

The News Sheet

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The Chairman's Notes

First of all a big thank you to Donal for so ably standing in the breach. Why we as a Society are so reticent when it comes to taking responsibility is beyond me, especially when in the past we have been so quick to criticise. Anyway thank you Donal; you have done a great job and dragged the Club forward into the Twentieth Century, made us all think about where we are at and have stimulated us such that we now have Section Leaders all over the place and a strong vibrant youth membership.

I have been a member of the NLSME for almost twenty years and have enjoyed every minute of it. It is a privilege to be able to socialize and to relate to folk from all walks of life that have a common interest. That is the enjoyment of model engineering in all its aspects and that includes the video section. I think it is time for me to put a bit back, in return for all the pleasure that I have derived during the past years and so I am very pleased to have been elected as Chairman of this great Society.

However you will have to bear with me as there are some caveats. Although I have officially retired, I still am in great demand as a locum doctor in several General Practices, so often my time is severely rationed. I have other interests outside that of medicine and model engineering and I have a rather complicated social life which should however not conflict with the position of Chairman or compromise it, but could limit the time available.

I expect that many of you may not know me, if you are not frequent attendees at Club functions, so I think a short introduction is required from me. You will generally recognise me by the benign optimistic smile that I carry most of the time.

I left school in Bolton at fifteen and went to train for the sea on board the training ship *Conway*. After graduation I embarked on a career with the Blue Funnel Line and stayed with them for ten years. I left when I got the Extra Masters Certificate, married and taught in a pre-sea college in Stepney for seven years before changing to medicine. I was fortunate enough to qualify at University College London as a mature student and then became a general practitioner in Barnet where I stayed for thirty years until retirement a short while ago. I have just enjoyed taking and passing a MA in Maritime History.

Personally I am neutral. I am agnostic, not a freema-

son and hold no political tendencies, although I am an honorary member of the local Rotary Club and a member of the Chartered Institute of Transport and Logistics.

With regard to the membership of the Society, I have several things that I would like you to think about. They are not in any order of significance but all are important to me.

I wish all the members to use **Commonsense**, to think first and then put forward proposals for actions, and not be dogmatic just for the sake of it.

We all must learn to **Co-operate**, not just between our small groups, but with the wider membership of all sections of the Society; to help and use our expertise for, not only our own sections but for the Society as a whole.

I would like all decisions to have a **Consensus** opinion and not those of just a few. That will mean **Communication** between all sections so that a fair understood opinion can be held. This is where the *News Sheet* can be a forum for the views of members. (Although as Donal said 'If you want to keep something secret, publish it!').

We all must **Contribute** with good will, even if it is just keeping up to date with and contributing to the *News Sheet* because we can no longer get out and about, or to the other extreme being devoted to work in the various sections and their various activities. It would certainly be a very dull society if we were all similar! We reap what we sow.

A sense of **Continuity** must be engendered so that the Society can be driven forward into the Twenty First Century with **Confidence**, hence at the end of the day we will have something to be proud of to hand on to those that follow.

Lastly but by no means least we all must learn the art of **Conciliation**. How that is to be achieved is difficult, but we must succeed at all costs.

If the membership can agree, then my dream will have come true and I will be able to look forward to my time as Chairman of our great Society with joyful anticipation.

Ian Johnston

Secretary's Snippets

The Society has received notification of:

- 1 A two-day rally organised by the Cambridge MES on 25/26 June 2005.
- 2 The Bristol Model Engineering and Hobbies Exhibition on 19-21 August 2005.

A copy of the Aylesbury Link has been received. All these items will be on the Notice Board in the coach at Colney Heath.

Well, our Annual General Meeting is over for another year and as a result, our Society has a new Chairman, Dr Ian Johnston. As Donal said in his Chairman's Report, the year has had its highlights, particularly the 60th Anniversary celebrations held on one of the best sunny weekends of the year. The organisation was superb, with many members contributing in their own individual ways to the event. However, too, the year has had its difficulties and I thank Donal for his fortitude and persistence in dealing with them.

It is now time to move on. The other Officers are staying on for another term of office; however, we welcome Adrian Reddish as a Council member. We say goodbye to Adam Gorski, who decided not to stand this year and thank him for his contribution.

Don't forget that any member is welcome to any of the Council or Tyttenhanger Committee meetings.

They may contribute to the discussions but cannot vote. The dates are advertised in the diary in the News Sheet.

At the EGM which preceded the AGM, changes to the Society's Constitution were discussed. It was agreed that Rule 3, paragraph one, should still apply with no changes, ie the Council will consist of the Officers and five elected members.

Rule 16 was amended to read 'The Chairman of the Society, or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman, failing this, such a member of the Council as the meeting shall agree, shall preside at all meetings of the Council of The Society (except for the Tyttenhanger Committee meetings) and shall in the event of equality of vote have a casting or additional vote'.

The Guidance Notes for Committees (Page 14 of the April News Sheet) proposed amendment was also agreed. This allows the Locomotive Section Leader to choose his working team.

Changes in the subscription rate for year 2006 onwards were also agreed at the EGM. The rates will be £52.00 per year for all full members, £20.00 per year for Country Members, and £1 per year of their age for Junior Members.

David Harris

Treasurer's Report

Now that it is June and the majority of the club have paid their membership for this year, can I remind all those that have yet to pay that this will be the last News Sheet you will receive until you do so. So save me a job chasing; please put your cheque payable to 'NLSME' in the post today, along with your membership card and a stamped, self-addressed envelope so that your membership card and receipt can be returned by post.

The rates for the year April 2005 to March 2006 are:-

Full member £42; Old age pensioner £34; Country member £20; Junior £6

Kieran Corcoran

Cover picture:

Robert Oldfield stokes his GNR class O1 2-8-0 'Sir Nigel Gresley' at Tyttenhanger on 1 May .

Photo: Nick Rudoe

Chairman's Report 2005

Another year has drawn to a close in the history of the North London SME; 2004/2005 has been a year in which the youth of the Society have started to come to the forefront of activities surrounding the Society. The Society has had five members under the age of thirty on either the Council or Tyttenhanger Committee for the past six months and in myself the Society has had probably its youngest ever Chairman. Although this may change I hope that the Society can continue to encourage the younger members of the Society to take a more active part within the Society. It may be because of the more prominent positions of younger members within the Society or purely just coincidence, but the Society has had a lot more junior members joining the Society and it is hoped that the Junior section will be re-established as an active part of the Society once again.

Unfortunately even though the Society has had an influx of younger members, the average age of the Society is still nearer to sixty-five than thirty and this nearly always leads to the Society remembering members who have died and this year is no exception. During 2004/2005 three of our number have died, the first being John Old back in February, Tom Luxford in March and Peter Shewry died just over a fortnight ago. At this time for reflection for the whole Society we take a moment to remember our friends.

In general it has been a good year to be a member of the North London SME; 2004/2005 saw the Society celebrate our sixtieth anniversary with a weekend that the Society can truly be proud of. All of the Society's sections took part with some fantastic displays being provided by all, and perhaps more importantly every Section had some sort of activity for both members of the Society and members of the public to watch. My thanks go out to every one who helped; however big or small your contribution may have seemed your efforts were appreciated by all who attended, and helped raise some £1,300 for the Society.

On a personal level it has been a true roller coaster of a ride with the sixtieth anniversary exhibition being one of the true highs of my time as Chairman as well as one of the lows. Through all of this I am pleased with what the Society has achieved during the last twelve months. I and I am sure many others of the Society's members believe that the Society has

moved forward; the so called rift that has been referred to by some has shrunk with a useful opportunity to clear the air at the EGM held in March.

This last year has seen a change of president for the Society with David Alexander going on to what we hope will be bigger and better things; his replacement at the Water Board Peter Darby has agreed to become the new Society President and I hope that we will have the pleasure of entertaining him soon.

One of the giant leaps that the Society has taken over the past twelve months has surrounded the Society News Sheet. 2004 saw Grahame Ainge step down as the Editor of the News Sheet and for his efforts over the last few years the Society is truly grateful. Grahame's successor is Nick Rudoe and due to this change the Council took the opportunity, in consultation with Nick and all those behind the scenes who were responsible for the publication of our News Sheet, to change the Society's News Sheet printer. This change has meant that Maurice Cummins and his team are no longer responsible for collating the News Sheet each month and again the Society is grateful for their efforts over the years. I hope that you agree that changing the method of printing the News Sheet has greatly improved the quality of this important means of communication within the Society.

Another recent change within the Society surrounds the Society Website; the old version of the site had not visibly changed for sometime, but now thanks to the efforts of Peter Foreman it has had a complete face-lift. The face-lift does not stop at the surface; the whole method of updating the site has been changed and this will allow all sections to modify their own particular area and this should lead to a more effective method of communication within the Society and to the outside world.

The new calendar for General Meetings has now been in place for over a year and the Society has enjoyed some fantastic nights here at headquarters and once at Colney Heath. 2004 saw both the Stationary Steam and Traction Engine Section and the 'HO' Section entertain the Society with the 'OO' Section entertaining the Society in 2005. On top of these three of my favourite meetings were lead by our own members, with Derek Brown's informative talk on CAD, Mike Chrisp's discussion on marking out and

Adrian Newson's talk on mobile phone technology. The General Meetings cover such a varied aspect of life with interest for all members; it is such a shame that we do not always achieve a full house here in the meeting room each month.

Linked with General Meetings the facilities here at Headquarters have been improved with the Headquarters-based sections kindly improving the kitchen facilities that we have on offer here and generally making this building a nicer place to visit.

The Society once again entertained the children from Childs Hill Special Unit and Mencap; along with these two events the children of St. Luke's School and Chernobyl came for the first of what we hope will be many visits over the coming years. It is events such as these that are an important part of establishing the Society within the community and providing opportunity to those who under normal circumstances would not have had the opportunity to participate at Society events, and to show that such events are truly appreciated one of the children from St. Luke's School still asks after the drivers to this day. The Branch Line Society also visited Colney Heath as part of their attempts to have a ride on all the railways in the country with both the members of the Branch Line Society and the North London enjoying a different aspect of our hobby.

The Society has attended several exhibitions over the past year with appearances at the St. Albans SME Exhibition, the Model Engineer Exhibition and the London Model Engineering Gathering, with the Society displaying a fantastic array of models reflecting the Society's interests and my thanks go to all those responsible for these displays that showcase the Society to the general public.

The 'HO' Section have had a busy year and gave the Society its first opportunity to see the new version of Young Street Yard at the 60th Anniversary. As usual the Section encouraged members to attend their annual Christmas evening and provided food and drink as well as the opportunity to have a go on the permanent layout at headquarters. The layout becomes more and more impressive each time I visit with an improved Digital Command Control system that I do not even pretend to understand creating a sound and light show that adds that extra bit of realism.

The 'OO' Section started a new portable layout in 2004 and the Council have been only too happy to provide funding for this exciting project, which will

also be an extension to the permanent layout which is housed here at Headquarters. The opportunity to be able to lay track for two days was too good to turn down and sped up the construction of the layout, or so I am told. It was this opportunity that brought about the unusual sight of a layout under construction at the Society's 60th Anniversary Exhibition. I for one found it fascinating watching the construction of the layout over the two days and was pleased to hear that it ran successfully on its first public outing at the John Keble Church Hall, Edgware, in April. Work has now started on incorporating the layout into the permanent layout.

The Slot Car Section have this year provided the Society with the fold-away tables that you see at the side of the hall. As you may remember, it was suggested last year at the AGM that the chairs in this room should be made easier to stack away so that the hall could be used for other events, and this has happened thanks to the efforts of the Slot Car boys so a big 'thank-you' goes to them. On to a more recent event, the Section has taken part about a fortnight ago in the BSCRA 1/32nd Scale National Championships with the Society represented in several of the categories with a highlight being Michael Ovens' win in the D2 Saloon class final, and just to show that this was not a one-off he also finished third in the Production class final just behind Franz Barillaro who finished second. Congratulations go to both of them and the other members who took part over this long weekend.

The Video Section has had a change in section leader from the late John Old to Dave Lawrence. As always the Video section continue with their many projects and have gradually been improving the excellent audio visual features that we have here at Headquarters; they will soon complete the computer connection to the projector, making life that little bit easier for the many presentations that the Society uses it for.

The Loco Section after being leaderless for sometime this year has had volunteers to become joint section leaders; first we had George Case and Frank Hills and since March Robert Oldfield and Adrian Reddish have taken on the mantle as Loco Section leaders. The section has been active on many projects over the past twelve months; the new kitchen was completed to a usable standard, and like all kitchens in my experience it will never be finished until it is time to rip it out and start again. Work over the winter continued on the rail replacement programme on the mainline at Colney Heath following the purchase of more rails jointly between central funds and the Tyttenhanger

Committee. This has caused even more comments to be passed on the quality of the new section of track with all in agreement that it was a great improvement over the old track.

Like the Loco Section the Marine Section has also had two changes at the helm during the last twelve months. Following Bernard Lambert's resignation luckily Derek Perham stepped into the gap and did a fantastic job as caretaker section leader; Chris Platford has recently taken on the job as the new section leader. During the last twelve months the section have held several regattas which have all been well attended, and perhaps more importantly for the future of the section the number of members who sail on our well maintained lake on a regular basis has increased. The tanker has been refurbished and can often be seen being pushed and pulled around the lake by a couple of tugs.

The Garden Railway Section has been steadily improving the facilities that are on offer at Colney Heath with 2004/2005 seeing the implementation of a new steaming bay area and a turntable. A Mamod circuit has been set up in order to allow some of our younger members the opportunity to get their foot in the door so to speak and take part in our hobby at a fraction of the cost of some of the beautiful models that can be seen running at Colney Heath. As well as running on a Sunday afternoon, Wednesday's have become a regular day for the members to get together. If you have not been able to attend one of these afternoons I can thoroughly recommend them to you; when the weather is favourable, the barbeque is lit and there are occasional alcoholic beverages to partake in, it is an incredibly civilised way to spend a Wednesday afternoon when you should be doing something else.

The Stationary Steam and Traction Engines Section with a title as large as some of the models owned by the members who take part, the past twelve months saw the number of members who own traction engines increase with one of our newer members Brian Baker, and the ear to ear grin that has been loctited to his face since the 60th Anniversary exhibition, unintentionally entered the Model Engineer Exhibition competition classes and came away with a Very Highly Commended, which is not bad at all, especially when you consider that they mark you down for having used a competition model. The section has attended several rallies around the country and has attended two local charity events with members present at the Redbourn and Stockwood Park Museums.

This review completes another year for our Society, a year that has showcased all the fantastic aspects of our hobby and Society. On a personal note to end the year, it has been my pleasure to be Chairman of the Society for our 60th Anniversary celebrations. I thank the current Council as it has been my pleasure to serve with you and the entire membership for the support that you have given me over the year, and I hope that if I am not still the Chairman at the end of this meeting that you will provide the same support to whoever is the new Chairman but I am hoping that you will give me the opportunity to continue.

And I now look forward to another prosperous year in the future of the North London SME.

Donal Corcoran

Boiler testing

A recent Sunday morning (10 April) was allocated to inspect and test boilers at the Tyttenhanger track site.

Although slightly soft underfoot, the ground was firm and the sun was warm for those traction engine and locomotive owners who availed themselves of the opportunity for a formal boiler test.



If you missed out on this occasion and require a boiler test, we respectfully request that you please make a prior arrangement with one of the club boiler testers rather than arrive at the track site in the hope of finding someone able and willing to do the necessary for you.

News from the Loco Section of the Tyttenhanger Committee

The season is up and running, so the focus this month is on things to come.

Sunday Running

The weather so far has been kind and Sundays have been well attended by members of the public.

However, as those of you who've attended recently will know, we've had problems with the batteries on the Society's electric locos. Of the 4 sets of batteries, two cannot be relied upon to do more than a couple of laps - these have now been taken away for "recycling". We're therefore obtaining 2 more pairs as a matter of urgency, which should give us the reliability we need as from the beginning of June.

Birthday Parties

With two of the eight birthday parties having now taken place, we'd like to say a HUGE "thank you" to those members who turned up to help, either with their engines, driving the electrics or stewarding the children. The weather we'd booked for 21st. May turned up late and most of us got a bit of a drenching. Fortunately the skies cleared as the children started to arrive and a great time was had by all.

There are no parties in June, but as the next one is on 2nd. July, we'll mention it now and say that we'd really appreciate some help!

Leighton Buzzard Steam Rally 4th. & 5th. June.

This is an annual event organised by the Herts Steam Club and has grown in popularity over the years.

Several NLSME members are also HSC members.

We'll be setting up Jim MacDonald's portable track and giving rides and - you've guessed it - if there are any of you who'd like to come and assist (if bringing a steam loco, a pole reverser is a distinct advantage!), please let one or both of us know in advance so we can ensure you have a free pass to the event.

Barbecue

Friday 17th. June will see the first Loco Section BBQ of the season. Bring your own food & drink. Given fine weather, there can be few better ways of passing a convivial evening and watching the trains go by. If you haven't yet tried it, give it a go!

North American Section Day - 25th. June

Organised annually by Tony Dunbar, this is when members of the North American Section leave HQ and head west to the hills & prairies of Colney Heath to try their hand as engineer of a real "iron horse". OK, that's enough of the "funnies"....

So, if you've got a (reasonably) easy engine to handle and are prepared to instruct in the black art of driving/firing/watching signals/speed/water/pressure and all the other things that make this aspect of our hobby the mechanical equivalent of patting one's head while rubbing one's tum - please come along. Partners are welcome and Tony has promised a Chinese meal at his place afterwards.

Adrian & Robert

Marine News

As your new marine section leader my main wish is to see members of the society enjoying the use of our splendid pool. When I first joined the NLSME back in 1984 we had no such facility and I can recall the inconvenience of locating and using public areas of water in local parks in North London. Now we can enjoy our own private area of water alongside the Tyttenhanger facilities and the company of other members utilising the various sections of track.

What's more, you do not have to be in the marine section to sail a boat!! Any member can place a boat (provided it is not fuel powered) on the pool. I therefore see myself more as a marine coordinator rather than a section leader.

It is always interesting to see new boats appear on the pool. For my part that means completing the final parts of U47 which involves some wiring and

ballasting work. Are there any other vessels under construction at the moment? We have two toy boat regattas organised this summer. I would like to organise a September regatta extending an invitation to one or two North London/Hertfordshire clubs. Hopefully I can give members more news about this in a later edition of the News Sheet.

One reason for joining a model engineering society is to tap into other peoples' knowledge and experience. Please feel free to write about new products and techniques in the marine modelling world which you think are of value to members. Not every member purchases or reads from cover to cover Model Boats or

Marine Modelling and not every idea can be immediately be found in those magazines. For instance, I recently came across a new acrylic paint designed for airbrushing. It can be sprayed without the use of a thinner but it is not one of the traditional water based acrylic paints which clogs your airbrush. It is called "Model Air" and can be purchased through the Model Zone chain of stores. The nearest one to us is in High Holborn, close to the tube station. Though primarily designed for use by military modellers it could be of real value to marine modellers. Any small scale, detailed work would benefit. There is a handy colour chart allowing cross referencing to Humbrol, Revell, Tanya & RAL colours.

Chris Platford

General Meeting, 3 June 2005: 'Anna'

Noted for his presence in Exhibition workshops, participation in locomotive efficiency competitions and contributions to the model engineering press, our own D. A. G. (Derek) Brown, has agreed to travel from his Rutland home to address our June General Meeting.

In his inimitable style, Derek will regale us with the trials and tribulations of the design and construction of Anna, his 7¹/₄in. narrow gauge Manning Wardle locomotive currently being serialised in Model Engineer

magazine.

The meeting will be held at our Headquarters in Legion Way, North Finchley, 8pm - 10pm. with tea and biscuits courtesy of Frank Dell.

Next month (1 July) will be a Forum dealing with everything you wanted to know about Heat Treatment but were afraid to ask. See you there!

General Meeting, 1 July 2005: Heat Treatment

To harden, temper, normalise or anneal – how do we achieve the properties we need in the materials we use? Are all steels the same? How can we be sure that the pieces of brass, copper or aluminium alloys we are using are in the condition we require?

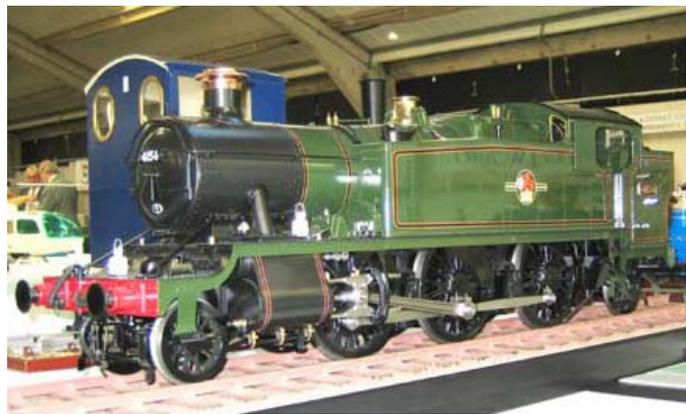
These and other matters concerning heat treatment will be the core topics for a forum which will provide an opportunity to share our collective knowledge and expertise on matters concerning heat treatment.

The meeting will be held at our Headquarters in Legion Way, North Finchley, 8pm - 10pm. with tea and biscuits courtesy of Frank Dell.

Next month (5 August) will be an evening at the Tyttenhanger Track Site courtesy of the Locomotive Section. See you there!



Above: Neville Wilkinson displayed his 1:50 scale Bucyrus Erie 1200T model walking drag-line now resplendent in a fresh coat of paint. Demonstrating the versatility of its hydraulic control by mining for dried peas, Neville was awarded a 2nd Certificate for this miniature masterpiece



Above: Alan Crossfield of Leyland Society of Model Engineers is a consummate craftsman, fine photographer and competent driver. His superb 5in. gauge GWR Large Prairie Tank locomotive was accompanied by a fascinating illustrated account of the build. Alan was awarded a 1st Certificate and the Barry Jordan Trophy for Best in Show for his locomotive.

HARROGATE 2005

By Mike Chrisp

It hardly seems possible that this year's National Model Engineering & Modelling Exhibition at the Harrogate Showground is the twelfth in the series! I missed the very first but have enjoyed participating in every one since. Exhibition Manager Lou Rex makes me very welcome and it is a great pleasure to renew existing acquaintanceships as well as to make new friends at this annual event. Well supported by the model engineering trade and clubs, I recall once recommending to readers of Model Engineer that if they were planning to visit only one model engineering exhibition, this should be it. My remark was noted and not very well received by a certain reader in Radford Semele! Accompanying this brief note are a few images of items which caught my eye and which may provide a glimpse of Harrogate 2005. I have some two hundred or so others – such are the benefits (?) of digital photography! NLSME members may wish to note that a brand new event will make its debut at the Northern Events Arena, Pickering Showground, 23 – 25 September 2005. Despite rumours to the contrary, Event Sponsor Simon Boak assured us all that Harrogate 2006 is scheduled and, as if one is needed, will provide an excuse for those of us with an affection for North Yorkshire to visit again next Spring.

Below: Harrogate wouldn't be the same without Eric Hughes. This year he toured the Harrogate Showground at alarming speed with his steam car 'Freddy' which has an awesome acceleration. Despite this, Eric had no difficulty in finding innumerable young ladies of all ages to accompany him around the site!



How's this for a four wheels to dual gauge ad-car was featured Model Engineer-A well deserved MES carried off association of Shield for the



system? With each axle, this justable driving on the Bradfording Society stand. award, Bradford the Northern As-Model Engineers Best Club Stand.



Left: This unusual 1:3 scale model of a Blacker Power Hammer created considerable interest on the Pickering Experimental Engineering & Model Society stand.

Right: Spotted on the Gauge 0 stand, one of two layouts running throughout the exhibition, this Rivet Counter Detector Van raised a good view smiles. Get a Life indeed! Model engineering is supposed to be FUN!



The May Loco Section Meeting

by Roger Bell

The meeting was a 'Work in Progress' and the first to speak was Bert Mead of his 'Project' which is a London & South Western Railway D15 in gauge one. It is a 4-4-0 with an eight-wheel tender designed by Drummond. Bert said that he has been working on it since time immemorial but it has now run on air. The wheels are on the outside of the frames meaning that any work on the axle boxes on the full size had to be done with one's hands through the spokes. Dummy brake gear will be added which would not have been the case had the frames been on the outside where it could not be seen.

The rear half of the tender will contain water, the front will be meths. The brass plate work will be secured using clamps and standard Araldite and not the instant type which goes off too quick. A gentle flame will make the Araldite run like water and seal better, he has used this technique on his 'Saint'. The Araldite goes hard enough to be filed and is similar to filing lead solder. A tee section braces the curved roof of the cab and one for the job was bought from Kittlehobby in Swansea, but the flat on the tee was not wide enough to rivet so he machined one up himself. The next job is to make the three lamp brackets and the boiler bands. Bert planned to try the tender out on the garden railway the following Sunday to check that the eight wheels will go round the curves on the track easily.

Mike Foreman bought along various parts from his Rob Roy which has covered many miles; he is giving it an overhaul (A Heavy General); it has not had a serious one for twelve years. The slide valve port face is dished 0.002"; this will be re-faced by rubbing it in a figure of eight motion on fine emery supported on a surface plate. The crank pins are undersize at 0.239" from 0.250" and will be replaced. The needle roller bearings are still in good condition. The brasses on the eccentric straps have worn away down to the soft solder which secured them. Having left the boiler in sulphuric acid for the day he was dismayed to find that it had eaten away some of the mild steel fittings. A more readily available equivalent to sulphuric acid is TD10 by Premier Products which can be obtained from a good janitorial shop. The wheels will be fitted with new tyres; he hopes to find some mild steel discs or rings he can use. The expansion links have survived well but they were cyanide hardened. He hopes to have it finished by August for his visit to a club in Germany.

The superb 3 1/2" g Peppercorn A1 on the table was the work of Ron Price. A full size one is being built by The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust; the original was built in 1948 and was capable of 100mph. It has three cylinders each with their own set of Walschaerts valve gear. The first coupled axle drives the valve gear for the inside cyl-

inder and the centre drive axle drives the valve gears for the outside cylinders. It is fitted with the double exhaust Kylchap system; this has four blast pipe cones under each of the two chimneys. The double chimney was bought as a casting for £9 from Reeves of Birmingham. Ron passed round some photographs of the machining set up for boring the chimney bores and fly cutting the underside of the casting to mate with the smokebox. A photograph is better than a hundred words. The lip around the top of the chimney was machined from 3/16" square brass using an end mill ground for the job; it was then silver soldered in place. Such is Ron's attention to detail that all of the connecting and coupling rods are fluted both sides.

Chris Vousden then spoke of a different type of work in progress, that of the ground level station and steaming bays at the track. This job was originally due to be completed by December 2002; it got a bit waylaid. Chris's brief was to use existing material, for the work to be in railway style and to prepare a drawing in traditional style on a fag packet. He passed round the drawing. The existing material was scaffolding with lots of fittings and second hand roof trusses. The main roof trusses are now erected and the bases of the support columns have the TLR logo cast in them. It is now a stable structure. The next task is to add the cladding which is shiplap boarding and the railway style fascias. Rain water will be collected from the roof for use as boiler water.

Derek Perham then spoke of a tool to make hexagon headed rivets and square headed bolts. It was made using an Eclipse pin chuck; only the Eclipse make is accurate enough. A piece of hexagon was on the shank of the chuck. The rivet was placed in the chuck. A framework allowed the chuck to traverse back and forth, the hexagon running in a guide slot, at the end of the slot the width increased allowing the chuck to be indexed one flat of the hexagon. Thus the rivet was traversed under a milling cutter to mill one flat at a time. The small amount that the cutter removes is such that the work does not snatch under the cutter.

The next few Loco meetings will be Barbecues held at the track.

A Life in the Merchant Navy in the 1950s

By Ian Johnston

The pleasant experiences of a young midshipman serving with Blue Funnel on his first trip to sea.

Peter Kearon has presented a very well written account (as usual) of his experiences with Reardon Smith. I beg to offer an account of my first trip to sea with Blue Funnel.

Blue Funnel Line was a very old established cargo liner company. It went by several names such as Ocean Steam, China Mutual and Alfred Holt & Company. To the shipping fraternity, the company was simply known as Blue Flue or Holt's. The ships were known as Blueys mainly because of their gigantic phallic symbols of oversize Blue Funnels, which probably served well in the past to provide a good draught for the boilers. But in these days many of the ships were motor ships so the funnels must have just been status symbols, especially to impress the locals in the Far East!

When you think of it, life is quite a lottery, isn't it? Especially when we are asked to make choices, not knowing any worthwhile details. At the age of sixteen I had decided on a seafaring career. Why? Because I had been for a few days at an Outward Bound Sea School in Burghhead, Scotland and on that meagre experience had chosen the sea in preference to a desk job. The fact that eventually I would escape National Service did not even enter my mind; honest!

The choice of shipping company was my next problem. We had a little red book with the names of shipping companies and their trading routes. Watts Watts, Hains, Barron and Runciman Shipping Companies, all held great attraction for me because they all stated that their trade was **World Wide**. If I wanted to see the World, then surely they were the companies I should join. It was not until some time later, I realised that in actual fact they were tramp shipping companies, going to some of the most grotty ports world wide to pick up grotty bulk cargoes to be taken to equally grotty destinations. By chance, our group had a ship visit to a Bluey in Liverpool and devoured for refreshment some of the most delicious juicy and warm meat pies that I had ever eaten. Chinese Stewards served the pies in a warm cosy saloon on a bitterly cold winter's day. My mind was made up instantly; bugger all that World Wide stuff - I could put up with China and

Australia if I could have a diet of those meat pies!

So the die was cast. I had made the best decision of my life on the most flimsy of gastronomic experiences. Little did I know at that time, that the Blue Funnel Line was actually a very large and respected company indeed and directly owned almost one hundred ships trading between Birkenhead and Australia, The Straits Settlements, Indonesia, China, Japan and indirectly with North America, (of which more later.) What was more, they did not insure their ships, a situation that would be unheard of today. Even in those days, a new ship could cost in excess of two million pounds. So you can imagine, the trust the owners put in the masters and crews when they were out of sight but not, 'out of mind'. The Company reckoned it could save enough by not paying for insurance to be able to build a new ship every fourteen months for 'free'. Not a single ship was ever lost due to stress of weather since the company started in 1864. Sadly, many ships were lost during both World Wars because, being well manned, immensely strong and fast, they were chosen for many dangerous tasks in those bitter conflicts.

Christmas 1952 was just about over and the remains of the turkey were being recycled yet again, when the telegram arrived. I was to report to the India Buildings in Liverpool in two days time. I don't know why they called it the India Buildings as the company never consistently went to India. Perhaps that was just a dream of the Unitarian owner Alfred Holt to join the British Raj!

The journey to Birkenhead from Banbury (my home town at that time) was on the old Great Western Line from Paddington. It wandered all over the place and even went through parts of Wales before it reached Chester about seven hours later. I think we were hauled by a Hall Class locomotive but unlike Peter, I am never on time and only just managed to leap on the train before it departed on the first part of that long journey. At Chester, the train reversed to run up the Cheshire Lines branch hauled by a ubiquitous Ivatt tank to Woodside Station in Birkenhead. A ferry trip across the Mersey on board *Egremont* completed the journey.

When I arrived on the sixth floor of the India Buildings, the Midshipman's Department was dauntingly approached. I found myself greeted by a wonderful man, Captain Hutson, who had just taken up duties as training officer. I was the first of several new midshipmen that he was to induct into the ways of Ocean Steam. I was shown to a large room, which proved to be a classroom, just the sort of place I was trying to get away from.

Next came a briefing session from a manager called Brian Heathcote who told the assembled newcomers, firstly, how to behave towards the seamen; that if we did not do willingly the dirtiest jobs on board, we would not be able to order the men to do them in later years. We were told that we must treat all ashore and onboard the ship with respect, no matter what position they held. Secondly that the company was where it was because of their fair-trading and excellent reputation out East. Finally came a sort of talk about the 'birds and the bees', which concluded with the words something like, "take my daughters, thank God they're pure"; a fact that some time later I found was not exactly true. As the Heathcote family resided in a large Victorian Villa adjacent to my next port of call, 'Holts Baby Farm' which was full of midshipmen with very high testosterone levels indeed. The 'Baby Farm', was a very substantial Victorian house in Aigburth where a 'stock' of midshipmen were kept, ready to go to sea at a moments notice. It was run by two nice and understanding elderly (to me) ladies who knew, 'what was what'. Although there was a curfew at ten, they knew full well that the latch was off a ground floor dining room window for late comers. They were motherly to those who were apprehensive and homesick but also could deal effectively with the rogues in our number.

With a large fleet, despatching ships to the Far East every few days, vast numbers of crew including midshipmen were needed to service them. When you consider that the ships were also sailing coastwise to Glasgow and Hamburg, that the London departures had to be catered for, the mind boggles at the logistics of it all. On top of that, the company had a number of ships, flying the Dutch flag, sailing out of Amsterdam to be manned by mixed crews. After a couple of days my discharge book had been issued together with a Seaman's Identity Card; the issue of a Passport was considered unnecessary such was the strength and reputation of the company or, perhaps it made it more difficult to jump ship! A correspondence course especially written for and by Holt's, was handed out to be completed by the end of the voyage. Now I knew why the classroom was there! If the course was not completed or done to Captain

Hutson's entire satisfaction then our leave would be cut short and the work completed in those classrooms in India Buildings!

Four midshipmen were the normal compliment on each vessel and I was to be the youngest and most junior first tripper onboard *SS Ulysses*. Before we joined the ship we had to visit the Shipping Office, (not to sign on like the rest of the crew because we were actually indentured apprentices) but to go wherever the master (A. Holt & Co) deemed, so long as it was legal, that is. We heard the Articles being opened and were surprised to find that the ship could be away for a long time. When she had discharged on the Java coast she was to load again for the East Coast of North America. I would be seeing the World anyway and that included the juicy meat pies!

The crew were not at all pleased to learn that the ship would be away for a minimum of six months and seemed to be puffing away on their roll-ups of Capstan Fine Cut with even greater zeal, so that the air in that smoky grey shipping office was acrid and smog-like. The articles laid down minimum scales of feeding and wages, but Blue Flue fed and paid far in excess of the minimum and in fact also paid a two month bonus of full pay at Christmas providing, that the cargo out-turns were satisfactory. As you can imagine there was great competition for work with Blue Flue and of course the company only accepted the best from all branches. At the Shipping Office, we had to agree to leave monthly allotments from our wages to the Seaman's Saving Bank or our next of kin and that, I think, inured us into the regime of saving.

Then it was to the ship! She looked massive towering above the Vittoria Dock in Birkenhead. In fact by today's standards she was quite small. *Ulysses* had been built in 1949 by J.L.Thompson of Sunderland of 9,000 tons gross for S&J Thompson's Silver Line. She was intended for the North Atlantic Trade as *Silver Holly*, but had been bought off the stocks by Blue Funnel and Blue Funnelized by the instalment of extra cargo derricks for faster working in port, the addition of a 'riveted crack arrester' at the break of the bridge and, of course, by increasing the funnel height! Deep tanks were fitted for the carriage of vegetable oils home and for the transport of tins of condensed milk outwards. The steam heating coils that kept the oils liquid also warmed the dry tanks so that the tins of 'connie' did not rust on the way out. It is said that the air-conditioning plant was removed as it was thought unnecessary; on a ship going to the Far East which was built for the North Atlantic, I ask you! It may have however been to

help with stability as the plant was high up in the ship.

The ship was steam powered by two Foster Wheeler water tube boilers giving steam at 490 lbs per square inch at a temperature of 800° F driving three turbines which when reduced in rotational speed by a massive gearbox, drove a single propeller at 132 rpm to give the ship a speed of about fifteen knots. This was fast by tramp standards but not fast by Blue Funnel standards. The faster the ship, the more voyages to the Far East could be made in the year hence more earnings. There was a lovely textbook Cockran auxiliary boiler in the engine room for heating, electricity generation and to heat the steam coils in the fuel tanks and the deep tanks when needed. *Ulysses* had six hatches for cargo. So if the maximum number of gangs were used, she could be very fast in discharge and loading.

The turbines made the ship almost silent when steaming and one would often have to look over the side to see if we were actually moving. When the ship entered or left port one midshipman was on the bridge one on the forecabin one on the poop and one in the engine room. I quite enjoyed the engine room where we had to record engine movements in the Movement Book and help the engineers, a little. The worst times there were in the tropics when the engine room temperatures were often in excess of 100F. I never mastered the art of drinking water from those metal carafes without touching the spout with my lips and as for popping a couple of salt tablets into my gullet first; that was quite out of the question.

My wood lined cabin was quite spacious especially as it was meant for two and the senior guy who I was to share with, miraculously broke his wrist on hearing that the ship was not going to return to Blighty for at least six months!

Our first port was Port Said where, we topped up with cases of bibles to be discharged in Aden. Why, I know not. Serious advice came from the Mate that if I dropped anything on the deck then I should kick it into touch first before bending down to pick it up. The Gilli-Gili (a sort of magician) man came on board with the dockers and did his tricks with poor chicks, which he could make appear from almost every orifice. Bum boats swarmed round the ship; they sold all sorts of merchandise from very cheap shoes with cardboard soles, watches with bamboo springs to 'dirty books' which by today's standards would probably be on a par with the bibles!

In order that there should be no problems the ship's doctor quirkily decided to vaccinate the crew against typhoid. This was in the extreme temperatures of the Red Sea; we had to work on deck in the full sun preparing the heavy ventilator plugs for action if needed in the monsoon that we could meet in the Indian Ocean. I have never felt so ill before or since. The work had to be done and with aching arms, combined with the heat and a feeling that the Doc could have given me the wrong jab through slight inebriation, I felt that I was going to

before we reached Aden. I rued the day that I chose the sea as a career. After a couple of days it all blew over of course.

Doctors or male nurses were carried on Blue Funnel ships; it sped them on their way through quarantine. So for that slight expense it saved a considerable amount of time and money waiting for health clearance, to gain entry to a port. Some doctors were just using the ship to get from A to B and be paid for it; some came to 'dry out', which was just the wrong place to be. With Gordon's Gin at about 5/- a bottle and Players Cigarettes at 2/- for 200, you can imagine that a cure rarely occurred and if the fire alarms were set off in the middle of the night, we all knew full well who it was!

Aden was visited and we were soon crossing the Indian Ocean. The monsoon did not seem too bad to me. So far there had been no ragging or initiation jokes for me as a first tripper. (Like being told to go and get some green oil for the starboard light, or that sort of thing.) But one day Frank Howarth from Howarth Hall in Derbyshire who was the most senior of us, told me to go to the bridge and ask the second mate for the Abstract and take it to the chief engineer. I thought deeply, if some thing is abstract then it won't exist. It must be a wind-up. So I went to see my friend Jock, the eighth engineer, who was a first tripper like me and told him my problem. He just laughed; he had been taking the Abstract each day from the chief to the second mate. The Abstract turned out to be a log book with an abstract of the day's run, position and speed, to which the chief added the fuel consumption, average engine revs and water reserves for that day. So it was not a wind-up after all and I sheepishly complied with Frank's request.

Soon we 'hit' the Java Coast, more truthfully we did not hit the coast; it 'hit' us; law and order seemed to be almost non-existent. When I asked about drawing money to go ashore, I was told that we did not need any. "Just sell a few hundred State Express 555 and you can live like a king". The best price was paid by yes, you've guessed it, the Customs. They strapped their purchases of tins of cigarettes to their legs beneath their very baggy trousers and off they waddled. I think we got the equivalent of about thirty pounds for a tin of fifty cigarettes.

As wealthy men, the eighth engineer and I went ashore and had a wonderful time; I bought presents for my family and a set of spanners that I still have today. Most of our gifts had probably been stolen from ships' cargoes in the first place, but at that time I was too innocent to know. We had a smashing meal of nasi goreng at the Dutch Seamen's Mission and then went for a beer in what we thought was one of the local bars. The beer was delightfully served by rather attractive waitresses, who then put tin caps on the glasses to prevent the flies from getting at the beer first. Rather to my amazement they then sat on our knees to help us drink; what service. The eighth, who was ginger haired and rather red from the sun, suddenly, got even redder. Although the tin lids kept the flies off our beer, it did not prevent these charming girls getting their hands on our flies. Jock being a fairly devout Presbyterian could not take any more so we just bolted our beer and dashed out into the afternoon sun and escaped back to the safety on the ship. We found out later that we had not been to a pub at all but to one of the most notorious bordellos in town.

To be continued.....

| Date | Senior Steward | Track Steward | Track Steward | Track Steward | Tea Steward | Tea Steward |
|--------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 05-Jun | M. Ruffel | N. Morgan. | John.L. Morgan. | D. Snellgrove. | John Morgan (Marine) | Mrs Morgan. |
| 12-Jun | M. Avery. | R. Durling. | R. Clarke | J. Avery. | A Hawkes. | D. Lawrence. |
| 19-Jun | R. Chapman. | N. Rudoel. | P. Brewster. | A. Mason. | Mrs Brewster. | K. Wilson. |
| 26-Jun | Ian Clifft. | F. Barillo | R. Williams. | S. Vousden. | T Barrett./Mrs Clifft. | P. Godin. |
| 03-Jul | K. Bartlam. | J. Cattle | G. Moore. | P. Fraser. | Roger Brown. | Graeme Brown. |
| 10-Jul | G. Case. | J. Amos. | J. Waldock. | B Luxford. | D. Eldridge. | H. Henderson. |
| 17-Jul | P. Brown | Colin Thomson | T Bittleston | D. Foster. | F. Dell | D.Metcalf. |
| 24-Jul | I. Johnston | B. Kennedy. | Dr Dyer. | D. Marsden. | B. Lambert. | R. Hesketh. |
| 31-Jul | B. Corcoran | P. Davies | K. Corcoran. | A. Newson. | Mrs Corcoran. | J. Firth. |
| 07-Aug | D. Corcoran. | Lawrence Steers. | P. Hyde | D. Smith. | P. Funk | J. Mills. |
| 14-Aug | M. Collingwood. | A Marshall. | D Broom. | M. Franklin. | C. Craig. | D. Franklin. |
| 21-Aug | T. Dunbar | M. Price | N.Gear. | G.Ellerby | Mrs.Dunbar | D Baker. |
| 28-Aug | J. Mac Donald. | P. Badger. | T. Bittleston. | P. Mac Donald. | Mrs. MacDonald | Mrs Badger. |
| 03-Sep | A. Reddish. | P. Lancaster. | I. Reddish. | R. Thompson. | L. Stack. | Mrs Reddish. |
| 11-Sep | S. Smith. | A. James. | V. Lacey. | B. Davies. | Mrs Smith. | Mrs Davies |
| 18-Sep | J. Squire. | G.Lang. | A Rixon | R. Wollett | Mrs Squire. | C. Plattford. |
| 25-Sep | C Vousden. | M. Reid | R. Todd. | J. Sandwell. | D.Perham | Mrs A. Perham |
| 02-Oct | M. Chrisp. | Robert Hatton. | D. Green | C. Reynolds. | J. Robson. | Mrs Robson. |
| 09-Oct | T. Baxter. | R. Lidzey | J. Sanson. | P. Weeks. | Mrs Baxter. | M. Sarche |
| 16-Oct | D. Jones | P. Sheen. | D. Spencer. | D. Grant. | R. Axton. | F. Adams. |
| 23-Oct | R. Oldfield. | A. Scott. | R Harding | J West. | P. Fox. | C Dean. |

haloween

Revised rota for June onwards

Reproduced alongside is a revised track and tea stewards rota. Please ignore the old list and use this one in future.

Well done. So far so good. This year we have had some very good attendances at Colney Heath on Sundays this year. I hope that we can all keep it up. If you find that you are unable to be present when required, please arrange an exchange with someone else on the rota. If I try to do it for you, it all ends in tears, with numerous calls back and forth to no avail.

xx

Some of you have been worried because you are not sure of the procedure when performing the tea steward's tasks at the track on Sunday afternoons.

The tea, sugar and coffee are all waiting patiently for you at the new kitchen in the coach. There are ample supplies of coca-cola and soft drinks eager to be sold to willing punters. It is nice if you can supply some home cooked cake, but it is not essential. But it is a welcome touch. Please please patronise the local dairy on the way to Colney Heath and **purchase a few pints of milk** because although the suppliers of all the other goodies are all powerful, they are unable to stop the milk going off during the week.

The price list is clearly displayed for all to see and there is a small cash box with a float to start you off for the day.

At the end of the session can you all cash up the day's takings and give them to a representative of the track committee who will bank it with Maurice and hopefully give you a receipt.

Best wishes for the rest of the season.

Ian Johnston

📖 Dates for your Diary 📖

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|-------------------------|--|
| Friday 3 June | 8.00pm General Meeting; Talk by DAG Brown; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley |
| Tuesday 7 June | 8.00pm Tyttenhanger Committee Meeting; Colney Heath (in the coach) |
| Saturday 11 June | Visit of Chingford and Chelmsford SMEs |
| Monday 13 June | 8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley |
| Friday 17 June | 8.00pm Loco Section B.B.Q at Colney Heath |
| <i>Friday 17 June</i> | <i>Deadline for copy to Editor for July News Sheet</i> |
| Saturday 25 June | North American Section Day; Colney Heath |
| Friday 1 July | 8.00pm General Meeting; 'How To' Forum on Heat Treatment; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley |
| Saturday 2 July | Birthday Party at Colney Heath (help required) |
| Tuesday 5 July | 8.00pm Tyttenhanger Committee Meeting; Colney Heath (in the coach) |
| Saturday 9 July | Colney Heath JMI School Fete |
| Monday 11 July | 8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley |
| Friday 15 July | 8.00pm Loco Section B.B.Q at Colney Heath |
| Saturday 16 July | Birthday Party at Colney Heath (help required) |
| Tuesday 19 July | Visit by children from St Luke's School (Help required) Contact: Pam Corcoran |
| <i>Friday 22 July</i> | <i>Deadline for copy to Editor for August News Sheet</i> |
| Saturday 30 July | Birthday Party at Colney Heath (help required) |
| Sunday 31 July | 10.00am Toy Boat regatta; visit to Colney Heath by the Vintage Boat Club |
| Tuesday 2 August | 8.00pm Tyttenhanger Committee Meeting; Colney Heath (in the coach) |
| Friday 5 August | 8.00pm General Meeting hosted by the Loco Section at Colney Heath |
| Monday 8 August | 8.00pm Council Meeting; HQ, Legion Way, North Finchley |
| Saturday 13 August | Invitation Club Day at Colney Heath. Contact Brian Apthorpe for more details |
| Friday 19 August | 8.00pm Loco Section meeting at Colney Heath |
| <i>Friday 19 August</i> | <i>Deadline for copy to Editor for September News Sheet</i> |
| Saturday 27 August | Birthday Party at Colney Heath (help required) |
| Monday 29 August | Bank Holiday - members' running day at Colney Heath |
| | ☆☆☆ |
| Every Wednesday | Miniature Railways, British and American and Video Group at HQ |
| Every Thursday | Slot Cars Section at HQ |
| Every Sunday | Morning work parties at Colney Heath (start 9.00am). |

📖 Hospital Humour! 📖

📖 A man is lying in bed in the hospital with an oxygen mask over his mouth. A young nurse appears to sponge his hands and feet. 📖

📖 "Nurse", he mumbles from behind the mask, "are my testicles black?" 📖

📖 Embarrassed, the young nurse replies, "I don't know, I'm only here to wash your hands and feet." 📖

📖 He struggles again to ask, "Nurse, are my testicles black?" 📖

📖 Finally, she pulls back the covers, raises his gown, holds his willy in one hand and his testicles in her other hand and takes a close look and says, "there's nothing wrong with them!" 📖

📖 Finally, the man pulls off his oxygen mask and replies, "that was very nice but, are...my...test...results..back?" 📖