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Thoughts of Chairman Dell

I won't comment too much on the visit of the Water Company and the open day for visiting clubs, since they are reported elsewhere in this issue of the News Sheet, except to say how enjoyable they were both for the Club and the visitors. With 25-30 guests and a good turnout by Society members the Open Day for the Water Company really was a happy afternoon and we were complimented on how we maintained the Colney Heath site. Many thanks to everyone who made it such a success.

Early Days

When I was at school just before the War (1936, 37, 38) I used to long for the summer holidays to arrive. But it was always spoilt for me in some way as my mother always packed me off to my grandfather who had a smallholding in a small village called Holton near Oxford. I didn't like the country then much as I was always a 'towny'. My grandfather was a miserable old devil. Nothing I did ever seemed to please him, My grandfather earned his living by selling his produce to the surrounding villages. For this he had a cart and two horses. He used to use the horses on alternate days. I remember the horses names were Horace and Daisy. It was my job each morning before breakfast to round up the horse of the day. Daisy was very good but Horace was a different story. Sometimes he would trot over quite docile but on other days if he decided he didn't want to work he used to lead me a merry dance. Sometimes I would be 20 minutes before I managed to catch him. I used to become quite agitated as I was always a hungry boy and looked forward to my breakfast.

Another thing that Horace did very well was, once he had got into his stride, he always used to break wind. This used to send me into fits of laughter. My grandfather didn't approve of laughing at natural things and always told me off.

My grandfather also had a pig called Lucy. He'd bought her to fatten up and kill for Christmas but somehow he never got round to it. I suspect that under the rough exterior he had a soft spot so she became a pet. Also on the smallholding were other pets. There was a seagull called Sam who he found with a broken wing which was so bad that he had to chop it off. Sam hopped around in the garden all day and often came into the kitchen, especially at meal times. Sam's arch enemy was Nigger the cat. This was a name you wouldn't use today but lots of dogs and cats who were black would be called

Nigger. One day when Nigger was stalking Sam the bird turned on him and pecked his eye. Afterwards the eye became opaque from this and Nigger only had one good eye. The last of the pets was a black Labrador called Albert who was a fire lover. He used to sit in front of the kitchen fire as close as he could get, so much so that his eyes got burnt and he went blind at an early age. In the house he was marvellous and never bumped into anything. He knew exactly where everything was especially his food bowl.

One last insight into my grandfather's personality. My father's brothers and sister had all left home because of the hard time my grandfather had led them. That just left my father at home. He was the youngest son. My father told me that they were ploughing one of the fields and my father's job was to lead the horse and woe betide him if he didn't lead him in a straight line. One day after the old man had been moaning most of the day my father decided he had had enough. He picked up a clod of clay and flung it at the old man. It hit just behind his ear and from that day on he was deaf in that ear. He chased my father all over the field but couldn't catch him, shouting abuse and telling him what he would do to him when he caught him.

My father decided he would leave home. The nearest relative he had was in service at a big house in Blackheath, a distance of over 60 miles away. It took him three days to walk. When he arrived he asked for his sister, my Aunt Nell, and she got him taken on as a boy gardener with a wage of 2/6d a week. They were indeed hard days.

To sum up, on the smallholding we had a seagull with one wing, a cat with one eye, a blind dog and an old fat pig and a miserable old man. After my father left my grandfather took on a simple boy from the village of which there were many in those times and he stayed with him for over 20 years. So the old man couldn't have been all that bad. Perhaps he had mellowed after my father had hit him with that clod of clay.

Frank Dell

Loco Section News

Apart from the special events our Sunday running continues to be popular with visitors. We were unfortunate to have one very wet Sunday afternoon and on that day we had a family visit, grandad being John Savident (Coronation Street's Fred Elliot). Although it was raining very hard he signed the Visitors Book and drove the Club electric loco (accompanied by a Club member) which he said he enjoyed very much. Our Section meeting at Colney Heath on Friday 11th August gave us the opportunity to thank Angela Perham for her help in keeping the Catering Dept. well supplied. We showed our appreciation with a gift and a card. Open Day for Visiting Clubs

Saturday 12th August was Open Day to visiting Clubs from Ascot, Canvey Island, Ereshash Valley, Fareham, Harrow and Wembley, Maidstone, Portsmouth, Rugely and SMEE. They were invited by Brian Apthorpe and Mike Chrisp. A total of 21 engines and two steam boats were running to entertain everyone all day. Once again the weather was extremely good and everyone had a good day. Special thanks are due to Sue Apthorpe for organising the catering.

Frank Hills

[August Open Day for Visiting Clubs](#)

[Thanks from Sue and Brian Apthorpe](#)

We would like to pass on our thanks to all who helped out at the Track on Saturday 12th August on Visiting Clubs Day. This event started several years ago when some friends of mine from the Erewash Valley MES asked if they could visit our track. At that time there were only a few people and locos. This has now grown into quite a large event with over 20 locos this year including several from Fareham SME and other clubs. Without the assistance of several of our members and wives it would not be possible to hold this event. Thanks once again to all those who helped out.

I have already had a request from my friends in the Erewash Valley MES to repeat the event at the same time next year so they must have enjoyed themselves! (They do have a happy knack of picking good weather). Out of the 21 locos which arrived, 19 ran. Of the non-runners one was a Conway 3 1/2" NG loco which had a mechanical fault and didn't get on the track. The other two were both electric locos brought by people who had more than one loco and we did not have the track capacity to allow them to run their second loco at a time that was convenient to them. Everyone had as long as they wanted on the track even though we had nine locos on at one time which is rather more than I would have liked. For those unable to attend I have listed the locos below.

Loco	Owner	Club
5" g 0-4-0 Electric	M Andrews	Erewash Valley
5" g 0-8-0 Netta	S Andrews	Erewash Valley
5" g 4-6-0 Claughton	N Thompson	Erewash Valley
3 1/2" 2-6-2 Bantam Cock	D Deller	Maidstone
5" g 4-6-0 Black Five	M Starnos	Maidstone
5" g 0-6-0 Cauliflower	R Bell	Rugeley
3 1/2" g 2-6-2 Jubilee	B Baker	Canvey
5" g 0-6-0 Simplex	L Connell	Canvey
5" g 0-6-0 Saddle Tank	L Nichols	Canvey
5" g Tyne & Wear Metro	P Bright	Fareham
5" g 2-10-0 Evening Star	J Pecher	Fareham
5" g Class 31	J Brotherton	Ascot
3 1/2" g Conway	H Doncaster	Erewash Walley
5" g De Winton	M Byatt	Harrow & Wembley
5" g 4-6-2 Duchess	M Parnham	Maidstone
3 1/2" g 4-4-2 Maisie	J Warren	Portsmouth
5" g Dholpur	R Hillman	Fareham
5" g Hunslet	M Hall	SMEE

Brian Apthorpe

[Three Valleys Water Company Open Day](#)

On the 29th July we held an Open Day for the management, staff and families of the Water Company. Mr Jim McGown and Mr David and Mrs Alison Alexander arrived at

3pm and were given an informal tour of the site and shown the activities of both the Loco and Marine Sections. They were invited to drive the locomotives which Mr McGown and Mr Alexander did and I think they enjoyed themselves. Our Chairman, Frank Dell, later presented Mr McGown, our past President, with a gift of a silver picture frame from the Society in recognition of his support over the years and welcomed Mr Alexander as our new President. Mr Alexander accepted a Society shirt presented by Frank and Laura Reddish, our youngest member, presented a bouquet to Mrs Alexander. Thanks should be extended to Kate Reddish and to Mrs Squire for their efforts in providing such a good spread for both guests and members.

Mike Chrisp captured the afternoon with his digital camera and below is a selection of his photographs.

Frank Hills

[Slot Car News](#)

Due to pressure of work and the fact that nobody has given me anything for inclusion (Except for Tony's excellent Trivia Quiz) this month's news is rather on the short side. Next month I shall be able to report on the Brooklands Rail Car Race and how our chaps did at the Reading 24hr Euro series.

Racing Calendar for September

7th 1/24th GP12/Track Clean
 14th 1/24th Production
 21st Team Race 1/24th GP12
 28th Saloon

Steve Francis

[Announcement](#) [16mm Garden Railway Section](#)

There is a possibility that a Garden Railway Section may be formed within the Society. The proposal is for the track to be out of doors in a suitable place, still to be selected, at Tyttenhanger. The present idea is for the track to be 32mm (0 gauge) for 16mm narrow gauge models. In addition there will probably be 45mm track as well for G scale. It is hoped to accommodate both gauges by obtaining dual gauge 32/45mm track.

The advantages of this scale of railway models/engineering are that both gauges give a relatively cheap introduction to live steam with starting prices for a steam loco being around £250.00 while battery driven electric locos are as little as £70.00. Rolling stock is also inexpensive, it being possible to build a truck for as little as £10.00. The other great advantage is that the locos are easily manhandled compared to 3 ½" and 5" versions.

John Milloy

With Apologies ~ Poem

On Sunday the thirteenth of August
Up at the Colney Heath Site
Young Bernard of Cookoo Line bridge fame
Was having a hell of a fight.

He was trying to trimmer the long grass
That was growing under the fence
But he couldn't get the thing working
And he was getting a little bit tense.

So he turned the thing upside down ways
And tried to adjust it a bit
And after a hell of a long time
Said 'Sod it. I'll mower instead'

He pulled the string strongly, it started at once
And he went up the long side of the pool
With a smile on his face, 'That's better', he said,
Now this is a wonderful tool'.

He reached the top grass by the Chester seat
When Kate with a cry of despair
Screamed, 'Don't cut the grass behind that seat'
But he had and the plant patch was bare.

They surveyed his work when Kate left him alone
He finished the cut with ease
But he went a bit mad or the mower did
He went into the pond up to his knees!

The mower went in too, with a gurgle and a splash
He was trying to walk on water
There is only one person who has done that
Bernard knows now he didn't oughter!

There was no one around to help get him out
He was soaked right up to his waist
There's a very old saying that railways are fun
There is something for everyone's taste.

They stripped down the mower, it was taken to bits
It was dried and put back together
When they tried it, it worked but Bernard was left
With shoes of wet squelchy leather.

Anon

Owning and running a 4.5" Burrell

Our Editor said, "Write a piece for stationery steam now."

"But when the Chairman poaches all the news what is one to do?"

"Write about model traction engines."

"But I haven't built one."

"Well write about what it's like to have one."

So I am.

If you buy one they are expensive. If you buy one like mine they are quite big. If you don't have a garage the only place to keep it is in the hall. So we start to come across some major problems; potential bankruptcy, divorce and probable loss of home due to eviction.

Having observed Mr Corcoran [8 ton showman's engine] and Mr Dell [8 ton steamroller and steam lorry] over a number of years and I hope learned, I managed to convince my life's partner that it was an investment, would bring endless joy and would lead to the total redecoration of the house. As a result she let me buy it. It is vital that potential owners of miniature traction engines are economic with the truth. So now I had a half-ton steam engine which didn't use rails but had a steering wheel. Most owners of four inch traction engines rig up a seat on the back of the tender and sit on it to drive, when I do that on my little Burrell steering becomes very difficult as the front wheels clear the ground. So if you're built for comfort rather than speed you will need a driving truck/trailer or a week or two at a health farm.

Transportation can be a problem, one can't just lift it into the back of the car and if you don't have a garage where do you keep the trailer? You need a nice big van; this means giving up respectability and joining that great British institution "The White Van Man". Your neighbours will love this, but there's more. If you want to attend traction engine rallies you will need a caravan, so an old caravan joins the van and large driving wagon.

The caravan will have to be stored elsewhere so the costs are still mounting, the marriage is on the rocks, the neighbours ignore you and when towing an old caravan behind an old van, countless farmers are caused unnecessary stress. You may well wonder at this point whether all this is such a good idea, but I assure you that it is. I can now take my beloved away for weekend breaks in the country using the caravan. This works well up to a point, traction engine rallies attract grubby men married to teachers, this means that they have something in common to chat about while sitting in their caravans out of the rain. (One word of warning, failure to get the caravan refrigerator to work can be fatal.)

When the sun does shine at the rallies often the wind drops. Now surprisingly this does have its pros and cons, the promise of sitting in the sun reading or reworking the National Curriculum has its attractions, but the impenetrable yellow/green smoke can be a bit of a blight when there is no wind to clear it.

Running the engine is fun. The coal consumption of about £50 per annum is a small penalty to pay and when tired it is nice to offer you friends a chance to drive while you relax. Here's another problem: Model engineers, in the main, drive small railway locomotives with great skill, they notch back, check the water, stoke the fire, look out for red signals, get the injector working and all the time keep an iron hand on the regulator and never drive too fast. What they don't do is steer the train around the track. So after your friend takes over there's no relaxation, walls parked cars concrete posts

and trees have constantly got to be told to move out of the way and have in one or two cases been known to hit my engine in a most reckless manner.

I can almost hear you say that I am just emphasising the setbacks. There are advantages in road steam. You can go on parades, or drive down to the pub as well as run at Colney Heath. This is of course true but remember that you will need tax and insurance at £100 per annum.

So the friends have come and off we go to the track. It will take about one and a half hours to unload and steam up before you go anywhere and it can be rather a dirty job. When you do this its better if your wife and friends go down to the pub for lunch and bring you back a sandwich. This can be eaten while you walk round warning off all the obstructions while they're having a go.

Testing the injector is no problem, you simply wheel it out onto the front path and fire it up. The crews of both fire engines will be most interested and your wife and daughter will have a good laugh. When I find the neighbour I'll get my own back. They all deny it.

Since I became the owner of a smallish Burrell all in all I have had more fun than I could possibly have imagined and I have driven neither of my railway locos since becoming a "roadie". The danger is the pull of the real thing, the full size engine, the ultimate road rage machine. It gets ever stronger. I'd have to sell the Burrell but this would allow space to decorate the hall and a big one would be an investment. We could get away for nice weekends in the country and it would bring endless joy and I'll have to check with Mr Corcoran to see how he managed it.

John Squire

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

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