

June 2001

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The Chairman's Notes

When I joined this Club on 14th August 1979 I little expected that I would ever be sitting down to write the Chairman's notes. So firstly may I thank the members for voting for me. I shall do my best to serve this Society, membership of which has given me so much pleasure over the last twenty two years.

My first duty is to thank on behalf of you all, those who have stood down from the Council, Frank Dell our retiring chairman, we are going to miss his "Thoughts of Chairman Dell" and his wry sense of humour. Mike Collingwood, our Vice Chairman, not much good at vice but first class at organising our general meetings and getting genuinely interesting speakers. We are going to miss his services for like many things in life which seem to run smoothly the effort which goes into the organisation and delivery are seldom seen but vital to their success. Peter Precious, our treasurer, who stepped in at a moment's notice to fill a breach. On occasion I have clashed with Peter. I would spend all the money but Peter cares for this Society and has protected it from spendthrift Section leaders. Peter has been a firm advocate for the stability and sound financial basis of our Society and we owe him our thanks.

Four of our Council members have remained in office but one of our senior members, Ron Price has decided to stand down this year and allow some fresh blood onto the Council. It is worth remembering that it is thanks to Ron and his generation of members that we have our magnificent track at Colney Heath and our Headquarters building. Thank you Ron for your additional time and efforts as a Council member and now that you have more time we are expecting at least one Gauge '1' loco every few weeks! As to the new members of the council Dick Payne is the Vice-Chairman. He runs a 5" loco and has Gauge '1' interests. Bernard Lambert is to be our new and no doubt parsimonious Treasurer and is the Marine Section Leader. Jimmy Taylor a man from north of St Albans and west of Yorkshire has dabbled in O gauge 16mm narrow gauge, turns wood and is building a 5" loco. Finally, myself as chairman. When I first became a member I was modelling 0 gauge, 16mm scale live steam. Since then my interests have expanded to include 5" locos, traction engines and steam rollers, American H0 and most recently back to the smaller scales with Gauge 1.

At present there are no elected representatives of the Slot Car Section or the Video Group. However the Council is the elected ruling body of a Society that has two major sites and many sections. While each Council member will have his own particular

interests, as Council members our duty is to do our best to represent the interests of our whole and diverse society. I am sure that I speak for us all when I say that this is what we shall endeavour to do.

On a personal note I have a disability, I am a medically diagnosed dyslexic. This doesn't mean that I am unable to read, but I have a very poor short-term auditory memory and I can't spell. So if I forget your name during a conversation even though you have known me for years and years don't be offended, just tell me who you are and I will then remember. However names aside, once a concept is in I retain it and I have an excellent long-term memory.

John Squire

Stolen!!!

The new aluminium fete track was stolen from the caravan on the morning of 17th May. We have reported the theft to the police and Mike Chrissip will publish photographs and a description in Model Engineer. Dick Payne is checking out the local scrap yards in case there is any sign of it. For those who are unfamiliar with it the design is based on tracks used by movie cameras. If anyone has any ideas or sees any signs of it please contact us at once.

Thanks

Marine Mutterings

The first active Sunday has happened!

On the 13th May John Morgan set up his superb harbour and brought along his equally superb Christiaan Brunnings. Many of our own members and a small contingent from the St. Albans Society turned up and a pleasant afternoon was enjoyed by all. The harbour proved to be a good focal point and I hope we will be seeing more of it.

I hope this bodes well for the future and that the lake will prove to be a major attraction this season. Maybe we should try some gentle steering contests soon. I have procured a further six buoys for this purpose – there's optimism for you! The Working Parties to complete the unfinished work have not yet started. Would you all be happier to leave this work until the Winter working season or would some of you like to work in the Summer? Please tell me! The unfinished work is building the 'Shelter' and setting up a lighting system.

Please try to support our two Summer Open Events – Sunday 22nd July and Sunday 16th September. Any further ideas for other Summer events and/or visits would still be very welcome. Also remember the June Meeting at Colney Heath.

Happy boating

From Bernard Lambert

Slot Car News

If June means the Le Mans 24 hrs then May means testing and pre-qualifying for the great race. John Newton and myself had the perfect excuse to indulge some fine food and wine and to watch some motor racing of particular interest. This year marks the return of Bentley after 70 odd years to La Sarthe. Firstly though we took the opportunity to visit the now abandoned race track at Reims (or Ranss as the locals call it). Reims is situated east of Paris in the champagne region which is another good reason for going. There are various rumours that what remains will disappear soon, so as we had the time it was too good an opportunity to miss. It does seem a shame that the French do not appear to recognise their motoring heritage as they single-handedly invented motor racing. Having said that we are not much better but there is at least what remains of Brooklands and what's left of Crystal Palace might just survive as the proposed development there has fallen through.

We set off early Friday morning to catch the ferry only to find there wasn't a space for us. So having to catch the next one we were upgraded to first class. This meant the comfy chair and free coffee in the lounge, free breakfast on the ferry plus a lot of smiling, being called sir and a lot of forelock tugging. Once off the ferry we headed straight to Reims. The first thing we noticed when we got there was the incredible cathedral or more correctly, the bits missing. It is a fine twin tower building with literally hundreds of different carved figures all over it but on top of the towers there was nothing. What it needed was spires – two long spindly things that point to the heavens. This subject caused John and myself to sit in a bar trying to decide what happened to them. Did they spend all their money on the carvings and run out when they got to the top or did the RAF remove them in WW2? (Answers on a postcard please).

Saturday morning burst into the hotel room before I was ready for it but as it wouldn't go away we got up, had breakfast and headed off for the step back in time. The first thing that hit us, or it would have been had we not stopped was the 'Route Barree' signs at either end of the pit straight. We could see the buildings sitting forlornly in a field but the entrance to them at either end of the pit straight was blocked off. Deciding it was too far to walk and the French police would not mind us trespassing on a closed road we drove past the signs, over the pavement and parked by the pits. We spent about an hour walking amongst the pits, grandstands and control tower. It was amazing to think that this was once the home of the Grand Prix, the stands packed to the rafters, the pits a hive of activity and for one weekend in the G.P. calendar the centre of the universe. And now you can't legally get to look at it. I don't know what will happen to the place but there seems to be a lot of local objection to a proposed airport if the graffiti is anything to go by and the track is also in between two major roads so the whole lot might disappear beneath a few tons of tarmac. So after having a good look around and taking some photos we headed off to Le Mans.

After arrival at Le Mans the first thing to notice was, yes you've guessed it, a cathedral, and yes, no spires but there was absently gathering in the town square and that was after all why we came. There was one of this year's gorgeous race cars, some modern road cars and a collection of trucks – sorry, 1930s race cars. It was then time to drive round the track. As you may know parts of it are on French roads and so, open to traffic. It was quite amazing to see how narrow parts of it are and how banked Indianapolis Corner is.

Whilst driving round the back of the circuit we drove straight into what seemed like the Tour-de-France: Push bikes and estate cars with spare bikes on top all over the place. You'll be pleased to know we came second to a teenager on a motobike but didn't get

one of the shiny trophies that were in a hut at the side of the road by the Start/Finish line.

Sunday was test day. The two Bentleys looked effortlessly quick – almost glued to the track. They were only fractionally slower than the fastest Audis who looked like they were working harder. The big disappointment was the two MGs. One stayed in the pits the whole time we were there, apparently unable to start and the other one when it got going didn't even manage a flying lap.

On Monday we headed back stopping for lunch at our usual place Le Bec Helloin. It is a very old village with a famous abbey near Rouen. It is just about the quietest, most tranquil place on earth and a perfect antidote to the noise of Le Mans. This part of France seems still to be suffering the effects of flooding with 'Inondee' signs all over the place. The local babbling brooks and rivers were babbling like mad and a lot higher than the surrounding fields. We got to see how bad it was after lunch. The weekend had developed into 'Do you remember when?' - recounting past hilarious incidents over the years. One of these events still causes great laughter when Bob fell out of the car at a lay-by. On Monday John did exactly the same as we stopped at Le Bec. John got out of the car and disappeared, just like the scene from 'Only Fools and Horses' when Dell vanished behind the bar. When I got round the other side of the car there was a crumpled heap covered in dust, mumbling, 'I didn't see the kerb'. This has now become known as Hallum's revenge. It was just a shame he wasn't there to see it.

We decided to take the old route back to Calais revisiting the old villages we used to drive through before the motorway was built. It is amazing how much cleaner these villages are now there is no through traffic apart from the odd tourist or two – one dusty, one not! As I said earlier France got soggier the further north we went, evident by the height of the river at Rouen. All the riverside trees were now in it. At Abberville it was even worse. There was a massive detour to avoid the south of the Town. When we got to the centre it was easy to see why. It seemed that half of the Town was under water. There were two massive pipes pumping literally tons of water from the streets into the already swollen canal. It was a very strange sight to see the lock gates virtually submerged.

There were no further incidents and we returned home looking forward to the race next month. By the way, do you remember when.....

The biggest event in the slot car racing calendar was also over the bank holiday weekend, namely the BSCRA National Finals. Paul Harwood was the best placed North London member with a 3rd in Saloon. Ian Fisher had some excellent qualifying times but unfortunately couldn't convert them into final placings. But after a gap of three years the NLSME team won the annual team race. The Harwood brothers also set a record. It was the first time three members of a family made the same final at the Nationals.

Calendar for June:

7th Sports
14th 1/24th GP12
21st 1/24th Production
28th 1/24th Production Team Race

From Steve Francis

The Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting 2001

I am pleased to say that with the exception of the Slot Car Section I have received a report from all Sections of the Society. So very good and upbeat they are that I can do no better than present them just as they are. However, in order to round off my term as Chairman I would just like to add a word or two here in the News Sheet. The Loco Section has now a complete run on the ground level from the main station to the turntable by the toilet block. Last Sunday (13th May) an engine was running. (Well done, that man). The garden railway is up and running with many engines running on Saturday and Sunday. The Video Section continues with good films. The 00 and H0 Sections go from strength to strength. The Marine Section is looking very smart and now has a harbour which should add a lot of interest. The Slot Cars continue to slot and Stationary Steam is far from stationary!

So all in all it's been a good year and now we've had the AGM, congratulations to those who were elected and to those who stood for election. I wish all Council members, Section Leaders and members of the Society well and long may we continue. I wish you all farewell as Chairman and I have to say I am already enjoying my retirement.

Now to get back to the individual Section reports:

OO Section Report from Ken West

During the past year of the Society we have shown our two Club layouts at six exhibitions. In April 2000 we took Binegar to a new exhibition at John Keeble Church in Edgware. Over the three day August bank holiday weekend Binegar was shown at the Rutland Railway Museum. In October, Bath Green Park, 24ft by 14ft went to Ashlyns School, Berkhamstead, the first outing for two years and as the scenery and buildings had been completed, it drew many favourable comments. In November Bath Green Park went to Hatfield for two days and performed well. This year we took a revitalised Binegar to a new venue for us – Leigh on Sea. This April we took Binegar back to John Keeble Church, Edgware.

We have a small dedicated membership – Geoff Howard, Dave Green, Ian Hammer, Dudley Willan, Mike and Johnathan Avery. Peter Shewry, one of our most important members, at least to me, is our superb tea maker and biscuit supplier, as most members working at Colney Heath will agree. We occasionally see Adrian Slawson now living at Knebworth and Paul Falcini, who have contributed various buildings to help fill the Bath Green Park layout.

This year the layout in the clubroom has seen a variety of trains running around and at times visitors have run American and continental on it.

Garden Railway Section Report from John Milloy

The major stage of constructing the garden railway has been completed. All the supporting structure is now in place with the legs (4" plastic soil pipes) embedded in concrete with supporting beams, 2"x 4" treated timber, securely attached to metal straps anchored inside the plastic legs which were then filled with concrete. The actual 'baseboard' for the track is 2"x 1" treated timber laid across the supporting beams, leaving approximately 1/2" gaps to allow rainwater to drain through.

The gauge 1 double circuit is complete with its point work and marshalling yard. Great

care was taken to ensure that the radius of the curves at each end were large enough for the larger gauge 1 locomotives. The track used was second-hand 'Tenmille' flexible track, but new 'Tenmille' points had to be purchased. These will have to have point levers added to keep them locked onto the selected road, as they do not have over-centre springs.

For the gauge O track, 'Peco' SM32 flexible track and points have been used throughout. The three track marshalling yard with its associated pointwork is in place, giving one single-line continuous circuit. The track for the planned extension has still to be purchased and laid but the points are in position for this later stage. This extension will be double track, giving a potential very long run for the gauge O locomotives. Eventually point levers will be installed to make the point control easier, though as 'Peco' points have over-centre springs, levers are not essential at present.

Boiler test certificates will be required for any live steam locomotive wishing to run on either of the gauges. It has been agreed that valid boiler certificates as issued by The Association of 16mm Narrow Gauge Railway Modellers will be acceptable as will Southern Federation certificates. All visitors to either track will also have to produce a valid boiler certificate before being allowed to steam.

Ron Todd has built a superb brick-faced bridge to enable safe and easy access to the inside of the tracks. Ron has also produced another bridge, this time in wood, very railway-like in appearance, to provide access to the O gauge extension. These bridges were necessary to avoid having anyone standing between the garden railway tracks and the raised passenger carrying 3 1/2"/5" track.

Close liaison with the Marine Section will be necessary for anyone using radio control equipment. A numbered/coloured peg system is in operation to avoid a clash of frequencies for both 40Mhz and 27Mhz frequency ranges.

Kate Reddish has been busy taking cuttings from her mother's garden for the slow growing evergreen bushes which will, when planted, hide the support legs and add to the illusion of this being a garden railway though at a comfortable height.

My thanks to all those (few) who worked so hard during the winter, enabling us to be ready to run on Easter Sunday, with both circuits in operation.

Video Group report from John Old

Reaching the final of the Leslie Gilham trophy for only the third time in the Group's history was an encouraging start to the year and finishing in the top three out of nine an added bonus. With an average attendance of ten it usually falls to the small proportion of workers (about three) to produce the films while the large proportion of watchers and talkers enjoy the usual round of events such as the Mystery Tour (good fun and good pub at the end) and the Coach Trip (this year to Burghley House (very enjoyable it was).

The summer BBQ at the Track was once again most enjoyable thanks to the drivers who provided rides for us all and kept beer consumption to a respectable level. One of our guests was so impressed he invited the Video Group to his house for our annual dinner. At ten pounds per head and with the profits (over £80) going to Great Ormond Street Hospital it was a terrific bargain for all concerned.

The Christmas dinner at the room above the Stag pub in Enfield was one of the best ever when about 18 of us enjoyed excellent food in a friendly atmosphere.

Despite gaining one new member we lost the services of 'actress of the year', Mabel English, who is now in a nursing home. We wish her well.

The temporary loss of our second headquarters due to the fire at the Legion building where we had arranged to film our set theme production meant we were unable to complete the project in time for the Triangle Competition this year and we had to withdraw. As Group Leader I would like to thank Andy Lawrence who always puts so much effort into keeping the group active, dealing with correspondence as well as putting on evenings and tutorials and making and editing more than his share of our output

Digital film now seems to have awakened renewed interest and four of us now use computerised editing (albeit not always successfully). With advanced technology there is always something new to learn although the older equipment still gets plenty of use.

Everything necessary to complete a video of your own making is available to our group members so it's a pity not more people avail themselves of these facilities on Wednesday evenings at HQ.

Loco Section Report from Jim Macdonald

Since the last AGM the loco section has had a very successful running season at Colney Heath with many popular running days. Visiting club days were so popular that it was decided to hold two separate invitation days this year. Birthday parties again raised much useful cash most of which will go to the maintaining of our Colney Heath site. A Water company invitation day organised to welcome our new president was a great success and we hope to repeat it next year. Many of the Friday evening BBQ's attracted lots of members and the running season was rounded off with our traditional Halloween evening.

The Friday meetings at Headquarters proved popular this year especially the Christmas (Robot Wars) Special.

We where all saddened to hear of the death of Dick Hooke

Winter working parties have suffered this year with the dreadful wet weather. However much work has been achieved in some atrocious conditions. The Ground level railway now runs between the two turntables and trains can now successfully turn at both ends. The coach is in its final stage of preparation for painting with lots of work having gone into its restoration.

Much effort has gone into the general maintenance of our Colney Heath site. A new method of loading the passenger cars on and off the track has been developed and implemented. The signal system has been overhauled and is in tip top condition. And finally the main raised track has had a thorough inspection and five main load bearing sleepers have been replaced.

As the running season starts we hope that all who where unable to attend the winter working parties can appreciate the effort a brave few have put in.

North American Section Report from Clive Winter

The North American Section continues to attempt to fit a quart into a pint pot in terms of its operating space. Trackwork is substantially complete and we are therefore motivating ourselves to get on with scenery and other aspects of the layout, and to ensure that we make the most effective use of the whole room.

Scenery: We have been fortunate this year to be joined by Keith Smythe, who took one look at our landscape and set about improving it. This has inspired others to exigitate. We had forgotten just how basic we have been. We now have backscenes, and windows in half built structures. Corrugated iron is rusting. In places our trains run through scenery which starts to approach the standards of the trains themselves. On occasion phrases like "that's a bit like a stage effect" have been heard, so hopefully we're thinking in broader perspectives than just the trains.

Digital Computer Control (DCC): The branch line is being arranged so that it can run trains using DCC or the conventional cab-control set-up. It seems that in having both on one layout we are pushing back the frontiers of model railway control knowledge – so far as we are aware nobody else has been mad enough to this. There is some apprehension due to the freedom and independence that DCC offers. It also means that it is possible to have a cornfield meet (head-on collision in English terminology).

Exhibitions: As a result of reviving our Young Street Yard layout at the NMRA Convention in 1999 we continue to receive invitations to exhibitions. We were at the de Havilland exhibition November 2000 together with the 00 section. Repeated operations led to some trackwork being revised before the three exhibitions we expect to attend in 2001.

Stationary Steam Section Report (A Soggy Season) from John Squire We started the season at the Zoo over the Easter weekend, which was a dry and sunny event. Our next big event was the Enfield Pageant, which was a total wash out. Leighton Buzzard and Whitwell rallies survived the rain but soft ground restricted the larger engines although small traction engines ran as usual.

The Colney Heath School fete saw Ron Todd's magnificent Burrell up and running. We also ran two other school fetes and took part in the Oxford Street Millennium parade as a result of which John Squire's photograph featured in Worlds Fair and quite right too.

The Three Valleys event at Colney Heath saw the first appearance of two new full size machines. Brendan, Pam and the boys arrived with "Suzy", a splendid showman's engine and John West with his "Super Major" tractor. The line up with the Wallace and Stevens roller, the Aveling "Suzy", the newly restored tractor, Rob Todd's Burrell and John Squire's Burrell looked very impressive.

At the end of August we were at the Heavy Horse show at Holly Farm on the Enfield Ridgeway. The roller had a splendid road run there with the loco section leader at the wheel menacing numerous road users and the miniature Burrell gave rides at the event. Finally in order to demonstrate the power of steam we towed John West all the way back to Colney Heath on his tractor.

Our last rally was a happy weekend at the Barlylands Farm museum near Billericay. The NLSME had two full sized entries and three miniatures at this event. In November we went with the 00 and H0 sections to the de Havilland exhibition and two miniature Burrells gave rides in the car park.

Yet again we were at the London New Years Day parade with three engines and sunshine. It's been a good year despite adverse weather and although we look forward to a year of uncertainties with cancelled events quite possible due to Foot and Mouth Disease we will not let it stop us having fun.

Marine Section Report from Bernard Lambert A winter of very poor working weather

has seen the completion of the paved seating areas, the tidying up the launching pit and the general landscaping of the grassed surrounds. It is hoped to complete the original planned work during the summer by building a shelter and providing a lighting system.

This work should make the Lake a very pleasant venue for boating activities. We have also been offered the occasional loan of a floating harbour to add to the interest of sailing on the lake

The Section has booked two Open Days during the summer season to which we hope to attract members from other Societies. We also hope to achieve a respectable turnout of our own members on Sunday afternoons and on Marine Fridays. The level of enthusiasm for boating at Colney Heath has yet to be properly tested but we remain optimistic that the Lake will prove a worthwhile facility. On the financial side the Section has some funds. These should cover likely running expenses and the cost of the lighting but we will require some assistance to cover the cost of building the shelter.

From Frank Dell

Tyttenhanger Gazette

A while ago Naughton Morgan was asked to give a talk on his working life in the marine world. He recalled he had done this before, a long time ago. It was in fact when meetings were held at Church Farm, probably in the 1970s. His talk entitled 'Mechanical Disasters at Sea' was the subject of the May Loco Section meeting.

Naughton's career started as a five-year apprentice with CH Bailey Ltd at Barry in South Wales where they had a dry dock and workshops for ship repairs. We saw some photographs of his fellow apprentices, one holding a giant caliper that would measure diameters of about three feet.

His next seven years were spent at sea in the Merchant Navy starting on a general cargo fridge ship on route to Tenerife, Cape Town, Australia, New Zealand, Panama and so right round the world. The ship was powered by two Doxford six cylinder vertically opposed piston, two-stroke engines; it was twin screw. The engine designs were described, which were quite unlike the conventional car engine. The pistons on some were water cooled with the risk of the water leaking into the lubricating oil. Just 2% of water in the oil would cause rapid wear.

Naughton's next ship was the Adelaide Star on which he was Second Engineer. The ship was in a poor shape. The 200 PSI Scotch-type boiler would not generate enough steam to run all the auxiliaries whilst on standby, so lights and fans were turned off. Hurricane lamps were used in the engine room. Standby described the periods when the ship was manouevring, as opposed to normal non-stop running at sea.

Having qualified for an engineer's certificate to operate a motor (diesel) ship the next stage was to qualify for a steam turbine certificate. One such turbine ship (the Paraguay) had high, intermediate and low pressure turbines, the high pressure turbines running at 360 PSI. This gave a speed of 17 knots – quite fast for the day. It would take seven weeks to get to Argentina and back. It had accommodation for 70 passengers but the only time Naughton saw them was at a cricket match with them. He was 12 months on the Paraguay.

The following seven years were spent at college lecturing marine engineering to those studying for their tickets or certificates. All the lads were dead keen to learn.

About the Clubroom were many good photographs of ships and we were shown others of corroded valves and other damage. Whilst on a 15,000 ton ship near Rotterdam travelling at about eight knots in poor visibility they rammed into the side of an 180,000 ton ship. It holed the one-inch plates on the side of the ship. If the collision had been another 30 feet aft it would have flooded the engine room. The bow on Naughton's vessel just had a mark on it. Asked why he didn't see the ship, the deck officer replied that it was so big it filled the radar screen.

The picture of a ship on the rocks broken in two was a 'Freedom Vessel', a 15000 ton ship built by RMI in Japan, some three years earlier. These ships replaced the Liberty Ships. Some 160 were built. It was off Portugal, full of grain in February 1974 with only one anchor down and not enough chain on the sea bed. Whilst the engineers and the deck officers were having breakfast the ship was blown onto the rocks at a beautiful sandy beach. It was to be a total loss. Naughton went on board and walked along a twisted gangway to inspect the other broken half of the ship. Some photographs showed the angle at which it lay. Parts were identified, like pumps which were taken off by the salvors and used as spares for the rest of the fleet.

On the table in front of us was a 20" diameter exhaust valve. Its 2 1/2" diameter stem was bent through 90 degrees where it had broken off and fallen on top of the piston. The piston, cylinder liner and cylinder cover had to be replaced as well.

Whilst on a 44,000 ton ship to Durban one of the prop-shaft bearings was over-heating. These shafts can be very long. On some vessels the engine was in the centre of the ship so the shaft, or succession of them bolted together, ran nearly half the length of the ship and the bearings were water-cooled. One would walk down the prop-shaft tunnel and place ones hand on the bearing to check its temperature. But whatever happened, no matter how hot it got, the shaft was never stopped as it would seize and not move again. As Naughton said, 'keep it turning until it is a pile of shavings on the floor. In order to remove a length of shaft a hole might have to be cut in the side of the ship and a floating crane used. The number one hold would be flooded to tip the ship so the prop would be out of the water. Ship repairers would have lathes with a faceplate six feet in diameter and a bed 30 feet long for re-turning a 15 ton shaft.'

Naughton's role for 30 years was as superintendent for two shipping companies and then fleet manager for UB shipping which had 18 ships. Whilst the engineers on watch on a ship would attend to day to day repairs and some maintenance, shipyards would do the bigger jobs. Naughton's role amongst other things was to fly out to a ship in trouble and supervise the repair on behalf of the Company.

A flight to Miami and then on to Port Everglades, Florida for another job; a 37,000 ton ship with three crankshaft bearings gone. The white metal had run out and it was down to steel on steel. The local repair company had a lathe, a borer and a push bike. After the insurers had assessed the damage, the crank was reground *in situ* in the engine. Covers would be removed from the side of the engine for access. On some engines, perhaps all, there are two shoulders on each crank. These act as a datum and a guide for the grinding machine to rotate around. The main crank may have to be turned for access to the lower side. A 1/4" was removed from the diameter to clean it up. The surface finish would have to be like a mirror for the bearing to last. The grinding dust had to be cleaned out before the engine was run. The connecting rod bearing was removable from the rod. This unit of both bearing halves weighed four cwt and the crankshaft was 680 mm in diameter.

The large nuts were generally tightened using a short stubby spanner and a 14 lb hammer. The modern approach is to stretch the stud hydraulically and then tighten the nut up.

As the meeting closed we thanked Naughton for this insight into the heavy end of engineering which for many of us, used to light engineering, was another world. After all a propeller he spoke of was 28 feet in diameter and weighed 92 tons. One of the largest marine engines is the Sulzer 12 RTA96C which develops 90,000 BHP at 100 RPM. It has 12 cylinders. Each one is 960 mm bore and 2500 mm stroke!

by Roger Bell

The Talyllyn Railway

I enjoyed reading Bernard Lambert's article in last month's News Sheet detailing the two Welsh narrow gauge preserved railways, the Talyllyn and the Ffestiniog. Having also travelled on both, I do agree with his verdict that in spite of all the changes that both have had to make to comply with modern law and modern passenger requirements, the Talyllyn does manage rather better to convey something of the flavour of a bygone age – which is of course what the preservation movement is all about.

Perhaps I ought now to declare an interest. Quite a few years ago, I became a life member of the Talyllyn although I must confess that I have done little for them other than to try to remember, every year, to send a donation to cover the shortfall which my one payment (whatever that small sum was) would do against today's expenses. It must also be said that the Talyllyn has one unassailable distinction, which can never be taken from it. More of that later.

The Talyllyn now has six steam locomotives. There are still the original two, made by Fletcher Jennings of Whithaven. The first, a small 0-4-0 saddle tank was delivered in 1864 and was named TALYLLYN. One year later DOLGOCH arrived having the same size cylinders but to a totally different design. These two locos were worked hard and ruthlessly for many years but when the Preservation Society (TRPS) took over TALYLLYN was deemed to be totally beyond repair and was stored. This left only DOLGOCH, in poor condition itself, to do all the passenger haulage. Fare paying passengers were needed desperately.

Obviously, one decrepit loco could not cope with this for long and extra steam haulage power was urgently wanted. It was indeed fortunate that the neighbouring Corris Railway, closed down shortly after being Nationalised, had the same rare gauge of 2ft 3ins. (The Talyllyn, presumably by some bureaucratic oversight escaped this fate, being omitted from the Nationalisation Bill). As a consequence, two of the Corris locos were due for scrapping and the newly-formed TRPS was able to buy them at a low price. One was a 0-4-0 saddle tank built by Hughes in 1868 and subsequently named SIR HAYDN, after the late Sir Henry Haydn Jones, former owner of the Talyllyn Railway (and also the slate quarry which it served). The other Corris loco, also a saddle tank, was built by Kerr Stuart in 1921 and was named EDWARD THOMAS after the Manager of the Railway in Sir Henry's days and who was an immense help to the TRPS. This latter one proved a most useful locomotive. SIR HAYDN, unfortunately, although of the correct gauge, had very narrow wheel treads and this combined with the chaotic and, in places, over-gauge track, made it prone to slipping between the rails and the loco had to be stored until the track could be improved.

A fifth loco came as a gift, although it needed first being re-gauged from its original 2ft. Built in 1918 by Andrew Barclay and subsequently named DOUGLAS, after the donor, Mr Douglas Abelson, it is a 0-4—0 well tank of somewhat European appearance, which I personally find very attractive. Although being very reliable, being smaller than the others it is less powerful and finds difficulty with the very heaviest trains. It is likely that eventually, a pair of trailing wheels will be added as has been done with the other 0-4-0s to steady the long overhang at the rear.

Since these early days, TALYLLYN and DOLGOCH have been completely rebuilt, using some new components but care has been taken to retain the original design almost entirely.

The sixth loco is a much more recent event. The TRPS was able to obtain quite cheaply a 3ft gauge loco built by Andrew Barclay in 1949 and little used. It is very like a larger version of DOUGLAS. As many of its components as possible have been built into a new design, a side tank 0-4-2 and, of course, to the correct 2ft 3ins gauge. It is named TOM ROLT after the first General Manager in Preservation days. He was also the driving force, along with one, Bill Trinder, who piloted the Railway from the estate of Sir Henry to the TRPS. The Railway still has much of the original rolling stock and also acquired some from the Corris. New construction is designed to blend visually with these historic coaches.

In the years preceding preservation the Railway had been losing money and little was spent on maintenance. Even such things as boiler inspection and insurance were unknown. The track suffered also and was literally run into the ground. A photograph exists showing a line of passenger coaches with their roofs at various incredible angles, revealing plainly the state of the rickety track beneath their wheels. Eventually, incredibly, all was improved. Get hold of a copy of the book 'Railway adventure' by LTC (Tom) Rolt. It is the kind of book which will never be out of print and records how, in the early Preservation days, these difficulties were slowly overcome.

Oh yes! That 'unassailable distinction'what is it? The meeting which led to the founding of the Preservation Society was held in the now demolished Imperial Hotel in Birmingham in October 1950. The first train, the start of a regular service, pulled away (by DOLGOCH), on Whit Monday, 1951. The TRPS was, as Bernard rightly says, the first Railway Preservation Society not only in this country but also in the entire world.....and a very sceptical world it was too, especially in such matters as a bunch of daft amateurs having the effrontery to think they could run a railway.

Overpage are photos of three of the line's engines in recent livery. (Sorry no room for a picture of Tom Rolt – Ed)

By Alan Hawkes

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

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