

## The Chairman's Notes

My first task is to wish Beryl Collingwood well. As one of our most efficient secretaries ever it is hard to imagine Beryl not on top form. However I hear that Mike now knows how to use a vacuum cleaner - every cloud has a silver lining. Best wishes Beryl for a speedy recovery from us all.

This month has been a busy one. First, a big thank you for the splendid turnout for the visit to Colney Heath of the kids from Child's Hill School. One little girl gave me a picture of our railway on her arrival, which is displayed, in the coach. As Ian Murray put it, he had "never had such enthusiastic passengers". The children really loved it, as did all those who helped to provide them with a great experience. I look forward to their visits as one of the highlights of the year.

Two Sections have visited Colney Heath. The Video Section had its annual barbecue and very nice it was. The Club locos did them proud and torrential rain was not allowed to spoil the event which ended at 10.30 PM.

For the first time the Slot Car boys had a day at Colney Heath and the sun shone. They all drove the Club locos, Butch on the Cuckoo Line and both electrics on the main line. They also managed to drive the miniature Burrell with some success. We all enjoyed our day and I hope that they as with other Sections will continue to have their day at Colney Heath on a regular basis.

Our usual fete at Colney Heath school had to rely on Jim Macdonald's portable track. My Burrell failed {for only the second time in six years} and Ron was unable to make it with his Burrell. However, the locos pulled the kids up and down the track: our Society supported the local school and we all enjoyed it.

Just to remind you, the next general meeting on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug will be held at Colney Heath where the barbecue will be lit and the club locos will be available. Our program of winter meetings should be in the next News Sheet issue.

*John Squire*

## **From the Membership Secretary**

The last subscription has now been collected and we have 222 members to date. These comprise 143 Full Members, 37 OAP's, 13 Juniors, 18 Country and, last but not least, 11 Honorary.

The change in the ratio of full members to OAP's reflects the larger number of OAP's who have elected to pay the full subscription this year.

This, together with the many members who have added a donation to their subscription, have improved our income this year. My sincere thanks goes to all who have been generous to the Society.

Since last year 10 members have resigned (mostly as a result of moving away from the area), 9 have failed to renew and 3 have passed away.

On the positive side we have welcomed 15 new members. If recruitment holds up we may see a small increase in membership this year.

### **New Members**

This month we welcome two new members approved at the July Council Meeting:

**Charles Craig,  
Keith Ashman,**

*Bernard Lambert*

## **Treasurer Twittering**

All your subscriptions have now been collected and banked. The coffers are overflowing but this happy state will soon disappear as the bills roll in during the rest of the year.

Otherwise there is nothing significant to report on our finances this month.

*Bernard Lambert*

## **Marine Mutterings**

By the time you read this our first 2002 Open Day will have taken place. I trust you all turned up and had a good day.

As usual we can still use some assistance on Sunday mornings with grass cutting and general tidying up around the Lake.

We are still thinking about the next winter work program – so far we have had no response from members. Some of you must have some ideas of what you would like to see happening in the Lake area. Please tell John (Morgan) or myself.

John and I are working away on building a 'Club' boat. This will be a simple electric with 40 MHz. Radio and electronic speed control. The idea is that it will be suitable for steering round the buoys and will give those who don't own a boat a chance to try their hand without the embarrassment of borrowing someone else's 'pride and joy'.

Enjoy the boating.

## ***And don't forget***

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September:      Second Marine Open Day – Gates open 9 am. Events for all types of craft from 10 am to 1 pm. and from 2 pm. to 5 pm. We hope to have visitors from local Clubs and lots of North London boats on the Lake.

***Bernard Lambert***

## **Tyttenhanger Gazette**

**By Roger Bell**

The July Loco meeting was an informal social gathering at the track. A couple of battery locomotives were in service. This type of evening gives one the opportunity to discuss the latest engineering problem and finalise in one's mind the easiest solution as well as to chat amongst friends in such pleasant surroundings. The occasional joke always goes down well amongst club members like the one about the chap standing at the bar in a pub having a drink. He starts talking into his hand and after a while does it again. The barman became curious and asked him why he was talking into his hand. The chap replied that it was a mobile phone. 'I have one implanted into my hand.' The barman refused to believe him so the chap offered to let him talk to his wife and asks for her number. He taps it onto his palm and places his hand near the barman's ear. Sure enough it was ringing. He then spoke to his wife for five minutes.

'That is unbelievable,' he exclaimed, 'The pace of technology is amazing.' Shortly afterwards the chap goes to the gents and an hour passes. Closing time is approaching so the barman goes to the gents to find him. He is standing in there with his trousers round his ankles and some sheets of paper stuck up his backside. 'What's the matter. Are you OK?' asks the barman

'Yes, I'm OK I'm just waiting for a fax!'

## Troubles with Brass

Whilst making some elbows the other day I decided that, rather than machine each one from a block of brass it would be easier and neater to take a piece of round bar and machine each end to suit. Then file a vee out of the middle and fold it through 90 degrees and braze it. I clamped one end in the vice and then struck the other with a block of wood and a hammer. It seemed hard and did not want to bend. As I was persisting it broke off. I should have known better. So what had gone wrong?

Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc. Alpha brasses have a zinc content of less than 36%, which makes them very ductile, which means they can be worked into complex shapes. Nearly all sheet brass is of this type.

Alpha-Beta brasses have a zinc content of between 36 and 46%. This is harder and stronger than Alpha and most bar stock is made from this. A small quantity of lead is added to ease machining and aluminium, iron and manganese is added to increase strength.

Beta brasses have a zinc content of between 46% and 50% and are harder than Alpha but very brittle and are only suitable for brazing.

So before bending the Alpha-Beta brass bar I should have annealed it, that is to heat it up to 400 degrees C, or for the home workshop where temperature can only be measured by a change of colour, heat up to 700 degrees C. There is no need to quench although it helps to remove any scale that forms. The best way is to heat the brass to dull red and bend it hot.

I must add that brass suffers a progressive breakdown at high temperatures so it is not suitable for boiler fittings below the water line. It is better to use phosphor bronze.

## Book Recommendation

Having read Michael Franklin's article in the July News Sheet on building a loco from a Winson kit, as he felt that building one from scratch was beyond his capabilities, I can well understand this. The complexity of the subject is such that traditionally an engineer would go through a five-year apprenticeship before being recognised as being qualified. Even then there was much to learn both practically and theoretically.

However, all is not lost. There is a short cut: the book entitled *Model Engineering. A Foundation Course* by Peter Wright, published by Nexus Special Interests in 1997 (ISBN 1-85486-152-2). This 408-page book is an absolute gem. It seems to cover everything we need to know and is written in a basic, easy to understand style. It is full of practical ways of making things and I recommend it as a constant reference book.

# Slot Car News

**By Steve Francis**

Once again four members of the Slot Car Section headed off to France for the annual Le Mans 24-hour race. Tony and Dan Condon and myself met at John Newton's and started our long journey south with great hopes of a good race, good food, wine and calvados and that England would soundly thrash Denmark on Saturday. Breakfast was had on the ferry, and that would set us up for our long drive through France or rather set us up for getting lost 5 minutes out of Calais. We soon (ish) found our way on the right way again and settled back to relive stories from previous trips to Le Mans. Funnily enough Bob Hallams seemed to figure in a lot of past trips. In past years we have stayed in a spa town called Bagnoles del Orne, full of shops selling support tights and things for people not in the first flush of youth. A bit like us really. Well three of us anyway. Dan's not old enough to appreciate surgical pink.

Normally Bagnoles is a very quiet town. Not any more. This year the place was buzzing. We never did find out why. The locals must have put something in the water. Anyway up early Sat. morning; well three of us up early and one person having breakfast late, and it was time to set the compass to SE. to San Saturnin, a small town on the outskirts of Le Mans that was holding a get together for all the Brits that had made the trip. We got there just in time to see a cavalcade of old cars heading off to the race. The locals really put on a good show with old cars and a model display of past Le Mans winners and they also had a bar. There was even a scale model of a Ferrari powered by a lawnmower engine driven by an eight year old.

We had our traditional Saturday lunch in the car park before the race but this year there was the added interest of England playing Denmark in the World Cup with the commentary provided by Radio Le Mans. From our car park we could hear the grandstands erupting every time England scored. To be part of the experience of being in a small part of France that will forever be England celebrating our success with 50 thousand Brits was very special. We finished our fine lunch and headed off to the grandstand for the start of the race. As expected the Audis headed off in front with the British interest of the Bentley and MGs following. Also in the race were a couple of camera cars, filming the event for a film about a French comic book hero called Michel Vaillant. A sort of motor racing equivalent of Roy of the Rovers.

During the afternoon whilst sitting in the grandstand John was as he put it enjoying himself with his friend Cal Vados. It was at this point that Dan came up with the theme for the weekend. John has always adopted a mock aristocrat pose whilst in France but with the help of the local hooch he turned into a lager lout, hence the "true colours tour 2002". As the day unfolded the Audis looked unbeatable, the threat from the British teams falling away.

We managed to eat at our usual restaurant in the evening, as there was, for the first time since we have come to Le Mans, no wedding. Why people choose to get married two miles from the circuit when there is anything up to a quarter of a million trying to watch the world's most famous motor race is beyond me. We headed off to Arnage

and Indianapolis corners to watch the racing. The cars look spectacular through these two corners at night. As it was now about 4am we thought it was about time to set up camp in the car park. We positioned ourselves so as to not get run over in the dark.

Out came the (you call that a groundsheet) two sleeping bags and three umbrellas. It was at this point Dan realised he had left his sleeping bag at home and preceded to climb under his England flag towel. Yes, you guessed it - he froze. Tony decided he was too grown up to sleep on the ground and stretched out in the car dreaming of one of the drivers, Milka Duno. Check out her web site and you will see what I mean.

Sunday morning filtered through my umbrella. Was it 9, or 10am – possibly - no it was 5. So I went back to sleep to await the Sunday morning ritual with the strange metallic object or pot of bar as it seems to be now called. It is basically a tin bowl that John bathes in before selecting attire (from his vast travelling wardrobe) for the coming day. By this time Bertie Wooster had returned. The lager lout was but a distant memory. Well for him anyway. We took great delight in spending all day recounting his previous day's exploits. I am sure he thought we were making it up, including the fact that Vino Nacarella didn't sometimes drive Matras but Nino Vacarella did. The race was basically an Audi whitewash but it was good to see the Bentley coming home fourth. Unfortunately both MGs expired in the night.

So the race was over for another year and it time to head back to Bagnoles for a much needed shower to remove the fine dust of Le Mans that gets in everywhere. We made our usual Monday lunchtime stop at Le Bec Helloin, and as usual it was bathed in sunshine. The brook was babbling and the swifts were flying in and out of the belfry. Suitably refreshed we took a slow amble back through the French countryside stopping at Crecy for a beer, site of an historic battle a few hundred years ago, when we stuffed the French. Back on the ferry we were firmly brought down to earth or rather deck, with the expense and quality of English food. Eating on a ferry is not to be recommended: especially not the house brick and chips.

There has also been some serious slot racing going on recently. Some of our Section competed in the BRSCA national finals in the heart of the Surrey countryside, literally, as it was held on a farm near Guildford. None of our racers came away with any top prizes this year but a few made some finals and picked up some silverware As for the team race N.L.S.M.E was successful in winning yet again and our other team Walmington on sea came fourth. We had a desperate search for a fourth driver and fortunately a former member Brian Church came to our rescue.

Our Scalextric nights are going well with about 12 drivers turning up to race. We are alternating between sports, saloon and F1 and last week held an open sports race, which gave us old timers, a chance to run our retro cars. We managed to get three cars running with the limited amount of tyres we have left. The three cars finished ahead of the Scalex. cars and if we can sort out the tyre problem I think we will race them on a more regular basis.

Its not often that us slot racers have the chance to see, let alone drive anything other than cars so the invitation from the Loco Section was most welcome. Ian, John, myself and accompanying children arrived to be driven round the ground level railway by a device powered by a lawn mower engine. Next up was John Squire's

small traction engine. He gave us a ride around and then explained what the controls did. Now it was our turn. Being in control of something that could probably pull a house down was something of a daunting prospect but we managed to drive the thing without hitting anything. We were allowed on the main track next to drive the electric powered diesel locos. Being slot racers we know where we are with electrics, but these were a revelation. Considering they can haul around quite a few people they were fast. Three small electric motors were mounted on the bogies and two large car batteries provided the propulsion. They were great fun as they were easy to drive for people who think that steam only comes from a kettle.

Next up was the Cuckoo line and a chance to try a steam loco. This small engine looked powerful and it was. Once the throttle, sorry regulator, was opened up this little loco flew. What this afternoon demonstrated was how powerful steam is and what proper model engineering is all about. Also the sight and smell of these engines took me back to when I was a small child standing on Liverpool St. Station gazing at awe at these hissing monsters, pulling in and out of the station. Thanks to the Loco Section for a really enjoyable and informative afternoon.

Back to slot cars for a moment, the Southern 32 racing league is well under way with John Secchi and Paul Harwood winning the team race. The next round is at Roedales in Brighton and I shall report soon on how it went. That's all for this month while I go and work out how to build a steam loco with a soldering iron and a Dremel.

### **Calendar for August**

1st	1/32 Team Race
2nd	Scalextric
8th	Saloon
15th	F.I. and 1/32 Production
16th	Scalextric
18th	Southern 32 racing league Downtys Cheltenham
22nd	Sports
29th	1/24 GP 12
30th	Scalextric

## **Congratulations**

Congratulations to Owen Chapman who has just finished his BSc Hons degree in computing at Northampton University and after three years of having to concentrate on something other than railways has been awarded a 2.1. Well-done Owen!

# Cyril Drayson – A Biography

**With Cyril Drayson's death at the age of 94, the Society has lost the last of the original NLSME members of 1944. During his 58 years as a member of the Society he held the positions of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and News Sheet Editor as well as being active in all sorts of Club activities for many of those years. That's no mean achievement and reading the News Sheets from the early years one cannot help but be impressed with the energy, leadership and hard work he devoted to our Society.**

**Since George Case's obituary in June we have received a biography of Cyril from his daughter, Lesley Rogers, which is reproduced below as a further tribute. Cyril wrote an article about his introduction to steam and his first boat, which it is hoped, will be published in a future News Sheet.**

Cecil James Drayson, known as Cyril by his workmates, was born in Chalk Farm, London on 25 October 1908. During the course of his younger life, as his father, James Drayson, was Manager of Lilley and Skinner shoe shops he lived in many areas of London. (Brixton, Chalk Farm Camden Town, etc.) He had great fun in one particular shop as it stretched over two buildings, 765 and 767, so his mother, father and elder sister, Ivy, lived over one shop, and his younger brother, Leonard and himself lived in the other shop. They had great fun playing hide and seek amongst all the various rooms in the two shops.

When the shop was closed they played in part of the shop and used it as a stage with relatives sitting in one shop and Cyril and his brother and sister acting in another part where there were curtains. Various elderly relatives lived with them during the course of my father's early life.

Somewhat unusually, his father had a car! A 'de Dion Bouton', an open car with a 'dicky' seat at the back and acetylene headlights. In this car the whole family went to Great Yarmouth for their summer holidays. Dad adored Great Yarmouth, especially the big dipper, but did not like swimming. His father kept chickens and customers would come into the shop and buy eggs. When they went on holiday they took a basket of eggs, because in those days you bought the food and the landlady cooked it.

At the age of 14 he left school and started work in a local garage, training to be a car mechanic. After some time Dad was persuaded to join the workforce at Roehampton Hospital where he learnt his skills in engineering and helped to make the artificial limbs for the disabled service men and women from the First World War. He specialised in the thumb joint.

They eventually moved to Ingleby Road, Ilford, Essex.

He enjoyed ballroom dancing as a young man and went dancing in Ilford, Essex, where he met my mother Elsie. She used to go with her brother Leslie and sisters Irene and Eva. He called the three of them 'Grace, Disgrace and Candlegrease.' When saying goodnight on the doorstep his voice could be heard in the bedroom above, as he was unable to whisper.

Dad eventually bought a motorbike and after a few years moved his employment to work at the Standard Telecommunication and Cables Ltd (STC) in New Southgate, North London. In 1934 he married Elsie and they lived in Potters Bar, Middlesex (now Hertfordshire) in a brand new house, which they watched being built. It cost £680. They lived there for 58 years until moving to Beaconsfield in 1990.

My sister Maureen was born in 1938, and I was born in 1944. Dad worked nights during the war, driving to New Southgate through the blackout. One of the buildings was bombed during the war. Fortunately Dad was not in that building. In 1946 his mother was killed by shrapnel after leaving the cellar of 38 Ingleby Road. It came through the letterbox. He had friends help dig the air raid shelter in the garden and took his turn in the ARP.

He was a very strict father, especially with table manners. He made his own radio and record player. Elsie's mother lived with them from 1958 - 1968. Each evening he would retire to his workshop. Dad's hobby was model engineering. Starting off from an early age (20s) with steam, especially steam boats. Once a fortnight we went to Broomfield Park in North London where we met up with other members of the North London Society of Model Engineers. Dad was Section Leader of Boats and a founder member of the Society. We also went to regattas at Victoria Park: also to Verulamium Park at St Albans. He won many trophies with his boat, in the Nomination and Steering competitions. He entertained people from France and Belgium at the International Regattas on August Bank Holiday weekend at St Albans.

There were also exhibitions at Ewan Hall in Barnet and in London where he displayed his boat, and stationary steam engines. He built a workshop in the back garden in 1951, brick by brick, after work and at weekends. Using his lathe and other machinery he built his first steam locomotive called 'Juliet' a 3.5" gauge steam engine which could pull Dad and five children behind him and he spent many hours at school fetes etc. entertaining children and adults alike.

He had an Austin 7 Ruby saloon (1935) car, which he would strip down, and rebuild every few years, except for the paintwork. He never took a driving test. After the war we went on holiday, about 2/3 times to Southend, staying with his Auntie Florrie. He loved flying his kite in the park, and letting us hold the string. The rest of our childhood holidays were spent in Weymouth where we stayed with Mrs Evans at 1 Poulteney Buildings. We would meet up with Mum's sister Irene and her family on the beach every day. Irene's brother-in-law part-owned a boat called 'My Girl' which would take people round Portland Harbour. Dad helped to do some engineering work for them and learnt to tie the knot which tied up the boat to the pontoon. He also did engineering work for the landlady of the guest house by making some parts for the 'Dumb Waiter' which saved her staff from running up and down stairs with the food.

He would save up all year for the holiday, paid by money order. A tin trunk would go by rail with our clothes in it. It took four hours to drive there; all logged by Maureen, so he could work out the miles per hour and gallons per mile. This he also did throughout the year, noting it down in his diary, which I gave him each Christmas. He was never in debt.

Dad eventually went to work at the de Havilland Aircraft Company in Hatfield working on the milling machines. He was involved in the Blue Streak, Comet aeroplane and many more, rising to Assistant Foreman. He worked there for over 25 years and received a gold watch. Dad always wore a suit and tie, even under his boiler suit when under the car. At work he wore a white coat, still with his suit underneath. He left there just before he was due to retire and worked for an engineering company in Potters Bar and imparted to the company his incredible knowledge of engineering.

After retiring at the age of 66 he used to call into a car breakers' yard for bits for his car and ended up helping them out for three mornings a week, again doing engineering work for them. He also made prototypes for a friend, in particular the prototype for the microphones that the telephone presenters wear on their lapels. He had also started a new 5" gauge locomotive called 'Doris' which regrettably he never finished.

He bought a towing caravan and enjoyed touring all over Great Britain every summer. He continued caravanning until he was 83, still driving, but shorter trips. He also used to drive a minibus once a week picking up the old people to take them for lunch at Oakmere House in Potters Bar where my mother taught the pensioners to make soft toys, which they sold at bazaars. My mother became involved in the Women's Institute and spent many hours learning handicrafts as well as being President several times, and eventually taught millinery and soft toys etc. until she was over 80 years old. After moving to Beaconsfield she became Leader of the local Senior Citizens at the age of 84. She died two years later after a short illness in 1993.

They had moved to Beaconsfield to be nearer to my husband Peter and myself. A new workshop was built in their garden and Dad carried on with his engineering until my mother died when Dad was 84. Due to his mental condition he retired less and less to his workshop, also he gave up driving which upset him very much. He still had a clean licence.

My father always helped other people and never took any reward except the satisfaction of knowing he had helped somebody: always the gentleman, walking on the outside of the pavement when with a lady and carrying her bags, opening doors etc.

He has four grandchildren - Sharon and Stuart from my sister Maureen who lives in Cheshire and Jacqueline and Michael. Sharon is married to David and they are currently living near Naples where David is a lieutenant in the Royal Marines, and Stuart is married to Lynda. They have a daughter called Katie who has celebrated her second birthday in February, and another baby born in October 2001 called Emma.

Michael married Samantha in June this year and Jacqueline is engaged to Stuart and will be marrying in December 2002.

# **Twelve and a Half Miles in Five Hours**

**A Tale of Stationary Steam (well nearly!)**

**By Donal Corcoran**

During June the Whitwell steam and country fair took place. As usual with these sorts of events they are named after a place near to where the event takes place but not actually where it took place. The rally happened at St Pauls Walden, and just to add to the confusion St Pauls Walden School is in Whitwell; the event is not.

It's an interesting rally and for those of you who did not attend I recommend that you go next year. Mike Chrisp came on Sunday and left looking wetter than a drowned rat, and he still had a smile on his face so it must have been good. To add extra interest the rally takes place under the flight path into Luton Airport (The consensus of opinion was that it would be four or five shot down planes before anybody would notice that any were missing.).

Anyway I get side tracked (It's kind of like being at a Council meeting!) The tale I am about to recount relates to the journey home. For those of you who don't know, my family and I own and run an Aveling and Porter 'Showmans Style' traction engine. (Before John Squire or Peter MacDonald says it, it's a converted steamroller).

Having been towed out of the field leaving grooves some four inches deep in the mud, and it being about 5pm on the Sunday, the prospect of the twelve and a half mile journey home which at traction engine speeds take about four hours, meant we left it in the farm yard till morning.

The Monday morning arrived and Kieran and I thought great, at last the weather had improved. This improvement in the weather lasted until the second the engine turned a wheel. At this point the heavens opened, and we left the farmyard at 10:45am.

Now the route we take is, as one of the more experienced engine drivers described, a journey where you are either on the brakes or have the regulator fully open for the whole journey, and the only flat section of road being a mile stretch about two miles from home.

The fact that the journey is always either up or down means that the water level is critical and we managed it well - well until the tubes started to leak. At this point I feel I will point out that I'm not as incompetent as I sound, as we knew we were going to have trouble with the tubes this year, and already intended to replace them in August. We just have to do them a little earlier than planned now!

The trouble all started when Jim, Peter and Foxton (the dog) Macdonald turned up, quickly followed by Ian Murray. Well I'll be honest it was a mile before that, but we won't let them know it! We fired up just before Kinsbourne Green Lane, which is a relatively steep climb. Kieran and I had a discussion about changing the route, but decided to still go up the hill.

Now after coaling the engine, just like driving a 5" round Colney Heath, it always loses a small amount of pressure when restarting. This under most circumstances is fine but this time it caught us out. With a slightly deader fire than I would normally attempt that hill with (we obviously drew through a small amount of cold air, even with the damper fully shut) this spelt the end of what until this point was a very good journey.

Traction engine tubes and a small amount of cold air are a recipe for disaster, and by the time we got to the end of Ian Murray's road we had dropped from the running pressure of 140 PSI to 60 PSI and then as I said Jim Macdonald pulled up, so it must have been his fault.

When Ian turned up, he had cans of beer in hand. It was a nice thought but Kieran and I had to turn it down - we don't want a bad reputation (but we did accept in the pub later). We sat at the end of Ian's road for some time deciding what to do. Did we need a low loader? Could we make it? Could the engine make it?

In the end we decided to have a go, so with the injection on full we pulled away with 75 PSI on the pressure gauge and rushed for home - rushed being we went at about 6mph instead of 4mph. At this point Dad had joined us from work (lunch break you understand) and so he and Mum went off to get the tractor and push bar, and Jim followed us in his car.

A mile later and with still two and a half to go, we stopped to lift water from the water bowser we had been towing. Peter helped Kieran while I tended to the engine and Jim and Ian (Kieran and I hadn't realised he had come with Jim until this point) warned traffic, in case they couldn't see that 17' long, 8' wide and 11' tall obstruction that was in front of them.

Once we had collected the water we needed we continued our journey only to find that Mum had not made it home yet as the MG had broken down at the bottom of the hill. Are you seeing a pattern of disaster yet? Well you will be soon; there is more to come.

We carried on home and left Mum at this point. It must have been around 3pm although I never found time to look at a clock, but at this point we were travelling down the A5, nearly home - only a mile and a half to go. This is the trickiest part of the journey - well under normal circumstances it wouldn't be a problem but with only 50 PSI left in the boiler now, and having to negotiate a hairpin bend, which drops quite dramatically, and a steep hill after the bend, it was never going to be easy.

We took the corner as wide as possible and still didn't make it in one. We had to disconnect the bowser, as we didn't have the pressure to reverse up the hill with the extra weight. We left the bowser hidden in the bushes and carried on home. Now Dad had returned but he didn't have the tractor.

While trying to bring the push bar down with the tractor it got caught under the wheel and bent it into what he described as a 'C' shape. Well it wasn't that bad but it was only going to get worse. Kieran and Dad went back home while Peter and I carried on up the hill with snails overtaking us every minute or so.

I drove and steered while Peter walked along with the chock in case the engine stalled. For this valiant effort Peter is now Peter 'Chocke Boy' Macdonald. Now Dad and Kieran on the tractor had returned so we hooked the tractor to the engine and proceeded to attempt to pull the engine up the hill. It didn't work, somehow the tractor gear selector had jumped out and we were stuck in top gear, but we didn't know it then.

This meant that the engine started to overtake the tractor and bent the bar into a 'V' shape. Well at this point I took the tractor home and tried (and succeeded) to repair it. So I raced back to the engine to find it less than half a mile from home. Kieran had managed to coax it even further up the hill. Don't worry, by this point someone had gone and got my Mum but I don't remember who. (Dad actually -*Mum*)

Well the tractor succeeded in pulling the engine with no trouble at all when it was in the correct gear and we were home ten minutes later. With practically no water, no pressure and no fire we as a collective group had managed to get the engine to travel some four miles, and it was only just 4pm.

With that in mind we went down the pub to celebrate, where Ian bought the beer, and called Deanna (his good lady), as she had no idea where he was and it sounded like she was disappointed as she was on her way to collect the life insurance. Ian reckons the worrying thing is he didn't know there was life insurance!

So to end this I would like to thank Jim Macdonald, Ian Murray, and 'Chocke Boy' for all their efforts, as we probably wouldn't have made it without their help. I would also like to thank Ian for the pint. Boy did I need it at that point, and I apologise to Deanna as she had probably already spent most of the insurance money before Ian called her!

If there's a moral to the story it is probably that all problems at either of our sites, or in life in general can be overcome with a little help from our friends!

## **Railways Under and Over**

### **By Peter Kearon**

*A brief look at how the M25 motorway affected the railway systems of the outer London area.*

When, in 1985, Mrs Thatcher was taken for a high-speed circuit to open the new M25 ring road around London she probably was struck by the attractive countryside but it is doubtful whether she spent much time considering the railway systems. Had she thought of it she would have realised that except for a few branches such as those terminating at Stanmore and Enfield (East) and most of the Underground network, all other lines have to cross over or under this new highway.

Regular travellers will know of the intense boredom of driving around, or queuing along this so-essential ring road. For those of us with some passing interest in

railways there emerges a new form of entertainment called 'spot the railway.' An upstairs seat on a double-decker bus would be ideal but most of us will have to make do with a seat in a four-foot high car. Do take care.

My own use of the M25 is generally restricted to that portion between junctions (J) ten and 24. Joining at the Guildford interchange and turning onto the clock-wise direction of travel we soon cross over the main line from Waterloo near Byfleet and New Haw where in years gone by Bulleid pacifics, Lord Nelsons and King Arthurs were taking advantage of the long straight before Woking. Between J11 and J12 look out for one of the more unusual overhead crossings taking Waterloo/Victoria electrics via Chertsey to Virginia Water and Ascot. Between J12 and J13 the road crosses the line joining Staines and Virginia Water. Similarly in the section between J13 and J14 the other branch from Staines, this time going to Windsor, passes under our route. A branch from West Drayton to Poyle seems to be threaded directly under J15 but it remains resolutely out of sight.

Having crossed to the north over the M4 motorway look out for a metal coaming along each side of the roadway; this is a bridge over the line from Paddington, and there is a mini-second available to spot the tracks on the up side. No chance of seeing a Castle taking home "The South Wales Pullman" but *Nunney Castle* recently passed this spot with a Swansea-Paddington special. The next possible crossing place is between J16 and J17 where in 1910 the builders of the joint GWR/GCR line from Northolt to Ashenden cunningly spaced their bridge to straddle exactly a road not destined to be built for a further 75 years. Once this was the preserve of Kings and A3s, 6100-class prairie tanks and for those old enough to remember massive Robinson 4-6-2Ts. Now the only moving objects are three-unit turbo-diesel trains working between Marylebone and High Wycombe.

Between J17 and J18 just where road lighting begins it is easy to see the edging of the bridge crossing the one-time Metropolitan line to Aylesbury and beyond and once the haunt of a batch of Kerr Stuart 4-4-4 outside cylinder tank engines which took over trains at Rickmansworth delivered there from London by twin-bogie electric engines. These 4-4-4Ts have long gone but even in the 1960s the electric engines were still in service operating on the lines into Farringdon and Moorgate using Baker Street as the junction. So far as I can recall they all carried names associated in some way with London. Do I remember *Dickens* and *Gladstone*? *John Hampden* was certainly running in 1963.

Tired of crossing lines? Then take a small diversion west at J20 along the new A41 and in a few miles the ex-Euston line will converge from the right. By going really fast you may well succeed in keeping within 50mph of a north-bound express on its way towards Boxmoor, Tring and beyond.

The next crossing place, between J20 and J21, is at Hunton Bridge where the same ex-Euston lines are clear to see on the up side only. A flash of red is probably not a Duchess but more likely a Virgin Atlantic I25. Having passed the M1 interchange look out for the Watford-St.Albans single-line branch, which secretly crosses the M25 just after J21A. A few miles further on there is the chance to see a main line train crossing overhead - this is the track from St Pancras, well remembered for class 4 compounds, in post war years often double headed, Jubilees and finally Royal Scots,

Nowadays make do with glimpsing a six-coach electric possibly running between Bedford, Gatwick Airport and Brighton.

It is not possible to recognize the next crossing for between J23 and J24 the LNER main line remains hidden in a long tunnel starting near Hadley Wood station and finishing within sight of Potters Bar Station. The only evidence of this railway's existence is the provision of a couple of vent chimneys placed in a field. As Gresley and Peppercorn pacifics are rare visitors it is likely that these landmarks will soon disappear under hordes of yuppie housing developments. All is not lost for the other Kings Cross line, the Hertford loop crosses under the M25 halfway between J24 and J25 but don't waste your breath waiting for telltale signs of steam.

That is as far as I go on my regular travels but having negotiated the lines from Waterloo, Paddington, Marylebone, Euston, St. Pancras, and Kings Cross I must leave the other sections to some member who regularly travels the more eastern sections of this fine highway and who too finds that motorway boredom can be relieved. It is not to be recommended for child entertainment, as most will find railway line spotting infinitely more boring than merely asking "are we nearly there?"

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