The Chairman's Notes

Since the exhibitions in January I have allowed the necessity of earning a living to take precedent over my activities with the NLSME. As my wife would point out this is quite rare. However, it has meant that I have been a little out of touch with Society affairs this month and am likely to remain so for another two weeks or so.

The Wembley exhibition went very well and our stand as usual was a credit to the society. On behalf of you all I would like to thank Tony, Jim and Morris for their efforts in organising our stands at both exhibitions.

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I did take a day to go down to the Brighton exhibition and I must say that I enjoyed it thoroughly.

On a final note when assembling an entire flat full of flat pack furniture and effects, I was somewhat surprised to note that even the toilet brush had to be assembled and had its own tiny grub screw designed to roll under the recently assembled sideboard.

John Squire

Treasurer Twittering

An application for Charitable Status has been submitted and we await a reply from the Charity Commissioners.

Bernard Lambert

From the Membership Secretary

Membership currently stands at 230 consisting of: 12 Honorary, 120 Full, 63 OAP, 13 Junior and 22 Country members.

New Members

This month we welcome two new Members approved at the February Council Meeting:

David Jones,

David Knight

Change of address

Rai Fenton

Bernard Lambert

Tyttenhanger Gazette

By Roger Bell

There being no business to report at the February Loco meeting, Stuart Vousden was able to start his talk straight away. Last month's talk was of a fireman's experiences so he changed his title to 'The Swanage Railway with Photographs' to convey to us what it's like to be a driver for the day.

The direction sign is the first thing one comes across at 4.00am and the beginning of a shift, as one walks into the engine shed. Three locos were in steam with steam filling the air of the shed. The fires will all have been lit at 3.00pm the previous day and will be virtually out. It will be the fireman's job to bring the fire back to life. The first job is to sign on and read the notices and pick up a working timetable. The rota lists all the duties and the names assigned to them. So having found one's fireman and loco and climbed up on the footplate one checks the water level. If the level is low the steam injector is used or alternatively a high pressure water hose. The hose will not work if the boiler pressure is too high so some steam would have to be released first. The fireman, whilst making the fire up, checks for leaking stays or plugs, fills the lubricators and checks that the oil is getting through right to the bearing and that there is no water in the pipe. Another check is for loose nuts and bolts.

There are about 35 drivers, 35 firemen, 30 guards and 20 signalmen on the railway. In the high season they operate 15 trains a day between 10.00am and midnight. The line has six locomotives. One of them, bought from Poland, was too wide and a foot was cut off each end of the buffer beam. It gives a very uncomfortable ride and the vibration causes parts to work loose. The cut-off has to be adjusted carefully as with the large cylinders and small boiler one can be short of steam. Its good point is that it has an A4 type chime whistle!

Stuart has worked on 30 different classes of loco. Flying Scotsman paid a visit once, giving Stuart the chance to drive it. It now has an A4 boiler giving it a power rating of about 8 ½.

The twisty climb from Swanage to Harmans Cross with a maximum gradient of 1 in 76 calls for some skilful driving. Whilst firing a 9F, Black Prince, the driver had selected 75% cut-off. It was not raining but there was some mist and the wheels slipped badly on the climb. The next day Stuart drove the same loco and with 35% cut-off there was no spin. The loco just walked up it.

The trains are five coaches long as this is the length of the shortest platform they stop at. If the train has more coaches than this the guard must lock the doors of the extra coaches.

On one occasion whilst coming down the steep incline between Harmans Cross and Herston and rounding an adverse bend, the fireman shouted across, 'There's someone on the line.' Having slowed down and stopped behind them he climbed down from the cab and approached the two ramblers complete with rucksacks walking in the 'four

foot'. Stuart asked them to walk to one side so that his train could pass. One of the walkers got his map out and pointed to the line which said, 'disused railway.'

Harmans Cross is the mid-point of the seven mile line and the sudden change of incline from uphill to level causes the water level to drop 3" in the gauge glass, so one requires plenty in there before going into the station. The level also drops 2" when the regulator is closed. This is due to the water in the boiler not being sucked up towards the steam, a strange phenomenon.

One bystander watching a train one day hauled by an open cab type loco noticed that there was no one on the footplate. He immediately 'phoned the emergency services. At the time there was a hailstorm and the crew who had been hammered by large balls of ice were temporarily hiding below the bunker.

After a cup of tea at the meeting, Stuart then ran his video taken between Swanage and Norden. The loco we were to ride on was an 8P, number 35027, Port Line, a Merchant Navy class. We watched the fireman crawl under the buffers to uncouple the hooks amongst the steam. The loco backed off. Then he climbed down again to change the point and then the engine ran round the train, to back up to the water tower. A measure of water softener liquid was emptied into the tender followed by the water, which filled it awash. Having recoupled to to the train, the smokebox door dart was checked for tightness as it can work loose due to expansion. The token for single line working was taken on board and with a good fire, 205psi on the gauge, brake vacuum at 20", the guard waved his green flag. The regulator was pulled out and back in a series of movements that gave best acceleration without wheelslip as the train pulled away. With the fireman keeping a lookout on the adverse curves they were over the points and passed the signal box where the signalman was leaning on his catwalk for a close view of the steam motive power passing by. As the journey continued all was visible inside the cab of the crew's movements. There were seven valves near the fireman's feet alone, possibly for the steam injectors. At the end of the single line working the train stopped, the signalman collected the token and went back to change points and signals, another train passed by, the working timetable was checked, and again we were off. The brake lever was applied several times to keep the train in check as we rolled down the 1 in 80 gradient into Corfe station, from where Corfe Castle could be seen high up on the hill. We then continued to the end of the line at Norden.

Stuart had brought along literature from the railway, the timetable, fares and events for this year plus a leaflet inviting one to be a Swanage Railway volunteer. They require people of any age, male or female regardless of skills and experience for the many and varied positions which are described as hard work, satisfying and rewarding, with a great feeling of community and camaraderie all against a background of the beautiful Purbeck countryside. Another leaflet offers one the opportunity to drive a loco in one direction and fire it on the return from Swanage to Norden. The experience, which lasts one hour, is £99 per person.

The evening was well presented and we thanked Stuart for an insight into the line and for providing us with an enjoyable evening.

Editorial

I would like to apologise for the quality of some of the photographs that have appeared in the News Sheet recently.

As members are aware, we are able to produce the News Sheet at a very reasonable cost by utilising equipment which Ron Thorogood has access to. Unfortunately, the process has difficulty producing good copies of certain photographs. Ron has on several occasions pointed out to me that anything other than matt black and white photographs with not too much black in them will not reproduce well. However, sometimes I 'chance my arm' and send him less than ideal pictures with the results you are familiar with.

So the very poor quality sometimes experienced is largely down to me and I apologise to those members who have sent me pictures, which later cause so much disappointment. The photographer is always credited and naturally this causes embarrassment if their well-taken photos turn out badly.

In the words of those old school reports: 'Must try harder!' is an appropriate criticism that can be levelled at me.

Grahame Ainge

Mariners' and Garden Railwaymen's Times.

By John Morgan.

Notes from the 18th January 2002 meeting.

A brief discussion on this year's diary led to three possible dates for this years Marine Section's two Open Days, Sundays 21st or 28th July and 15th September. The final choice rather depends upon the other Sections in the Club and what they have planned for this year. I would have thought we have until May, when the invites to the world should be sent out.

In addition to our Open Days, the first Sunday in each month during the season from April to September would have some form of competition organised for North London members to concentrate on. (At next month's meeting, 15th February, I will propose the scoring system that would lead to a little "something" at the end of the season for the leaders).

The evening continued with a model saved from a skip. Information on both the kit it was made from and its owner sought the builder of the actual boat, myself.

It looked to me like a sea going "gin palace" or gentleman's motor yacht. The plywood hull has shrunk at the front end and needs reinforcing with glass fibre. The ply superstructure is quite weak and therefore damaged, I hesitated to say so in front of engineers (quite correctly as it turned out) but I intend to replace all of it using

plastic, for its flexibility, lightness and strength. Another reason for starting again is that the old design is not at all watertight, there being no coamings around the hole in the deck under the cabins. Any water finding its way on to the deck will flow straight down below.

So, what is it a model of? Many voices volunteered their owners thoughts, all gratefully received. I think we decided it was circa 1950s with the kit a decade or so later possibly from Graupner or Hegee . We have in the area David Metcalf, who used to edit Model Boats Magazine and is still around in the model world (no doubt he will be attending the coming Wembley show.); a photo to that publication may also bring some information.

Our John West, once in the model trade himself, was convinced that he recognised the kit and would you believe that after diving into the "library" at HQ came out with a January 1970 Model Boat mag that contained a page from RipMax "Super Boat Kits"? There was a photograph of a vessel almost identical to the one I now own. Sold as a Water Police Patrol Boat it is 90% the same, except for superstructure and stern, which on mine is open for the ladies to sun themselves. I now suspect that two kits were produced using common components. The hull, portlights, cabin, even the anchor winch are identical.

So which came first? My feeling is the yacht, so I am now going back in time looking at earlier RipMax adverts.

Model Slipway's Canadian Buoy Handling Vessel

Next up was Jimmy T with his recently finished Model Slipway's Canadian Buoy Handling vessel. Purchased 12 months ago, it has taken Jimmy just two months to get on the water. I say "only" as he thought this was too long; the time taken due to "not knowing what he was doing!!"

It became evident that the quality of the kit left much to be desired, especially with the white metal fittings (aren't they all?). The superstructure was a poor fit and needed filling. The plastic detail parts needed some difficult work cleaning them. Those made from white metal just fell apart when any attempt was made to remove the flashing and had to be replaced - some with brass. Railings that were supplied in brass were too thick to be bendable and are now aluminium.

The supplied props were also white metal, which proved to be inefficient and one eventually suffered metal fatigue. A call to the Prop Shop resulted in a 24-hour delivery of a brass pair the fitting of which also transformed the boats performance. The modified rudders, white metal of course, have lasted though it took Jimmy's engineering skills to drill, sleeve and tap them to ensure a reliable and removable fitting. He has plans to replace with brass at some stage.

To continue the saga, next came the speed controller, which never really worked and a new one was purchased through contacts within the Club. Plastic engine couplings were no more successful than the original props. Eventually failing, they were replaced by universal joints, but these were not constant velocity couplings, so the original acute angle between motor and shaft caused vibration at speeds. Realignment

of the assembly has solved this problem. A tip from the floor to find the optimum alignment is to measure the current consumption. The lowest amperage showing when the set up is correct.

The first mating of the props to the motors left no endplay, as Jimmy was concerned about the ingress of water up the shafts. He admitted this had to be changed, as there was too much friction. The members soon put his mind at rest. The application of grease or petroleum jelly in the shafts will give a good seal even if there is plenty of play.

To summarise the experience, he enjoyed building the model but at £170 the original kit was poor.

There was general agreement that most fittings from the "cheaper" kits (under £400?) are thrown away. The only function they fulfil is to give a template for their replacements!

Suspension on Garden Railway Rolling Stock

A break for tea and John Squire took the floor to talk about the controversial subject of suspension on garden railway rolling stock (and was it controversial!). John's view is that some movement on axles is essential to avoid wheels ending up in the ballast, but some on the floor thought it a waste of effort.

Locomotives - John admitted that not many come with suspension as such, though any bogies automatically give a degree of movement around their locating pin. Most designs just rely on the weight of the loco to keep its feet. Only a few have slots in the frames for the horn block fitting. Experience has shown that provided no slipping is encountered, when they can bounce off the rails, they do seem to be able to run on all but the worst laid track.

Rolling Stock - the meeting was shown three types of design. The first was spring steel wire (piano wire) that was fixed on to the underfloor of the vehicle and just rested on the axles, 4 pieces, one for each wheel. Slots in the axle guides allowed the wheels to ride up and down. What about the friction? came the cry from the floor - negligible was the reply.

The more sophisticated kits, like TenMille, came with a proper coiled spring mounted in the axle boxes which gave the most movement of all the types on display. The comment? "Completely over the top".

The last design actually got a murmur of approval. One pair of wheels was mounted on a rocker plate. It was loose, not self centring and gave about 1/8 inch movement. Known as "3 point suspension" it was clever, easy and effective.

John stopped while he was ahead, ending on an uncontroversial design.

A Model of the Titanic

Last came John West with the first of many editions of a new magazine on historic ships that came with a (very) small part of a wooden kit that would in 100 issues or so produce a model of the Titanic. At £3.99 a week it will not be a cheap model, but from what came with the first issue, the quality is good, being laser cut wood. He now has the start of the keel, bow, stand, a few frames and the plan.

The boat is quite a considerable model being 1.7 metres in length and should be capable of adapting to taking a radio, propulsion and steering gear to make it work. It is however designed to be a static model.

There are etched brass fittings to come, though just how the planking is going to be cut up to be packaged into the publication's size is eagerly awaited!

Members commented that a freezer would be required for the icebergs! (Very good).

John thinks the kit is from Amati, either a range that they left on the shelf now that the hype over the latest Titanic film has died away, or a special kit made for the purpose. John is inclined to think the former as he reckons he can see where the once complete piece of wood, with all the laser cut parts, has been cut into the size of the magazine.

John is not sure if he will continue with the project.

An American 4-6-0

Finally we were treated to Mr West's latest purchase, an American 4-6-0 of the 1900's: The "Top Link" passenger loco of the day. Produced to celebrate Bachmann's 10th anniversary. The quality of this company's output has improved steadily culminating in the model now on display. It was purchased from Alban Rail, Redbourn for an amazing £133. It's for gauge one track, but at 22mm to one foot as the actual engine is for narrow gauge, 3' 6". The centre driving wheels are not flanged, so this model will negotiate 2' radius curves.

It's an upgrade of an existing model, cast metal wheels, cab, and frames replaces original plastic and the detail is greatly improved, as a look into the cab will confirm - it's all there. In fact, all detail is outstanding. The outside walschaerts valve gear is also now metal. The headlights are LED with a reflector and are switched depending on the direction of travel.

The loco has no suspension but is very heavy. (Please see previous section of report!!!) Drive is electric and to the rear-most driving wheels via a worm gear. The motor is designed to run at 18 to 24 volts and appears to be very efficient; John has yet to drain the battery while at Colney Heath. The battery pack is in the leading truck, which takes the hassle changing one loco for another. John is confident she will pull a full train without any difficulty.

So ended the third meeting. We now need volunteers to give a little talk about their hobby or interesting anecdotes ***a la*** Mike Collingwood, for the remaining three winter evenings at HQ.

Marine Mutterings

Winter work around the Lake is progressing well.

A new area beside the Lifebelt Post has been cleared and leveled ready for grassing. Steps from the bridge to the launching pit have been built and the paving beyond the pit has been tidied up. Work is under way on the construction of the Shelter and we hope to complete before Easter.

Well done workers! Happy boating **- *Bernard Lambert***

SOUTHERN RAILWAY PASSENGER LOCOMOTIVE LIVERIES

By David Snellgrove

Following Mike Collingwood's article concerning his Maid of Kent/LI Class locomotive in the News Sheet for November 2000 when he confessed to being ignorant where Southern Railway liveries are concerned, I thought some notes from a Southern "fan" concerning this railway's liveries would be welcome for the benefit of other prospective builders of Southern locomotives.

On formation of the railway in 1923, the initial livery was the last one used by the LSWR prior to Grouping, i.e.; Urie green, a very pleasant lightish green similar to LNER green but more greyish (no 5-963 BS 2660; 1955). Lining out was in yellow and black, changed from black and white as used by the LSWR to avoid accusations of being biased! With this livery, a new lettering style was employed called Expanded Egyptian, very popular at the time, in primrose yellow. The company name was emblazoned in 6.5" letters centrally on side tanks or tender sides with the locomotive number in 18" figures in the same shade underneath and, up to 1931, the A, B or E for the company's 3 works was carried in-between; tender locomotives were fitted with cast brass number plates on their cab sides. However, these were painted in the same shade of green as the rest of the locomotive so rendering them almost invisible.

This livery, however, was short-lived and probably before much stock was painted, it was changed in late 1924 and a shade called parsons green (also known as presto green) began to be used; lining out reverted to black and white. Lettering and numbering remained as before except that number and, by then, nameplates were initially painted black but then red (vermilion) from 1928 to render them more conspicuous. This livery became known as Maunsell or sage green and was a rich deep green when first applied. However, it weathered unevenly and looked drab quite

quickly. Stock painted at Ashford tended towards a blue hue while that painted at Eastleigh turned brownish.

Following a complaint from a shareholder in 1935 that the railway's stock was looking dowdy, in 1937 Maunsell introduced a new shade of green. This was used on a single Brighton line electric unit and on the new stock then being introduced for the Portsmouth electrification but no steam locomotives received the new shade.

Enter stage left a certain Mr Bulleid later in 1937. After improving the Lord Nelson class locomotives, the second thing he did was to turn his attention to the railway's livery and in May 1938, he had N15 class no 749 experimentally painted in bright green with no lining, black cylinders and numerals sited on the cab side sheets; this shade was the one introduced by Maunsell in 1937 for the new electric stock. It was a very light emerald green, slightly more bluish than LNER green. The locomotive was repainted in a less vivid hue the following week; cylinders were green with black and white lining and numerals on the cab side sheets after briefly being carried on the smoke deflectors. The loco reverted to Maunsell livery in mid-July. However, this experiment formed the basis for the new style livery as, at the beginning of July 1938, Bulleid had painted in a slightly darker shade of green, 4 Schools class locomotives, nos 925/7/9/30 and during the next few weeks, nos 926/8/32 were also repainted. Lining was black and white including cylinders but smoke deflectors were plain black.

While the new shade went down well with the travelling public and the directors, Bulleid was not happy with this livery and in 1939 began painting locos in a new shade of green called Dover green. It was known on the railway as green no 1 or light olive. It was similar to the final LSWR colour and the first one used by the railway but was darker (no 5-065 BS 2660: 1955). Lining was either black and white, black and yellow or dark (Maunsell) green and yellow. It was applied to locomotives in classes: H1, H2, H15, LN, N15, N15, N15/X, T9 and V. However, it weathered badly, turned khaki and then flaked so was not adopted.

In 1939, further locos were painted in:

Green no 2; this was in fact Maunsell green; lining was either black and white or black and yellow. It was applied to locos in classes B4/X, H1, H15, I1/X, LN, L11, N15 and N15/X.

Green no 3 also known as light green. This was the shade of green that Bulleid used on the seven Schools class locos in 1938. Lining was either black and white, black and yellow or dark green and yellow. It was applied to locos in classes: LN, N15, N15/X and V.

A new style of lettering and numbering was introduced for all these liveries; the cab number plates were dispensed with and cab side numerals used instead. These were 9" high in gilt with ¾" black shading to the right and underneath. The company name was in the style of the then popular typeface used in adverts and notices; the letters were also 9" high in gilt with an internal black line; no shading was employed.

As from September 1939, it was decreed that secondary locos were to receive the new liveries unlined. This applied to classes:-

Green no 2: A1X, A12, B1, B4, D1 (4-4-0), D1 (0-4-2T), D3, D15, E1/R, E4, E5, F1, H, H2, H15, H16, I1/X, I3, J, K, K10, L, L1, L11, M7, N, O2, R, S11, S15, T1, T3, T9, T14, U, X2, X6 and 0415.

Green no 3: A12. D1, D15, E1/R, H15, H16, I1/X, I3, K, K10, L11, L12, M7, N1, O2, S15, T9 and T14.

In 1940, the decision was made that green no 3 was to be the new livery subject to it being a shade darker. This was eventually to become known as malachite green; lining was universally to be black and yellow. However, by this time World War II had broken out and paint pigments became difficult to obtain. From March 1941 (Eastleigh) and July (Ashford), secondary locomotives leaving works emerged in all-over black. The intention was to continue to paint green locos in classes LN, MN, N15 and V but as from April 1942, even these emerged painted black. A further lettering and numbering style was devised for this livery. It was similar to the previous one, "old gold" being used instead of gilt which it resembled when weathered. Blocking was in light (malachite) green to the right and below with highlights; the letters retained the internal black line as well as having the blocking. This style became known as "Sunshine" lettering.

Bulleid was no lover of black and, as soon as it appeared that the war was ending, began using green again. However, supplies were still scarce so it was initially reserved for his fabulous pacifics but, as from January 1946, it began to be used for other locos starting with Schools class no 934 and King Arthur no 767. To eke out supplies, it was mixed with black so rendering it slightly darker than the shade in use before the war. This is the well-known shade of malachite green much loved by model-makers. Lining was black and yellow with one exception and yes, you've guessed it, a further style of lettering and numbering was introduced. This was the same as the wartime "Sunshine" style but substituted black shading with highlights for the green. From time to time there were shortages of green paint with the result that locos continued to emerge from works painted black with green wheels: K/As no 765 in 6/46 and 782, 791 and 800 in 4/47. In fact 782 was destined to be the only K/A never to be painted completely in post-war malachite green, retaining black until receiving its BR livery in 10/49. Malachite green was also applied to several lesser classes:-

H1 class nos 2037–41
H2 class nos 2421-6
J class nos 2325/6
L class nos 1761/4/6-70/2-5/7-81
L1 class nos 1754-9/83-9
M7 class nos 242/3 (unlined), 676
N nos 1817/54
T9 no 119

The intention with the livery changes was to brighten up the railway's image by increasing the area covered in green paint. The pre-war liveries of green nos 1 and 3 did go some way in achieving this but green no 2 definitely did not as it was the same colour as before. The post-war malachite green was much more successful in achieving the railway's aim especially as the green paint **was** applied to a larger area and, as the same shade was also applied to carriages, a far more visually pleasing

assembly was created. The instruction was to paint green locomotive smoke deflectors; this was not always done with the pre-war liveries, occasionally with greens 1 and 3 but never with green no 2 and the coal flares on the Urie 8-wheel tenders were painted black. As numerals and letters were affixed centrally in the green panel, although this suited most locos, on those paired with the Urie 5000 gallon version, they did not line up and so created a visual imbalance. Where smoke deflectors were painted green, there were 2 styles in application. Style 1: the green was carried down to the gangway and continued down the curved section to the front buffer beam; there was no lining along the bottom edge of the smoke deflector: The rest of the loco being painted green or black as before. Style 2: the smoke deflector was lined along its bottom straight edge, the lining continuing to the front of the plate and the curved segment down to the buffer beam painted black, green and black being applied as before. With both styles, outside cylinders were mostly painted black but occasionally green and lined out.

There were some subtle differences in the application of the post-war livery; smoke deflectors were always painted green and lined along the bottom edge as in style 2 above with one exception: Schools class no 919 which had its smoke deflectors painted black at Ashford by mistake. Also, the whole of the tender side panel was painted green including the coal flare on the Urie type which resulted in the company name lining up with the cab numerals. Green and black was applied as before except for footsteps which were painted black.

In spite of the numerous livery variations before the war, except for classes LN, N15 and V where some locos received more than one experimental livery; most locos retained their Maunsell livery until painted black as, very often, it was only a single loco in a particular class that received a new livery. Likewise, after the war, most locos kept their all-over black livery until painted in BR livery after Nationalization. In fact, several locos went through the war and reached BR still sporting Maunsell livery; namely A1/X no 2467, B1 no 1453, D1 (0-4-2T) no B633 (pre-1931 no and scrapped 1946), E2 no 2101 and H no 1323.

The post-war malachite green livery was a very durable finish; I have seen in print that it was the most durable railway livery of all time. When applied to carriages, it was expected to last 10 years before repainting was required. It sat very well on all types of locos large or small, unlike a lot of other liveries and did not require other embellishments such as polished brass etc to set it off. It did adopt a bluish tinge eventually but did not deteriorate anything like its predecessors and was cheaper to apply as it did not require varnishing. Cab interiors were painted tan throughout this period and buffer beams were vermilion.

I do hope these notes have eliminated misunderstandings that members may have concerning Southern liveries as, when one understands the chronology of events, it is quite straightforward. I have compiled them from information contained in the HMRS Livery Register No 3 LSWR and Southern, RCTS Locomotives of the Southern Part 1 and Bradley's LSWR Locomotives, the Urie Classes. These volumes contain very detailed information concerning the various liveries and it is possible to ascertain which livery and lining a locomotive carried at a particular time and in which style. One final note; the one exception to the post-war lining scheme, T9 no 119. This was the Southern's royal engine. It was painted malachite green and fully lined out in

black and white. It also sported a white five pointed star on its smokebox and was fitted with a hooter instead of the normal whistle. After Nationalization, it was renumbered 30119 and lettered British Railways on its tender in the Southern style. It was scrapped still sporting this livery never carrying BR lined black.

A Tale of Two Tugs

By Allan Hawkes

The following article was written about a dozen years ago for the magazine of the Welwyn Garden City SME and was also published later in the magazine of the St Albans MES (to which illustrious organisations I also belong).

Perhaps it should be explained that the Stoke Mandeville Exhibition referred to below was then held in the leisure complex of that Hospital with the profits going to their funds but in later years it had to be transferred to the more spacious site at RAF Halton, where of course it is still held.

This is a rather round about story – but it gets there in the end. One of the boats which I took last year to Stoke Mandeville was my 1/48th turn-of-the-century paddle tug. My original intention had been to build a scale replica of RELIANT (the one in the National Maritime Museum) but due to the difficulty of inserting all the 'works' for independent paddle control in the narrow hull and also, due to the opinions of the experts that a small paddler could only prove disappointing on the water, it became just a freelance model containing about 75% RELIANT, 10% ROKER and 15% EPPLETON HALL. I had photographs of the RELIANT and EPPLETON HALL and I suppose, looking back, that it did bear a fair resemblance to EPPLETON HALL. Incidentally, confounding the experts, my model, once an obscure fault causing radio interference had been tracked down by a friend-of-a-friend, sails quite well.

The first point about this story is that at Stoke Mandeville who should appear but the ex-Chief Engineer of The EPPLETON HALL – or EPPY HALL, as he called it. He kept coming back to have yet another look at the model, although it bears the fictional name of EMBLEM of which my dictionary gives as one meaning 'typical representation', which is all I intended it to be. Long were the stories related by the ex-seafarer about the exploits and mechanism of his noble craft but fortunately, having read the book 'The Eppleton Hall' (of which more anon), I was able not only to comprehend him but even to enlarge on a few points. He came back for a final look just as the exhibition was closing.

Now to the main point of this long-winded story: The book mentioned above; this recounts how that old tug ended up several thousand miles from its birthplace on the Tyne. It starts when, in San Francisco, two men, both avid marine enthusiasts heard that the world's last remaining paddle tug was to be scrapped and they resolved, there and then, to journey to England, buy it and sail it back to San Francisco as a working exhibit in the Museum of that city. This 'last paddle tug' was not the EPPLETON HALL but its near relative RELIANT and, on arrival in England, they were told that they could not buy RELIANT as it had been promised to the National Maritime Museum (as it is now called) at Greenwich. On enquiring at that Museum, the two

Americans were shocked to hear that the Museum wanted only one engine and one paddle – the rest was to be scrapped. This seemed sacrilege and, knowing of another old paddle steamer, the very similar EPPLETON HALL, which had been lying at the ship-breakers for several years, the two proposed to the Museum that, if they delivered, at their expense, an engine and a paddle from the EPPLETON HALL, would the Museum waive their claim to the complete RELIANT so that they could buy it and sail it across the Atlantic? Five months elapsed until, after a lot of prodding, the Museum said, without any elaboration, NO.

The two Americans then resolved at all costs to save the RELIANT from being almost entirely scrapped and hit upon a bold plan: If they couldn't acquire the old tug legally, they would pinch it by means which were (just about) legal. With this end they formed, quite legitimately, a Friends of Greenwich Museum Society and the owners of the RELIANT were informed, on impressively printed paper, that two representatives of that Society would arrive to purchase and remove the old tug, as agreed, from Seaham Harbour. A British actor and actress had been hired for their ability to portray 'earnest representatives' and they appeared at Seaham with a suitcase of genuine British money. The plan was that once the money had been handed over and a receipt obtained, a modern tug would quickly appear and tow RELIANT seemingly off the edge of the world as no more would ever be heard of it, but a steam driven paddle yacht, privately owned and with a volunteer crew, bearing great similarity to the late RELIANT but with a different name and flying the flag of an obliging South American country, would appear at a Dutch shipyard and be readied for an Atlantic crossing.

Sadly the plan didn't get started. When the two, actor and actress, arrived at Seaham they found that someone there had become suspicious and the local police were waiting for them. In fact no police action was taken as the Americans had done nothing which was entirely illegal.

Having been robbed, as they saw it, of RELIANT, the American party turned their attention to EPPLETON HALL, lying on the mud at the breakers and with most of the woodwork burnt out in readiness for scrapping to start. On the spur of the moment, they decided to buy this rusty monster and the book 'The Eppleton Hall' relates how it was saved, restored and sailed, with its ancient engines and a volunteer crew, across the South Atlantic, through the Panama Canal to San Francisco. Probably this shamed our own museum into taking in the entire RELIANT, now a major exhibit.

Get the book if you can. It was published in America but some copies were offered for sale in this country and your local library will eventually obtain it: 'The Eppleton Hall' by Scott Newhall (one of the two original conspirators) published by Howell-North Books of Berkeley, California in 1971.

Authors postscript, 2002

As is now well known, the tug RELIANT, which the Museum seemingly wanted so badly, has now been dismantled and removed from sight with storage and conditions not stated.

The EPPLETON HALL in San Francisco was at first rather neglected, although its original arrival was greeted with public acclaim. More recently, the necessary funds and labour have been directed on to the old tug and, by all accounts she looks superb.

Fate sometimes performs strange tricks.