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Thoughts of Chairman Dell

Another AGM over, another year gone. Time just seems to fly when you're enjoying yourself. It was nice to have so many members giving in proposal forms for Council members and officers. We were spoilt for choice. Over 40 members attended, perhaps expecting to see some fireworks, but no blood was spilt.

On the Council we have two new members Ron Price and Keith Bartlam. Our new Secretary is Tony Dunbar. Peter Precious is Treasurer and Ron Thorogood is Membership Secretary. Tony must be a glutton for punishment as he has already served as Chairman for six years quite recently. I was most sorry that Beryl has stood down after over 9 years service. She has been a good friend to me and has helped me on many occasions. I am not very strong on procedures at times and a quiet word from Beryl has brought me back on the right path. I shall miss her and I thank her sincerely for all her good efforts over this long period.

While I am in a thanking mood I would like to thank Angela Perham for quietly carrying out her duties providing all the eats and teas we have in the coach. I am sure some members think it all happens by magic and that Kit-Kats (my favourite) just appear. They don't. It's all down to Angela. Thank you very much for a job well done.

Another Lady I would like to thank is Kate Reddish. When you look round Colney Heath and see the flowers and hanging baskets it's all down to Kate. I think she ought to be called Kate Greenish as she certainly has green fingers. And what about our catering manager Peter Shewry; always in attendance every Sunday with a sunny smile (sometimes). He will always stand in if a tea steward doesn't turn up (it does happen). I could name many more especially all our newer members who all seem to work very hard on working parties.

The next thing on my list is that I would like this year to be a year of reconciliation. If you've fallen out with someone for whatever reason have a word, shake his/her hand, be

his/her friend. We all have a common interest whether it be OO, HO, slot cars, marine, stationery steam, video or steam engines large and small.

Lastly I would like all members to write to me promising to do all the Chairman says; also including all officers of the Society and Section leaders. Please include a £10 note to defray expenses and I promise to send you a post card when I go to the South of France.

Lets all look forward to the coming year and make it a year that the Society can be proud of. And a final last thought: its nice to see George Case coming back - we missed you George.

I would like to mention Bernard Lambert for his Bridge over the River Kwai (I mean cuckoo line). Not a life was lost. Also many thanks to Ron Todd for the magnificent tunnel portals. Lastly thank you to all Council members and Section leaders new and old for all the efforts they have put in over the last year. And a big thank you to Jim Macdonald for stepping in at a most difficult period. If I've missed anyone out I apologise; you probably did it so quietly and efficiently that I haven't noticed.... yet!.

Frank Dell

The 56th Annual General Meeting **The AGM was held on 5 May 2000**

The Minutes of the 55th Annual General Meeting were read out, were approved and were signed.

The Chairman then gave his report covering the past year's activities for the Sections and for the Society as a whole, and these will be published in due course - maybe even in this month's News Sheet.

At this point the Auditors - Mike Foreman and Jim Robson - were asked to present the annual accounts to the meeting for their consideration. This they did, responding to a variety of questions put to them by the members. Finally Tony Dunbar proposed that the accounts as presented should be accepted. This was seconded by Rai Fenton, and unanimously agreed. It was agreed by a majority of members that they had done a good job.

The Election of Officers was the next matter to be dealt with. As there were 2 nominations for the Treasurer's post, and 9 nominations for 5 Council posts, a vote was taken. The Tellers were Jim Macdonald and Jim Robson. So far as the Treasurer's post was concerned there was a tied vote of 23 each for Mike Foreman and Peter Precious. The Chairman discussed the problem with these two gentlemen, resulting in Peter Precious offering to act as an Auditor, leaving Mike Foreman to take over as Treasurer. Your new Council is as follows:

Chairman: Frank Dell. Re-elected unopposed.
Vice Chairman: Mike Collingwood. Re-elected unopposed.
Secretary: Tony Dunbar. Elected.
Treasurer: Mike Foreman. Elected.
Council Members: Jack Edwards. Re-elected.

Ken West. Re-elected
 Mike Chrisp. Re-elected.
 Keith Bartram. Elected.
 Ron Price. Elected.
 Auditors: Peter Precious and Jim Robson.

By now we had arrived at the final item - Any Other Business. It was agreed the Society will invite Water Company staff and families to an Open Day at Colney Heath on Saturday 29th July - probably in the afternoon - when we can look forward to thanking Mr McGown for having been our President for a number of years, and when we can meet and get to know Mr Alexander, the new Managing Director at the Three Valley Water Company. Tim Joiner then gave a brief resume of the portable electrical appliance tests he had recently carried out at Headquarters.

Before closing the meeting the Chairman proposed a vote of thanks for all the unsung members who had helped in so many different ways over the past year, mentioning: the Auditors - Peter Shewry expert teamaker at Colney Heath and H.Q. - Kate Reddish for all the gardening work she does at Colney Heath - Grahame Ainge for an excellent News Sheet - and finally he thanked everyone for their continued support. The meeting closed at 9.50 pm. - when some tired and drained folk quietly wended their way home including me, your now ex-Secretary.

Beryl Collingwood

[From the New Secretary ~ May Council Meeting](#)

The May Council Meeting took place just 4 days after the Annual General Meeting! Consequently, the new Council members (Tony Dunbar - Secretary, Ron Price and Keith Bartlam) hardly had time to draw breath before being thrown in at the deep end.

Fortunately, April had been a quiet month with very little correspondence being received or sent, e.g. rally notices from Royston and Cambridge MES and a programme from Sutton, all of which had been passed to Jim Macdonald for display.

The Southern Fed. had informed us of the death of the Treasurer Reg McGhie. A letter of condolence had been sent to Terry Dickson, stepson of the late Graham Balcombe whose obituary had been published in the May News Sheet.

An Open Day is to be held on Saturday, 29th July, 14-00 - 18-00 hours for us to greet our new President, David Alexander and say 'adieu' to Jim McGown on his retirement. Staff and families from the Three Valleys Water Company are being invited to participate. You and your loco (or boat) will be needed as well - please note!

Three new members were elected.

Other items - The reconstruction of the British Legion has commenced. Meanwhile their Committee are meeting at our HQ on a monthly basis on a Monday evening.

General meetings would be held at HQ throughout the summer period with speakers being supplied internally. How about you?

Marine Section meetings are now being held at the Pond at Colney Heath for the

summer season.

The first working party, organised by the HQ Committee, has taken place. and an immediate improvement was noted.

Delivery of three new passenger trucks is imminent.

Working parties are continuing at the track throughout the summer.

That's all for this month - a bit disjointed but I hope to improve next time.

Tony Dunbar

Election of Officers Up-Date

The week after the AGM the first Council Meeting was held at Headquarters at which it was learnt that due to a number of other commitments, it was unlikely that the new Treasurer - who was not present - could attend many meetings. The possibility of changing the meeting to accommodate him either to the first week in the month or on another evening, was discussed with the end result being that the present day and week - second Tuesday every month - suited the majority of Council members.

The Chairman has now discussed this problem with both Mike Foreman and Peter Precious. As it was a tied vote at the Annual General Meeting, it was agreed that Peter Precious is now Treasurer, and Mike Foreman will once again with Jim Robson act as Society Auditors.

Mike Collingwood

Loco Section News

Confusion!

I gather from a conversation at the track last weekend that confusion reigns over the implementation of spark arresters to locomotives and coal fired vehicles. Firstly may I explain to those who are new to the Society or have forgotten the procedures; you vote for a Section Leader and appoint a track committee on his recommendation. It's been like that from the start of the Society and I have no intention of changing it. After consultation with interested parties the Section Leader makes the final decision.

As Section Leader I have discussed the matter with the track committee and it was agreed to put the proposal on spark arresters to both a General and Loco section meeting. This has been done and the decision to implement the popular recommendation adopting spark arresters has been made by me. The timetable appears at the end of this article.

More Grief

I am very reluctant to put barriers up and exclude people from enjoying a day out at Colney Heath, but in the interest of safety and the protection of all concerned I must remind members of the very strict rules we have on youngsters driving vehicles on days that the public, private parties or visiting clubs attend Colney Heath.

No person under the age of 16 is allowed to drive or sit between the driver and the controls of any vehicle whether it is steam or electric powered on the main raised or ground level track or if a traction engine, on the road.

This rule may seem rather harsh as some youngsters are much better drivers than many adults, but for insurance reasons alone the rules must be obeyed at all times.

This however gives us a problem, for if we read our constitution our whole purpose as a society is to promote and enjoy the hobby. Letting youngsters drive steam engines is possibly the best way to guarantee its survival. So what can we do? One suggestion that I am rather keen on is to have a family day at the track, with the driving given over to our younger or young potential members. This could be a Saturday in the summer and be incorporated with a lunch-time BBQ. Supervised driving with steam and electric traction by all youngsters would be encouraged. Any member who would like to help organise such an event or has any other suggestion please contact me. It would be nice to turn this into a family day for members.

Better news ahead.

I have decided with the approval of the Track Committee to set up three new sub-committees. These are for the purpose of advance planning on three specific areas at Colney Heath. The First is The Ground Level Extension Committee. It is to be chaired by Les Brimson and will include Tony Dunbar and John Caldwell. The main purpose of this Committee is to look at the work needed to extend the ground level over the next 6 or seven years. The second is The Coach Restoration and Catering Committee and will be chaired by Mike Foreman. The purpose of this Committee is to plan and evaluate the work needed to bring the carriage up to an acceptable standard for the long term needs of the Society. And the final sub-committee will look after all matters relating to the Boating Lake with Tom Luxford representing the Track Committee and John West joint Chair. This committee will also include Frank Inman and Terry Hammer.

Members who would like to contribute to any of the above committees please contact me.

Magic Catering

As if by magic all the provisions just arrive at the coach on a Sunday and have done for as long as I can remember. The magic in this case has been the hard work of Angela Perham, who to my recollection has received very little credit for this very important job.

As many will be aware Derek is planning to retire this year and I have it on good authority that Angela would like to give up this task giving her more time to find jobs for Derek to do! I am most grateful for all the hard work she has put in over the years. It is appreciated by all. My wife has agreed to take over this job until someone who would like to do it permanently comes forward. She has given up on finding jobs for me!

Birthday Parties

The last few weeks have seen three private events at the track. This gives us a small financial profit allowing us to buy material for the continuing working parties improving the facilities for members. With all the Club locos in good order it's a good time to enjoy a pleasant afternoon giving pleasure to so many. For those who couldn't come to the winter working parties we would welcome you in the summer. Grass cutting and general

maintenance now happen on Sunday mornings.

Spark Arresters Timetable

All Club coal fired engines are to be fitted with spark arresters immediately.

All persons willing to pull passenger carrying trains with their own locomotives must fit arresters before Aug 2000.

All Locomotives running on public running days must have arresters fitted before Sept 2000.

All Locomotives running at Colney Heath Track must have arresters fitted before the start of the next running season (i.e 2001).

*Jim Macdonald
Section Leader*

Notice of signal change

Following discussions our signals engineer, John Riches, has changed the indication given by the traverser.

From now on, when you push the traverser onto the track, three sets of lights will normally change. These are:-

1. The traverser approach by the signal post will indicate RED.
2. The station departure will also show RED.
3. If the station section is clear, the approach lights will now change to AMBER.

The signal indications given by ordinary traffic on the track have not changed.

Mike Hodgson

Editorial ~ The News Sheet Cover

Over the past 55 years the cover of the News Sheet has I think been changed at least three times. The May edition design was introduced about July 1988 by Bert Mead when he was Chairman of the Society. Although it has served the Society well and some may regret its passing I felt it was time for a change. And so starting with this June edition we have a new cover. It has been approved by members of the Council and Section Leaders so I hope you will agree the change is worthwhile.

The main feature of the new cover is that every month it will have a different picture. This month it has three pieces of clip-art which as you will see are not as accurately drawn as us modelers would have liked. However, they are from a series which is the best available at the present time and I will do my best each month to choose examples which are at least recognisable as the prototypes they purport to represent. I'm sure many will spend a little time each month trying to spot the awful mistakes in them!

More importantly I would like, whenever possible, to use a photograph for the front page and I would like to invite members to submit photos to me. The guidelines for this are as follows:

- 1) Photos should preferably pertain to Society models or activities (past or present).
- 2) They should be very clear and mainly consist of a single subject. (Long distance shots will not reproduce well.)
- 3) They should be sent to me with an SAE for return together with a caption or explanation of the subject.
- 4) By some means or other I will render them suitable for our printing process without damaging them. (i.e. they will be reproduced in matt black and white and where possible will be scanned with a computer. Some detail will be lost in these procedures.)
- 5) I cannot guarantee to use all that are submitted - the maximum that can be used for the cover in a year is 12.
- 6) Photos sent to me are at your own risk but I will take every possible care with them.

Finally, and most important of all, the new cover will incur no extra cost to the Society.

The Britannia debate

I was delighted last month to be able to include Peter Kearon's excellent article on the Britannias. Equally this month's article by Bob Fitzhugh is a joy to read. Since they were built the Britannias have been one of the most controversial of steam locomotives. Quite why is not certain but it may be because being the last class of engines designed and used for express passenger work on all regions of BR they are known to us all and not being a product of any one of the 'big four' they inevitably were compared with each region's existing locomotives.

Although I cannot claim to be an expert on them I feel I have probably read everything that has ever been written about them. So I can tell you that in Peter and Bob's thoughts and recollections there is new information. It really does say something important about our Society when we can publish authoritative articles which add to informed debate.

Grahame Ainge

Slot Car News

In the last 26 years the sun has shone once at Easter. It snowed 6 times and rained the rest, so it was inevitable that the British GP was heading for trouble. It was nothing short of a miracle that it didn't rain on the race day. That must have been little consolation to the thousands of paying customers who were told to keep away because Silverstone resembled the Somme. It always rains at Wimbledon and no-one tells tennis fans to stay away. OK they have to suffer Cliff Richard singing to them but that is almost better than nothing.

Of course nobody was to blame. Not the owners of Silverstone who only had eight months to do something about the fact that it might rain in April and they might have to do something about the car parking arrangements. Not Bernie Ecclestone who only sets the calendar and has to have his say so before anything happens in F1. So who is to blame? It must be the fans because they only had to pay £90 to turn up and turn the fields surrounding the track into a muddy quagmire, block the roads and make it difficult for the corporate guests and VIP's to get in. Such is the way of sport these days.

Money and the people that bring it are far more important than the real fans.

I think our own racers are a shy bunch because no-one was particularly forthcoming on their successes or otherwise at the recent nationals. I believe Greg Harwood did quite well in Saloon and the NLSME team only lost the team race by 3/100 of a lap. Better luck next year.

The problem of vanishing marshals has appeared again. Please remember that a race can't begin without them and the longer it takes to round you up the longer it takes to get down the pub!

I took my family to Colney Heath at Easter and was very impressed with the way the amenities have improved over the years. The boating pond is much bigger than I imagined. I wish I still had my model boat. My daughter certainly enjoyed herself on the trains and I shall be very interested to see the new ground level section with turntable working. I hope that this might spur on some of my fellow slot racers to take a trip up to Colney Heath and see what is happening. It does make for a nice Sunday afternoon out.

[Tyttenhanger Gazette](#)

[Derek Perham's 5" LMS 20 Ton Brake Van](#)

As no topic had been arranged for the May Loco Section Meeting and Derek Perham found himself in the chair at short notice he brought along his LMS 20 ton guards van to show us. He has already made several wagons to haul behind his Speedy and following full size practice has chosen to finish the train off with a guards van.

The model is at the running chassis stage and follows the Doug Hewson design which is exactly to scale. An underframe kit was purchased for about £70 from Doug which is good value for money. Much of the frame work is 'U' section steel which is nicely formed. The tooling that makes them is superb. The angle brackets having three rivets on each face, which are in line, make it difficult to get the rivets in as the heads clash. Some brackets had to be left off as they could not be riveted in place.

The brakes are, like all parts, true to scale and will operate by turning the wheel in the middle of the floor of the van. Many jigs were made and the whole assembly took many hours to make. Hoops will be fitted under the mechanism so that if a pin should come out and a link fall it will be arrested and not damage the track or derail the van. On the GWR a chain was fitted for the same purpose.

The linkage pins are headed and drilled 1mm dia for 1/64" split pins. The axle leaf springs are made from Reeves spring steel which is not hardened. They can be drilled using a slow speed, a sharp drill and a little cutting fluid.

The spring buckles are folded from 1/16" material to a 'U' section then a plate silver-soldered underneath which is tapped for a screw to secure the leaves in position. The folding was done with a punch and die made to suit, the bench vice being the press. Derek found the use of a bench shear handy for cutting the springs to length.

The axleboxes were made from three pieces of bar silver-soldered together. This saves buying a casting or machining from solid.

In order for the guards van brakes to stop the train the van has to be ballasted. On the LNER vans the whole of the chassis beneath the floor was filled with concrete. The LMS however had two ballast boxes riveted under the frames, Derek's were made from sheet steel and filled with gypsum which looks like concrete.

The wooden floor was made from one piece of 1/8" thick birch ply, as is the superstructure. The plank effect was created by milling with a 'D' bit back and forth across the sheet.

The model was up to Derek's high standards of craftsmanship and would make a pleasing distraction from loco building. We thanked Derek for a superb presentation.

Roger Bell

The Britannias - The Other Side of the Coin ~ By Bob Fitzhugh

I read with interest the article in the May news sheet regarding the Britannia Class locomotives. Whilst I am not in a position to dispute any the assertions concerning experiences on the Western Region, I would like to look at the 'other side of the coin' and acknowledge their positive attributes.

Firstly we must remember the immediate post-war conditions prevailing at the time the design was inaugurated. The railway system was at its lowest ebb in so far as the state of locomotives, rolling stock and infrastructure were concerned. Materials, fuel and most of all labour were in short supply or of dubious quality. The parameters within which the designers were working must have been something like these:-

1. Produce a machine which will be easy to service and have a minimum maintenance requirement.
2. It should be capable of steaming satisfactorily burning coal of varying quality.
3. It should be able to attain high mileages between main works overhauls and attention at such overhauls should be a minimum.
4. Whilst being principally aimed at passenger work it should have a mixed traffic capability.
5. It should have as good a route availability as possible.

These requirements dictated the design which emerged with the following features:-

1. A large boiler with wide firebox and adequate combustion chamber. This in turn led to the Pacific wheel arrangement.
2. Two cylinders made as large as possible, with outside motion for easy access.
3. The revolutionary design of integral welded horns, and very adequately stayed and stiffened main frames.
4. Roller bearings throughout.
5. A self cleaning smokebox and rocking grate.
6. As much of the pipe work for auxiliaries, control valves, manifold, etc placed outside the cab.

It should also be remembered that these locomotives aspired to be Class 7 only and were

never expected to out - or even equally perform in terms of power and speed, the more costly Class 8 machines of the pre-war and pre-nationalisation era. I would submit that there was no pre-nationalisation design which could so well satisfy ALL the requirements I have listed.

Peter's article highlights the poor starting performance of locomotives with rear carrying axles. The weight transfer effect is a matter of physics and there was nothing the steam locomotive designer could do to prevent this. In my younger days I had much footplate experience on ex LNE Pacifics and V2's and knew many of the Kings Cross and Copley Hill (Leeds) top link drivers. A number of them, unofficially of course would sometimes allow me, as a Motive Power Trainee, to have a go in the driving seat. I recall that my first attempt at a start from rest was indeed pitiful and accompanied by the wheels spinning as described in Peter Kearon's article. However, I soon learnt the correct technique, which was to watch that invaluable aid, the steam chest pressure gauge, observing the pressure rise as the regulator is opened and easing it back closed if the pressure rises too high or too quickly. In other words the potential slipping is corrected before it occurs and a clean, though not necessarily rapid get away ensues. The important thing is not to be in a hurry and to remember that if slipping is allowed to occur then adhesion is lost and the overall start will take longer.

Once the train was underway the locomotive was 'notched up' and the regulator fully opened. On these LNE locomotives the normal practise was to leave the regulator wide open and drive purely 'on the lever'. This practice together with the low cylinder clearance volumes and high superheat was the reason for their high front end efficiencies.

With regard to slipping on the move, that well known Kings Cross driver, Bill Hoole, showed me the best way of dealing with this was by leaving the regulator untouched but rapidly winding up the reverser until the slipping ceased and then slowly letting it down again towards the original setting. This was a more controllable method than closing the regulator and kept optimum power applied to the wheels continuously. I do not know however, whether it could have been so successfully applied generally to other classes.

My personal experience of footplate riding on the Britannias was confined to a few trips over the GE Line where they were indisputable masters of their job. They could not however, be 'notched up' to the same degree as the big East Coast Mainline engines and their riding always seemed a little harsh. In later years (1959/60) my work involved frequent travelling over the Midland Mainline to and from Derby. My observation was limited to that from the train using a stop watch. The Britannias worked turn and turnabout with Rebuilt Scots on the Manchester services and whilst my very fastest trip was with a Scot, in average day to day service there appeared to be nothing between the two classes. Both could be relied upon for a good performance over this undulating route.

Here then is a tribute to the Britannias, a product that generally fulfilled the requirements of its time, perhaps not one of the star performers, but an everyday locomotive which was basically less demanding than most in its servicing and maintenance requirements.

Bob Fitzhugh

[Stationary Steam and Traction Engine Section](#)

The run on flour sieves is continuing apace! Frank is looking for a King sized version to fit his roller, but don't forget that if you run a traction engine at Colney Heath large or small you need a licence, insurance and above all the flour sieve on the chimney.

Brendan has seen the light at last and finally admitted to being a stationary steam man. He's been building his Maclaren for some time now, but at last he has come out.

On 29 July we will be holding a day for Three Valleys Water. I expect Ron, myself, Frank and his roller and possibly Terry but it would be nice to see some of the other steam road vehicles in the Club on show. What about a table of running Stationary Steam engines? I'm sure that our visitors would enjoy them. I used to love Ralph Dapling's and Les Sherman's set up.

I'm looking for a driver/drivers for my Burrell for the Colney Heath School fete on the 17th June. Give me a call 020 7794 5915.

The weekend of 3rd and 10th of June we will be at the Leighton Buzzard and Whitwell Rallies. If you want to visit let me know and I'll send you directions.

Build a traction engine and you'll never have to wait in a queue while you run out of water. Traction engines can overtake!

John Squire

Spotlight on John Old

Our Editor has twisted my arm to put pen to paper and tell you about myself. Sixty-seven years of my life can surely only be of interest to my Mum and Dad and the latter forty four years to my wife, so I will only bore you with a little info on my filming activities.

But firstly - did you know that Father Christmas can't spell!

When I was a rather naïve 10 year old Cornish lad I sent a note up the chimney to Father Christmas asking for a yacht and what did I get? A Football.

My father, a keen football player for Newquay AFC (known as the peppermints because of their red and white shirts) and following Cornish tradition of giving someone a present of something you want yourself I was given this football, a heavy leather thing with a bladder inside and a leather lace capable of cutting your head open if you were foolish enough to try heading the damn thing. Boxing Day was a freezing cold day and I was dragged to the nearest patch of grass with 2 bamboo canes for goal posts which I had to stand between whilst Dad practised taking penalties.

Wearing his hobby stankers (Cornish for hob nail boots) he blasted the ball in my direction - straight for my angelic little face. Frozen to the spot by fear and cold I copped it full on the hooter. Result: Dad 1 goal, lad 1 bloody nose - end of my interest in football!

However, to his credit and Father Christmas having learnt to spell by then, the following year I did get my yacht. It was my pride and joy, the most magnificent model in the

whole of Cornwall. I had to stand on tip toe to reach the top of the mast. The hull was carved from a solid lump of wood by Harry Hutchinson who ran the local boating lake. He had lost 2 fingers from each hand helping to build the viaduct which carried the main line railway into Newquay but he could still manage with quite intricate workings.

Whilst cycling to the boating lake one day I caught the mast of the yacht in the wheel of my bicycle and chopped a couple of inches off the top. I went home in tears but my sister's boyfriend repaired it for me by wrapping a piece of tin can around the join and soldering it. He was an apprentice sign writer and painted the name on the bow for me in big bold letters "RED FURY". I still have the yacht today with the original red sails, now moth eaten, and the bit of tin can well rusted. Perhaps one day you may even see it up at the pond at Colney Heath. It is well over 60 years old and like me showing signs of wear and tear.

I first became interested in photography when I borrowed my mother's Kodak box Brownie and took black and white photographs of an antirrhinum. My first job as a farm labourer provided me with the means to buy my own camera, an Ensign Ranger MKII which cost me three weeks wages (nearly £13).

It wasn't until I came up to "Lunnun" that I could afford the luxury of pictures that moved (cine) and sound could be added (albeit separately from the pictures). Black and white film was 2/6 (12 ½ p) for 4 minutes and we seldom used colour because it was five bob (25p).

When I secured employment as a Toll Inspector with the corporation of London (my son informed his teacher that I inspected toilets!) I had to collect the tolls on all the fish entering Billingsgate Market. This brought me into contact with many people and lorry drivers from all over Europe. Some of these lorries had very dodgy tailboards and things were known to fall off occasionally. It was about this time I was introduced to video. After 16 years service I was made redundant. My redundancy money enabled me to purchase a very good still camera (Canon EDS 650) and an even better camcorder, a Canon EX1 H18 and I have just recently acquired a Panasonic digital video camcorder. The picture quality is almost professional standard and the sound reproduction superb.

Back in the early seventies, having become disillusioned with the dictatorial way Albion Films (an amateur group) was being run, three pals and I decided to form a more friendly and sociable club and Hornsey Cine was born.

Three quarters of the Albion people then joined us and we hired the Moravian Church Hall in Priory Road, Hornsey, hence the name.

After a few happy years the hall was let out during the day as a pre-school nursery for young children (I love children, having with my wife, brought two boys and a girl into this world). However, having to clear away to one side a varied assortment of plastic ride on toys, sand pits and other paraphernalia made things very difficult for holding our meeting and new premises were urgently needed.

Whilst walking my collie dog, Sunny, in Queens Woods one day I bumped into Dave Lawrence, an old Albion Film Club member, who was also involved with the NLSME. He said he would enquire into the possibility of hiring the main room at HQ.

We were then informed that the lease did not permit sub-letting but we could use the room if we all became NLSME members. About 15 of us did just that. We were of course a bit concerned we may lose our identity as we were quite well known by then in

the amateur film world through entering competitions against other North Thames clubs under IAC rules (IAC being the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers, our hobby's governing body).

Every year we take part in the Triangle competition. I am often asked what this amounts to. Basically it is a competition open to all clubs affiliated to the IAC. It is divided into regions (ours being the North Thames Region - which is much larger than the name suggests). There are usually between 20-30 entries and these are split into groups of 3 (hence the name Triangle). The winner of each Triangle goes into the next round and the winner from the second round of Triangles go on until there are only three clubs left and then one grand winner emerges. There are also trophies for the best set theme and best open section films. Each club has to enter three films - one documentary, one open section and one set theme. This year's winning club will set the theme for next year's competition and so at least one of the films has to be made in the current year. The three films must not exceed 45 minutes in total.

All this may sound very complicated and will be boring to a lot of readers but is included in response to many enquiries regarding the Triangle. The set theme last year was "The Card" whilst this year it is "Time". I was fortunate enough to win the Triangle with my "Time" this year and the film has gone as an entry into the Lesley Gillam Trophy. We are all very pleased because it is only the third time the Club as qualified for this coveted trophy. Although I wrote the script and produced it I only did some of the actual camera work. Next years set theme will be "The Big Break" - As you can see the themes offer plenty of creative opportunity and could not in any way be described as restrictive.

If any NLSME member wants to have a go please contact the Video Group Section Leader. If you want your model filmed in action, unfortunately we can't really do it for you but will willingly help you to do it yourself and you can even borrow one of our cameras if you do not own one. As you probably know the equipment to show it on already exists at HQ thanks to the co-ordination of the NLSME Council and the Video Group along with the remarkable achievements of Jim Macdonald in obtaining the video projectors.

Often we host the Triangle competition. Anything up to fifty people come to HQ and we are often complimented on our projection equipment as provided by the Society as a whole with the Video Group chipping in what we can. We were initially known as the Cine Section. Not liking the word section because it suggests we are separate from the rest and also wishing to update our image from the now old fashioned "cine film" we are now known as the VIDEO GROUP and among our members we possess at least three of the latest digital video cameras.

Any NLSME member is welcome to join in our activities just as some of us have been involved in other sections.

In the early days of the pond at Tyttenhanger we helped with the digging and removal of some very prickly Hawthorn bushes. We were so involved with helping Frank Inman and Terry Hammer who seemed to be doing all the hard work with little and only spasmodic help that we completely forgot to film the event. Another opportunity missed!!

Since the completion of the pond interest in the Marine section has increased dramatically. I myself, my son Malcolm and Andy Lawrence have all got boats nearing completion so not only have our filming activities gained ground our other interest are

also widening.

The Video Group's annual BBQ at Tyttenhanger has also got us involved with some of the Loco Section members who kindly let us ride on and sometimes drive their trains. Sadly due to bereavements and people moving away our group is now down to about a dozen regulars and we would welcome support especially from within the NLSME.

If you would like to find out more about amateur filming why not join us one Wednesday evening at HQ about 8.30pm. I am sure our Ken would be pleased to make you a cup of tea although since the fire we can no longer have a drink at the British Legion next door. Still we do manage a drink at the Triumph at the end of Summers Lane!

May your hobby be as enjoyable to you as mine is to me and unless you want a football for Christmas don't write to Santa Claus and ask for a yacht.

John Old

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

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