

October 2009

Steaming Ahead


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Chairman's Chunter

Due to circumstances the last "Steaming ahead" edition covered a three month period.

On behalf of the Board for this I apologise.

Many of us have commitments away from the society and because we rely on so few to take the lead, as do all societies, delays occur.

Whilst on the subject I would ask all members to think seriously about a contribution for the publication.

We have many long-standing members who must have a fair few stories relating to the history of the society or projects and events of years gone by that newer members, such as myself, would enjoy.

Please, I beg you to share them and keep "Steaming Ahead" a worthwhile read.

Should you not have access to a computer I will arrange for hand written contributions to be typed for you. So what other excuses can you come up with!!

Right 'humble and begging over' what's been going on?

Starting at the ground level extension. The project has been subject to a few delays but the work has simply been diverted to another job.

The effort and muscle going into this project is tremendous. No shortcuts are being allowed resulting in one job causing another.

I am convinced that the constant commitment of the regular team, and they know who they are, will produce a brilliant extra to an already great facility.

The signalling team is making progress in an effort to overcome the system problems. The train detector trials continue and the oncoming winter will show any weaknesses.

A plan of future signal location, due to the track development, has been tentatively agreed.

Ten point motor units have been completed in readiness for installation.

Some time ago it was agreed to purchase a Roanoke 0-4-0 diesel outline shunter.

The reason behind this addition was to add to our hauling capabilities on such events as birthday parties and

particularly bonfire night.

Unfortunately the loco did not fulfil the requirements and after a great deal of modification in an unsuccessful attempt to improve its performance a radical proposal was agreed.

The loco was to be stretched and rebuilt as 0-6-0.

New side frames were produced, an extra axle and wheels ordered, new connecting rods ect. ect.

The loco was stripped and a dedicated team took on the task of the rebuild.

Many hitches reared their ugly heads removing the 'straight forward' side of the task.

The loco has been treated, as has its tender, to a severe makeover. A breaking system compatible with our rolling stock has been installed. All the work has been done to a very high standard, which is a credit to all involved.

The loco started as a 'Yellow Peril' but now, having been repainted and renamed, she is a very smart 'Blue Jubilee'.

As always, the site is being kept very tidy by the 'Hort team' their job is relentless, but they carry on

Events This Month—September

Sun 04 Oct 2009	Steam Up
Sun 11 Oct 2009	Birthday Party
Sun 17 Oct 2009	Steam Up
Tues 20 Oct 2009	Trams around the world

Dates for Your Diary

Sun 1 Nov 2009	Steam Up	10am onwards
Sat 7 Nov 2009	Bonfire Night—Tickets Required	
Sat 21 Nov 2009	Steam Up	1pm onwards

Your help needed for Bonfire Night 7th November

apparently regardless.

The station-fencing program is well underway which will give us the opportunity of better public control, with some of our younger customers we certainly need it.

Last month I mentioned the possibility of the development of a garden gauge section.

I recently visited Stafford MES site to view their 32mm gauge set up which had been featured in the Model Engineer magazine.

I was made very welcome and discussed the introduction of this gauge into the society.

I was informed its concept resulted in a few members wishing to be able to active within model engineering without the weight and backache.

The introduction of this gauge has resulted in fifteen new members.

Please make your views known, for or against, regarding Garden Gauge and if you would be interested in the development of such a section.

Finally, as always, I sincerely thank all those active members who continue to work tirelessly to maintain and develop our facility.

Allan Leary

Tuesday 20th October

Meeting at Balleny Green

7.30 A talk by Mike Ballenger on Tramway of the world.

GROUNDS MAINTAINANCE DIARY AND MISC NOTES SEPTEMBER 2009

TUESDAY 1ST.

There was a lot to get done today, with the birthday party on Sunday 6th, so I loaded the car and prepared to get to Little Hay early. Main item was a 6'0" Photinia Red Robin shrub which I'd dug up on Monday morning to add a bit more colour and interest to the site. I had collected diesel on the way and arrived at Little Hay about 8.45am, however, John (W) was already on site and had unlocked. So having dropped off the shrub, I headed for the bonfire. With a large pile of hedge cuttings from the last couple of weeks having more or less dried out, a little diesel and after checking the wind direction it was well alight very quickly.

Grenville was also early and having got the mowers we set about mowing the usual parking areas before the 'crowd' arrived. Bill arrived and was almost finished getting his hedge cutting equipment ready and fuelled up when Vic arrived. The two of them then gave the front hedge a final trim, progressed to the conifer hedge by the level crossing and then onto the shrubbery between the two tracks at the station exit.

Roger arrived and took on the job of finding a suitable position for the Photinia shrub. It's now planted between the two flowering cherry trees, adjacent to the hydraulic lift, and will quickly establish itself becoming a good size colourful shrub over the next couple of years. Roger

and I broke off from what we were doing following Chris asking for assistance to help his small group take down the marquee.

John (W) worked to get the new fence panels creosoted while Stuart washed the green mould off the club house end wall, where the clematis had been, before he and Colin made the final adjustments to the new fencing round the end of what will be the extended patio.

As usual we had stopped for coffee at around 10.30am and watched John (R) cleaning up in the steaming bay while Ron was cleaning and applying a top coat of blue paint to the third H/L carriage. Elsewhere, Allan (D) and Mike (Bentley) the only ones of Dave (M)'s team today, continued their work on the new track bed. The new grass has knitted well on the shoulders and we were able to mow it for the second time. After lunch Roger and I spent time tidying and filling in the small gaps around the margins of the new turf before having to abandon it because of rain.

All that remains is the two hour job on Sunday morning cleaning up and getting the club house ready for the birthday party.

SUNDAY 6TH

The party went off very well although we were a little short of members, however, those who helped enjoyed the tea and cakes provide. Two appreciative e-mails from the birthday organisers and a request for another party as a result. Thanks to all who assisted at this party.

TUESDAY 8TH

I arrived around 9.15am to complaints from Stuart and John that they had had to unlock. But as they were sitting drinking coffee under the

Copy dates for future news letters:-

Tuesday 27th Oct for Nov

Tuesday 24th Nov for Dec

Tuesday 29th Dec for Jan

This Months Quote:

Its better to have enough ideas for some of them to be wrong than to be always right by having no ideas at all

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email steve@casprint.co.uk **Newshound : Neal Harrison 0121 378 3992**

Your help needed for Bonfire Night 7th November

canopy I was not unduly worried. However, it was to plan and Grenville had already started mowing round his usual long walk. Bill and Roger arrived and concentrated on the cutting the laurel hedges in the South West corner. Quite a big job which took all morning; it was 1.00pm when they sat down for a well deserved lunch.

The main grass areas, I had decided, could wait another week and with a good turn out it was possible to tackle most of the things planned for the day. John (R) finished off tidying up the banks and approach to the track crossing being re-instated by Garry and Chris behind the carriage. David (March) with some help from Grenville worked on the Hover mower but unfortunately it won't hover and is in such a poor state that it's on its way the 'the great lawn in the sky' very shortly. He then went and fetched a new filter for the lawn tractor, changed that and the oil – it sounds a lot better now but there was not time to change the drive belt this week.

Vic and I started the ground work, first off reducing part of the bank behind the 'dog kennel' so that we can get the mowers down between the high and ground level tracks more easily. Then to the lower copse but before that coffee (10.30am) with the rest of the team as usual. While we were having coffee Michael (W) started trimming the two banks by the level crossing where the grass had grown quite high. It is important to keep this tidy as it's an area that all visitors have to pass as they come in and Michael does a good job.

Coffee done we set about levelling all the tipped soil in the lower copse, on the top and down into the lower area making it safer and looking better before concentrating on the top of the tunnels. All the path slabs were tidied and the large concrete edging/ slabs/cappings and other assorted dumpings stacked neatly ready for re-use elsewhere.

Dave (M), Allan (D), Mike (B) and Peter (snr) laid the final length of signalling ducting up to the position

where the crossover will be installed. In the process they dug out the crossing and several 'muck truck' loads of soil which Vic and I were able to use to infill and build up areas in the lower copse. From our position working on the top of the tunnels Vic and I could see and hear Garry and Chris working on the crossing as well as Allan (L) and David (Smh) re-assembling Roanoake. When I went down to put away the tractors, trailer and 'muck track' into the store, mid afternoon, work on Roanoake had progressed well and it was looking very good but see else where for details.

TUESDAY 15TH

It's a Birthday Party on Sunday 20th so we did a complete mow while Bill concentrated on the pool side laurel hedge and Michael cleared the very large piles of clippings. Grenville, Bill and Michael left around lunch time after which I worked levelling and spreading more soil over the tunnels. It still requires several trailer/muck truck loads of soil and work before it will be finished to my liking. There is a lot to do on the hort side at this time of the year and now signs of autumn with the trees beginning to change colour and drop their leaves.

Stewart and John worked on the safety fencing on the south side of the signal box and Dave (M), Allan (D) and Mike (Bentley) worked putting the final touches to the 'level' pegs in the new track bed and buried the signal ducting. In the high level station area Ron is getting on well with the final stages of the cleaning and repainting the carriages in the new livery. They will be ready for Garry to apply the lettering and decals soon. Down at the bottom of the field and in the maintenance area Garry, Allan (L), David (S), Chris and John (R) worked on Roanoake and completed the installation of the point lever on the point into the carriage shed – see separate report.

Although brief notes for today in all a very good day and with a lot of progress made by everyone the whole site looks good. If you haven't been down to Little Hay for a while

it's worth finding time to come and just walk slowly round the site to see and appreciate what and how much is being done by the teams and individuals.

TUESDAY 22ND

Bill, Roger, Mike (Withers) and me worked on the trimming the beech and laurel hedges, shrubs adjacent to the high level station and around the lower copse. About six or so years ago the beech hedge had been neglected and was higher than the lamp post, very straggly and obstructing one of the firework displays. It's now much better and will be cut back on one side to encourage it to thicken up more.

After lunch I spent an hour or so raking and levelling newly tipped soil on and adjacent to the tunnel top and in the copse. This once scruffy untidy area is now beginning to look quite tidy and once the grass has grown should be somewhere pleasant to put a new replacement seat.

Dave, Allan (D), Mike (Bentley) and Keith worked on the new track signalling junction box installation and shuttering for the concrete alongside the tarmac path area of the track. On the patio Stuart and John commenced drilling holes for the next lot of new fencing, intended to stop children and adults on events from walking on the tracks. It will provide much better control and be much safer than the green plastic used previously for events.

Garry, Chris and David (S) worked on the re-assembly of Roanoake – but see elsewhere for report and pictures – and Peter (Robinson) worked cleaning the old ballast, a worthwhile job but a very dirty and dusty one.

Finally today. The club house was given a though clean and made tidy for the birthday party on Sunday, as it has to be each time, but by mid afternoon today there was dirt on the carpet, dirty mugs, spilt coffee rings, wet on the work surfaces, dirty plates from someone's lunch in the sink, in spite of Chris having washed up a load of mugs before lunch. Come on – we are all working on

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maintenance or projects on the site and it's not good enough to expect someone else to clean up after you.

MONDAY 28TH

This morning I received a letter from Jim Bayliss with a donation towards the cost of a replacement hover mower. Jim, your generosity is appreciated and I assure you it will help considerably – thanks on behalf of the Hort Team.

TUESDAY 29TH

Needed to get in early to start the bonfire and rid of the worst smoke before most of the others arrived. This only worked partially because the laurel cuttings had compacted somewhat and were slow burning.

Grenville arrived while I was attending to the bonfire, and satisfied it was burning well, we both went to get the mowers. The self propelled mower that Grenville exercises every week always starts easily and he went off round the field as normal. However, the tractor mower had failed to start last week so that had to be sorted. At this point I was joined by Roger and together we went through checking fuel and spark plugs etc., but without success until after coffee. We then got it sorted having cleaned the plugs again, fuse and other contacts, checked cut-out switches and in the end with Mike (Brophy)'s assistance, a bad contact was located in one of the safety switch wires.

David(M)'s team is getting on well with forming the concrete sides to the new track alongside and retaining the tarmac track. Stuart and John continue cutting holes and planting concrete posts for the fence across the patio while Ron finished the last of the H/L carriages and started on the wooden benches. The carriages are now ready for Garry to put on the lettering and decals to match the I/L ones. Peter (Snr) continued work cleaning the old ballast – as I said before, 'a worthwhile job but a very dirty and dusty one'.

While working on the tractor, after coffee, I went to get the plug spanners for the second time from

the bench in the machine bay and to my horror, the benches were clear, clean and tidy. I couldn't find anything, John (R) was in and had cleaned the whole place and put away the tools in their proper places. A job long overdue, well done and that shouldn't be necessary!!!!!!

Well, that's it for another month; I'm now off until early November so the next notes from me will probably not be until November.

Eric Davies 29th September 2009

Signalling Report.

As everyone will see the new track bed has been dug out. Cable ducting has been laid from the Level Crossing Gate to the Station Junction. Connection boxes have also been laid and track crossing pipes (courtesy of D. Moseley's team) where all the signals will be positioned.

We are looking for volunteers to make some new signals and signal posts. **Any takers?** (contact – Mike Brophy).

Also 5 lever type and 3 proximity train detection devices for signalling have been fitted to the existing track, for testing purposes as to which device will give the better service.

Discussions are on-going for up-grading the signal cabin.

M. Brophy

For Sale

Hydraulic lift.

Will lift 12½ Stone Needs a coat of paint £70.00

Contact Betty 0182761829

Birthday Parties

The last two parties have seen a good turnout of staff to which I am very grateful to all who turned up.

I overheard some comments that we were over staffed, this is not the case we try to have staffing levels that will cope with the expected number of children and adults on site.

It will always be the case (WHEN ALL IS RUNNING AS IT SHOULD) that some of you may not have to much to do all of the time but this should allow us to give each other a break. However if we are unfortunate enough to have any form of incident then all our spare capacity would soon be bought into play, any short fall in staffing levels could have dire consequences both for our passengers and the club.

So please keep coming and keep the staff levels up to maximum for all events especially the next three major events.

Many thanks

Steve Whitson

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS & EVENTS FOR 2009

Date	Event	Event Co-ordinator	Time
Sun 04 Oct 2009	Steam Up		10am onwards
Sun 11 Oct 2009	Birthday Party		1-3pm
Sun 17 Oct 2009	Steam Up		1pm onwards
Tues 20 Oct 2009	Speaker		7:30pm
Sun 31 Oct 2009	Halloween Evening—Cancelled due to ongoing track work		
Sun 1 Nov 2009	Steam Up		10am onwards
Sat 7 Nov 2009	Bonfire Night—Tickets Required		
Sat 21 Nov 2009	Steam Up		1pm onwards
Tues 24 Nov 2009	Speaker:		7:30pm
Sun 06 Dec 2009	Santa Special—Tickets Required		
Sun 13 Dec 2009	Santa Special—Tickets Required		
Tues 15 Dec 2009	CHRISTMAS PARTY—members only		7:30pm
Sat 26 Dec 2009	Boxing Day Steam Up		10am onwards

Engineering lasts forever!

The U.S. standard railroad gauge (distance between rails) is 4 feet, 8½ inches. That is an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way we built them in England, and the U.S. railroads were built by English expatriates. Why did the English build them that way? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used. Why did "they" use that gauge?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing. So why did the wagons have that particular odd spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that was the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads?

The first long distance roads in Europe (and England) were built by Imperial Rome for their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts in the roads? The ruts in the roads which everyone had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels, were first formed by Roman war chariots.

Since the chariots were made for (or by) Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. The U.S. standard railroad of 4 feet 8½ inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman war chariot.

Specifications and bureaucracies live forever. So the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's ass came up with it, you may be exactly right, because the Imperial Roman war chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back end of two war horses.

Thus we have the answer to the original question.

Now for the twist to the story.

When we see a space shuttle sitting on it's launching pad, there are two booster rockets attached to the side of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRB's. The SRB's are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRB's might have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRB's had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad from the factory had to run through a tunnel in the mountains. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track is about as wide as two horses' rumps.

So, a major design feature of what is arguably the worlds most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass!

Isn't engineering just great?

Thanks to David Smith for this snippet

Roanoke Before



And after



More on this next month