system. A charge of fresh coal was fed into the top of the retort, which then worked its way down giving off gas as the temperature rose. Below the layer of incandescent coal the coke formed was sprayed with water jets which formed a secondary supply of gas (water gas) which as it burned off kept the whole system working. The ash and clinker gradually worked its way down to end up in a water filled pit at ground level. This muck had to be shovelled out into wheelbarrows and rolled away to a dump, this was the ash man part of the job. The pit, had to be filled with water afterwards to maintain a seal.

The furnace man part of the job entailed regulating the coal admitted to the retorts and periodically opening parts and knocking down lumps of caked coke and clinker which formed. This was done with an Iron poker, which gradually got too hot to hold and had to be changed for a cold one.

As this was a continuous process it couldn't be shut down so our gang worked twelve hour shifts six to six, three days nights, two days off then four days then two days off again, to me it seemed such a performance,

I never did get the hang of it.

Events Programme

2018

Tuesday February 6th	2D Computer Aided Design (CAD) What's available? Talk by Dave Wood.
Tuesday February 20th	P2 project (New build Mikado 2-8-2 loco) - Talk by Huw Parker A1 Steam Trust.
Tuesday March 6th	Edgar T. Westbury, pioneering model engineering and his LMS 1831 Project. Talk by Bob Bramson.
Sunday April 1st	Vivary Public Running
Tuesday April 3rd	AGM
Sunday April 15th	Vivary Public Running
Tuesday April 17th	Rail Accident. A further talk by Richard Brown of the Rail Accident Investigation Branch.
Sunday May 6th	Vivary Public Running
Tuesday May 15th	Trophy Night
Sunday May 20th	Vivary Public Running

Sunday May 27th	Vivary Public Running
Sunday June 3rd	Vivary Public Running
Sunday June 17th	Vivary Public Running
Sunday July 1st	Vivary Public Running
Sunday July 15th	Vivary Public Running
Sunday August 12th	Vivary Public Running
Sunday August 26th	Vivary Public Running
Sunday September 2nd	Vivary Public Running
Sunday September 16th	Vivary Public Running
Sunday September 30th	Clublec 2018. More details to be published nearer to the event date.
Sunday October 7th	Vivary Public Running
Sunday October 21st	Vivary Public Running

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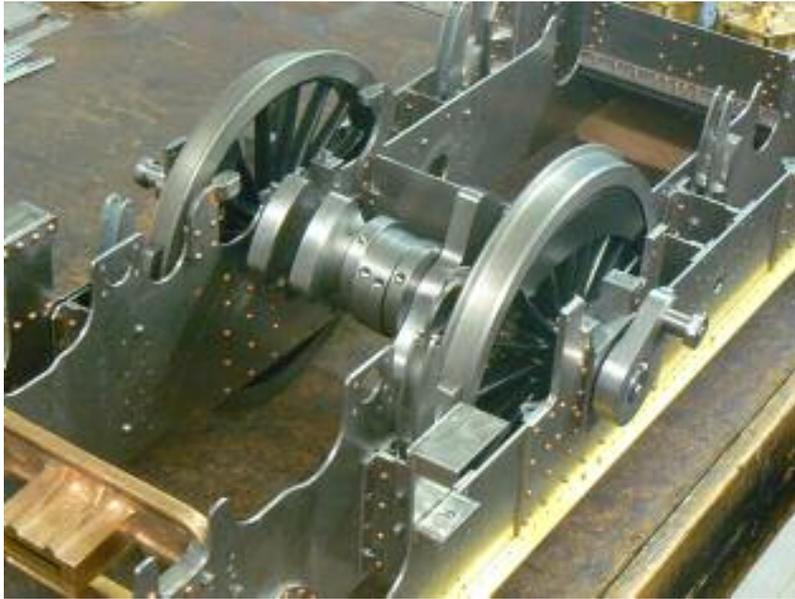
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Two views of the crank axle on Chris Orchard's magnificent Bulldog

