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Thoughts of Chairman Dell

I've been Chairman now for nearly a year and I think I'm still enjoying it, although sometimes more than others. The E.G.M. and A.G.M. are nearly here. This year we will be discussing the increase in subs - always a lively subject. As those of you who attend General meetings know, I bring along a small curio. I have amongst my collection of junk a W.W.1 TIN HAT. It might be useful, although I hope I don't have to don it. I hope we have a good attendance as, at worst, it could be an interesting evening.

We have vacancies for Council members and officers so get your nominations in early. I would like to see lots of members standing for Council membership, so if you feel you have something to offer, please step forward.

I often come to Colney Heath during the week and stroll around the grounds. It's when you are on your own that you really appreciate what a fantastic place it is. Purely from a personal point of view, you cannot put a price on being a member of NLSME with its superb grounds and facilities. It is really a small nature reserve - I've seen the usual rabbits, moles and foxes, and once I saw a pair of grass snakes entwined basking in the warm sunshine (reminded me of my courting days!). We also have many birds that visit us. Blue and yellow tits, pheasant and partridge and the occasional sparrow hawk. Another bird we see which is always around Colney Heath is the Greater Crested Member. This bird has a strong homing instinct and can be found at Colney Heath in both summer and winter. Another bird we see which is closely related to the GCM is the Lesser Crested Member Absenter. He also has a strong homing instinct, but unfortunately, this instinct does not seem to work very well in the winter. As soon as the temperature drops and the days grow shorter, he finds it very difficult to find Colney Heath. But as soon as spring returns and the temperature rises, he returns. I've seen three already this season and expect to see a lot more. Sometimes, though not very often, a Lesser Crested Member Absenter can become a GCM - they look so similar, its hard to tell them apart! ;-)

Frank Dell

Off the Cuff

The twelfth and final meeting of the current Council was held last evening (20th April) - a week later than usual in order to achieve a "Full house", which we certainly managed with all 9 Council members present plus 5 Section Leaders and one other member. Whilst everyone else accepted the March Minutes, I personally had to admit to leaving out in its entirety one item which belatedly will be added to them. Nonetheless the Minutes were approved and signed. Such trust they have in me! We then moved on to Matters Arising, and the first item concerned the container for Colney Heath which is due for delivery on 26th April - our main concern now being the forecast week of rain which could leave ground conditions WET & SOGGY! Let us hope we were being unduly pessimistic and the delivery will go without a hitch.

The next item concerned fetes, as the recommendation of the Council and the decision of the Track Committee (approved by Loco members) to cease attending such events has been challenged. A list of 16 members who are keen to continue with fetes has been established with the intention of forming a Fetes Section. There is a "bookings secretary", the free loan of suitable transport has been organised, and a dual 5"/7 1/4" gauge track is planned. Obviously this proposition led to a very protracted and at times heated discussion, which was finally resolved by agreement that a small committee will be formed from the 16 to provide a proposal on the mechanics, safety, and costings involved, this package to be fully reported to the Council in three months time. And there the matter will rest until the new Section's proposals are submitted and assessed. The earlier decision to discontinue attending fetes remains in place for at least this year, the only exception being the Society's free attendance at the Colney Heath village school's summer fair on Saturday 19th June when miniature traction engines only will be present.

Having in 50 minutes only got this far with the Agenda, Tim Joiner arrived to discuss his idea that we should try to maximise the potential of the Millennium celebrations - by hiring out portable tracks, locos, miniature traction engines, and even perhaps exhibiting models, thus keeping the Society's name and all aspects of the model engineering hobby well in the public eye. This obviously has to be aligned to any possible rekindling of our involvement in fetes, and his ideas will be kept in mind.

At this point we returned to the Agenda, with some discussion on the forthcoming Extraordinary General Meeting relating to the new subscription levels and lack of notice re same. We then arrived at the Chairman's Report but as he had already spoken at length on a number of matters we rapidly passed on to the Secretary's Report. Correspondence was soon dealt with and there was some discussion on guide-lines for Birthday Parties. Several Clubs having expressed an interest in spending a day at the track, a mutually convenient date will be sought and arrangements made. Nominations for the Gutteridge Cup were received and all will be revealed at the A.G.M: and Open Day invitations from other Clubs were passed to the appropriate Section Leaders. The Treasurer reported two new members (actually, rejoiners) - the brothers Greg & Mark Harwood whose interest is in the Slot Car Section. The draft Annual Accounts were then tabled and discussed - they will be audited next week.

Section Reports followed. A team of SLOT CAR members recently went to Holland where they won an 8-hour endurance race.

MARINE have some concern at the water level in the pond - is it natural evaporation or is there a leak? It is hoped to get a water leak detection and repair kit from the

manufacturers of the liner. The perimeter of the pond is now paved, and landscaping work is continuing. CINE members are disappointed that their new projection screen has proved faulty and has been returned to the manufacturer. OO members had a good showing at a recent exhibition in Mill Hill: NA members continue to work on their track, and preparing their exhibition layout for a big "do" in Peterborough later in the year. LOCO have finished their winter working parties though some enthusiasts continue to turn out Sunday mornings to finish the ground level track. Finally STATIONARY STEAM have carried out their annual boiler inspections and will now be able to enjoy the various events taking place all round the country, and they are planning to have a Road Run from Colney Heath - date to be advised. The Chairman mentioned that the Sentinel Owners Club are planning a "run" from John O'Groats to Lands End, presumably as a Millenium celebration, no doubt a costly event for those taking part.

A speaker for the September General Meeting has been booked - a past Chairman of the Society, he is Les Brooks and he will be talking about measurements in model engineering. Barbecuing at Colney Heath will start AFTER the A.G.M., on the second, fourth and where appropriate, the fifth Friday evenings each month.

Though out of sequence I will close these notes by reminding all of you that the Annual General Meeting - and two E.G.M's - will be held on FRIDAY MAY 7TH commencing at 8.00 pm sharp.

At this - the last meeting of the present Council - it was established that the only members willing to continue in office if elected are:

Frank Dell (Chairman)

Mike Chrisp (Council member)

Jack Edwards (Council member)

Beryl Collingwood (Secretary)

The vacancies are Vice Chairman, Treasurer, and 3 Council Members.

Now it is up to all of you, the members, to consider doing a stint on the Council - we all have to be nominated, proposed and seconded, and the forms will be available on the evening so why not have a go - you might surprise yourselves and enjoy it! Why do you think I'm still here!

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking his fellow Councillors for their support and commitment during the past twelve months. Beryl Collingwood

Beryl Collingwood

[Sprocket Hole Writes](#)

Another annual Triangle Competition and once again the Cine Section were eliminated in the first round, but as there are only three rounds it is not as bad as it sounds and we did come second in our group.

For those who don't know, can't remember or may never have been told, all clubs entering are divided into groups of three and each club enters three films, one documentary, one open section and one set theme which differs every year.

There are three judges, who award three points for the winning film in each section, two

points for the second and one for the third. The club gaining the most points goes on to meet two other winning clubs until there are only three clubs left for the final round.

In our first round Hornchurch gained 23 points, we gained 16, and Watford 15. John Old had the honour of being asked to judge the semi-finals, where he found the documentary section very strong, the open section was only average, and this years set theme (the card) was generally weak all round. Woodford and Wanstead came first in the semi-final, going through to the final (outcome not yet decided). Planet Video Society (based in Enfield) were second and Milton Keynes third.

Just before going to press we were saddened to learn that Ken Blackwell's dad had passed away after a long illness and our sympathies go out to Ken and his mum. Ken has organised some great coach trips on our behalf and his dad enjoyed most of them until he became too ill to travel with us.

The venue for this years trip has yet to be decided but we hope all sections will consider joining us when we have decided where to go! Any suggestions (within a couple of hours travel each way) will be considered and we do like to fill the coach. For the final details and the chance to book early, Ken's number is 0181 886 6056, and more details will be in future News Sheets before the trip, which is usually in August.

Sprocket Hole

[Tyttenhanger Gazette](#)

At the April Loco meeting Rod Pomeroy spoke of some plastic containers he had bought secondhand. They may be of use for carrying one's locomotive tool kit. The container had a drop-in top tray with a lid and carrying handle. They cost £ 5.00 each. Please contact Rod if you are interested in purchasing one.

During the evening we watched films brought along by members. Whilst talking to Derek Perham, he showed me a 45 gallon oil drum he had turned from solid steel in 5" gauge. It looked very realistic despite its simplicity, and is one of six which will form the load for one of his wagons for the goods train he is making. There will be two five-plank goods wagons and three seven plank mineral wagons, two of which are end tippers and one having a plain side door. They are modelled on 1927 to 1934 vintage LMS with wooden underframes.

The next Loco meeting at HQ will be in October and is a bring and buy / auction.

Until then the Loco meetings will be held at Colney Heath. *P.S. Please remember - rear lights are required for night running.*

Roger Bell

[Marine Mumbles](#)

I am afraid the best laid plans for the March Marine meeting did not go according to plan. There should have been a talk on producing ship fittings by yours truly. Guess who

lost his voice on Friday morning, post flu? It was probably the best thing that could have happened.

The meeting kicked off with Frank giving his usual Council meeting report. A general talk then ensued with some very interesting and important points being raised, the first being that steam powered boats working over 15 pounds psi boiler pressure must have a boiler certificate before they can sail on the Society pond, or any other. Mike Collingwood also added to this by saying that home made Low Pressure Gas containers for firing the boilers would also be subject to scrutiny as well. This is something we must think about before allowing steam powered boats to sail.

Another point which we all considered very important was raised, this being what form of insurance does the Society have with respect to the pond? I have written to Beryl, the Secretary to forward this question to the Treasurer / Council.

The rest of the evening was saved by Frank, who produced a video on Airbrushing, which was a general introduction. I wish I had had that when I did my air brush talks, it would have saved you all. The video showed the types of air brushes, how they function and their applications. The second half dealt with techniques and the use of masks. Sorry everybody, but I had to leave before the end as I was feeling so rough.

Derek Perham has got everything under control, including the trophy for the pop-pop boat championships which will be completed by the time you read this. It seems to be the general feeling that we should now meet at the pond at Colney Heath for sailing on the Marine meetings, since the nights are now drawing out.

Well thats about it from me except for this:

Get those boats out!

Peter Stern

WUT News **from the North American Section**

The North American section continues to pack lots of modellers into the somewhat confined space at the end of HQ. We have in recent months entertained guests from Seattle (Washington), and diverse parts of these Isles. It is not unusual to find ten or twelve of us on a work night, and "play nights" are liable to extreme congestion. Members who are retired (or self employed) have a great advantage in being able to arrive much earlier than we wage slaves.

On some evenings passenger and freight trains are backed up around the room waiting for space to appear in the passenger terminal or freight facilities at Woodside and have been known to disappear into the black hole at Vulcan, or to be held for ages in the Erie loops in desperate efforts to make space.

Richmond the industrial area in the centre of the room is progressing rapidly. Track appears, is rearranged and re-rearranged. Switches are now finding the permanent

locations and wire tubing laid for setting them. A permanent switcher a Northern Pacific 0-8-0 has found a home there admittedly some way from its home among the big skies of Montana.

Chairman Frank recently graced the room and commented on the big sky sunset which has appeared behind Cooke, the mid-point on the branch. Now that it's maturing it does seem more acceptable to those familiar with sunsets in the east of North America, at first only the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific fans who like their desert skies were in favour. Or perhaps we're all getting used to it. The artist prefers to remain anonymous but has admitted to being inspired by an Edward Hopper painting of a Railroad Sunset from 1929.

Who says we don't have a broad range of interests?

On the wider stage a group from the North American section lead by Rai Fenton are running this year's NMRA British Region Convention 1999 which is being held in Peterborough October 22-24, 1999.

In spite of the impracticality of both organising the convention and operating a layout we are taking Young Street Yard as a switching layout. It is now being worked on in the library (with the consent of the Council). The main item is the creation of a u-bend shaped fiddle yard to save space. Many of the structures are in need of some refurbishment or possibly complete renewal.

Clive Winter

A 1999 Message from the Boiler Inspectors

Once again the Boiler Inspectors have considered their availability to conduct routine boiler tests and - like last year - have decided these will take place only on the first Sunday in every month, from now to October when the running season finishes. This means they can run their own engines in the remaining weeks without being faced with a queue of tests before they can steam up their own locos. It is hoped members will continue to be as understanding of this decision as they were last year, and that prior arrangements will be made for the boiler tests. It is the loco owners responsibility to provide their engines with the appropriate connection (5/16" x 32tpi male) already fitted, pressure gauge blanked off if appropriate, and in a fit state to retain the required hydraulic pressure without excessive leaks from fittings.

The Boiler Inspectors

On-Line News

Here are two of the many E-Mails\ Comments I have received following the updating of our web site.

Along with the web site face lift I have now changed our email list into a discussion list so anybody who is a member can discuss their favourite hobby with a kindred spirit wherever they may be in the world.

From Mike Baigent * EX-Bracknell club

Many years ago (about 1974 I think), I came as a visitor to NLSME when I was in the Bracknell club. I brought along, and ran, my 3.5" gauge 2-6-0 "Princess Marina" on your track. I had some really fast runs, the only odd thing was that, being a damp day, I felt an electric shock "tingle" whenever I stopped and put my feet to the ground. This turned out to be due to the back e.m.f. produced by your signalling relays; further discussion with your signalling department resulted in my suggesting "flywheel diodes" across the relay coils. I wonder if it was ever done ? (By the way do you still have that superb GNR centre-pivoted signal by the station ? I "fell in love with it", so if you ever dispose of it, remember I have a large garden !!!!!).

Anyway, I digress, - back to my amusing account: During the afternoon, I let a fellow member, Ray Whittleton, have a drive and decided to take a novel photograph by sitting in the recess built into your tunnel. Eventually Ray came through on "full throttle" and I pressed the camera button, hoping to achieve an effective "night shot" kind of picture.

Unfortunately, Ray was a somewhat nervous type, and the camera flash took him unawares and really scared him. I heard a very loud shout, and seconds later, saw that Ray's silhouette was standing in the tunnel beside me, whilst my locomotive and driving trolley proceeded down your "long straight", with nobody on board, and at what seemed to be an increasing rate of knots with both safety valves blowing hard..

I realised that to give chase would be futile, so I waited whilst the train went round the bottom curve and tried to catch it on the way back towards the station. Unfortunately, I tripped and "missed the train".

Luckily, Ray had put the injector on just before reaching the tunnel, and the pressure started to subside. By the time that the train reached the station (priming heavily by this time), it had slowed down enough for someone to stop it.

The resulting photograph looked like a film stunt: Loco emitting clouds of steam, and Ray about twelve inches off the seat with all four limbs at 45-degrees to his trunk, and "red eyes" the size of an owl's !! The photo was a 35mm colour slide and I loaned it to Ray to get copied. Unfortunately he became ill and died some time later, I never got the photo back and I don't know what became of his widow.

There was one other memorable incident that day. In those days I had an old Morris Minor ex-telephone van with the ladder rack on top. We (i.e. Bracknell club) used my old van to bring along two of our passenger trolleys. The trolleys were longer than the van: one was tied to the ladder rack and the other was inside the payload area, with the back sticking out and the van doors tied across with rope. The journey was very slow as the old van was clapped out (and wouldn't pass a bus, let alone a test !!). Driving up through Denham (there was no M25 in those days), the chap in the car behind us with two youngsters on board kept frantically flashing his lights in a desperate attempt to overtake us. Eventually he managed it and then pulled up in front, forcing me to stop. "Oh dear", I thought, "I've obviously upset this guy, and worse - he looks bigger than me !!"

"Excuse me", said the man, holding out a pair of five-inch gauge bogies, "but these fell off of your van some five miles ago. Sorry, but I ran over this one". Grateful thanks all round followed, and that is why the NLSME had an extra car-load of passengers that

day (invited by Bracknell !!).

It is many years since I was in Bracknell club, having moved to the Guildford area, but some of my older acquaintances (like Jim Rough) often recall this day with great amusement, whenever we meet.

Maybe I could visit you again this year sometime (But I won't be running any "ghost trains" this time!!).

From Peter Probert

Thanks for the contact - it's absolutely wonderful for me to travel back in time to the mid 50's when I was a young member. Nostalgia is sickening!! Remember me to Tom Luxford and Bert Mead!

I have toured your web page and you are to be congratulated on a professional up-market presentation. What would LBSC have thought about all this? NUFF SED!

Peter - "Fayette/Maisie/Speedy/Class 40" - Probert
By the way it may be of interest to some of my older brethren that I a now 61.....!

*Peter Foreman
Web Editor*

Crime and Punishment Part 2

....and now what you've all be waiting for - the second, and final part of Peter Kearon's chilling chinese tale:

The following morning at a rather earlier time than was expected, Ho Wong sent a messenger begging Deng Yeung and his fellow associated to honour his humble office with their esteemed presence. Ho Wong looked completely untroubled as he offered tea and biscuits and made light conversation about the weather and the price of rice. When all were comfortably settled Ho Wong began.

"I have had the opportunity of considering your most worthy disclosures, and again I offer you good gentlemen my most sincere thanks for making me aware of the wicked practice which has been perpetrated by these five scoundrels." Deng Yeung's eyes appeared to give the slightest flicker of pleasure. Continued Ho Wong, "I have taken the opportunity of investigating personally this sad affair and have strongly interrogated the villains. That they are guilty is beyond question; that they each begged forgiveness and each offered an identical excuse merely proves collusion and in itself underlines their guilt. They each produced the same story that a lump of coal on a highly loaded tender, quite usual when departing from the terminal, sometimes does fall off onto the trackside and could perchance bounce into the gardens of the company cottages. That a womanfolk would remove any falling debris was merely to protect the vegetable plot from damage. The whistle was always blown at this place, but was done merely to alert a permanent way gang which for some time had been working on the track section just at that location."

"I cursed them for being liars and thieves and for their dishonesty and treachery and vowed to them that the Great Railway God could not be mocked and for certain he would inflict his most severe displeasure on them in the afterworld. Even now they are bound and are locked in the lamp room awaiting their fate."

"But, fellow officers, I am deeply disturbed at the clever structure of lies and half truths that they have woven together. Their imitation of truth and indeed had you not told me of your own impeccable eye-witness evidence it is not beyond denial that even I may well have innocently believed their smooth, treacherous posturing. Think then of the mortal perils that we officials are facing. If these villains have been able to weave a web of such clever deceit that even the highest company officials can be misled, then is it not possible - even likely - that the Great Railway God could be similarly misinformed by their vile silken tongues. Our God has, after all, many important and difficult problems to deal with each day and it would just be possible he would be too busy to spend time interrogating and exposing these scoundrels."

"Imagine then our own fate when we one day arrive to face this endless wrath for the dispatch of, what he would believe to be, blameless men sent to an early death by our own wrongful orders. I'm afraid that any protestations, unsupported by fellow officers (unless by the merest chance we should die together) would be brushed aside. I am in the deepest despair and filled with endless fear."

"There is just one way in which justice can be ensured. Even before the rogues stand before the seat of justice it is essential that our Great Railway God hears the truth as witnessed by our own steadfast men. It is necessary for one of these honest witnesses to accompany the five scoundrels so that their foul lies can be countered by clear eye-witness evidence of their wicked deeds which will ensure that their undoubted guilt will be plain to see. I know that all of you will demand the honour of being chosen to perform this heroic mission and I sympathise with those who inevitably are turned away. The lucky winner, whose name will be carved on a stone plaque to be erected at our main terminus, forever to be blessed, will be the first to enter the furnace to give a little time to put the undeniable truth to our Great Railway God before those five worthless characters arrive."

"Go now and choose your most worthy representative and honoured comrade. Already our finest locomotive 'Empress of China' has been lit up and by noon will carry a full head of steam with the brightest fire. (The warm-hearted Chinese consider it unfair, even cruel, to plunge a prisoner into a dull fire, as it could cause prolonged discomfort).

"Fellow officers, do not delay, return before noon with your elected hero so that swift and sure justice can be carried out."

Deng Yeung and his colleagues looked strangely apprehensive as they filed out and, unusually, failed to respond to H Wong's promises of everlasting co-operation and undying friendship. But it was a very short time before Deng Yeung appeared again at the door of Ho Wong's office looking extremely concerned, and in his confusion failed to notice the proffered hospitality customarily partaken. He was clearly in a hurry, and without more ado, but with much hand wringing, explained that there had been a regrettable mistake. "I have only just learned", explained Deng Yeung, "that the foreman platelayer in charge of the rail section from the station is a lazy, incompetent liar, who neglectfully has allowed the track near the company cottages to fall into a disgraceful condition, causing locomotives to roll to such an extent, that lumps of coal have often been dislodged from heavily loaded tenders. Furthermore, you kindly, highly trained top-link drivers have always blown a caring warning note on their whistles to warn of

danger to the track workers. Be sure this man will be severely punished."

It took some time for Ho Wong to consider the implications of this information and as the minutes to noon were ticking away, Deng Yeung and his fellow officers showed distinct signs of suffering from oppressive heat, although, in truth, the weather was remarkably clement for that time of year. Finally, Ho Wong gave his response. "As you have now been able to clear up the situation in your usual competent manner, it would be wrong to trouble our Great Railway God with a litany of misunderstandings. The true culprit has been found; this matter must be put behind us.

Please celebrate your clever investigative skills by joining me in drinking a glass of rice wine." From the terminus came the unmistakable sound of a four-cylinder engine pulling away and soon 'Empress of India' roared past Ho Wong's office window. A short time later, the mocking shriek of its whistle could be heard as it reached the company cottages.

Footnote:

The stone garden wall at the rear of my aunt's house in Spring Gardens Terrace, Roath, Cardiff backed onto the up main line which ran on a falling gradient from the General Station, just a mile away. London-bound trains emanating from Swansea and the West were usually re-engined by Cardiff's own Castle class locomotives newly coaled at Canton sheds. Tenders were piled high to give enough high-quality Welsh coal for the round trip. From that wall I often saw lumps of coal lying on the trackside; but for how long they remained there, I cannot say.

Peter Kearon

For Sale

(At 50% of the cost of a similar Warco Machine)

Naerok Mill/Drill Model RDM350M

Unlike the Warco machine the Naerok has positive head location when raising and lowering

- very important!

R8 Spindle Imperial Dials

Crompton Parkinson Motor

Can be seen working. Very good machine.

£ 480 ovno. Buyer collects.

Please contact us mentioning the name Peter Precious

CENTEC Model 2C

Horizontal Milling Machine. Metric.

Table 30 x 6 inches.

1 inch Arbour. Six speeds (85 to 1400 rpm)

3 Phase, 1h.p. Motor (almost new) Coolant

Vertical attachment. Reversing switch. Guards.

Good condition.

£ 400. Buyer to collect.

Please contact us mentioning the name Bob (Hertfordshire)

Camden Miniature Steam Services catalogue

Having just ordered a book for Michael's birthday present - Bassett-Lowke Railways A Commemorative Edition - and having personally thoroughly enjoyed browsing through the latest catalogue from Camden Miniature Steam Services, led me to wonder how many members know of or receive this catalogue? It is a veritable gold mine of publications ranging from engineering through to technical steam, hot air engines, trains & boats & planes, modelling and much more. There is a good range of books on American trains, narrow and standard gauge: on Alternative Technology, very much a subject for today and the future: construction manuals: European railways: dolls' houses: horology: mechanisms, movements and designs: trams: wireless technology, ad infinitum.

They list reprints of really old publications, like The Boy Mechanic Series dating from the early 1900s! I was tempted to get Michael a copy of The Girl In The Street - Or the Bedside Bus Book, which has to be good value at only £ 8.95p.

Some publications are only available in paperback but many are hard-covered, and you can spend as little as £ 2.75 to buy Lathe & Planer Tools (1908) through to £ 134.35 for The History of the Union Pacific Railroad in Cheyenne. Or, perhaps like me, you will find something of personal interest - mine was a paperback "Made By Garretts (An Introduction to the Products of the Leiston Works)" where my maternal grandfather spent his working life, and my father and my many uncles served their apprenticeships. Camden also offer a good selection of videos and even a few CD-ROMs, and they have just belatedly arrived in the 20th century by going on e-mail.

Beryl Collingwood

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

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