

Issue No. 886

March 2026

# The News Sheet

North London Society of Model Engineers

March  
2026



You can see this News Sheet in  
colour by visiting our web site at [www.nlsme.co.uk](http://www.nlsme.co.uk)

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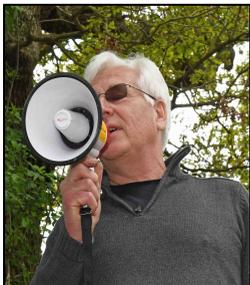
**Front cover;**

Bittern looking fantastic at Erdington with beautiful Teak coaches,  
 March 2012

Picture by Owen

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

This issue of news sheet contains notices with respect to our 2026 AGM. Normally held on 1<sup>st</sup> Friday in May we have decided, this year, to postpone it by one week because the first Friday falls on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Given the vagaries of the postal system it is probable that not all members will have received their May news sheet by that date. The AGM will therefore be on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> May. Nigel Griffiths is, after several years as council member, standing down at the

AGM. Thanks are due to Nigel for his time and valued contributions. This creates a vacancy, I trust other members will put themselves forward for this important position. See the call of AGM notice elsewhere in this issue.

At the February council meeting we heard that our finances are in a stable state. Excluding legacy sums, reserved for capital project/expenditure, our income last year exceeded our running costs. This is a most fortunate position. Consequently, the Council will recommend at the forthcoming AGM no increase in subs for the next year

It is sad to report that of late we have found branches and stones in the pond. Clearly someone has thrown them in, not likely to be a member but perhaps accompanying visitors? The action is bewildering though one explanation may be that they were thrown onto pond when it was frozen and subsequently and inevitably sank when it thawed. Whatever the cause please keep an eye out for misbehaviour and stop it when seen.

Maintenance work on grounds upkeep and raised track is progressing well at Tyttenhanger. In addition, the ground Level team have replaced fencing necessary near the toilet block. Good progress is also being made on the Steaming Bay Project, in particular the swing point, re-roofing the old workshop building, carriage store traverser and a canopy over the steaming bays. All this is a variation on a scheme originally contemplated long ago and known as Project 2000, for that was the intended year of completion. At this rate our updated plans may well be complete in 2027 and it will be well worth the wait. Thanks to all who continue their efforts on the many tasks in hand despite the atrocious weather we are having.

Finally, I remind members to check diary dates with our secretary if they want to use Tyttenhanger for private events, the notices and procedures for private events were published in the February News sheet.

See you at track or HQ

## Treasurer's Report

Another financial year nearly over and I'm pleased to say that having reviewed the subscription rates and the December 2025 RPI, your Council decided that we did not need to invoke any change for the forthcoming year. HOWEVER, some members who pay by Standing Order please check that you are in fact paying the correct amount as per the Membership Renewal form, which hopefully has been included with this News Sheet.



Council was also pleased to accept an application to join from Harvey Smith, who is interested in Garden Railways. Welcome to our Society.

Mention made last month that LBB were being a 'little' slow in invoicing us for HQ rent and insurance. Despite two emails re the rent I have received no positive response, but on the insurance front I have had a reply advising me of the figure due for 202/26 year but no invoice received to-date. I am now going to approach the relevant Councillors for the Ward to chivvy them up.

With the continuing appalling weather progress at Tyttenhanger has been a little slow. However, we are ready to pour concrete in the Steaming Bay area as soon as it dries out a little. Similarly the job of replacing main beams in the RTR is progressing but again awaits dry weather to apply the screed to the first two beams out of the five to be dealt with. Thanks to all those stalwarts who are putting in time in these shocking conditions. My project in the dry is making good progress thanks to Dave wielding his welding kit. Much better than my own in the circumstances.

At last year's AGM I intimated that this would be my last year as Treasurer, however as I am about to be relieved of my book-keeping duties for the Gresley Society, I have decided if nominated be willing to continue as Treasurer for a further period.

Keep safe and keep engineering. **Mike**

## Editor's Comments

Hello all and thanks to everyone for their submissions. Please keep them coming. Short editions also help me fill awkward page gaps so anything relevant of interest is also welcome too! I am sure as the weather slowly improves many more people will be out & about.

Not much from me this month, Sorry for the random blank pages in last month's edition. Despite Keith's brilliant guide sheet, I got the page multiples wrong and the printer company kindly added in some blank spaces to avoid having to awkwardly respace everything late minute.

See you all next month!  
Best,  
Jack



### **Supply of bags of coal and steam oils available for sale at the Colney Heath site.**

Anthracite Beans in 20 kg bags at £16.00 per bag.  
The size most used on our locos.

Anthracite Grains in 20 kg bags at £16.00 per bag.  
Suitable for 3 1/2" gauge or those with very small fire-hole doors.

Steam Oil 1000 grade.  
Steam Oil 360 grade.  
Bearing Lubricating Oil 220 grade.

2 Pints bottles @ £10.00 or 1 Pint bottles @ £5.00

Contact the Treasurer, Mike

## Winter working at Colney Heath

The weather has been somewhat damp to say the least since Christmas but this hasn't stopped the maintenance activities at Colney Heath. Nigel and his team have continued with the almost endless task of maintaining all the grounds and shrubs around the site. The RT track Permanent way team have now replaced several sections of track base and prepared the top surface for the final cement layer once the weather improves



The signalling team are now well advanced with the replacement of trunking and wiring between the station and the steaming bays. Around the steaming bay area several projects are underway as part of this ongoing refurbishment project.



Fabrication of the new swing out section has started with many hours of cutting and welding already invested in completing this element of the project. The aim is to complete the various elements of this structure this spring and install it next winter. Excavation of the base on which it will stand is finished and again once the weather improves the concrete will be poured.

The new roof panels for the old workshop building have been delivered and if all goes well, we will be able to report on the progress of this task. Inside the old workshop Mike has been busy fabricating the new carriage traverser and rails on which it will operate.

The order for fabrication of the new steaming bay roof steel support structure will have been placed by the time you read this. It is hoped that some of this will be erected before the start of the running season

The annual inspection of all RT carriages is also progressing well. At least this is one job which is not affected by the weather!

On the GLR as reported in Paul's report they have not been idle with various maintenance items on their to-do list completed or in hand.

There are quite a few other jobs which need doing before we start running trains again so please come along and help. More pictures and an update on progress next month.



## **NLSME AGM call for Council Member Nominations 2026**

Nominations are invited from members of the Society for the elected positions on the Society's Council to be elected at the forth coming AGM on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

The elected positions are Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and five Committee members.

Nominations are to be submitted by e-mail by 7.00pm 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026 to the Secretary, whose e-mail address is listed on the News Sheet back page. Nominations after this date will not be considered.

Submitted e-mail nominations should include the Nominee's name and supporting e-mails from the Proposer and the Secunder, and the position for which election is sought. In the past nominations from all candidates required a brief statement describing the Nominees interests, reasons for standing and vision for the future of the Society this now will be only necessary for any candidate who has not previously served on the Council and wishes to stand for the 2026-2027 Council.

Candidates' nominations and any new statements will be circulated to all members in the April News Sheet.

Please note that Mike Treasurer and Nigel Council Member will not be standing for council this year.

**Nomination deadline: received by the Secretary by 7.00pm 17<sup>h</sup> March 2026**

**The NLSME Council**

# Narrow Gauge News

By John



Hi everyone and welcome to the latest from the wonderful world of Narrow Gauge. This month I thought I might turn the spotlight onto my

winter project which was a micro layout based (very loosely!) on a real location,

The Standard Bottle Company, which was in New Southgate. Opened in 1935 and closed in 1971 it was on the Bounds Green road, the photograph shows it in the distance the



chimney being the obvious clue. the lorry at the foot of the hill is on the North Circular road and New Southgate station would be behind you on the right, other than that everything has been swept away! The actual bottle factory which boasted 3 retorts was demolished post closure and became part of Middlesex university which subsequently itself has now been replaced by flats. Why model it? As a local lad if I wasn't spotting the Deltics on the adjacent ECML as i lived a stones throw from Wood Green tunnel I would go and watch the toing and froing of the

Bottles company's internal 2 foot gauge railway. In particular just near to the public road where it was possible to watch proceedings was a large pile of discarded glass and occasionally a train of tipper wagons would add to it, I can still hear the noise! Was this where my fascination of narrow gauge came from? Incidentally one of the Loco's "carbon" still exists and is located at Leighton Buzzard though apparently in very poor condition, I am sure Owen will have all the latest news regarding that! The model, straight away I have to confess that it is an



impression of a soon to close industrial site rather than an actual representation of the real thing. The most obvious difference is the track gauge. I have modelled it in 0 scale, 7mm to the foot so really the track gauge should be 14mm as the real thing was 2 foot, though for convenience 00 track (16.5 mm) is often used which is known as 0-16.5, however I had some stock and track left from a previous uncompleted project which was still 0 scale but using N gauge track (9mm gauge) which equates roughly to a

15 inch gauge in reality, this is known as 0-9.....hope your still with me?!!

The layout really should be classed as a working diorama its housed in a laser cut kit from Narrow Minded Railworks a company who produce some very nice kits in all scales and all narrow gauge based. The track plan could not be simpler a single track running through the scene with a fiddle stick at each end. However being a very small scene does allow close attention to detail and hopefully I've created the look of a very derelict industrial site. The only addition to the actual diorama box is adding the pavement to the front which then allowed street furniture such as the phone kiosk, letter box etc. plus some people ,



I like to think that the young lad watching proceedings is a young me though I never had a Raleigh chopper unlike him the lucky boy! With the plethora of people producing 3d printed items of all types its so easy to procure pipes , ventilators , bottle crates and all types of ephemera it wasn't difficult to create the scene.

The locos and rolling stock are kits from various small online manufacturers the loco chassis are from the Japanese company Kato and their N gauge range, and superb runners they are too. but as usual for me its all about weathering and a consistency in using similar materials to hopefully make something that will at a glance fool you into thinking is that real? I'll leave that up to you, I hope you enjoy the photographs. Hopefully I will bring it up to HQ soon on a Wednesday running night so you model railway chaps can have a closer look.

Till next month, its Spring! Yay! And in the meantime enjoy your hobby.

### Page 12 - b

Jack, the editor, here - To make the most of some empty space and paper, I have started Bookworm's latest edition here.

### Bookworm Writes –

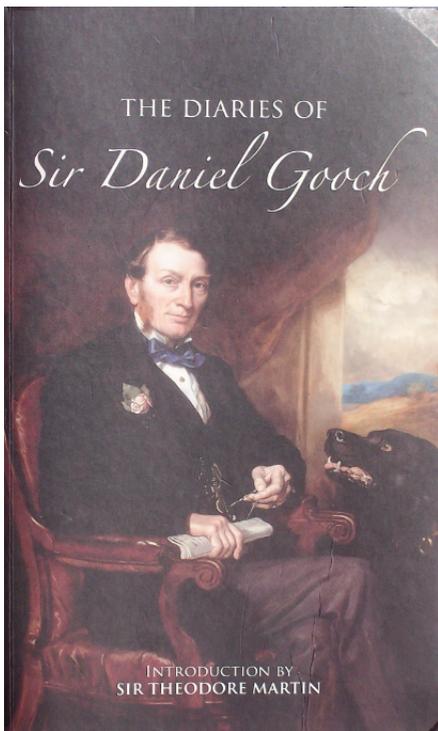
Thought you would like to know how my first piece under our worthy new Editor, Sir Ed, went down.

I received the following: From the Editor – Contributor 25 Feedback – Bookworm

*“Yo Bookworm! Not a bad first piece considering you haven't found your way round the net yet. This month, as it's the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of that chap Bell in America inventing the telephone I REALLY want us to grab the youngsters attention and have you write something that will appeal to them as well; mention Bell, include one of*

*our famous British engineers, and loads of that tosh you write about history, then wrap it up with a bit that 'hands across the sea' stuff....you know what I mean.* If you get this one right we might pick-up some good advertisers from our new American on-line readers.

Never let it be said then that Bookworm is not up for a challenge....think I have a book review that will just do.



**Book Review - The Diaries of Sir Daniel Gooch – Reprinted by Nonsuch Publishing Ltd.**

Immediately I say welcome to my younger readers and don't let that *old school* title put you off. Think of it instead as being called: **"The Diaries of one cool dude called Daniel Gooch, aged 876 months"** And with that *pumpin'* thought now in your mind, yo, *go on down* and get well stuck ya to the first chapter and start the learning, yo..yo! For my older readers I say welcome. I will now set the scene.

Not for the first time in choosing a book

from this publisher of heritage books we are given privileged access to one of engineering history's most interesting periods, that of the industrial revolution. This volume is not just someone's interpreted history either, for it comes from the horse's mouth (so to speak), Mr

Gooch's own diaries. Like many great men and no doubt women of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was sort of expected that you would keep a diary to record the great achievements of your life and in a time before *Facebook*, if you were lucky enough to become famous, to publish them later for the benefit of mankind (who said the Victorians ever undersold themselves) and in a bid no doubt to add a bit of extra bunce to the pension (no state pensions then).

**Chapter 1** - They say you can be born at the just the right time to have a place in history. Though when our Dan was born in 1816 he probably had little thought of the part he would go on to play in the Victorian dash to modernise the world (in reality just an excuse for the British Empire to become ever more efficient at making money out of the rest of the world). But having been dangled on George Stephen's knee when just out of the cradle and having been bought his first lathe aged 12 he should have had a fair inkling. And given that start I think it would have been a brave Dan that said all he wanted to do in life was to become a footballer. Instead he slid effortlessly into his first set of overalls, a spanner put in his hand and the rest is history. Meantime no-one could accuse the Victorians of lacking ambition, for not only did they put money into known but still emerging technologies, but they also quite often put serious money into technologies that could

at best be described as crawling rather than emerging; did they do blue sky thinking then?

It is of course only to our benefit that this far-sighted approach was taken all those years ago for it has given us so many things that today make our lives easier.

**Chapter 2** - So our Daniel, having eventually proved his mastery of the file and lathe (whilst risking life and limb at times) working for among others Robert Stephenson at the Vulcan Works, went on to produce two locomotives there that were eventually to find their way to the embryonic Great Western Railway.

Hearing that the GWR and Isambard Kingdom Brunel (aka I.K.B) were in need of not only engines, but a young dynamic locomotive Superintendent by the name of Gooch, our Dan took it to be a sign of his destiny and signed up. But having arrived, it was to find that other than the two splendid engines he had designed himself at Vulcan's, the rest were a motley collection better suited to boiling water for tea than transporting fee paying gentry across the country. So it was out with the duck quill, a fresh sheet of parchment and before anyone had time

to ask, *'what time is the next train?'* he had designed another couple of engineering masterpieces and the crisis was solved.

**Chapter 3** - Those with a nose for this kind history won't really need your guide to old school engineering to remind them that even though I.K.Bs 'brief' had been to survey and build a railway from London to the west of England, the Great Western railway, he had evidently got frustrated having arrived into Bristol to smell the Atlantic ocean wafting down the Bristol channel and resolved to fork right and keep the journey going by designing GWR steamships that could convey passengers across the water, in this case to AMERICA - tough for those that only wanted to sightsee around Bristol I guess.

I am sure psychologists today would have a field day if asked to analyse what drove I.K.B, for what he lacked in stature (cigar to boots was only about 5 feet ) he more than made up for in the sheer scale of his ambition. For having resolved to cross the ocean he designed and built 3 steamships to achieve it; The Great Western, The Great Britain and The Leviathan (aka The Great Eastern), each one bigger than the last with the last being so big at 692 feet there wasn't a dock big

enough in England to build it, so he just leant the bits against a convenient river bank on the Isle of Dogs and got cracking.

At this point we will paddle around the story a bit so as not to lose the interest of my younger readers and instead jump ahead to the next exciting bit: So then to the Great Eastern:

In the time you were away I.K.B has overworked himself and the stress caused by delays and problems in building this last great ship has taken its toll on his health. Dan (the hero of our story )in the same period has continued to work miracles for the GWR, not least getting the Swindon works built and keeping the flag flying for the broad-gauge ( younger readers may need to look up Broad gauge) However, before the mighty ship was finished I.K.B died. And its fate drifted for a bit thereafter before his best mate Dan took over superintending the last year of its construction.

Now here your guide is going to do his utmost to correct the erroneous impression that history has given to this much maligned vessel. For as you will come to discover when you read chapter 3, far from being a failure it did initially do much good work, fulfilling its intended purpose

in providing prestige for the home nation, it's just that period didn't last very long. Unfortunately the ships weakness lay in its size which did make it rather accident prone. The trouble was each time it had an accident the no-claims bonus diminished and the repair bills got bigger until eventually they became almost as big as the ship itself. Not even the best Victorian visionaries had pockets deep enough to keep paying for its accidents and in a time before block-bookings by package tour operators (Saga cruises were at least a century away), on-line vouchers, and transferable air-miles, it was nigh-on impossible to make it pay and the owning company went bust.

Having lain unloved for a period we next neatly connect this part of the story to our Dan, who in the meantime had developed an unexpected passion for the 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of 'texting', that is the 'Telegraph' (not to be confused with the newspaper of the same name); the tap, tap telegraph i.e. early Morse code – For my younger readers benefit, the telephone and mobile phone, far from being given by God 2000 years ago (no matter what **A.I.** may say ), had to wait their turn to be invented. It was in fact a few years before these '*must have*'

gadgets appeared – Telegraph was used to send messages around the country.

**Historical note:** For the sake of clarity, in the nineteenth century the order of pertinent inventions in communication were: 1 - Person waves flags 2 – Person flashes light 3 – Having invented batteries, person makes sparks 4 – Person making sparks invents tap-tap contact key that sends sparks along wires (from feet to miles) to a recipient's discharge spheres (balls) – 6 The telegram becomes a reality (1845ish).

By 1854 someone had the brilliant idea that instead of sending tap, tap messages only to the house next door or to the next town, what would stop them sending a message across an ocean to their new besties in AMERICA - or was that from AMERICA to England? Anyway the answer was 2000 miles of wet water ocean. Problem then: How to lay 2000miles of cable in one hit?

Answer: Find a stonking great ship capable of carrying enough cable to stop them having to go back to their local branch of "Cables are us" every hundred miles. This went on with mixed success until 1865 when

step forward again our hero, Dan (shortly to be known as the telegraph-man) and The Great Eastern steamship.

**Chapter 4 and Chapter 5** -The Atlantic Cable-Laying Expeditions of 1866 and 1869 – You can guess the plot here, but it's all good stuff.

**Chapter 6** – By the time you have got to this chapter we find our Dan has been head-hunted once more by the GWR and asked to become its Chairman, but despite this he still couldn't leave the old Great Eastern steamship alone for long...but he does also write a bit about the little railway tunnel built under the river Severn amongst other things.

### **Bookworm's Verdict**

*(Keep it short – Ed)* This fine volume was originally published in 1892 and is another modern reprint from the company Nonsuch Publishing Ltd of Gloucestershire. Other than a brief introduction to the modern edition it is presented in its original form with a nice picture of our Dan on the front cover.

Even though this book is a collection of extracts taken from Dan's own diaries they are fairly selective and you don't get the full story of the man or his life by reading it. That said they are still from the nib of the

great man and describe (perhaps in outline rather than detail), some of his greatest hits. To those of us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it acts nicely as a time machine as we join Dan during some of the earliest days of the Great Western Railway's existence when he became its first Locomotive Superintendant.

Once Dan's passion for laying the first successful transatlantic telegraph cable kicks in, we then find ourselves sharing with him many of the highs and lows of this undertaking; in fact at times you can almost smell the tar and taste the salt in the air from some of his descriptions. For this was no '*chuck it over the side*' operation, and if in the telling of this tale it doesn't leave at least some of my most loyal readers left holding half of a tea soaked digestive biscuit in their hands, whilst the rest sinks effortlessly to bottom of their tea cup, as they sit goggled eyed at something they have just read.....then my name's not Bookworm. Whilst Mr Gooch didn't design and build the Great Eastern steam ship his involvement became epic (*yo!*), it was an extraordinary vessel with its two paddle wheels (55ft dia) and a screw propeller, simply massive (*wicked, yo!*) for its day; it could turn virtually in its own length and on a good day it could achieve 13 knots on the flat, imagine what it could have done downhill!

In reviewing this book I feel a responsibility to stimulate further interest and desire in you loyal readers young and mature, to want to learn more about this period beyond just these 236 pages. For there is more detail to be had, from the development of Swindon Works, several Gooch engines of note, the Severn railway tunnel which was simply one of the major civil engineering achievements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and then there was the GWRs gauge of choice, the Broad gauge.

The book is split roughly 50% about Dan Gooch's railway career and 50% about his transatlantic exploits. A book that deserves a prominent place on your coffee table this spring to impress friends and neighbours with your knowledge of engineering history – A definite Bookworm recommendation.

**The Diaries of Sir Daniel Gooch – ISBN 1-84588-016-1 Reprint by  
Nonsuch Publishing Ltd 2006**

Available from all good suppliers of second-hand volumes.

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*Don't forget the ad - Ed*

**ADVERT**

*Mutt & Jeff's – Hearing Aids For the Discerning Listener are proud sponsors of NLSMEs Bookworm Series.*

## 2026 Great Central Winter Gala

Photos by Owen

Jack, the editor, adds – I wanted to add some photos in this month to encourage people to get out and about despite the miserable weather, I noticed Owen had recently photographed the 2026 Great Central Winter Gala so it seemed very fitting! Cheers Owen!







## Gauge 1 Update

Geoff,

Gauge 1 Section Leader

You may have noticed that it can be cold outside at this time of year. In fact very cold at times.

But this does not stop a number of regulars attending the Tyttenhanger track through out the year. Having the paving around the layout makes it easy to keep the foot wear clean and it does not become a trudge. Additionally with the Bothy on hand we are able to retire to more comfortable conditions with a warm drink and watch what is going on.

While there are many of our Gauge 1 group that visit the track at this time of year there are those that prefer to take the time to be in more hospitable surroundings, in the warm. In my early days in Gauge1, running outdoors was very rare between the Autumn days of October and late Spring.

It was during this time that we would retire to the warmth of the workshop with occasional interruptions to attend an indoor venue with a portable track. Within the Association, these days, there are a number of groups that can offer access to portable layouts for use indoors and we make the opportunity to enjoy such days.

A portable layout does offer the opportunity to include some scenic displays. I have been fortunate in the last month to visit the Midlands group when they were displaying their new portable layout, Carding Road.



This set up now includes Station, and lineside warehousing and a terrace of buildings. It really brings a test track forward to include the railway environment. I offer a few photos of Carding Road.



Updated TRACK STEWARDS ROTA FOR 2026  
+ FAMILY AND FRIENDS DAY

In the December 2025 issue of the News Sheet, I wrote that it was my intention to issue a draft Track Stewards Rota for 2026 in either the February or March News Sheet. Well, I have managed to meet the editorial deadline for the February News Sheet, so on the next couple of pages you will find the 2026 rota for you to peruse and note when you have been allocated a track steward duty.

When drawing up the rota I have taken into consideration country membership, advancing years, fitness and members of the Gauge 1 Group who, in 2026, will be continuing to carry out Sunday tea duties, so not every member of the society has been listed.

We will be continuing with the requirement of a Senior Steward plus 10 Stewards for every Sunday we will be running. So, if your name is not listed and you will be able to do a duty later in the year please contact me – my contact details can be found on the back cover of the News Sheet.

As usual, apart from the first Sunday in May (see announcement below), we will be open for public running on the first and third

Sundays each month until the third Sunday in October between 2.00pm and 5.00pm. **Track Stewards should arrive on site at 1.00pm to ensure that all site preparations have been completed before the arrival of the public.**

Please make every effort to attend on the date you are allocated, because if you do not it places an extra burden on the other stewards. You are reminded that being a member of the North London Society of Model Engineers does require you to commit to do at least one rota duty when you join or re-join each year (confirmed on your membership form). If, however, you are unable to perform the duty on the date shown on the rota **it is your responsibility** to arrange a swap with another member and to advise the two Senior Stewards of the change. A phone call or email allows the Senior Steward to plan for the number of stewards who will be there. If a swap has been arranged, I would also appreciate being notified by the individual or Senior Steward concerned so that I can update the rota which will be regularly published in the News Sheet from May onwards.

Our public running days provide a lot of pleasure to parents and children who come along to our site at Colney Heath. With rising costs in general over the last year and the projects the society is either currently engaged upon or planned for the future, the income from the public, the Fetes and Fairs Section, as well as

the subscriptions we pay go towards improving and/or maintaining our facilities not only at the track but also at Headquarters.

Talking of the Fetes and Fairs Section, they would also very much welcome assistance by any member of the Society who would like to become involved with the wide variety of events they attend. If you would like more details on how you can become involved please contact Peter. Again, his contact details can be found on the back of the News Sheet.

Finally, after the great success of our family and friends days on the first Sunday in May for the last few years, Council have agreed that this should be repeated annually as a precursor for the start of our running season. So, please reserve Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2026 when our Colney Heath Site will be a **Society Members and their family and friends only** running day. The site will be open all day and into the evening and beyond for us to enjoy. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided (volunteers to assist in helping to dispense these please form an orderly queue at the kitchen door in the carriage) and it is hoped members and their families and friends will bring picnics along to enjoy our site.

**Nigel (On behalf of the Council) February 2026**



## MARINE MUMBLES MkIII.

By Pete– Marine Section Leader

Here is the latest episode in the series on Royal Navy Coastal Forces close range ordnances.

### The Holman Projector MkII.

This was another 1941 stop-gap anti-aircraft weapon, relying on steam or compressed air to operate it. The ammunition was a Mills bomb (hand grenade) fitted into 'tin can'. The gun was also used to fire parachute flares to illuminate targets.

The steam powered one relied on the ships steam plant for its pressured supply. The most used version was the MkIIA which had compressed air for propellant.



The MkIIA comprised of 4' 6" smooth barrel tube attached at the lower end to a pressured air receiver. Attached to the top of the tube was a crude adjustable angle iron sight.

To fire the weapon, the air hose tap was opened to allow 160psi compressed air into the receiver. The safety pin was removed from Mills bomb (it was just proud of the tin top).

Tin and contents were then slid down the barrel. Target sighted and fired by twisting the right had grip.

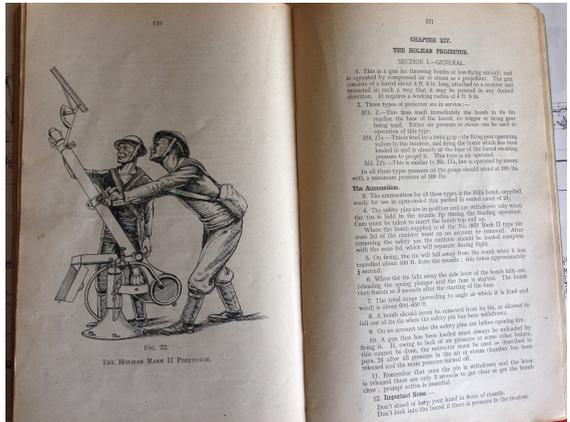
The tin and grenade parted company at 100' (due to perforations at the bottom of the tin blowing the

grenade out) with the projectile travelling on to between 600'-650' before exploding.

Unfortunately, no one had trained the grenade only to send shrapnel vertically or horizontally. There was always a danger of the gun crew being on the receiving end as well.

Records show that at least one German Heinkel He111 was shot down by one of these contraptions. It seems the main use of this weapon was trying to shoot potatoes down the funnel stacks of friendly destroyers, as the MTB/MGS sailed by.

The line drawing of the weapon is taken from my late fathers RN DEMS (Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships) Pocket Book. I managed to lose a red hard rubber practise round, he gave me



My replica model is 1/12th scale, built from the accurate Admiralty drawings of John Lambert.

Once again I used brass tube for the barrel, fitted end cap and receiver.

Plasticard, in its many guises, made the rest of the fittings. If the pedestal base looks familiar, it was machined from an old inlet valve. The air hose came from a length of electrical wire insulation.

As ever the model was airbrushed with enamel paints.

Oh, I haven't forgotten to talk about paint weathering. Will do next time.

### General Meeting Reports

The December meeting followed our tradition of a Christmas gathering. The assembled throng enjoyed mulled wine with mince pies and were treated to a quiz, prepared by Jim and presented by Pete. The quiz topics were very disparate, encumbering railways worldwide and 1960s music. The mulled wine must have taken effect as maximum score was only 35%, well done Dave. A Christmas tree and music supplied by Mike added to the ambiance of a very pleasant evening.

In January Owen entertained us with a presentation of his superb photographs. Owen is an excellent recorder of events at our club and railways throughout the UK. Using the overhead projector his pictures were seen to good advantage. Following a chronological sequence commencing in 2020 he showed various club activities at Tyttenhanger and our HQ, the Ffestiniog and Vale of Rheidol Railways, Leighton Buzzard Railway, where Owen is a driver, Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway plus numerous others and shots of steam excursions on the mainline. All accompanied by an informative talk and responses to many questions from the floor. Such was the variety and interest that we had not progressed to photographs beyond the year 2023 before the clock reached 10pm. A very enjoyable evening much appreciated by all who attended.

For the February meeting Malcolm gave us a fascinating insight into mobile phone networks development and operation. Malcolm was professionally engaged managing installation of cellular networks for

BT and had wealth of knowledge of the subject. Starting with early mobile communication devices that became viable in the 1980s. Those, as some may remember, were cumbersome and had to be used with a few hundred yards of a transmitter. Malcolm used a series of slides to illustrate the development and advantages gained from 2G through to 5 G networks and informed us that 7G was already operating in Norway and Thailand. Following a tea break Malcolm gave us an illustrated history of Napier Engines, well known for their high-powered Sabre with its unique H configuration, and of course the Deltic engine. Less well known was that Napier also made cars in the earlier years of the company.

The February evening concluded with a film of the occasion NLSME members, principally Mike Radford and Nigel Dant, having for some years been visiting Poland's Railways and in those days driving on the main line, proposed and assisted with the extension of a full size turntable. This was necessary as the yard from which steam excursions were based could not turn their largest locomotive, a Pacific. The film showed how the table rails were extended about a foot each end and the fixed rails cut back a similar amount. After some snagging and head scratching by Mike, Nigel and the professional yard crew, we saw the table complete a 360 degree turn of the Pacific. I doubt that volunteers would be allowed such access or be so hands on nowadays.

A New Model Railway Project Part 9  
“Composure and Ai Subterfuge” by Paul  
***Step by Step photos on page 33 & 34***

In my last article (March 2025), I lamented about all the compromises that it would entail to build a 4mm scale model of Widford (Herts) station within the space I had available within the two “cameo” style baseboards which, together, give me a space of 1800mm long and 450mm wide. See Part 1 in February 2022.

I reached a hiatus last spring whilst I reappraised what to do. The killer compromise would have been making the station straight so that the tracks would exit each end at right angles. But a straight version of Widford just wouldn't be Widford.

Up to that point, I had built all of the station buildings and had placed them on my home layout which features, amongst other things, a branch line station with a curved platform. They looked very “at home”. The whole thing sings “Widford” although it isn't.

The summer of 2025 came but my Cameo project had been put away for a rainy day. Ironic, really, as I had originally thought of the project as a summer garden table modelling exercise.

In July '25 Mrs G went away for a few days which meant I could commandeer the dining table, get out the cameo boards and have a long hard think about what to do with them. I really felt the need to re-compose the scene that would fit into the space available.

As many of you are aware, I model the railways of the old Great Eastern section so am quite familiar with many of the GE lines that once existed. Given that the original intent was to use a station building I had scratch built in the late '70's it was natural to blow the cobwebs

off that and see how I could reuse it. After much pondering, the idea of building Takeley, on the erstwhile Bishops Stortford, Dunmow and Braintree\* Line took root. (This line is now a footpath known as “The Flitch Way”).

Takeley station was dead straight, so the spectre of curve anxiety went away. The tracks emerge from under a brick bridge at the western end. A good start as bridges are a good way to visually lose model tracks off the end of baseboards. \you will see this later. Takeley was a very long station, if the Goods Yard is included. It was a station where the passenger and goods facilities were place end to end on a narrow site. I figured that if I just model the passenger platform end with the station building, it would fit nicely into the 1800mm length I have. But that meant dropping the goods yard entirely. A fine thought except the station environs were so open, and not at all compatible with the boxed in end of my baseboards. There was no recorded handy building or copse to disguise the exit of the tracks to the fiddle yard. How am I to disguise the exit? Another bridge, perhaps. But there wasn't one at Takeley.

It occurred to me that I had an opportunity to reflect, in model form, my first summer of Civil Engineering Training which was setting out a new bridge over the railway line at Kennett, near Newmarket, Suffolk. The bridge now carries the A14 over the Ely to Ipswich Line. Back then I worked for Wimpey and, lo and behold, there are Wimpey branded model construction vehicles of the era I am modelling available in 4mm scale. I figured that I could create a fictional “bridge under construction” to hide the eastern exit of the tracks.

But that left me with a problem of how to blend in the bridge deck crossing the line at right angles where it butts directly against the backscene. I needed to create a convincing visual blend of 3D model with a 2D backscene. More head scratching. Another pause moment. Painting a road under construction with my level of artistic skill is, I thought, beyond me. What to do? But I went ahead regardless and modelled the bridge under construction complete with modelled pre-cast concrete and tied reinforcement awaiting concrete. Thereafter I paused once again awaiting an solution to pop into my head.

And one it did. At Christmas. Not in the form of a gift from Santa but the discovery of how to use AI to create images either from scratch or by modifying existing images. The discovery came about on Boxing Day when I successfully doctored family Christmas images into comic forms.

I realised that AI is simple to use. Open Google and search for an AI App (several are available), give it a photo, or start blank and type what you want from AI. My Youngest planned an entire Road Trip to Germany by asking an AI map to suggest one. I started with ChatGPT but soon discovered my Android phone is preloaded with an AI tool called Gemini. It is an option if you press the “share” icon (  ) in a photo gallery. Its free and very easy to use. See accompanying picture sequence.

At this stage I realised I was working more as an artist than a technician – I had, over the years, been composing and recomposing my scene, not on canvas, but in “mixed media” with blending two- and three-dimensional work.

AI enabled me to manipulate the photographic backscene. I took a photo of the part of the backscene (created using Drone footage as described in my February 2025 article) which abuts the bridge under construction scene. I asked Gemini to “create a road under construction the snakes away into the distant trees”. And that’s just what it did. The resultant image was transferred to MS Powerpoint, resized, printed and pasted onto my backscene. Voila!

Getting bolder, I took a photo of the next slice of the drone backscene and asked Gemini to create an image of a 1960’s housing estate under construction in the big field. Again, Gemini came up with a suitable image in all respects except one – it had incorporated a really weird blue crane in the scene. But that was easy to deal with by reprocessing the image in Gemini saying “delete the blue crane in the image”.

Gemini did as asked!

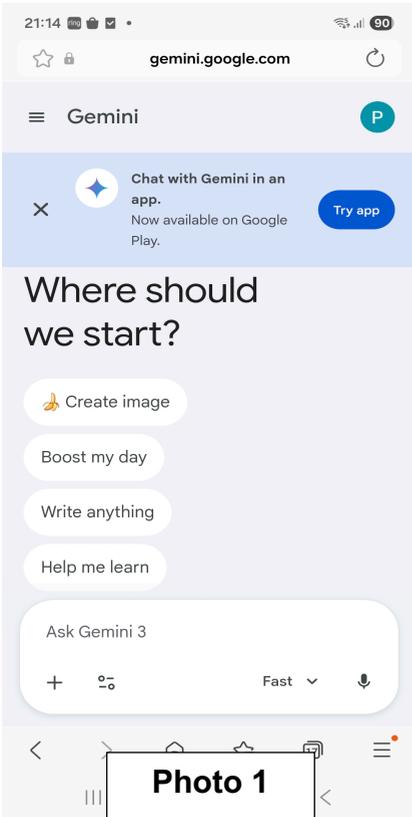
That’s not to say that the AI tools always work first time around, but it didn’t take me long to realise that simple commands to create or modify elements of a picture work best one at a time.

I will leave you with a sequence of pictures that, I to tell the story of one AI Image that I created with an initial request to “create an image of a UK branch line receding into the countryside as seen from a bridge”.

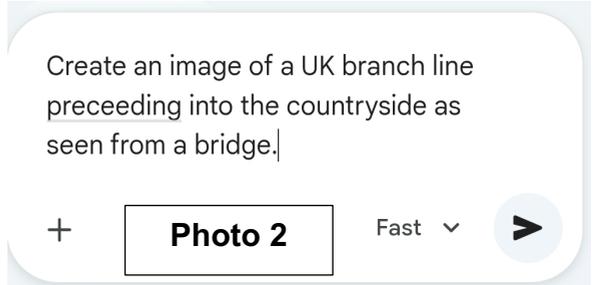
See what AI can do for you folks!

That’s all until next time.

Paul



See **Photo 1** which is a screenshot from my phone showing the start point on Google Gemini, should you want to give it a go.



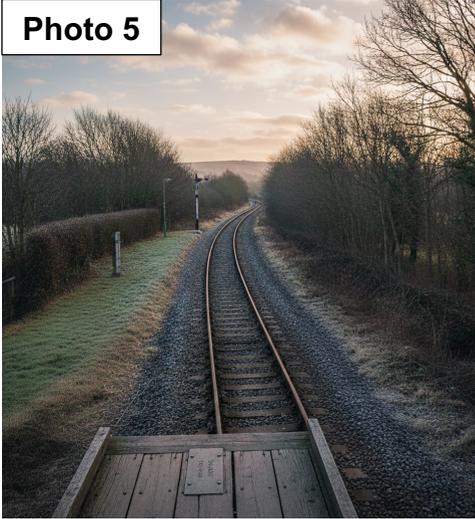
**Photo 2** shows my opening request/command.

**Photo 3** was the result. It was good but needed modifying. I saved the picture and asked Gemini to "remove the platform". It did.

**Photo 4 (left)** was the result of removing the platform.



**Photo 5**

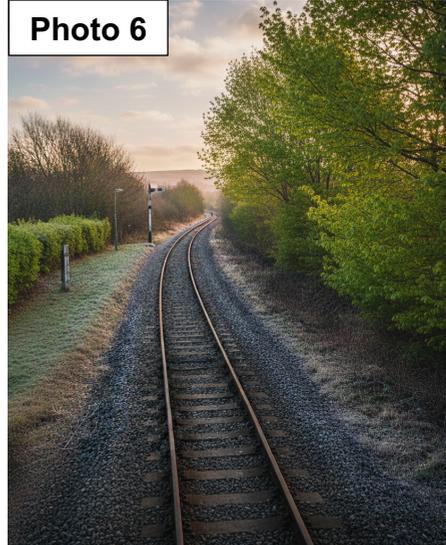


I then asked Gemini to remove the iron railings in the foreground. It did and **Photo 5** was the result. Then I removed the wood structure at the foot of the page.

**Photo 6** was the result. This was fine but it was winter. I asked Gemini to “make it summer”.

**Photo 7** was the result. I saved each image before asking for the next modification.

**Photo 6**



Perfick! I downloaded Photo 7 to my PC, processed it in Powerpoint, printed it and mounted it behind the western bridge on my Cameo layout.

**Photo 8**



**Photo 8 (left)** is the final result showing the completed Ai generated image in place on the layout.

## Booking an Event at Colney Heath?

Tyttenhanger site is open to all members at all times.

However, on certain pre-arranged days members access is subject to some restrictions. This does not prohibit members running/sailing but should note booking requirements and priorities are as follows; -

### Public running days 2pm – 5pm

Set by council. Managed by Senior Steward. Notified in news sheet

Priority given to public passenger hauling

On site parking for members and disabled badge holders only

### Event Days

Proposed by members, approved by council. Managed by sponsoring member. Notified in news sheet

Priority given to event passenger hauling.

On site parking for visitors at sponsor's discretion

### Private parties

Proposed by members, approved by council. Managed by sponsoring member. Notified in news sheet

Priority given to party passenger hauling.

On site parking for visitors at sponsor's discretion

PLEASE NOTE:- SIGNS ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO PLACE AT THE GATE INDICATING IT IS A PRIVATE PARTY AND NOT A PUBLIC RUNNING DAY

### Members days

Ad hoc events do not require council approval. No notice in news sheet

No priorities apply

All public, event, parties or members days to be in accordance with the Rules and Regulations for the Tyttenhanger Site. (copies have been provided to all members)

## Club Dates for your 2026 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	
<p>The March general meeting will be a presentation by our John Beesly on the trials and tribulations of owning his standard gauge steam locomotive. Another evening not to be missed.</p>	
<b>March 2026</b>	
<b>! Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March</b>	General meeting. Talk by John Beesly on owning and maintaining his full size steam locomotive. 8pm at HQ
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Working Party at Colney Heath 9.00 – 12.30
<b>April 2026</b>	
<b>! Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April</b>	General meeting and talk by Mike Chrisp, reflections on Model Engineering. 8pm at HQ
<b>Advance notice of events in 2026</b>	
Friday, 8 <sup>th</sup> May	AGM at HQ. 8pm <b>(This is the new date!)</b>
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Family & Friends members day at Tyttenhanger
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	Vintage Model Yacht Group Regatta at Colney Heath
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> May	Public Running Session 14.00 – 17.00
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> June	Barnet Beavers biannual visit to Tyttenhanger 14.00 – 17.00
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> June	Midsummer evening run at Tyttenhanger
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> September	Vintage Model Yacht Group Regatta at Colney Heath

**NORTH LONDON SOCIETY OF MODEL ENGINEERS  
Officers, Council Members & Section Leaders**

Contact details removed for this web edition

The views expressed in this News Sheet are not necessarily those of the  
Chairman or Council of the NLSME.  
The telephone number of the Tyttenhanger site is 01727 827389