

Issue No. 883

November 2025

The News Sheet

North London Society of Model Engineers

**November
2025**



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colour by visiting our web site at www.nlsme.co.uk

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Front cover; -

In this month's issue Peter who is section leader for the club's marine section starts a new series on modelling Royal Navy WW2 close range naval guns used on the Coastal Forces (MTBs and MGBs etc). The cover picture is one of the models he has produced.

Picture by Peter

Your editor is very grateful to all those who have contributed to this edition. Your efforts are much appreciated by all the members of NLSME. This News Sheet would not be possible without you.

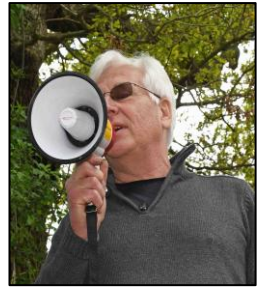
Articles long or short on any subject which would be of interest to members of NLSME will be gratefully received for inclusion in future editions. If you don't want to put pen to paper but have a suggestion for a topic which is of interest let the editor know and we will do the rest.



Chairman's Comments

Les

I was not able to attend the Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition this year, but I did attend the St Albans model show. Hats off to the St Albans club for arranging a very good event. Their strap line of "Models that Move" really summed it up. It is primarily a modelling show rather than an engineering exhibition. Plenty of radio-controlled devices, cars, lorries and boats, plus rockets, tinsplate models, inventive use of Meccano, 3D printed traction engines trundling around (electric not steam), aircraft and live steam locos and traction engines.



Our stand, covering all sections of our club, was reflective of our model engineering background, adding another dimension to the show. I thank all members who contributed and manned it over the weekend. I do not like to pick out particular models but Jon's extraordinary 7 ¼" gauge Locomotion, displayed on the actual double centenary date of Locomotion No 1 opening the Stockton and Darlington Railway, was perfect.

Closer to home, congratulations to the HQ sections for a splendid presentation of all three layouts for the October general meeting and for the program of railway films in the main room. Close inspection of these layouts is always warranted showing the remarkable modelling skills and enthusiasm we have in our club for these gauges.

Public running at Tyttenhanger is now over for 2025, I understand the last day was a near washout, but, apart from that, the year has been most pleasant. (I missed it as myself with James and Rob were being equally washed out riding our old motor bikes in the New Forest).

Winter work parties commence on Sunday mornings from the beginning of November. Plenty of maintenance tasks to do, including an effort before Christmas to clear excess brambles encroaching on the raised track and ground level railway. See list of work in this news sheet pages 10& 11. All that in addition to the steaming bay improvements which, fingers crossed, will be completed this winter. Do come along and help out. You may want to take on a particular task or join one of the teams, let me know and I will steer you in right direction, or just turn up. Tea break at 11am.

Winter meetings continue at HQ. Friday 7th November 8pm will be Work in Progress and December is our annual Christmas gathering. I am preparing a schedule of talks from our members for next year.

See you at the track or HQ.

Derek 1935 - 2025

Last month we informed you that Derek had sadly passed away, and we promised a fuller account of his life and memories in this edition.



Derek was born in November 1935 in London Colney not far from the club site at Colney Heath. He never moved far; St Albans was the family home where he spent his childhood years. He got married and set up a home still in St Albans and as the years passed three children, grandchildren and great grandchildren gradually filled his life.

Derek completed two years of National Service with the REME. His time in the forces helped shape his discipline and strong sense of service, qualities that stayed with him throughout his life. He remained a lifelong supporter of the Royal British Legion, regularly attending events and enjoying the camaraderie of friends he made there. He especially enjoyed dancing at the Hemel Hempstead branch and those evenings brought him so much happiness.

Once the children had moved away Derek and his wife Angela developed their love of travel, exploring many corners of the globe, but they especially enjoyed cruises. One of his fondest memories was seeing in the New Year in Gibraltar, watching fireworks from the deck of a ship. He would often recount stories from their travels, always with enthusiasm and a sparkle in his eye.

Closer to home as many club members will know Derek had a passion for engineering, having trained as a mechanical engineer. He particularly loved model engineering, with a lifelong love of steam locomotives. He could spend hours in his workshop, both in Sandfield Road and later in Blake Close in St Albans.

Derek joined NLSME in July 1981 and was a very active member of the society. Over the years many society members have benefited from his engineering experience and his encouragement especially of those new to the hobby and club.

As we mentioned last month Derek didn't confine himself to just building high quality locomotives in various scales. He started with fly-by-wire aeroplanes in his younger days but also built boats, yachts railway wagons, stationary engines and musical instruments. As reported in the November 2023 issue of the news sheet he constructed two ukuleles for his grandchildren. He even made a rather unique sun dial the design of which could fill a couple of pages on its own. It is one of only two. His is mounted on his garage. The other is in Australia.

The first cash machine

Derek once related a behind the scenes story from a time when he worked for a well-known engineering company.

It was 27th of June 1967 at the Barclays Bank in Enfield. The first ever UK cash machine was being opened by the actor and comedian Reg Varney of *On the Buses* fame. It was a big day for the Bank and there was much publicity.

However as the time approached for Reg to withdraw the first tenner unbeknown to all outside the front of the Bank the machine was not working correctly. Derek was inside trying to fix the problem but to no avail and time was against them. The bank could not be seen to fail so the decision was taken to go back to basics. As Reg fed in the card to collect his money Derek manually pushed the ten pound note out through the slot. No one knew of the problems and this publicity picture shows Reg with the note which Derek had been holding just a few seconds before.



LBSC Memorial bowl

One of the engines Derek built was a 3½ inch gauge Doris locomotive which he entered into the prestigious LBSC Memorial Bowl competition held at the Staines club site in 1992.

On the day Derek prepared his engine well and at the appointed time proceeded to the start line for his measured run. Then as reported in the ME magazine calamity, the nicely made regulator handle had broken. Undeterred a quickly arranged temporary repair allowed the run to continue.

At the end of the day Derek was delighted to be awarded the LBSC Memorial Bowl in recognition this fine locomotive and his engineering skill. His picture holding the cup graced the front page of the ME in December that year.



The double sided shovel

Derek had a keen sense of humour. At one of the work in progress meetings Les related to all present how, during a night run in the dark at Colney Heath, he found he was having difficulty maintaining the fire. The problem was solved when he realised, he was holding his shovel upside down and very little coal was getting into the firebox. It was just a funny anecdote shared, and Les thought that was

the end of it. However at the next meeting Derek related this story to the assembled crowd to more mirth and then presented Les with this finely made box which contained a beautifully made double sided shovel.



Derek's family wish to thank everyone for their kindness and support shown in his final weeks.

His wish was always to pass away peacefully, and in those last days he found great comfort in the many cards and messages that were sent.

Many club members attended Derek's funeral which is testament to the high regard in which he was held by all who knew him.



Treasurer's Report

By Mike



What an awful afternoon weather wise to end the TYT public running season! I arrived just after 4pm to find nearly everything cleared up. The RTR had abandoned running after three o'clock through lack of adhesion, loco's were slipping to a stand despite copious applications of sand. The GLR had been running one of their two trains with two locos. The other a steam loco was coping due to its weight. As I left the GLR & Narrow Gauge Garden Railway seemed determined to stick it out to the bitter end.

Statistically this season, according to the somewhat shaky statistics recorded for nine of the ten open Sundays reveal that we collectively hauled over 3,443 passengers of all shapes and sizes. The Carnet income exceeded last year's total, so a big thank you to all those driving, stewarding, catering and generally doing their bit, a very big thank you and well done.

The delayed last Council Meeting accepted an application to join our midst from Michael, whose is interested in Locomotives, a warm welcome.

As mentioned last month the annual Raised Track condition survey will commence as soon as I have shaken off the bug I caught a few weeks ago, but in the meantime a few experienced members have already been checking and supplying feedback. Looks like we will be having to replace one or two main beams this year, probably after the New Year's Day run.

Winter work parties kick off on the 2nd November and on Friday 7th November the General Meeting at HQ will be the always popular **Work in Progress** meeting, when all those things you have been working on all year will be offered to us with some explanations of how you overcame all the obvious problems that can beset our hobby.



Keep safe and keep engineering.

Letter from the Editor

Dear reader

I am both delighted and relieved to be able to announce that we now have a volunteer to take over as editor from February 2026.

Jack has taken on the challenge, and I will be working with him to ensure we have a seamless transfer.

As mentioned in previous News Sheets my last edition as editor will be the December 2025 issue.

Just a reminder that as usual we don't have a January News Sheet. This will give our new editor a little more time to put together the February 2026 edition. I will provide his contact details for you to send all future contributions in the December edition.



Bookworms: Memoir of a Clubman – Curly

Just another reminder that the complete including the previously unpublished final chapters are now available on the NLSME club web site just look on the articles page.

Available from a keyboard near you and all leading makes of iPad.

New supply of bags of coal available for sale at the Colney Heath site.

Anthracite Beans in 20 kg bags at a **new** price of £16.00 per bag.

The size most used on our locos.

Anthracite Grains in 20 kg bags at a **new** price of £16.00 per bag.

Suitable for 3 1/2" gauge or those with very small fire-hole doors.

Contact the Treasurer, Mike Foreman.

Grounds Maintenance Update and Help Wanted

Now that we have reached the end of our public running season our thoughts must now turn to the upcoming winter working parties. For those of us who look after the grounds maintenance the leaf collecting season will be starting once all of the leaves have fallen.



However, in the interim there is a window of opportunity, and I am hoping that this is where you – well you, the one who is reading this article will be most welcome to join us.

Let me explain, over the last few years we have been fighting a bit of a losing battle with the brambles which have been encroaching more and more onto both the raised and ground level railways. We have managed to clear some areas, but we know that unless we can clear certain areas and deal permanently with them the brambles will regrow. Brambles grow at a rapid rate given the right weather conditions and can be quite nasty for any unsuspecting driver or passenger on either of our railways.

To tackle this growth we have a new garden multi tool with a hedge trimmer attachment. This together with the now repaired donated one and sufficient volunteers we will be able to cut back the brambles to ground level. We will need to collect the cuttings and move them to the “burn pit” adjacent to the ground level bridge for disposal when we have a dry spell. We can then deal with the new growth early next year with a suitable herbicide.

So, you would be made most welcome with friendly chat and banter and cup of tea or coffee on either a Thursday from about 10.30 or Sunday morning from about 9.00. Training will be given in the use of any motorised equipment. All you will need to bring is a stout pair of gardening gloves. Hope to see you there!

Nigel – Grounds Maintenance Team Leader

Winter Maintenance List 2025-2026

(Additional to the Steaming Bay project)

Over the winter months, as well as the new steaming bays, we have a number of maintenance tasks that need to be undertaken.

If you have a few spare hours, please take on one of the items on the maintenance to-do list below. The list will be written on the white board on the outside of the carriage. If you are willing to undertake one of the tasks, please put your name against it. Hopefully more than one name will be against each task, thus sharing the load.

Maintenance List

- Carriage, both ends and the back adjacent to the apple trees are in need of repair and then re-painting with the appropriate colour.
- Carriage Gutters need clearing.
- The Main Toilet Block external wood needs a coat of wood preservative.
- The Machine shop and nearby Toilet Block both need a coat of green preservative. Other structures such as carriage sheds may also need a coat of wood preservative.
- Orchard Junction Signal Box needs a re-appraisal, and the excellent work of restoration resumed.
- The Top Tunnel is in need of patching with torch on felt or otherwise to delay further deterioration.
- All benches, tables & chairs need a wash down and a coat of wood preservative.
- GL signals to be repaired as necessary.
- Coach drain to be rerouted into sewer.
- Complete green painting of the containers and doors 1 – 7.
- Erect replacement fence near to Main Toilet Block.
- RT and Cuckoo line sleeper replacement as necessary.
- RT and Cuckoo line rail holding sleepers to be replaced as necessary.
- Leaves to be collected and disposed of in approved places.

Gauge 1 News November 2025

By Geoff

These months come round quicker each time the Editor calls for copy.

We have had some very good weekly meetings with our usual members attending and their locomotives performing to the regular high standard (i.e. some go home and demand that a little TLC is spent on them. That can be a look at the wicks or adjust a leaking gland or perhaps the battery should have been charged up.)

In the last month the G1 group assisted with a static stand at the St Albans ME. Nice to see the comparison between models of our size and those of the larger gauges within the NLSME.

A couple of our members were able to pick up some Aster tank locos at a local auction for a reasonable price and now they are enjoying fettling them back in to running order. Always a risk buying auctions models as you will not have seen them run, invariably they come from a deceased modeller and may not have run for some time or been set aside pending a problem (unless you know the models history). Generally if you are familiar with gauge 1 models it should not be too difficult to return these models working to the track.

I would like to congratulate our active member, George, on being awarded a 50 year long service award at the Great Central Railway. George is the current editor of the GCR members magazine and the copies he brings to Tyttenhanger are very impressive.

The Gauge One Model Railway Association, of which most of our group, if not all, are members held their AGM in Darlington at the Hopetown Museum this month. The actual venue was the building where the new build locomotive, Tornado, was built. The Association also used the large shed where the P2 is being built. The adjacent old North Road station is a museum which has recently been refurbished. The location and surroundings really added to the event. We also had access to the loco sheds and workshops of the Darlington Railway Preservation Society and the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Society. A number of NLSME members attended the event.



Whilst in Darlington some of us stayed a couple of extra days to visit a few of the numerous railway themed venues in the area. Sunday was spent at the Tanfield Railway for a lovely day of industrial steam locomotives and 4-wheel carriages and we had a special behind the scenes tour to see many of the historic relics not normally accessible to the public. The Monday morning was a visit to Shildon to the two museum buildings plus some of the original buildings from the old Stockton & Darlington Railway.

We could have spent more time in the area as there is plenty to see for those of us that like such things.



Narrow gauge News November 2025

By John

As some of you may know Mrs Narrow-Gauge hails from the beautiful southwest of Ireland, and on my earlier trips over there one of the distinctive things I first noticed was the lovely smell of burning turf wherever you went. And as you travelled through the countryside often you would see men with their distinctive spade cutting turfs, called a Slean, creating piles to dry in the sun (not easy in Ireland!) to heat their homes and for cooking etc. Of course this has almost died out now to be replaced by gas and electricity, I hope you enjoy this brief look at the Irish peat railway system, an industry which once was essential to the country but has almost disappeared.



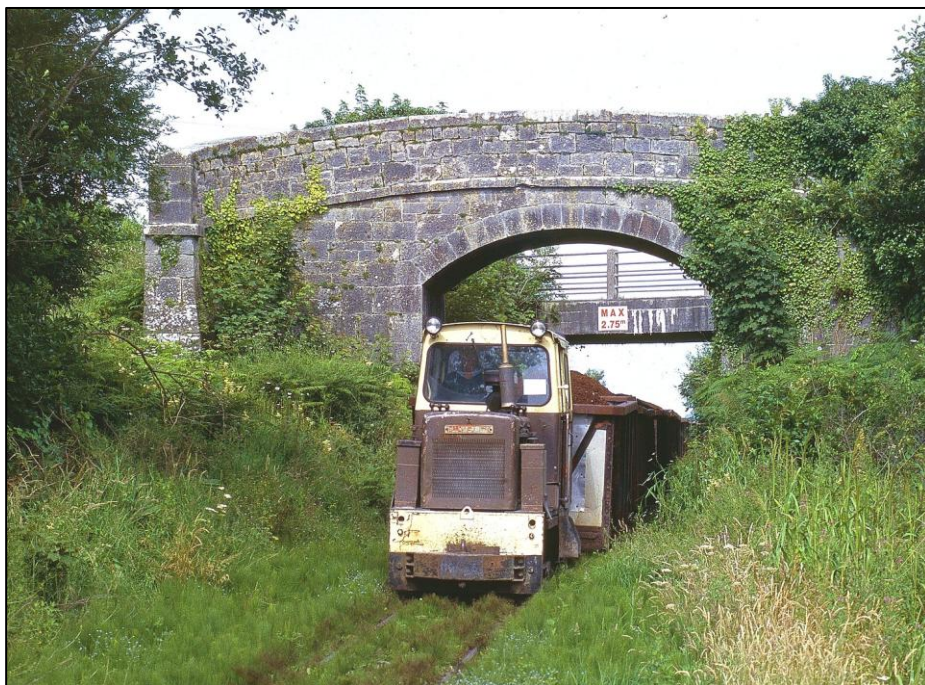
The Irish peat railways represent one of the most unique and lesser-known elements of Ireland's industrial past. Winding through the boglands of the Irish midlands, these narrow-gauge railways once played a vital role in the country's energy production, transporting peat a traditional, carbon-rich fuel from remote bogs to power stations and processing facilities.

Though largely industrial in nature, the story of these railways is deeply intertwined with Ireland's economic development, environmental debates, and rural heritage.

Peat has been used as a domestic fuel in Ireland for centuries, but it wasn't until the 20th century that its use was industrialized on a national scale. In 1946, the Irish government established Bord na Móna (literally "Turf Board"), a semi-state body tasked with developing the country's boglands to reduce reliance on imported coal and oil. Part of this initiative involved the creation of an expansive narrow-gauge railway network designed specifically to extract and transport milled peat from Ireland's raised bogs.

The railways used a narrow gauge of 3 feet (914 mm), which made them ideal for the soft, shifting ground of the bogs. The lightweight tracks could be laid and moved easily as the peat fields were worked, and their flexibility allowed access to areas that would be inaccessible to heavier standard-gauge rail systems.

At their peak, the Irish peat railways extended to over 1,000 kilometres, making them one of the most extensive narrow-gauge industrial railway networks in



Europe. Small, diesel-powered locomotives hauled long chains of open wagons, called “peat trains,” laden with milled or sod peat. These trains ran from bog fields to briquette factories, where the peat was compressed into fuel blocks, or directly to power stations, such as the massive peat-fired plants at Shannonbridge and Edenderry.

Most of the work was seasonal, concentrated during the summer when the peat could be dried efficiently. The process involved cutting, spreading, drying, and gathering the peat, often using mechanized harvesters and vacuum systems. Workers operated in isolated and often harsh conditions, and the railways were essential for moving both materials and workers across the vast boglands

By the late 20th century, the environmental impact of peat extraction came under increasing scrutiny. Peatlands are not only slow to regenerate taking thousands of years to form but they are also significant carbon sinks. Burning peat releases large amounts of carbon dioxide, contributing to climate change. As Ireland moved toward greener energy sources and sought to meet EU climate targets, the use of peat for power generation was gradually phased out.



In recent years, major peat-fired power stations have been closed or converted to biomass. As a result, the railway network began to shrink rapidly. Many lines have been dismantled or left to decay, and the use of peat as a national fuel is now nearing an end.

Despite their industrial focus, Irish peat railways have garnered interest from railway enthusiasts and historians. Some small sections have been preserved as heritage railways, such as the Lullymore Heritage & Discovery Park in County Kildare, which offers visitors a glimpse into the world of peat harvesting and the role of Bord na Móna. Additionally, several disused track beds are being converted into walking and cycling trails, part of a broader initiative to rewild and rehabilitate former boglands.

These railways also serve as a physical reminder of a significant chapter in Ireland's economic and environmental history a period when energy independence was achieved through the exploitation of a native resource, and when whole communities were built around the rhythms of bog work and peat trains. I hope the accompanying photos show how ramshackle and temporary the railways were but also fascinating and evocative...a great subject for a model?

A simplified wet header design

Some time ago a conversation between Ron and Brian developed an idea to try and simplify a key component of a small, non-superheated boiler. The wet header was the subject and the comment which started the discussion, "there must be a simpler design than the more traditional solutions to be found on many drawings" for small boilers.

After careful consideration and a few ideas had been thought through they struck on a possible solution. Back in his workshop Ron decided to make a mock up to develop the idea and see if it would work. The result can be seen in these pictures.



It requires a single bolt to hold the whole assembly together and O rings seal each joint. I am certain this basic concept could be developed to incorporate a superheater for larger models.

If you would like to know more or wish to see this mock up just ask Brian or Ron who would be delighted to show it to you.



My model boat collection No.31

By Roy

Continued from September news sheet :-

The model was prepped for sailing now and as soon as was possible the model was floated in the club lake. She sat very well with the displacement slightly less than I thought and she moved at a controllable speed. There was no leak so that was a small relief, but the battery voltage dropped off a bit after half an hour which caused glitches in the radio control.

In the meantime I decided to try getting some background of the model. She had been built in Cockermouth (Cumbria) and I could see there was some thought behind the detail. I wondered if the builder had been a deck hand or had some contact with the boat. The photos show the model on the lake at Colney Heath.



I approached the Scottish Fisheries Museum asking if the registered number CN992 was recognised and any information about the type of boat. I was pleasantly surprised to receive a very nice email from the senior curator Linda, with general information. She said the CN registration numbers never reached the 900s and also referred me to the videos they had about life and times of the 1920s/30s. She mentioned the associated model boat club and a download of a plan she had in her archives.

I looked at the videos and then thought I better look at the plan as well, this came up on my laptop, and it was not until I doubled the size of the plan that all was revealed. It had the same number as my model! I traced it to a Harold A Underhill plan published 70 odd years ago as part of a catalogue of models he had made. I went to my own library of modelling books by him and the book, *Scale Models and Rigging*, had plates in the back with selected plans and there was my model described as a Ring net fishing boat. So, the solution was already at home

with me! There were 3 sheets needed to build the model at the exorbitant price of £28.50 for each plan. I would normally spend less than £20 for a complete set.

The published one was the General Arrangements plan which shows the side view and plan. The bulkhead cross sections and keel and planking contain the information needed to construct the hull. Incidentally, if you look at a current yachting magazine where the bulkhead cross sections are shown, these are just an idea, the money is in the **actual** cross sections and where the design copyright is. If you buy one plan you can only build one boat from it!



Most of these fishing boats are located in the Western Isles where the many islands provide for some protection from the weather and a surprising amount of warmth from the tip of the Gulf Stream, so much so, that palm trees can be grown there. The fishing boat registration codes had 2 letters, and these were mainly the first and last letters of their town of origin, thus FY is Fowey, additionally it is a bit of fun when seeing a fishing boat working out where she came from. The continental registrations are code letters and long numbers, boring!

CN is Campbeltown on the north coast of Scotland. These fishing boats chased the "Silver darlings" or herring from up north and around Scotland and into the North Sea and down as far as Harwich as the fishing shoals migrated with the season. The ladies who gutted and filled the barrels were known as the fishing

lassies and they followed the fleet down the coast. They were known also for their strength as they would carry a full barrel weighing 6 stone on their backs when moving the barrels. When the steam powered drifters came along the extreme fishing this enabled nearly killed off the herring altogether. And as far as the fish stocks were concerned their relief came with the instant reduction of all fishing for all sides during WW2. Thus, allowing for 6 years of respite while their numbers built up again. To put this in perspective there are billions of these and mackerel fish in the sea. A TV recording of a recent fishing trip lasting 5 days towards the north of the Dogger Bank, located a shoal nearly 7 miles long. This very modern boat was fully automated including using suction to move the caught fish directly into the hold from the net and video showing the content of the net live. They had a contract to fish for 1000 tons and caught 1100 tons, the fish were landed and inspected for quality and the catch sold for 1.25M£s. It went to the Sushi market.

Back to the model and a bit more thinking. I had bought some individual smaller cells to make up into 7.2 volt batteries, but they still would not get past the drive motor or the space under the wheelhouse and steering gear. I went through my motors and found some overlooked 385 6 -12volt motors. I did some testing with a spare shaft and various propellers mated up with meters for reading volts and current, testing in the kitchen sink and found an acceptable solution was the 385.

The 385 (3 and 8 refer to the 'can' size and the 5 is the number of poles) and it was shorter than the Monoperm so the this was removed and the new one glued in place. You read right: I glue my drive motors in place. They are angled into alignment using hard packing foam, the glue is bathroom sealant and the whole glued together, which is flexible and very strong and left for half a day to set.

For couplings these days I use the Huco brass part of the coupling and discard the plastic u/j and use a thick-walled tubing to connect up. Nice and quiet and sits well after a short spell of high-speed running.

With additional soldering in of RF correction capacitors, all was tested in situ, and I have high hopes this will be the final fit, just a small problem with the weather now.

Bookworm Writes – Winter Workshop Number

You know it's often puzzled your guide of the printed word why during the 1960s the Model Engineer magazine produced a 'Winter Workshop Edition' every ...September, when the sun still shone brightly in the sky and the air was still warm. If not actually hot.

I always felt it was let down for the ME to publish their version so early for surely that title is brimming with symbolism, evoking thoughts of happy hours yet to be

spent in the workshop over the coming winter, one's mental if not physical wonderland full of all that is pleasingly familiar, a space free from the troubles of the world and domestic scrutiny (not to mention the latest artificial room fragrance from Jaywick), a place where troubles are measured in thousandths of inch and a crisis is running out of 8BA nuts and bolts just at the time you start to assemble that item you've been working for weeks.

However no such worry here for this month your guide is giving you the real deal having now waited all year, well since last winter anyway to write it. I am delighted then to be able to share with you our very own Winter Workshop Edition.

Where the ME's version and '*ours*' do align is they can both be enjoyed (*if you ever get to the story – Ed*) not only by those eager to dash out as soon as they have finished reading to get on with cutting metal, but also by those who may just want to sit quietly in front of a roaring hot radiator with their pot of tea a pile of Jammy Dodgers and to just soak up the engineering ambience coming off the pages, and enjoy making another part for their imaginary project; after all I like to think we cater just as much for the armchair enthusiast as we do for the 8hr a day in the shed person.

All the same I can't help feeling a bit sorry for those who for whatever reason don't have a workshop of their own, as they really don't know just what they are missing. For nothing compares with that first reassuring nose-gay of fragrance that hits one as you open your own workshop door. Granted it is a personal thing, and can range from the enigmatic, '*What the h...ll did I leave open ?*' to the more good old fashioned, '*Wow!*' as the odours of time and industry hit ones sniffer and instantly produce a rush of excitement and headiness that not even the 'wackiest' of 'baccy could rival.

In my owners case it has taken many, many years to arrive at that balance, for his cocktail of odours includes creosote, machine oil, cutting oil a splash or two of paraffin essence of pinewood, cellulose paint and a touch of old tobacco smoke that all combine wonderfully with just hint of tar coming from the roofing felt that instil in him deep calm, a sense of wellbeing and that, *all is well with the world* feeling; added to which if the heater has been on the time switch before he arrives he describe it as, "*like receiving a welcoming hug as I step in.*" Honestly if we workshoper's didn't have it for free people would pay good money to know the secret of how to brew such a happy tonic.

But then his father started him early down the path when he introduced him to his own workshop and encouraged him to move on from assembling Meccano to making from solid metal.

-Bookworm Note: I remember one of our wisest Bookworms once saying to me, "*Never underestimate the value and satisfaction to the young mind of showing how something can be made by one's own efforts*" Wisdom indeed I say-

As he moved on to adulthood and progressed from School days to an apprenticeship and his first pay-pocket, with it came the chance to buy his first (humble) second-hand lathe which could be lifted on and off the drawing board cum desk he used for his night school studies. Then after leaving home he shared rooms in an old Victorian villa with lads from the same course, where tucked into the corner of a bedroom his little workshop was allowed to expand, especially when his fellow residents discovered he could repair bits off their motorbikes for them, though explaining the oil stains on the bedspread and carpet to the landlord proved a bit more of a challenge.

Then tragedy struck... he fell in love; and the workshop had less and less work done in it and became neglected for the uncertain pleasures of The Royalty Dance Hall, the cinema and local coffee bars. However wedding bells brought with it much happiness ...not least because combined financial resources brought forth a rented maisonette and a large spare room where he could think about unpacking the neglected workshop and even consider (smuggling in) some more machines.

However that period lasted but a short while until Mrs owner put her foot down with a firm hand one day when she announced their neighbours love of The Beatles music coming through the floorboards day after day was making her headache (more likely due to his boiler making activities in the spare room, me thinks) prompting her to say it was time for them to buy their first house.

What a terrible dilemma for a young model engineer to have to confront so early in married life, and him so well on with his first engine, for he knew a good bit of the deposit for a new house was tied up in his workshop, and worse he knew she *suspected* a good bit of the deposit was tied up in his workshop...so taking a deep breath he sold up the machines for the sake of his love.....and the hope their new home might provide a back garden where she could happily grow flowers....and just maybe he could think about putting a shed up as a permanent workshop.

Several weeks elapsed and eventually a house was found, but alas life's call on their now stretched resources meant the shed had to wait longer and he instead was forced to find temporary sanctuary in the end of the flimsy cement board garage. But three hard winters of chasing rust and stomping around in an old woolly duffle-coat, long-johns two boiler suits and fir lined boots on his feet all to try to keep out the cold almost put pay to the hobby for all time, for in the 1960s 'Kingspan' was but a gleam in the imagination of a certain Mr King and other insulation didn't run to much more than old rolls of newspaper stuffed into draughty gaps and discarded carpeting hung on the walls, and if money was found, paper thin expanded polystyrene sheet. But then spring would eventually arrive and with it the reopening of the track for a new season and the engine would come out once more and all (nearly all) the hardship of the previous winter would be forgotten.

Great aunty, though she didn't know it was to be his saviour, for with her demise a small legacy (bless her) appeared which he immediately looked to wisely investand upon returning from the track one afternoon and seeing a decent sized shed for sale in' Bignal and Cutbush's' garden centre at South- Mimms, his dream workshop was at last within sight.

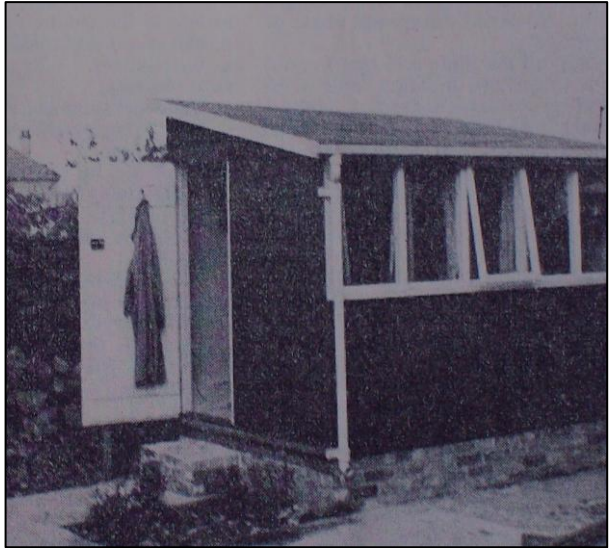
Mrs Owner however took a little more persuading that this was the best use of at least part of auntie's legacy, but when the pluses were pointed out i.e. she would no longer be cold in the kitchen over winter because he would no longer require an electrical extension lead out of the window to the garage, nor threaten the entire electrical circuit of the kitchen (memories of the ruined dinner party cooking for her Opera Society ladies still fresh in the memory), she eventually agreed.

With all finally set the shed was ordered, plain sailing from here. Or was it? Only those that have experienced the heightened anticipation of listening out for a delivery lorry bringing a new workshop shed can appreciate how he felt upon hearing those terrible words on the phone, *'Sorry Guv, can't be for a month or two now, we're on strike!'*

So near and yet so far....such was the lot of the young 1960s homeowner, a time when one's political allegiances were tested to the very limits – **Bookworm**
Historical Note: For my younger readers, Governments of the 1950s and 1960s alternated between being Conservative or Labour with surprising regularity. This ping-pong was required as each party sought to keep alive the long cherished traditions of what today would be called their respective 'Power bases' known then as ' the Rank and File.' The long held tradition in industry of '*man exploiting man*' was complicated as each political party approached it from totally opposite view points, but it did make life interesting and today can be looked back upon with a certain degree of nostalgia – but I am pleased to report that in the case of the shed verses management' after a short period of negotiation over a tray of beer and sandwiches both parties sought to bury their differences....until the next time...or change of Government.

Eventually of course the shed did arrive and but for the unfortunate late discovery that the panels wouldn't pass down the sideway of the house necessitating a last minute trek with it all through the house (thankfully certain parties were out at the time), and but for the odd chip out of the doorframes, all went to plan.

If one now measures the progress of the intervening years by the number of times the shed has been re-creosoted and new roofing felt applied, then it's been up a long time. And other than the damage sustained in the hurricane of 1987 it has stood the test of time well, standing as it does majestically among the roses Mrs owner has grown up beside it, around it and over it to blend it into her vision of the garden, there it still stands continuing to provide comfort warmth (Hurrah for Kingspan! – other products may be available) and on a deep winters day enough hugs to give a 15 tog rated duvet a run for its money.



Bookworm Tip: Should you be in negotiation with your own *best beloved* about investing in maybe your first shed workshop this winter (best time for prices some say), don't forget to talk up the positives of having you nearby and on hand and of the benefits to your wellbeing, not forgetting to mention that a shed is for life, not just for Christmas!

Next time we go behind my owners shed door – Watch out for future Workshop Editions

Photo W.T.Sowler - Model Engineer 15 Sept 1965

Ground Level Waffle.

By Paul

Good news. Another new sit astride coach has been ordered for the G.L.R. which hopefully will be with us in a few weeks. Once a fitness to run exam is carried out (for those not familiar with railway terms that means making sure everything works and nothing is hanging off) the new coach will be available as and when required.



Now for something completely different My favourite Engine Recently whilst spending time with one of my grandsons. I was asked which was my favourite train/loco? This is a very difficult question to answer, as I have been lucky enough to have driven and worked on many locos ranging from our clubs Butch, several 71/4" gauge, many different 2ft gauge, right up to standard gauge locos steam and diesel. But my mind kept going back to one particular engine, which I have not driven but have ridden behind. LMS Stanier 8F 48624.



48624 passing Watford Junction with a north bound freight (date unknown)

This set me thinking, why do people have favourite machines? Be it trains, cars, planes, boats etc. At this point I was going to suggest a new section in our news sheet, where members could tell us what their favourite machine is and why. Why is 48624 my favourite? Well basically it's a list of coincidences. Firstly when I was a young boy (about 11½ years old) my father made me a wooden toy loco to play with. It was a 2-8-0 freight loco like the ones I had seen on a visit to Willesden shed, where my Dad worked as a fitter and my grandfather was a driver. My toy engine was painted my favourite colour red. (wrong colour but I loved it).

Some time ago I was given my grandfather's work diaries and out of interest I looked up what he was driving the day I was born; you guessed it 48624. As luck would have it 48624 has been preserved. Some of you will know it ran in red paint (the wrong colour again) when first rebuilt from scrap yard condition. Which is how it was when I rode behind it. So, to recap. I had a toy 8f painted red – my grandfather was driving it the day I was born – From new to withdrawal 48624 was always a Willesden engine so dad and granddad will have both worked on it and it was painted red when I rode behind it. Which all adds up to make my favourite loco.



As a final note, all the Stanier 8F's where only ever painted black, Hence the common name Black 8's .48624 was only red during preservation for a short time and is now black again as it should be.

So, I've told you mine, now what's your favourite. Let the editor know what and why.

Marine mumbles

By Peter

I'm going to start a new series on Royal Navy WW2 close range weapons, fitted to Coastal Forces MTBs, MGBs and other smaller units. So bear with me!

Firstly, a big thanks to all that attended the Vintage Model Yacht Group regatta and made it a great success. The weather was fine for the goodly number of boaters who made the pilgrimage to our water. Also, our stand at the St Albans show looked outstanding. Once again thanks to all, from the NLSME, who participated and made it so successful. Write-ups on these two events can be found lurking somewhere in this edition.

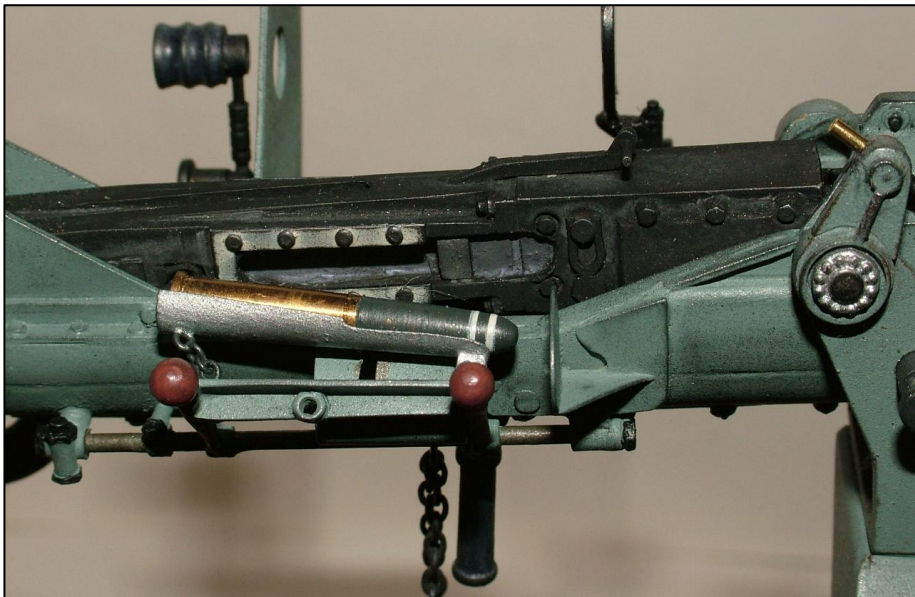
THE ROLLS-ROYCE GUN

They didn't just make posh cars, engines, machine guns and a type of torpedo etc. The Rolls-Royce gun was conceived in late 1939 as a medium bore aircraft/ship gun. It used the same ammunition as the shipboard 'pom- pom' gun, being a 2pdr projectile of 40mm diameter. The gun didn't fair too well with the RAF, so it was mainly deployed by the Royal Navy on the Coastal Forces units during the early years of WW2.

The naval version was completely manual in operation which gave it a slow rate of fire. It's gun crew consisted of two, a Gun Layer and Loader. Cocking the gun was performed by inserting a long T- Bar engaging rod through the rear mounting box, via a large hole. The loader stood on a raised platform at the right of the breech with an ammunition box tray to his side.



Being a single shot ordnance, each round was push loaded into the breech via a side loading carrier.



Once the gun was fired the empty shell case was ejected to the left side. The case rolled over a tray, so to miss removing the hand of the Gun Layer. Being totally manual the Gun Layer, fitted in his one shoulder support and back belt, was expected to train/ aim the weapon whilst having the loader as an extra weight. I bet this was fun with a rough sea running. The best rate of fire was 30 rounds a minute (on a good day). Not such a good anti-aircraft weapon, if required, due to its slow rate of fire.

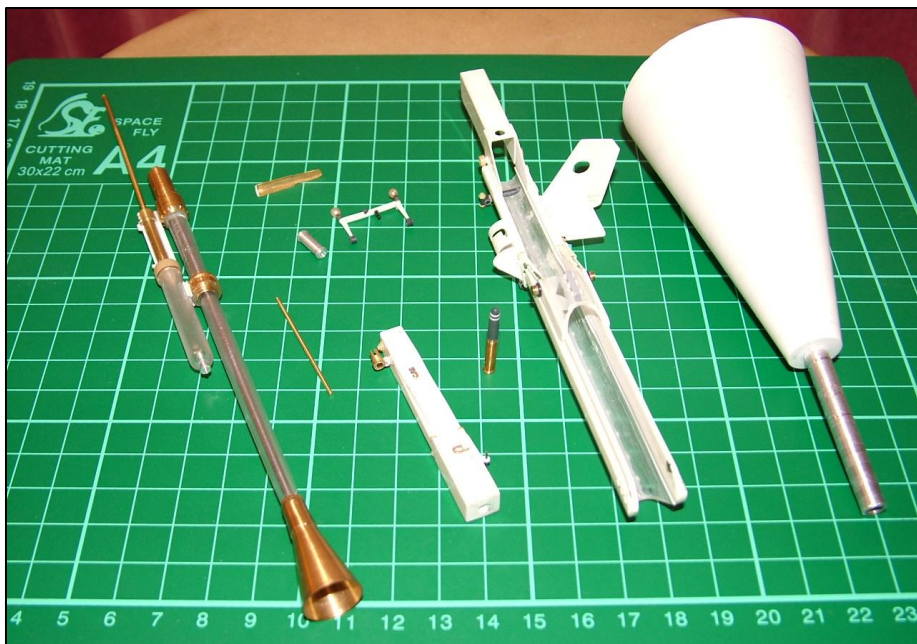
The Rolls-Royce gun was superseded by the single, hydraulically powered, auto-loading 2pdr 'pom-pom', which had a much faster rate of fire. There is a lovely, posed photo (in David Birch's book on Rolls-Royce Armaments) of the gun's technical team, one of which is still wearing his bicycle clips.



My model of the Rolls-Royce gun was built from John Lambert's redrawn Admiralty plans. The model is in 1/10 scale. This being 9.5 inches long and 6 inches high. I used his plans as a template, rather than redrawing to a different scale. As can be seen in the photos most of the fabrication was produced from plasticard, a brass barrel and other 'bits and bobs' too frighting to mention.

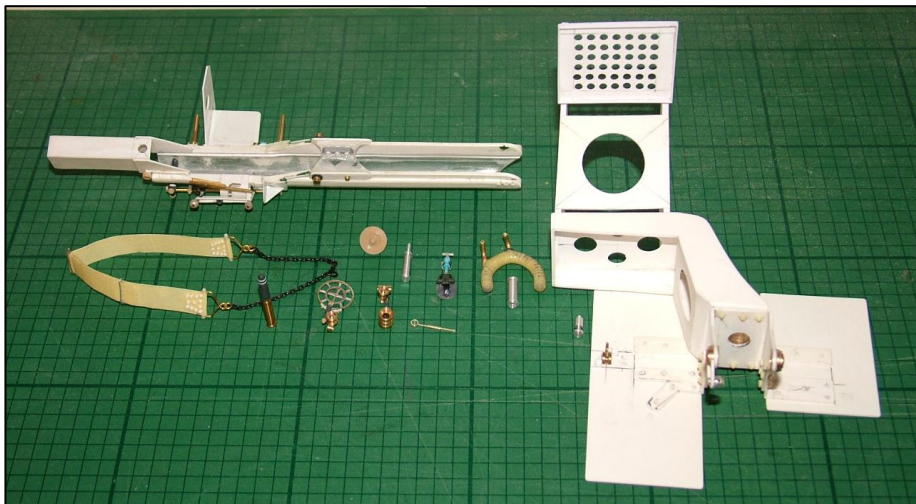


Plasticard being much lighter than brass sheet helps to keep the top weight down, when building ships for sailing. The plasticard was chemically welded using a Plasiweld solution. This gives a sharp finish to all the joints.



A wooden conical gun mount was produced in the lathe, covered and 'glued' with thin plasticard to give a metal effect.

The finished ordnance was painted by airbrush then weathered using a dry-brush technique. This is where a paint brush is loaded with paint, then most of it wiped off onto a tissue, and what's left used to highlight detail.



The model was finished using acrylic satin varnish. I hope the photos of my model can add to the text description of the real Rolls-Royce gun.



Club Dates for your 2025 Diary

<u>Every Wednesday</u> G1 group meet at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Thursday</u> Working groups, and general conversation at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Saturday</u> Ground Level Rly at Colney Heath	
<u>Every Wednesday evening</u> HO & OO Groups meet at HQ	
November 2025	
Sunday 2 nd	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Tuesday 4 th	Council Meeting at HQ – 13.00
Friday 7 th	Work in progress meeting at HQ - 8pm
Sunday 9 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 16 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 23 rd	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 30 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
December 2025	
Tuesday 2 nd	Council Meeting at HQ – 13.00
Friday 5 th	Christmas gathering at HQ – 8pm
Sunday 7 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 14 th	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 21 st	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Advance notice of events in 2026	
Thursday January	1 st New years day Steam Up and general get together 10am to 4pm at Colney Heath
Please notify our secretary of all meetings and other Society events for inclusion in the Society Calendar and also tell the news sheet editor. Approval for special events still rests with Council.	

A representative of any Section or Committee or an Officer of the Society shall, on request to the Secretary, be entitled to attend a Council Meeting as an observer and submit proposals thereat. If attendance is agreed the secretary will advise the member concerned. The Editor of the News Sheet shall be entitled to attend, ex officio, all Council Meetings