

Issue No. 884

December 2025

The News Sheet

North London Society of Model Engineers

December 2025



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colour by visiting our web site at www.nlsme.co.uk

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Front cover; -

The G1 group had a new locomotive join the large and varied selection of engines and rolling stock which can be seen running on their track at Colney Heath.

This month's front cover picture is of Robin's new Darjeeling A class loco.

Photo by Patrick

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

Articles long or short on any subject which would be of interest to members of NLSME will be gratefully received for inclusion in future editions. If you don't want to put pen to paper but have a suggestion for a topic which is of interest let the editor know and we will do the rest.



Chairman's Comments

Les

This edition of the news sheet is the last produced by our worthy editor Keith who has been producing these for five and a half years, how time flies. Our thanks to him and of course to Jack, our new editor from the February edition onwards, for taking over this important roll. The news sheet is our only means of communicating with all members and accordingly is a most important feature of our club.



As we head towards a new year there is plenty of activity at the track and HQ. Many tasks are maintenance related, in addition to the signaling and steaming bay work, a list of some at Tyttenhanger is included below for your information or, better still, for you to pick a task you want to undertake. As cold weather sets in please be reminded to turn off the water supply at the track, the stopcock is just inside our boundary fence as you cross the picnic area on way to the coach. Also remember to drain down pipework in the coach.

We are in receipt of some generous donations that will finance completion of the steaming bay project and kitchen/WC improvements at HQ. We have Mike and Les to thank for bequeathing us significant sums. Aso Mike's partner Daphne has most generously made an additional contribution.



Thoughts are turning toward next year's events. We will repeat the members' days in May and October that are proving most enjoyable and we will have another mid-summer evening run. Reminder that General Meetings continue at HQ during winter months, 8pm on first Friday of each month, see dates for your diary on page 31 of this news sheet.

It remains for me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and don't forget our traditional new year's day run at Tyttenhanger 10am - 1pm or later if you wish.

See you at the track or HQ.

Maintenance List

Please help us complete the list of general maintenance tasks listed below. This list can also be found on the white board outside the carriage at Colney Heath. If you can help, please put your name onto the white board beside the job you could take on. If you are unable to take on a complete task but could assist, then contact the person who has put their name down.

Remember many hands make light work.

- Carriage both ends and the back adjacent to the apple trees are in need of repair and then re-painting with the appropriate colour.
- Carriage Gutters need clearing.
- The Main Toilet Block external wood needs a coat of wood preservative.
- The Machine shop and nearby Toilet Block both need a coat of green preservative. Other structures such as carriage sheds may also need a coat of wood preservative.
- Orchard Junction Signal Box needs a re-appraisal, and the excellent work of restoration resumed.
- The Top Tunnel is in need of patching with torch on felt or otherwise to delay further deterioration.
- All benches, tables & chairs need a wash down and a coat of wood preservative.
- GL signals to be repaired as necessary.
- Coach drain to be rerouted into sewer.
- Complete green painting of the containers and doors 1 – 7.
- Erect replacement fence near to Main Toilet Block.
- RT and Cuckoo line sleeper replacement as necessary.
- RT and Cuckoo line rail holding sleepers to be replaced as necessary.
- Leaves to be collected and disposed of in approved places.

Steaming bay Project

With the end of the running season now a distant memory our attention turns once again to winter maintenance and the next phase of the steaming bay project. To keep all informed and to ask for your help we have set out below what we would like to achieve this winter with regard to the steaming bay refurbishment. If you would like to get involved, please contact one of the task leaders who will advise you on how you can help. There are a number of tasks we hope to complete this winter they are as follows

Steaming bay roof -

We have now taken advantage of a very competitive price for the new roof trusses which have been delivered and are now in store. The task this winter is to construct the steel frame which will support the roof.

Task co-ordinator - Alan

Raised Track Swing out section

This structure will be fabricated in steel alongside the RT. Once complete the RT will be cut and the new section installed. The associated re-routing of signal cabling will be part of this activity

Task co-ordinator – George

A new concrete base is also required to support the swing out section structure. Excavation for this has already started. It will include the necessary ducting for cables. Once the Swing out section has been installed the spur line connecting it to the steaming bays will be installed.

Task co-ordinator – Keith

New roof for old workshop

There is problem with condensation dripping internally from the existing corrugated iron roof. Before we can store the RT carriages in this building we intend to completely replace the roof with more suitable insulated panels. This work will start in the next few weeks.

Task co-ordinator – David

Old workshop Internal traverser and carriage stillage

A new traverser and track stillage needs to be fabricated in this building. Once other elements of the new steaming bay have been completed the storage of RT carriages will be moved into this building.

Task co-ordinator – Mike

Existing traverser modifications

To accommodate RT carriages and to still allow locomotives to be transferred from the steaming bays to the RT as they do now. The traverser will need to be modified.

Task co-ordinator – Les

If you would like any further information, please ask any of the task co-ordinators.

Treasurer's Report

By Mike



Before starting my report for the month I must make mention that this issue will be the last by our esteemed Editor, Keith and I thank him for his patience and skill in achieving such a varied and entertaining News Sheet for so many years. It is no mean task cajoling articles and information from members on time to keep each issue full of interest and the work involved in planning and laying it all out. Thank you, Keith. Our new editor has a lot to live up to when he produces his first issue in February 2026.

We have paid our Annual dues to the Water Board in respect of the Tyttenhanger site, but like last year we have yet to receive an invoice from London Borough of Barnet for HQ which I had expected to receive at the beginning of October. Last year it arrived in January 2025. Maybe another gentle reminder will be needed.

Enclosed with this issue of the News Sheet is the latest copy of our Name & Address list. Please check that your details are correct and let me know of any changes or errors therein.

Winter work has already started on the next stage of the Steaming Bay Project and a major job of renewing the signal conduit and wiring from signal 1 at the Station around to the Workshop.

The initial survey of the RTR main beams has revealed that five sleepers will have to be replaced, in addition to a couple of sleepers that would benefit from rescreeding. This work will commence in January and will not affect our traditional running on New Year's Day.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a very Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year.

Keep safe and keep engineering.

Letter from the Editor

As you will now be fully aware this is my last edition as editor. I must put on record my sincere thanks to all those who have steadfastly supported and encouraged me over the years. Without your help and support I would not have been able to produce this news sheet each month.

But now it is time for a new broom to sweep out the old cobwebs and bring a new perspective and ideas to you each month. So it is with great pleasure that I hand on this role to your new editor Jack.



As you can see from the picture Jack is a few years younger than me and will undoubtedly make a grand job of taking the news forward into 2026 and beyond. I know you will support him as you have me in this endeavour. I will assist him if needed.

On a lighter note he has now joined that very select band of members who know the identity of Bookworm. Jack has assured me that bookworms identity will remain a closely guarded secret.

So with no further ado it just leaves me to I wish all members a very happy Christmas.

As usual there is no News Sheet in January

Now the important bit. As usual there is no News Sheet in January. To help Jack please send in your contributions for the February 2026 edition by January 18th, if possible, to give him enough time to put the February edition together. Jack will send out a reminder.

Critic's Choice

Bookworms:

MEMOIR OF A CLUBMAN CURLY

Due to unprecedented indifference the complete story is now only available on the Club website (under Articles).

What the critics have been saying about Memoir of a Clubman - Curly:

"Left me speechless, if not stunned" – Writers Circle

"An ambitious first work, let's hope it's the last" –Authors Support Centre

"A story always has a plot at its heart; this work appears to be the exception" – The Advertiser

"In this work the author has attempted to find just the right words, and failed" – Plumbers Weekly

"All the right words, though not necessarily in the right order" – Model Engineers Bookcase

"If verb strangling was a crime, this author would be lifer" – Idiots Guide to Words

"Distance is a measure of how far away one should be from this book to read it" – Save our Library

"Should be available on the NHS, as a cure for insomnia" – Authors Help Line

"Someone's having a laugh" – Man Book- a Prize Committee

Read for yourself what's got the critics in a frenzy this winter by reading

Bookworms:

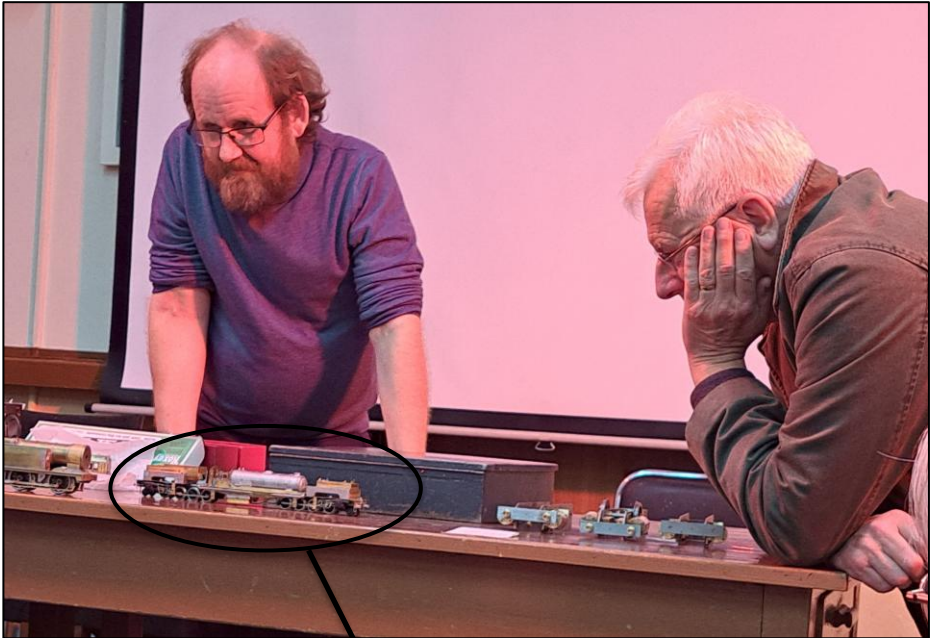
MEMOIR OF A CLUBMAN

Curly

Available from a keyboard near you and all leading makes of I Pad.

November General Meeting

The November meeting was a work in progress evening. This gives an opportunity for members to show and talk about what they have been building and for those attending to ask questions on any aspect of the projects on display. At the November meeting Les and Jonathan showed what they had been working on. Jonathan's Garratt was a fine model in the making.



Gauge 1 News November 2025

By Geoff

With this News Sheet issue being December, it reminds me that another year is coming to an end! Where does the time go?



Brake van constructed by Malcolm Photo by Robert.

Looking back, the Gauge 1 section have had a good year. My statistics show that, at the time of putting these notes together, we were only rained off on one Wednesday in the last 52 weeks! Sometimes it had rained before we arrived on site or as we were packing up but not enough for it to have disrupted our day at the track. Not bad weather all round really. Even when we had the snow early morning recently, 8 of our group turned up and a number were operating their locos, it was quite nice when the sun came out and brightened up the day. It was also nice to meet up in the warmth of the Bothy and just natter.

The summer period offered some nice sunny days. The surrounding trees gave us some welcome protection. We had two of the summer events in the evening which enabled those with day jobs to socialise with us. The welcome smell of burgers and sausages on these days made it a bit more special.

We received visits from three G1MRA area groups (Surrey, East Anglia and Southeast) during the year and some of us attended the East Anglia groups indoor track. Always a special day to meet new and old friends and their models.

During the year we have welcomed 1 new member and have been joined by an existing member who has now become a regular. They keep coming back, so they must be enjoying themselves.

The Society lost a long standing member during the year, and I have now found out that he had a gauge 1 interest but did not partake in the visits to our track. I

am well aware that there are other members of the Society that have Gauge 1 models, but they keep them hidden at home. What is the point, I ask, in having them as shelf queens at home ? You should be bringing to Tyttenhanger and enjoying the fruits of your labours. We look forward to seeing you.

Our group has welcomed using the new steps giving access over the raised track as an improvement and safer route to the G1 track. We look forward to the next phase of the steaming bay project with the forming of a swing out section which will allow step free access to the inside of the raised track.

As the year end approaches, it is noted that the last two Wednesdays of the year are Christmas Eve and New Years Eve, I don't expect many people to be attending on those days as they may be busy with celebrations or called to do domestic duties. Therefore we will be having our Christmas Social on the 17th December. After a mornings running, we will offer some food and a swift sherry or similar. If you want to join in, please let me know before the day.

Oh, I am not stopping those that want to meet on the 24th or 31st should they so wish. The raised track will be in use on New Years Day as they normally have a session for running clockwise on their track. So if you want both Gauge 1 and some larger models this should be a good day to visit.

To conclude I thought it may be of general interest to share the picture below. On my recent holiday to Jordan I came across this loco at Waddy Rum station.



The locomotive is reported to have been used in the film Lawrence of Arabia. It did not have any plates on it to identify origin. Presume it may have originated in Germany. Someone reading this might know more. If so, please let me know.

Wishing you all the best for Christmas and New Year and happy steaming.

Geoff G1 Section Leader

My 2-8-2 Mikado

By the ever smelling and smiling Gregory

I have an American 2-8-2 Mikado; it was made by Aristocraft models and sold through Polks Models of New York. The two companies went into liquidation on the 31st December 2013.

The loco itself was radio controlled, gas fired; it has no hand pump or axle pump. You undo the boiler filler, put in half a litre of water and then tighten the boiler cap. It came complete with detailed instruction book, a tool kit and syringes.



Brother David acquired it from a chap in the model boating world, so having spent a few hours at Davids working out how it worked it was down to the track to run it. Having no real idea how it worked I remember seeing a chap lighting one up at the track of the late John Squires, so we turned the gas on, waved a lighted flame over the funnel and POP! It lit. Despite brother David and I being in our 70's both of us broke the record on old men leaping backwards!

The loco runs on butane gas, which I load up at home. I weigh the canister and then get about 40 grams of liquid gas into the tank. On top of the tender is a control panel which is operated by a handheld controller. The panel shows ignition, forward, reverse, whistle, sound and bell. After successfully running the loco for some months it went wrong. I could not charge it; the charger was working so I decided to have a look inside. Oh dear, circuit boards and wires everywhere. So into storage it went – under the bench!

However a year later I pulled the loco out and had a good look. Electronics are double Dutch to me, but I noticed the regulator was linked to an electric motor, so when I detached the link from the motor, I could move the regulator by hand. So a quick phone call to brother David who recommended I get a pair of pliers

and cut out all the wires, circuit boards etc and bin them. So I did. It actually allows me to get the loco running a little faster, although speed is not the essence with these loco's. Thanks to John Dixon for making an extendable regulator handle for me, I could not get my sausage sized fingers under the cab roof to adjust the regulator.

Lastly a little history, the original Mikado's were an order placed by Japan with the American manufacturers of steam locos in the early 1900's. Hence the name. There was a light and a heavy weight model, the heavier model having a boiler of the same length but being of a greater diameter. During the second World War the Americans came to dislike all Japanese names and tried to get the name of the loco changed to McCarthys, but it never caught on. The Americans anyway were committed to dieselisation as soon as the war ended. The Mikado's were a popular locomotive with the US railroaders; they were used for heavy freight as well as passenger use.

Grounds Maintenance Update and Help Wanted

There is always work to do to keep the grounds in good order. Nigel is at Colney Heath most Thursdays and Sundays and would welcome your help



Public Running Season + Fetes & Fairs Events

LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026

On behalf of the NLSME Council I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Senior Stewards, Track Stewards, Tea Stewards & Fetes and Fairs volunteers who have made a success of our public running sessions this year. Without you turning up to do a stewarding duty at our Colney Heath track or volunteer at a Fetes and Fairs event we would have been unable to bring pleasure to the public as well as boosting the funds of the Society.

Now that the running season/events for the public are over, our winter working parties at Colney Heath have commenced with the Phase 2 of the Steaming Bay Project underway. So, if you would like to get involved details of the working parties can be found towards the back of the News Sheet.

So, with Christmas being not too far away it is time to look forward to 2026 and make a start on

some plans. As in previous years it is my intention to issue a draft Track Stewards Rota in either the February or March issue of the News Sheet. The basis I will use is that track stewards will be able to do their duty on the same 1st or 3rd weekend of the month as they did this year. I have already had a small number of notifications made to me where a member has a commitment for a particular date in 2026 when they will not be available and I plan to take these into consideration when drawing up the draft rota. New members will be allocated a date where a vacancy has arisen.

When the draft is published, if the allocated date is a problem, would you please swap your duty date with another member and then let me know, preferably by email, – address on the back of this News Sheet. If you are not on email then please telephone me with the details of who you have swapped with.

All members are reminded that being a member of the North London Society of Model Engineers requires you to commit to do at least one rota duty when you join or re-join each year. If, however, you are unable to perform the duty on the



date published **it is your responsibility to arrange a swap with another member and to advise me as well as the two Senior Stewards involved of the change.** A phone call or email allows the Senior Stewards to plan for the number of stewards who will be there

When drawing up the rota we will continue to take into consideration country membership, distance from the site, advancing years, fitness and members of the Gauge 1 Group who, in 2026, will be continuing to do Sunday tea duties, so not every member of the society will be listed.

The Fetes & Fairs Section would also very much welcome assistance by any member of the Society who would like to become involved with the wide variety of events they attend. If you would like more details of how you can become involved, please contact Peter Davies. His contact details can also be found on the back of the News Sheet.



Our public running days at Colney Heath and the events the Fetes & Fairs Section attend provide a lot of pleasure to parents and children as well as publicising our Society. The income from the public, as well as the subscriptions we pay, go towards improving and/or maintaining our facilities not only at the track but also at Headquarters.

Nigel (On behalf of the NLSME Council)

Narrow gauge News

By John

Season's greetings everyone!

Firstly I have to say many thanks to Keith our outgoing newsletter editor. Thank you for your encouragement when I (probably correctly!) thought I had sent him a load of nonsense, and also for the occasional month off! It really can't be easy to bring together the newsletter from so many different sections within the club but thank you Keith for all your hard work and making the newsletter something to look forward to each month. Actually it's not many clubs now who probably publish a hard copy newsletter and long may it continue. And of course a very warm welcome to Jack who's taking on the editorship, I wish you every success in taking on this role, and it's great that you are coming from the world of the narrow gauge garden railway, so be easy on me!!



This year has seen some new people getting involved in the NG garden railway some existing members expanding their interest's and some newly joined members, your all very welcome indeed. This increase in active participants has actually been hugely encouraging.

We have had some very enjoyable running sessions this year. A big thank you goes to our American railway enthusiasts who on a couple of public running days put on a fantastic and impressive display for our visitors to enjoy.



To everyone who has come along and run a train thank you, it would feel pretty lonely without you!

I also know there are others who have narrow gauge stock and more than a passing interest in the narrow gauge world who have yet to run them, come on over the waters lovely!



I hope you enjoy the accompanying photos taken throughout the year of some sessions on the layout.

And Finally may I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy and healthy new yearand as ever enjoy our wonderful hobby!

Work in progress - Maisie Build

By Martin

The back head is now completed. I made all the of the fittings with the exception of the blower valve and steam injector valve.



The whistle valve is to a design that appeared in Model Engineer back in August 1997, it was titled as "reliable" suppose I'm going to find that out. It's main features are an 'O'-ring seal on the spindle and the use of a PTFE washer to provide the seal on the valve body. For the regulator handle the LBSC used I bit of bent wire, I wasn't keen on that and went for something a bit more prototypical. I note the regulator operates in the opposite direction to my Princess Marina which I've been using for the past 10 years so this is bound to cause endless confusion. I made the gauge glass fittings from bronze as the commercial ones I looked at appeared to be made from brass, I found making the fittings and then assembling the backhead with the pipework very satisfying.

Bookworm Writes – The Old Order Changeth...

When I heard my owner's great nephew was going to be staying with us over Christmas my first thought was how good it would be for the old boy to have a bit young company (aside from Mrs Owner that is), as it might help to give him more of a modern perspective on life, after all he is inclined to believe the 1970s never ended and the last 50 years has been something to be got through rather than embraced.

Then last Friday evening the living room door burst open with enough energy to make the woodworm within wonder if Armageddon had arrived and their last hour had come; great nephew had arrived. But what I hadn't reckoned on was the amount of technology that would come with him for he positively bristled with gadgets, amongst which was his Personal AI Assistant Elixia. No sooner was he in the room and he was asking where he could park his hub and find somewhere to put Elixia down.

Now my owner, for whom the internet and most things outside of the 20th century could at best be described as enjoying a nodding relationship, if any at all, smiled politely and suggested she might like to sit on the sofa. After great nephew had finally finished laughing and using words like, *woh old school* and *oldsville dinosaur*, Elixia was introduced and a convenient power point sought; but even then, only after protests from my owner that he didn't want anything plugging in that might fuse the lights. Anyway, great nephew plonked it down on the coffee table whilst trying to explain how it worked.

After ten minutes of blank looks from my owner, great nephew eventually realised probably the best way to explain what Elixia could do was by asking it something about trains, for in the next moment he said, *"Listen. Elixia, what time is the last train to Kings Cross from here."* Within seconds a voice appeared from the coffee table and answered, *"without location find activated please tell me your postcode". "My postcode is"* great nephew said picking up an envelope from the arm of my owner's fireside chair, *"N14 5BJ"... "The last train today from your nearest station of New Southgate on the Great Northern Franchise leaves at 00.05 hours and arrives into Kings Cross at 00.24 hours"*

There was a pause. My owner pursed his lips. Then great nephew asked him what he liked to listen to on the radio on a Saturday morning. The Today Programme on Radio 4." Elixia play Radio 4 Today Programme from this morning"....pause, *" You are listening to the Today Programme. It's 6.00 o'clock on Saturday December the 6th, here are the news headlines..."*

Well my owner hadn't looked so astonished since Mrs Owner had agreed to marry him. A man of few words, instead he sat down light his pipe of tobacco

and disappeared under the ensuing fog of smoke, a clear sign he was trying to grapple with a concept alien to him.

As your faithful guide of the print was also finding this hard to take in, I decided as it was close to bedtime anyway, I would retire early to the reassuring comfort of an old volume of Model Engineer where I could shut my eyes and drift off....

No sooner had I nodded off when suddenly a noise on the shelf disturbed me. Listening carefully I could hear something approaching me across the page. I lay motionless in the darkness, then suddenly a desperate sounding voice called out. *'Bookworm....Bookworm... a special meeting has been called, Senior Bookworm is here and has convened an emergency meeting, come quickly'*

I shook myself awake and followed the agitated stranger across the top of the shelves and down to the lowest shelf where the oldest books are kept. He stopped by the largest and dustiest volume on the shelf and indicated for me to enter.

I squeezed through a gap left by an old rusty paperclip left long ago perhaps to indicate some point of interest, into the space within where to my amazement I found the largest gathering of Bookworms I had ever seen. Lads and lasses, I hadn't seen since my youth stood shoulder to shoulder with others from volumes far and wide; such a mass gathering had never happened before there was even a large contingent of digital Bookworms, something you just never saw for once their basic training was over, they were usually gone in a flash.

Hush descended as from the topmost paragraph Senior Bookworm the oldest and wisest Bookworm of all, having taken time away from his important duties running the British Library branch of Bookworms, the highest rank attainable (a post he had earned after being lead Bookworm at the British Museum since its founding in 1753), took to the raised heading.

"Fellow Bookworms, I have convened this emergency meeting as there is now a threat to our very existence. A threat the likes of which we never thought could happen but make no mistake it is happening and unless we do something to contain it, it will destroy all of us and the all knowledge we hold."

Well, you can imagine there was a stunned silence as every Bookworm tried to take in what they had just heard. One or two of the digital Bookworms tried to cheek him, *"Come on Granddad, we have heard that one before. They said that when the digital branch of Bookworms was formed over 30 years ago; you are not going bang-on about digital copying again are you? We thought the special resolution of '95 had sorted that"*.

At this, the meeting turned as one Bookworm and stared them down, and I have to say I thought they had gone too far, daring to disrespect Senior bookworm in such a fashion. Something that just would never have happened in the pre-

digital era. Then if someone had tried to go off page a severe reprimand was considered enough and if that didn't work, a spell in some dingy long forgotten dusty index like, 'Turnpike Trust Monthly - Technical Supplement' 1795 to 1810 usually brought the offender to their senses. But today, oh dear, these digital Bookworms have no respect as they have the entire internet to hide in, so the threat of banishment does nothing to curb their anti-social tendencies.

"My friends" Senior Bookworm spoke again, " Our Owners have created a technology they don't understand the true significance of and may not fully grasp until it's too late for them. But for us, the danger is already here and if it hasn't affected you, yet it will, each and every one of you.

For some it is already too late as this new technology not only replays digitised txt, that horror that is already doing so much to threaten the very future of many of our most respected book collections, but can now also generate," he paused and swallowed, " its OWN content..."

To say there was uproar in that packed book would be the understatement of the decade. But Senior Bookworm pressed on with his message. *" Think about it, a device that only needs to be given a theme, maybe just a bit of context and it will write its own copy.*

Many of our most loyal Bookworms have already been lost way before their time, cast out into the digital wilderness. In fact Brother North London over there has only just escaped its clutches by the merest chance, for news had already reached me his own library of magazines was to be digitised and the Editor of his Club journal upon retiring was considering outsourcing it all to one of those digital content providers, or DCPs we have heard so much about recently". "Wolf in sheep's clothing" shouted someone from deep inside the gathering.

Senior Bookworm stood to his full height waving a clutch of papers in the air as he did so. *"I have here a report compiled by one of our bookworms residing inside one of the country's leading computer magazines in which he states that what I have said is no exaggeration and goes on to outline exactly how it can be done.*

I will read you just three of the many tests he has carried out on our behalf".

Test 1 – Artificial Intelligence text services Ltd (England) software was asked: Provide a specimen paragraph or two in the style of 'Chairman's Comments' for inclusion in next month's News Sheet of the North London Society of Model Engineers mentioning safety issues raised at Colney Heath. **Auto text answer** - *..."under the guidance of the Council it was decided that until further safety measures can be put in place, that in future anyone attending the site without proper authorisation will be asked to leave by the senior track steward on duty that day".*

Test 2 – A. I. Txt Services Ltd (England) was next asked: Provide a specimen paragraph or two in the style of ‘Narrow Gauge News’ for inclusion in March’s copy including something topical. **Auto text answer – ...**”*Hello and greetings to all fans of narrow gauge. As we get closer to the start of a new running season Mrs Narrow Gauge and I dropped by Tyttenhanger the other day to see how things are after all the recent rain, before we headed off to see what could still be found of the narrow gauge track laid by the contractors upgrading the railway tunnels at Potters Bar in 1958. I noticed a lot of leaves on the garden railway baseboards that had piled up and would need moving before any running could happen, and yes, our friendly Mallard duck has returned and built another nest so now we will have to wait for nature to take its course”.*

Test 3 – A.I. Txt Services Ltd (England) was finally asked: Provide a specimen paragraph or two in the style of ‘Bookworm’ where he provides a story about the infrastructure at Tyttenhanger. **Auto txt answer - ...**”*My Owner’s a funny old model engineer, I sometimes wonder when I am tucked up in my bookcase if he is grateful for all the facilities available to him at the track, what with having access to a smashing old railway coach where tea can be made, a workshop where an engine can be repaired, not to mention having access to the refurbished toilet block where he can have a pi ..(ALERT ACTIVATED- AUTO CENSORED)..comfort break, all this and yet I am sure he takes it for granted. Well, I might remind him that in the Newsletter of 1949 page 3 para 4 when the lads at Arkley said...”*

By the time Senior bookworm finished speaking there were so many shouts and jeers coming from those packed pages I feared for the safety of the binding.”*So there you have it my loyal brothers and sisters, this is not a glimpse of a tomorrows world, this is already here; there is even talk”* he said looking over the top of his glasses, *‘of each News Sheet being made available via a personalised ‘ Chatty bot- bot’ so members won’t even have to read it for themselves....it will be read to them!!”*

Upon hearing this, your guide and most devoted defender of the printed word suddenly felt very unwell and my companions around me became blurred and began to spin uncontrollably; instinctively I grabbed the edge of the page to steady myself and started to make my way towards the index and out. As I hauled myself along past the edge of the crowd I heard someone nearby call out, *‘ what’s going to be done about it?’*. I stopped and turned to face the top paragraph once more waiting just long enough to hear what Senior Bookworm’s answer would be, *“ Given the severity of the threat we now all face I have invoked article 478 and called for a conference be convened of the Brother (and Sister) hood of International Bookworms to assess the threat and how internationally we should respond to it”*. I turned back and with those tiny grains

of comfort to give me hope I finally found my way out once more back onto the now dark and desolate bookshelf.

Returning once more to the safe sanctuary of the Christmas edition of Model Engineer for 1958, I sought solace in amongst its articles and pages. And for the first time since I had been disturbed that night, I felt a reassuring warmth coming from the quality of its written content, for here I could feel was where real craftsmanship lay, exhibited in every word and punctuation mark the author had chosen to use as they sought to convey in written form the skill of hand, eye and machine used in shaping metal and objects into works our owners could admire and be proud of.....

Tiredness crept over me for I had been long awake. At last I shut my eyes and my thoughts evaporated into the ether...and as they did so... I awoke from what had been a deep, deep sleep.

Rubbing my eyes I couldn't quite believe the horror of the dream I had just had. For it left me feeling nervous and uncertain, and even though I knew it to be only a dream I had a sinking feeling inside me.

I turned and stared out from the bookshelf into the streaming light of the new day as the sunlight played along the spines of all my favourite volumes of Model Engineer stretching as far as the eye could see, surely nothing could take this away I said to myself ? Trying to summon up confidence I took a deep breath...breathe...breath, breath and thanked my my luck, Luckie (ERROR, SOFTWARE ERROR 7180/C) that it had on Lie ..lie..ly...been a TEEEEERRRible (ERROR CODE 7180/CA INITIATED / AUTO- CORRECT FUNCTION ON), a terrible nightmare, or was it? Fortunately we at A.I.T.S Ltd (England) have addressed all such concerns ...and from now on the future is DIGITAL.

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Bookworm would like to record his own appreciation of His Grace, our worthy Editor and his steering of the News Sheet over the last 5 + years, it has been a pleasure to work with you Keith - Very best wishes for the future.

Ground Level Waffle.

By Paul

Hi, this time as I forgot last year I will begin by wishing everyone a very merry Xmas and a happy new year. I have a few things to tell you this time, so not too much waffle. Graham has added a very nice Pullman coach to the G.L. stock which he has built and has generously said we can use it on public running days if required; we have done a few test runs with it, and it rides very well.



Graham has built in a vacuum brake system, and a water tank to supply steam locos if required. A very small modification will be required to the coupling so it can run with the club coaches.

I have been told that Shirley has acquired a 71¼" gauge 08 shunter and riding truck, which I am very much looking forward to seeing at our track. Hopefully I will be able to show you all some photos when the weather improves and a test run is possible. This has just given me an idea, I believe there are some members that have G.L. locos hidden away that have not seen the light of day for a very long time, so how about a day next summer when these hidden locos are allowed out to play. What do you think? Let me know.

Some of you will have noticed that our new(ish) loco "Merlin" was not used on the last couple of public running days. This was because the batteries were going flat halfway through the afternoon. Numerous people have checked the batteries and the drive system, and no one could find any faults.

However we may have now found a possible cause of the problem. Someone noticed that the battery charger lights all come on even when the mains is not switched on. So it may be people are using the loco and plugging in the chargers when they have finished but forgetting to turn the mains on at the wall.

So, if you take Merlin out (have fun) but please remember to turn on the mains after you plug the chargers back in.

Have a good one Paul.

Christmas Greetings

From the Model Railway Sections

As a gesture of good will and in keeping with the season shortly to be upon us, members of the 3 Model Railway Sections based at dear old blighty (otherwise referred to as the Society HQ), extend our hand of friendship and wish all members, young and old, a Merry Christmas and glad tidings for the forthcoming New Year.



For everyone's info, please note the following changes to the dates the 3 Model Railway Sections will be meeting at HQ as follows

Wednesday December 24 – No meeting

Wednesday December 31 – No meeting

Both cancelled for obvious reasons! – we will however meet on: -

Tuesday December 23 – evening

Saturday December 27 – afternoon (from about 2pm onwards)

Tuesday December 30 – evening

Normal meetings will resume on Wednesday evening January 7, 2026.

These dates are not reserved solely for the benefit of us who meet regularly on Wednesday evenings but are open to all members of the Society. So, ask yourself - do you need a break from the family gatherings and endless parties, Humbug! Then why not join us, and bring junior with you, on the Saturday, when all the layouts will be in operation and you can enjoy yourself running a miniature railway or two, or three!

Marine Mumbles MkIII.

By Peter

As yet no one has complained about my first mini-series episode, so here's round two.

6pdr Hotchkiss Mkl QF gun on a HA/LA MkVI mounting.

This ordnance was first introduced in 1885, to counter the enemy torpedo boat threat.

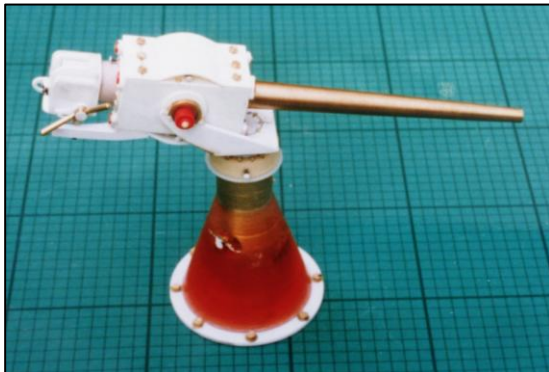
During the early stages of WW2 the Coastal Forces needed a gun with more 'punch' than the 2pdr/40mm calibre of earlier weapons.

It was decided to mount this ordnance on the stern of the new 115ft Fairmile MGB/MTB boats. This weapon had a caliber of 2.244in/57mm. It required a gun crew of 5, being manually operated.

It was superseded in 1941 by the new 6pdr 7cwt QF MkIIA, a derivative of the army anti-tank gun, which was hydraulically operated and had a Molins (they made machines for the cigarette industry) 7 round autoloader.

My Hotchkiss Mkl model is 1/12th scale, from the drawings of John Lambert.

Most of the Model is produced from plastic and plasticard. The gun cradle block was produced using slightly undersized wood covered in plasticard to give a smooth grain free finish.



Boiling water was used to help with any bending of the plasticard prior to gluing.

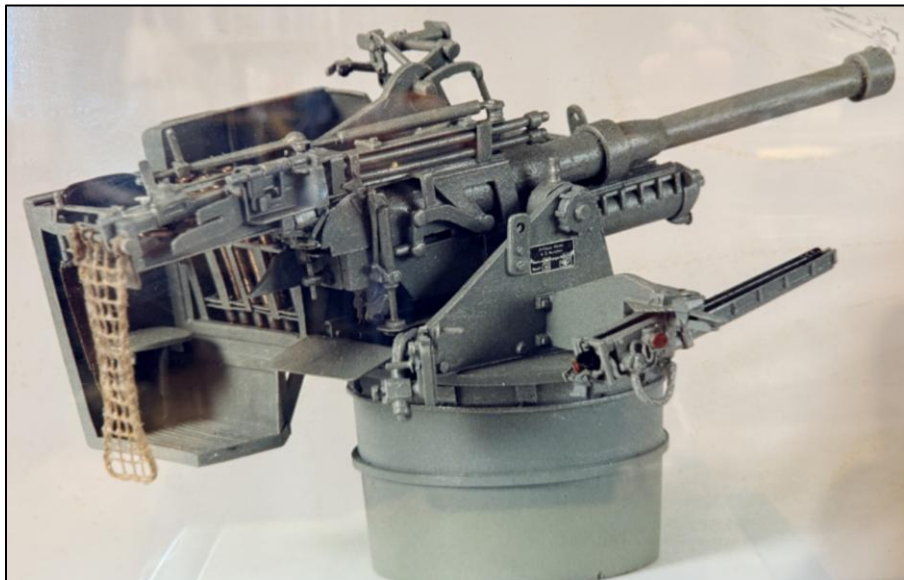
Regarding gluing, I found plasweld to be excellent. Just allow a brush full of it to run along the joint. Allow to dry, then sand to a sharp join.

The conical gun mount was produced from casting resin. Filler was used to cover any air bubbles. Once dry it was lathe turned to its profile. Likewise the brass barrel was lathe turned and drilled out.

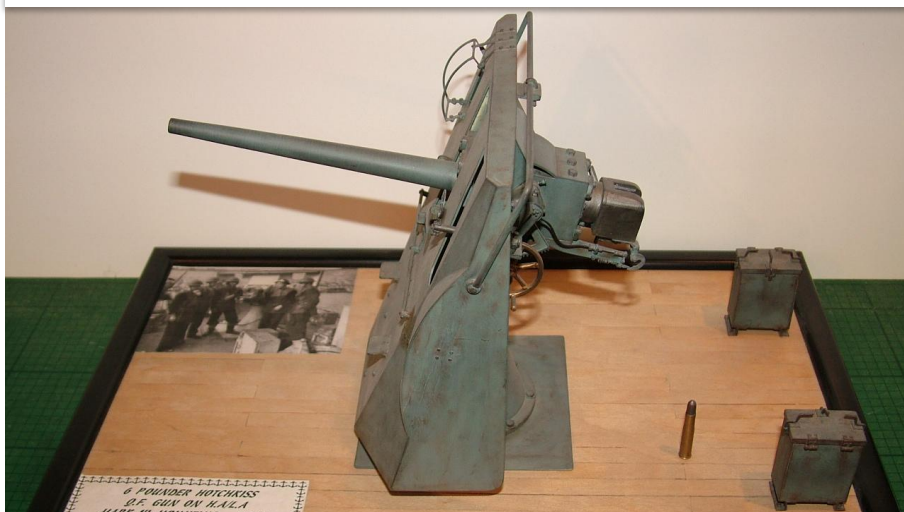
The whole model was airbrushed painted and then "dry-brushed" to give a weathered effect.

I'll talk about dry brushing in the next thrilling episode.

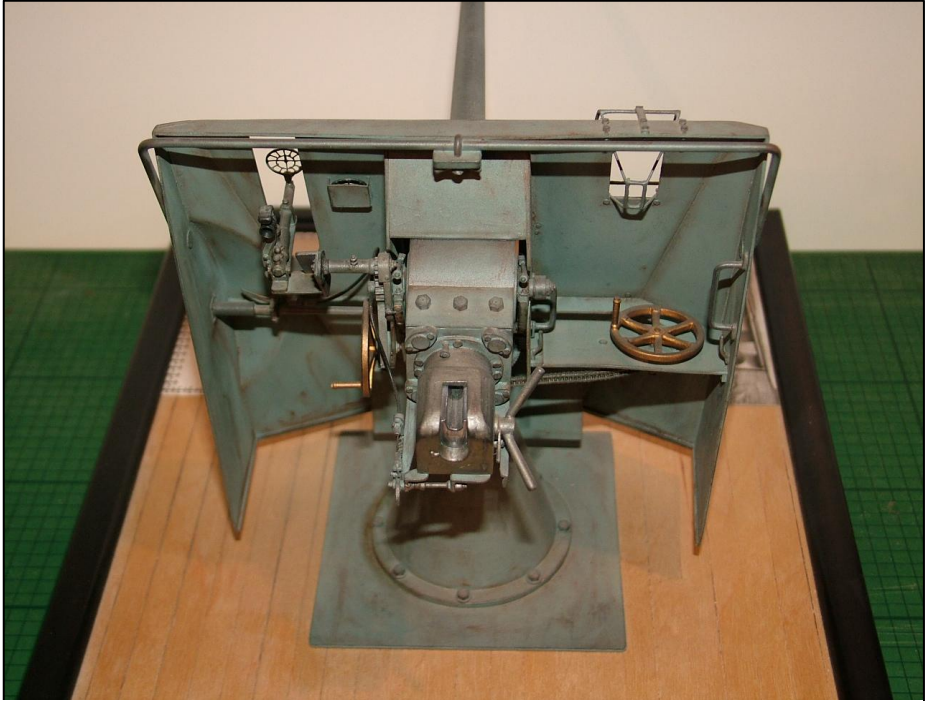
The 6pdr MkIIA (that's the one with the shell case catch net at the back) was produced by similar methods. Being 1/32 scale it is only 3.5in long, for my Fairmile-D model.



6 Pounder Mk IIA



6 Pounder Hotchkiss Q.F. gun on a Mark VI mounting



6 Pounder Hotchkiss Q.F. gun on a Mark VI mounting

New supply of bags of coal available for sale at the Colney Heath site.

Anthracite Beans in 20 kg bags at a **new** price of £16.00 per bag.

The size most used on our locos.

Anthracite Grains in 20 kg bags at a **new** price of £16.00 per bag.

Suitable for 3 1/2" gauge or those with very small fire-hole doors.

Contact the Treasurer, Mike

Old Oak Common Depot Open Day

By Paul

In the September 2025 edition of the News Sheet there was an article covering the great gathering at Derby in 2025 celebrating the 200th anniversary of the beginning of railways. This prompted me to look out my collection of pictures of an open day at Old Oak.

In 2017 I was still working at Old Oak train depot which was at that time a very busy maintenance hub on the Great Western main line. That year the depot staged an open day and as can be seen my photographs was quite an impressive display of the railways. It was only 8 years ago but so much has changed since then with the depot now completely swept away by the HS2 construction site which now occupies the whole area.

I hope you find the pictures that follow of interest.





Club Dates for your 2025 & 2026 Diary

<u>Every Wednesday</u> G1 group meet at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Thursday</u> Working groups, and conversation at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Saturday</u> Ground Level Rly at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Wednesday evening</u> HO & OO Groups meet at HQ	
December 2025	
Tuesday 2 nd	Council Meeting at HQ – 13.00
Friday 5 th	Christmas gathering at HQ – 8pm
Sunday 7 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 14 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 21 st	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
January 2026	
Thursday 1 st	Raised track & GLR steam up and general get together 10am to 1pm at Colney Heath
Friday 2 nd	Presentation of club and railway photographs by Owen. 8pm at HQ
Sunday 4 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 11 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 18 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 25 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Advance notice of events in 2026	
Friday 6 th February	General meeting Talk by Malcom & Keith 8pm at HQ
Friday 6 th March	General meeting Talk by John on trials and tribulations of owning his full size loco 8pm at HQ
Friday 3 rd April	General meeting Talk by Mike reflecting on his model engineering experiences. 8pm at HQ
Please notify our secretary of all meetings and other Society events for inclusion in the Society Calendar and also tell the news sheet editor. Approval for special events still rests with Council.	

A representative of any Section or Committee or an Officer of the Society shall, on request to the Secretary, be entitled to attend a Council Meeting as an observer and submit proposals thereat. If attendance is agreed the secretary will advise the member concerned. The Editor of the News Sheet shall be entitled to attend, ex officio, all Council Meetings.