

December 2000

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Thoughts of Chairman Dell

It'll soon be Christmas again and I'd like to wish every member, their partners and their families a very happy time and a prosperous new year. Good luck with all your modeling projects and especially best wishes for good health in 2001.

Halloween Night – What a shame about the weather although the skies cleared and it stopped raining about seven o'clock. By that time a lot of people had made up their minds they weren't coming so numbers were down. A lot of hard work was put in by Jim and his helpers and I believe that in spite of everything we covered our expenses. The mediteranian soup was delicious. Perhaps one year we will have it dry. Still, locos ran and those that came enjoyed themselves.

Working parties have begun and I hope to see you all Sunday mornings.

The War Years

Earlier this year we had a very interesting talk by Bert Mead about his experiences during the last war from an adult point of view. I would like to tell you about some of my experiences as a young boy, 11 – 16 years old during that time.

If it wasn't for the fact that people were being killed it was for me a very exciting and wonderful time. One of my first memories was the erecting of our Anderson shelter which I helped my father with. An Anderson shelter consisted of rounded side sheets of corrugated iron and two end pieces. It came complete with instructions on how to proceed. After several days work we had the hole to more or less the right size. After that it was fairly easy to erect and shovel the spoil on top. Sand bags in front of the entrance completed the job. My father was in his mid 40s and quite fit. Also he had me to help him. You can imagine the problems some people had – those getting on a bit or not in good health. But such were the times that those that couldn't were helped by those who could. My father and I helped to erect four Anderson shelters and became quite expert. After the first serious rainfall ours quickly filled with water. We hadn't read all the instructions and didn't put in a soakaway. This we did and even laid a brick floor. They were very cold in winter and nice and cool in summer. When the air raids started my poor mother used to shake herself to pieces. I don't know whether it was the cold or just that she was terrified of the air raids. For warmth we tried a paraffin heater but the fumes were awful so we suffered.

As the war dragged on food became more and more of a problem especially meat. If you were in with the butcher you could sometimes get offal, hearts, kidneys and liver which weren't rationed. One of my mother's tricks was to cook a full Sunday lunch – Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes, brussel sprouts and gravy but no meat. You kidded yourself you'd eaten your meat first. However, you could if you had enough money eat out at restaurants. The government had imposed a ceiling price of five shillings for all meals. That's 25p in present day money so you didn't get much but some people went to perhaps two restaurants to get a decent meal.

As the raids became worse the government opened up Chislehurst Caves. Lorries came round at 4.00pm and picked you up and delivered you back the next morning. It was like a small town in the caves; it had its own hospital and cinema. The temperature was a constant 65 fahrenheit so it was quite pleasant. My father couldn't come as he had to work until 6.00pm but was quite happy that mother and I were safe. We were always pleased to see each other in the morning and know that we had all survived the night. One thing that was always in short supply was cigarettes. Both my mother and father were smokers as were most other people in those days. I spent a lot of my spare time cycling round to all the local shops looking for supplies of cigarettes – not always with success. I still remember my father's look when I came back empty handed.

As the war dragged on I was beginning to take an interest in girls and started to go out with a girl called Eileen who worked in a sweet shop and tobaconist. This was the end of my parents' cigarettes problem as Eileen always saw to it that a plentiful supply was at hand. After about three months the romance began to cool and we parted. I told my father and he was quite upset, saying, "Can't you keep going out for a few more weeks?" I told him no it was all over and so were his cigarettes so my cycle round started again.

Because of the air raids school was cut down to three half days a week (That's why I'm so thick). We lived in Catford, South East London not far from Hither Green marshalling yards so things were always quite lively at night. We did however have daylight raids as well. My school was Catford Central at the bottom of a hill. At the top was Sangley Road School which was bombed at about 12.30 on a Wednesday. I can't remember exactly how many children were killed but it was over 80. Before bombing Sangley Road School we were all in the playground. We saw the planes come over and waved to them as they were quite low. (We didn't know they were German). When we heard the explosion we knew who they were. Great clods of clay came raining down and my friend was hit by a large clod and seriously injured. He died three days later in Lewisham Hospital.

To be continued

Frank Dell

[Safety Valve](#)

As Society Safety Officer, Paul Lacey makes some recommendations for improving safety at the Track.

Hopefully this will be the only such column I will ever need to write and the only time I will need to ask for your co-operation in improving an already excellent record of safety.

First a short potted history of myself. I was born in 1953 I am almost too young to remember steam but for a couple of trips to Gamages behind a Prairie in BR livery for the Christmas layout.

After leaving school in 1971 and joining Barclays Bank as a computer operator I realized in watching the engineers that that was my career calling, I became an apprentice 'Office Equipment' engineer for Olivetti. I was trained in all manner of electro-mechanical machines, including the birth of the personal computer; our product, the Olivetti Programma 101 being reviewed on 'Tomorrows World'. They thought it a wonderful machine but could see no reason for people to use PCs in this age of the mainframe, our machine having just 128 bytes of memory.

Just 10 years later I launched Olivetti's first PC the M24 Personal Computer, the second best selling machine ever, after the IBM PC.

In 1991 I started my own company supplying Office equipment spares, at present we keep over 80,000 lines managed by three large Windows NT Servers and provide support to our customers via a large web site.

Well, I suppose you are now thinking, what qualities does he have for 'Safety Officer'. In 1990 I joined the Metropolitan Police as a Special Constable. I am currently the same rank as a sergeant and based at Barnet Police Station, this has assisted me in becoming a trained First Aider, Firefighter, and provided me with the necessary skills for investigating most incidents. Add this to the fact that I wrote a safety procedure for our Company and there you are.

As I am sure you will agree most of the risk the Club has is at the track. This is where members of the public are exposed to our hobby and I would like to see the following improvements.

1) Track Improvements need to be made with the section of track from the Station to the steaming bays being roped off on public running days, perhaps by removable poles with chains between. Many times I have seen excited children running to the track arms outstretched. A fall or a stray limb would be disastrous for our hobby.

2) Communication must be available between the two track stewards; a minimum of a telephone but I would personally like to see two way radios. They are readily available for £130.00 and this would ensure effective communication.

3) Track Stewards must ensure that they remain Track Stewards doing their job correctly for the day, I have witnessed occasions when people wander off or decide they will become boiler inspectors. Perhaps boiler inspectors should not be assigned days as track stewards on the first Sunday of the month. It is crucial from a safety point of view that both the station and the steaming bays are correctly manned.

4) Fire Risk at the steaming bays, while we have plenty of water we have no portable water extinguishers. We need two put out by the track stewards. Remember that if people's clothing catch fire they don't always stand about close to where a hose is located. We do after all 'Play with Fire'. Two should also be located at the station, positioned outside, not hidden in buildings.

5) Signals I must ask why do so many members go past a red signal? And then seem surprised to find a train broken down in front not waiting at a signal where they thought it would be. We are all very thankful to the Club engineers, who have provided us with

one of the major safety pieces of equipment on site, so why not use it. Track stewards should remind offenders and if they cannot comply then they will be asked to remove their loco.

6) Fete Section Could I have an invite to your next appearance, as an observer?

I know that people will say we have been running OK for all these years and never experienced any problem, but with the current increase in ambulance chasing by the legal profession, we must adapt to ensure our continued excellent record. It will never be my intention to spoil the fun and satisfaction we all feel when we complete another days steaming.

Before I leave you all in peace could I give a big thank you to Mike Collingwood for his training on boiler inspection, and I trust one day to be as knowledgeable and fair minded as he is. Also to Tony Dunbar who is personally responsible for getting me involved in live steam at the track.

Paul S Lacey

[Tyttenhanger Gazette ~ Taliesin](#)

At the November Loco Meeting there was little Club news to report so Brian Webster was able to commence straight away his talk and slide presentation on rebuilding Taliesin, an 0-4-4T locomotive for the Ffestiniog Railway.

In order to start with a relaxed meeting, Brian told a story concerning a guy who found an old lamp. He rubbed it and a genie appeared and asked him if he could grant him a wish. The guy said he had relatives in America whom he wished to visit and as he hated flying, could he build a bridge so that he could drive his car over. The genie said, That's a bit difficult. – "Have you another wish?" The guy said, "I don't get on with my wife and I wish I could understand women." The genie replied, "Just how wide did you want that bridge?"

Taliesin is a single Fairlie locomotive and was designed by George Spooner in 1875 and built one year later as works No 791 at the Vulcan Foundry. It had one boiler and two bogies, one powered and one unpowered. Many modifications were made during its service life. In 1900 a new boiler was fitted, an enlarged and roofed cab, bigger side tanks, Ffestiniog sand pots and chimney fitted, outside framed trailing bogie and a larger rear bunker. The boiler was condemned in 1924 but the purchase of a new one was refused by the board so it was used on light work until 1927. In 1932 it was dismantled and the parts delivered to Glan-Y-Mor and in 1935 the boiler was sold for scrap.

It was during 1987 that Andy Savage and Gordon Rushton proposed to rebuild Taliesin and in 1989 a covenanted subscription scheme was launched. The project was named 'Taliesin 2000' with the intention of building the loco by the turn of the century. The loco had the reputation of being very economic and free running and also very kind to the track. Of all the major types of loco that ran on the various 'two foot slate lines of Caernarvanshire and Merioneth, only the single Fairlie had not survived into preservation. The only survivors of this class are non-working examples in New Zealand and the USA. The design was to be historic on the outside, as it was in 1925, but inside would take advantage of modern technology. The bogie driving wheels would be the

originals but the bogie design would incorporate all of the developments in bearings, axles, lubrication and steam pipes proven on the 'Merrins' 1988 rebuild.

The cost was estimated at £200,000 - £250,000 and 240 subscribers paid £60 each per year for ten years under the covenant scheme. On completion the loco would be the property of the Ffestiniog Railway Company and would be maintained by them. An interesting calculation was carried out during August 99 when £178,500 had been spent. In 1876 the cost of a return ticket to Blaenau was two shillings and two pence (10.1p), today the fare is £13.80. The cost has risen 137 times. The original cost of the locomotive when it was built in 1876 was £1306 which multiplied 137 times equals £178,922, although the volunteers did not charge for their labour.

In order to keep the volunteers interested over the ten year period Brian sent out to each member a jobs list of work that had to be done and of work to do. Jobs were not delegated to individuals, each did what they could and this worked quite well. Each volunteer would receive a certificate of participation and a method of names in a hat (the more attendances per individual, the more names one had in the hat) was started for the person to light the fire in the Loco for the first time. This was won by Mike Radford.

The original works drawings could not be taken into the workshop for fear of damage so they were redrawn and redesigned as required on CAD. This work was done in America. The draftsman never having been to this country however felt he would like to contribute. Two sheets were hung up on display, drawn in imperial inches. One of the sheets was of the boiler which was built by a boilermaker for £32,500 plus VAT. We saw a summary of the boiler specification. The full spec was ½" thick! It was built to BS2790, the working pressure being 200psi whilst the original had been 150psi. It was superheated, unlike the original. The weight was nine tons. The crane capacity at Boston Lodge Works at Minfford on the Ffestiniog Railway was ten tons. The boiler could not be riveted due to legislation so was welded by a coded welder. One moment of terror arose when the boiler was lowered between the frames as it was too wide. The diagonally positioned washout plugs interfered with the frames. The plugs had a male square head for tightening up so these were replaced with female equivalents. Whilst the boiler had been tested by the maker, they did not ask for the blanking plates, so a new set was made which took some time to get them to seal. After half a day and much water on the floor a test was achieved. To detect cracks in a boiler the surface is sprayed with a purple dye, then sprayed with a white coloured mixture. Any cracks are then seen as a purple line.

As Brian progressed through the slides he described each one as it covered the construction. The side tanks were of welded construction to prevent leaks. The rivets were dummy, each head having been turned on a capstan and stuck to the tank with super-glue. On the curved part of the tanks the rivet heads were welded in place from the inside. The dummy heads were located using a cardboard template. There were two inspection hatches and through these climbed a small girl volunteer to paint the inside of them – a bit claustrophobic but ventilated with a fan.

The twin safety valves, due to legislation, have to be fitted with compression springs. These were built hidden under the dome; a dummy Salter gear being fitted for appearance. The brass dome was spun at a cost of £3000.

One of the first parts to be made was the power bogie. The holes were drilled through the 7/8" thick frames with a magnetic base drill. (One turns the magnet on and off with a switch.) The drill is quite useful and will also clamp to a vertical face, unless of course someone removes the plug from the power-point whilst drilling, as it then falls off - a

point of safety to be mindful of. The holes for the special close fitting bolts were reamed.

Whilst the Loco was being built it was nicknamed Ernie. The previous loco, Palmerston, was known as Eric.

At 12" to the foot scale, weld preparation means significant lumps of material have to be removed, often by milling. Some fabrications would be left for over a day to cool down as they would get very hot during welding. Dunking them in water would have caused distortion.

The Loco can be run on oil or coal, with a two hour change-over time. The oil tank would be lifted out and the coal bunker dropped in its place. When starting on oil, compressed oil is used to vapourise the oil until steam pressure is up; then steam is used.

Inside the smokebox one could see the spark arrester for preventing fires. The windows were made from toughened glass, but as a spectacle plate was tightened the glass shattered so they were replaced with laminated glass.

Eventually came the time for steaming up and a drive in the yard. As the moment climaxed and the Loco moved someone shouted, "What about insurance?" A telephone call was made to the insurers and within half an hour it was covered, restricted to movements in the yard. It took a few days for the cover to be extended to the main line and to receive it in writing.

Despite the loading gauge being checked, the first run on the mainline caused some natural unease until it had passed the platforms and the signals and gone under the bridges. It was snowing on this first run and it did not have the cab roof fitted. One of the team had a mobile phone and kept the others informed of their progress down the line.

This was without doubt a remarkable achievement by a small group of between nine and 15 volunteers and we thanked Brian for giving us an insight into their ambitious and successful project.

Roger Bell

Model Railway Section News

It's been some considerable time now since anyone from our Section put pen to paper to report on our activities. Reports via our Section Leader, Ken West, to the monthly Council meetings have been noted, albeit briefly but they have not conveyed all that we have done over the last couple of years. So I thought it was time to bring everyone up to date. In brief most of our evenings have been spent working on various sections of Bath (Green Park) but work has been slow as we are only able to erect a maximum of three boards on our room at any one time. We have, however, been out and about with our layouts at various exhibitions.

Starting with the weekend of the August Bank Holiday, we took our 'Binegar' layout to a 3 day exhibition at the Rutland Railway Museum. Being the largest of only 6 layouts within the locomotive shed at the museum the layout received much attention from

members of the public, especially when they all crowded into the shed each time it rained. Yes, it did rain over that weekend, so much that at one time the shed roof leaked and we had authentic rainfall on the layouts. The museum itself is sited on the old exchange sidings at Cottesmore where iron ore extracted from nearby quarries was transferred to the national rail network. Although it is only a small museum, with less than a mile of running line, the site tells the story of what was once one of the largest extraction mining industries in this country. Details are also on display there of how a large excavator was 'walked' 16 miles from one quarry to another, an amazing event when you realise the machine was the 2nd largest of its kind ever built in this country and was all electrically powered. A small but friendly museum well worth a visit during the Summer, and to please 'her in doors' Barnsdale Gardens, the home of the late Geoff Hamilton (or Gardeners World fame) is but a short drive away.

On October 14, we took 'Bath (Green Park)' to an exhibition hosted by the Tring Model Railway Club at Ashlyns School Berkhamstead. This was the first time we had set this layout up for full operation since Reading 2 years ago. Although we had carried out vast amounts of work in the interim period, a number of gremlins soon took hold but during the course of the day we were able to work around them. Again, we were the largest of the numerous layouts on display, and being the first sighted by many visitors as they entered the hall we received many favourable comments. The most numerous one heard was 'cor - ain't it big!'. Three months prior to this show was spent by ourselves completing some long outstanding work on the basic scenery of the layout, but we have still got a lot of work to do before the layout is anywhere near finished.

November 4th saw us out again with 'Bath (Green Park)', this time at Hatfield, together with the HO section who took along their Young Street switching layout and John Squire with his miniature traction engine giving rides around the car park. Again various gremlins came to light on Bath, some of which we thought we had previously cleared. Oh well – back to the drawing board. A list of work required has been drafted and will be attended to in the new year.

As a result of these outings, we have received invitations to attend two further exhibitions next year, both with 'Binegar'. The first, currently being discussed as I write this, will be on the weekend of February 10 & 11th at Leigh on Sea, Essex. This invite was channelled via the HO group who attended the exhibition there this year – thanks chaps. The second is a return invite to attend a small exhibition to be held at the John Keeble Church in Edgware on 21st April. I trust Section members will note both these dates in their 2001 diaries when you get them.

Having spent so much time working on Bath, we have decided to pack this layout away for a couple of months, dust off the main club layout, erect the section of Binegar we use as a branch line terminus and generally relax and play trains. After all that's what we are all here for as we are often reminded: 'Model railways are fun'.

With Christmas nearly upon us yet again, all that remains now is for me, on behalf of the Section, to wish all Society members young and old a joyful and peaceful Yuletide and may your tools never go rusty.

Geoff Howard

[One Tug Per Week](#)

The model steam-driven tug TID 22 has appeared several times on the 'pond' at Tyttenhanger and several people have asked the meaning of those initials TID. Read on and all will be revealed.

The beginnings go back nearly sixty years when early in the war there loomed an impending shortage of small tugs able to assist in the rapid docking, unloading and turn-round of the merchant ships carrying vital supplies in the convoys. Many of these ships were elderly but, of necessity, kept in use, although virtually uncontrollable at low speeds.

In those desperate days, decisions were taken quickly – no Enquiries or White Papers. The order came from ON HIGH “Design, organise and start work immediately towards achieving, in the shortest possible time, the delivery of one tug per week using, in the process, little or no shipyard labour”.

The only real answer to the seemingly insoluble problem of not using scarce ship building labour seemed to be a design for a tug that could be built from pre-fabricated sections so that small engineering works throughout the country could be used. Such works usually possessed no plate-bending ability, so the design for the new tug's hull had to be made up of mostly straight lines. Only the bow section needed curved plate and this would be entrusted to one suitable firm.

A very large model of the proposed new tug was tested, in the water, against a model of a conventional tug hull at the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington. The results were surprising. At the low speeds envisaged (7 ½ knots) the angular hull offered less drag through the water than the shapely curved hull – although above that speed, the situation was quickly reversed. Not only that, but in tests for stability (recovering from a roll) the new proposed hull proved definitely the better, probably its angular section acted like normal bilge-keels. There was great satisfaction all round.

The finalised design called for a welded steel hull to be made in eight sections, none with a maximum dimension of more than ten feet or weighing more than ten tons, so that no specialised lorries would be needed for transport.

Richard Dunston Limited, who had been responsible for much of the detailed design work, were appointed as the main contractor for completing the hulls at their base on the Stainforth-Keady Canal at Thorne in South Yorkshire. The hull sections, as they were delivered, were placed in correct order on the canal bank, carefully lined up, welded together, then launched sideways into the narrow canal. Engines and boilers were then added and, for simplicity, oil lighting was used throughout.

The first launching of TID 1, took place on 26th February 1943 and the tug was handed over, complete for use on 17th March. Almost exactly one year later, TID 60 was handed over, thus the one-a-week demand had been easily met.

TIDs 1 to 90 were all coal-fired but thereafter, all were oil-fired and had lowering funnels; this was so that they could be shipped bodily as deck cargo on heavy-lift ships to the Mediterranean and Far East where coal supplies were unobtainable. In all 182 TIDs were built, numbered TID 1 to TID 183; in the best Naval tradition, there was no TID 13. Some were operated by civilian towing and shipping firms, some by the Royal Navy and some by the Army (Royal Engineers); TID 22 is one of these. During the war none carried names, only numbers.

After the war, all were gradually sold off and some were given to friendly nations to

help their recovery – a small convoy sailed to Finland. A few TIDs still exist: TID 164 was at one time moored at Chatham and there is apparently another at Maldon. A picture appeared of one very rusty and battered one beached in Turkey. Oh yes! Those initials TID? It was the Admiralty abbreviation for TUG, INSHORE AND DOCK.

Most TIDs survived the war and detailed records exist as to losses and eventual disposal. The only mystery is TID 22, just “British Army. No further record”. Does that battered hull lie on some unknown sea bed? Or did its crew, peace being declared, and fearful of a return to the hurly-burly of civilian life, steal away with their tug, sneak it somehow through the Suez Canal without paying any dues and head East, seeking sandy beaches, palm trees and making a life of fishing and, with the help of compliant and beautiful damsels, the making of coconut beer? Perhaps they, and their descendants are still happy on some desert island. We shall never know.

[The 2000 Curly Bowl – A Competitor’s View](#)

Knowing that the rules had been changed so that owners as well as builders could compete in the Curly Bowl I did not take much persuasion to realise that a good day out could be had on rails not seen before. So a few days later I was on my way to the Bromsgrove SME track on Stoke Heath.

I packed the car the night before, checking I had coal, pre-soaked charcoal, oils – both thick and thin, rags, matches, miscellaneous tools and of course the loco, a Hielan Lassie formerly owned by the late Bill Camp all cleaned and looking smart. It was then that I discovered my blower was not working so I hurriedly borrowed Dick’s little machine, actually meant for 6 volts (and just takes off on 12 volts).

The morning started out clear and bright. I rechecked that all had been packed and armed with map and instructions from the route planner set off. I made good progress up the M1 to Birmingham, managing to get ahead of schedule, so I stopped for breakfast near Cadbury World.

The instructions were very good and I found the site of the Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings quite easily. Not so simple once inside the venue though and asking staff on the ticket desk I found they did not know there was a track there, let alone a competition! But the general public came to the rescue along with a convention of timber craftsmen who were also there for a weekend event.

Having arrived early and unloaded the car, I fiddled around connecting the tender and loco, filled the tender and boiler with water, oiled all the works and was ready to go. Accordingly I was invited to run second, but because of being a late entry I was requested to complete the paperwork prior to the competition start, So having borrowed a pen and set to, with the description of the model and any other interesting detail or history (which could not have been that bad because the words were used in the Model Engineer!), I handed in the notes well before the judges had started with the first competitor.

The track was egg shaped with the steaming bays located in the centre of the track around the lower bend. There was a very nicely constructed covered station, complete with passenger truck storage under the bench seating. Picket fencing separated the public from the rails and the entry road for members is bridged over the track forming

an interesting feature. The rails were of aluminium for 2.5, 3.5 and 5" gauges mounted on timber sleepers with steel supports. Anti tip rails were fitted all round. As one member commented, the construction was probably over engineered but it certainly looks smart. The club is actively making an extension which will add one and a half times its current length, this will make this a very testing track to drive with an incline all the way back to the station.

On to the competition. I watched with nervous trepidation as a fellow hobbyist was put through the test of being watched steaming up and describing the model all at the same time.

Glad I took the decision to pre-water and oil the loco. And on their test laps I made a big note of the fact that judges do not put water in the boiler or coal on the fire, so I left the axle pump on and planned to dive into the cabin at the end of each circuit and do the necessary. (Lucky it was a small lap!)

Because of a small delay to the first competitor (with a Maid of Kent), my test was started without all the judges being present. So I quickly swung into action, checking water and noting that the grate was fixed OK. In with the charcoal, tried to light a shovel full and switching on the blower all whilst talking to the judges. Trying desperately to sound that I knew all about the loco (after having only driven it once before!) Apart from the beautiful bits of shiny steel that whiz round and other bits you can't see inside the hot bit, its got Baker valve gear and symphonic tubes (technical bit), what ever they are.

Then they asked what additions or work I'd done to the loco. "Err well - none, apart from cleaning, a full de-scale, checked all clacks and valves worked properly, boiler tested and a repaint in a striking blue with white and black lining, "So no machining?" they enquire, "Err well no." I knew I had lost their attention by that point and was left alone to complete the task of steaming up, which with Dick's blower on 12V, whilst very noisy was completed in record time. So nice fire, full boiler and onto the track.

From the steaming bays there was a sloping line that had a simple transfer unit at the bottom and a unit similar to that at Colney Heath at the top, except theirs was ELECTRIC Oh what joy. None of that pushing and shoving. Just click the button and you're onto the incline and onto the track. No, not as simple as that. I had to wait as the Maid of Kent was receiving care and attention by it owner to raise more steam for the next judge. So up and down the incline I went to maintain water level and keep the fire going. Still it was good exercise.

Finally on we go. I was asked if I wanted to use the club driving truck. "OK," I said. Then backing onto the unit, which suddenly seemed so much bigger than ours with appropriate heavy construction. It looked like it seated six with an extra bit for the driver. It is also equipped with air brakes, driven by a built-in compressor running on 12v electrics. The brakes are automatically applied when the unit is at rest, so to release or stop you need to turn this small knob which is mounted on a 13 amp sized switch box. Unfortunately because this is offset to the right, to accommodate the clubs electric loco's controls it sticks into your body when leaning over to reach Lassie's footplate. The unit is also equipped with an emergency brake lever strangely located under your right leg.

OK, hooked up and off we go with two passengers on board. You are allowed a couple of laps to prepare the loco for the judge. So the first go round was getting used to the track, building up the fire and checking the by-pass valve was set at just the right place.

Two laps later back to the station and roll to a stop. The judges were not quite ready so I was asked to go round again.

Releasing the air brake and pulling gently away, knowing I had a little slip up starting the back incline on the laps before, I opened up the regulator just a little more whilst going round the first bend. I looked up and ooooooh **** * there's the first competitors loco with new driver back on the track and stopped! Where's the brake! LEFT LEVER. NO SWITCH - CAN'T FIND IT . UNDER LEG - TOO LATE - BANG!!!

Yes I did it. Every one comes running including the judges to see if all is well. Thankfully, I was just a little shaken but still on the track. Close inspection revealed that the connection bar to the truck had disappeared under the tender and the buffers now pointed at each other. Both of us pulled away slowly, but Lassie had developed a clanking sound from the motion somewhere; but only really audible when applying power. Passengers disappeared rapidly when we reached the station, and the judges were about to drive the loco. But they were now intently listening to this nice little clink-clank from each turn of the wheels, and all had serious frowns of disapproval. However the competition continues and I manage to recover the fire and pump water into the boiler after each lap. I got that down to a fine art, and at least I did not have the additional problem of a stuck open regulator as suffered by the Doris.

That's it - all over. And knowing I had totally lost any chance of a points placement I was feeling a little low. The Maid of Kent's owner came to the rescue with a pleasant little brew from the back of his car, and with many apologies for being back on the track. This kept a little group of us going through the rest of the afternoon's proceedings, which were only dampened by heavy bouts of rain. Overall it was a very pleasant day spent in the company of talented engineers and rail enthusiasts at a nicely run club which has some very clever cooks within its membership who bake exceedingly good cakes.

My thanks go to Brendan and family, who on return to home pastures, gave their time and workshop equipment to save my bacon, by bashing out the dents and tracing the source of the clinks and clunks before I returned the loco to my brother who is the guardian of the handsome machine.

Just a final note: - If the Club ever puts air brakes on our trucks, someone please give great thought on the size and where to position the on-off switch!

The opinions and views expressed in this News Sheet are not necessarily those of the Society or editor.

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