

Aug – Nov 2010

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STEAMING AHEAD



Sutton Coldfield Model Engineering Society

► **Bonfire Night Sat 13th we need all your help please** ◀

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Events This Month-

Sun 7th First Sunday steam up

Tues 9th New Signal System Presentation 7.30 at Balleny Green

Sat 13th Bonfire Night - Your help needed

Sat 20th Steam up 12.00 on

Dates for Your Diary

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Sun 05 December 2010 | Santa Special | 11am-3pm |
| Sun 12 December 2010 | Santa Special | 11am-3pm |
| Fri 17 December 2010 | EXMAS PARTY at Shenstone Hall 7:30pm | |
| Sun 26 December 2010 | Boxing Day Steam Up | 10am onwards |

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Copy Date is the last Tuesday of the month

Editors Apology

Dear all

As some of you will have noticed Steaming ahead has been noticeable by its absence. Initially this was due to technical problems with a computer upgrade which forced us into some un-planned software upgrades, then the learning began!

Things always happen in threes I had few personal issues to deal with and in my haste to get a Aug/Sept issue out quickly I found to my horror that I had managed to over write it with Octobers draft.

As this meant a complete rewrite I decided for continuity of articles to merge the lot into one issue covering August – November.

My apologies to all, and my thanks to our contributors for their patience, especially our chairman who has had to revise his chunter three times to keep pace with the delays.

In the commercial world the **sack** would be in order Please?

Steve Whitson

Chairman's Chunter

Balleny Green has changed dramatically since the last publication.

The ground level track development program has suddenly, it seems, become a reality.

As soon as the garden party ended and all rolling stock had been put to bed a few members, following Dave Mosley's lead, took on the roll of club vandals and proceeded to rip up the track behind the pond. The installation of 'pond junction' had started in earnest. By the time everyone had left for home the original track was no more.

The laying of the new junction, which brings the recently installed outer track into service, had been planned in detail and started early the following morning.

An excellent team had turned up on a very hot Monday morning. The plan was to re-open a circuit by close of play Friday.

Monday proved to be particularly hot with a great deal of spade work to be done. The team worked their proverbial socks off

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and a great deal of progress was achieved.

The effort continued over the following days resulting in much more progress than planned being made by Thursday.

To all the chaps involved with the installation of pond junction I offer my sincere thanks, together a tremendous job has been done.

I mentioned the Garden party earlier. This event proved successful and all our guests certainly appeared to have an excellent day.

We are helped to achieve good days, such as these, by quite a few non members whose contribution is so important and given so freely. I wish to express my and our appreciation to all, thank you.

The stationary engine/ buffet evening was well attended with a good display of excellent model engineering whose quality was only matched by the food on offer.

Thanks to all who contributed towards the buffet. As far as I know no one went hungry.

Again, those who missed the

event missed a very pleasant, social evening.

A few week ends ago we hosted the 21/2" gauge rally. The numbers who attended made the site look very busy indeed, a pleasing sight.

Some visitors brought loco's to run on the ground level track so together with loco's run by our members Pond junction was put through its paces and a fair few problems showed up. This was a very useful exercise and since the event many of these problems have been addressed.

As always the 'hort' team, as well as digging in ducts and having been active in the recent track laying, are keeping the site up to the standard which creates much comment from visitors.

Due to unavoidable circumstances the august edition of Steaming Ahead did not go to press. Earning a living seems to be quite important to some folk.

This being so I'll chunter on.

We have completed our birthday party commitments for this season.

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The last party proved to be very busy. We entertained many adults as well as the children. The few staff who attended to man the event did a great job and I thank each of you greatly. These events keep the society finances buoyant and cannot be run without sufficient staffing so, again I ask, if you can help at events please do.

The most recent social event was the Tuesday evening steam up and barbeque.

The weather was dry but quite cold but, pleasingly, the evening was well attended resulting in a very worthwhile and sociable meeting.

I believe the food was reasonable too.

A development has been started which will be a great asset to the high level facility. This will incorporate a hydraulic lift and a fixed height track section.

When complete we will have the benefit of a well improved loading/ unloading bay.

During construction there will be unavoidable inconvenience but the result will be worth it.

Best Wishes to all especially those who are unwell at the present time.

Allan Leary.

Again I am afraid I have to apologise for the delay in producing this edition.

The problem was unavoidable and I believe all our members are reasonable enough to understand that, disappointing as it may be, producing 'Steaming Ahead' is not always the first priority in ones life.

I believe the editor does a great job under difficult and, sometimes, thankless circumstances.

The development of the high level loading/ unloading bay is continuing quite well. The concrete base has been laid which has the traverser rails cast in.

This slab was laid in, what turned out to be, appalling weather conditions and those involved deserve a blue peter badge.

The steel fabrication that forms

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the traverser itself is virtually complete and ready for the installation of the hydraulic lift.

A great deal of work continues to be done fine tuning and sorting the many finishing touches towards the completion of the present faze of the ground level track project.

Concrete by the ton has been laid, track panels built, point levers installed, cable ducts dug in and cabled, ground dug out here and built up there, turf laid the list is almost endless.

The time taken to do all of these jobs is probably around 10% of the time taken talking about them and drinking tea, but, let's be honest, what's the rush.

My last comment is by no means a criticism more a request.

Another aspect of the ground level project is the development of the new signalling system. Bill Coleman proposed, some time ago, to develop a system which would be modern and fit for purpose.

Together with the input of the signalling committee a mimic board has been produced and a

system proposed.

The mimic and proposed system was presented to the board for consideration and comment.

Post presentation, much discussion took place, including some positive criticism, and some changes were suggested, noted and agreed.

It is perfectly obvious that many hours have been spent developing the system so far and I wish to thank the committee and especially Bill for their commitment and determination to get to where we are right now.

BILL COLEMAN WILL BE DOING A PRESENTATION OF THE SIGNALLING SYSTEM PROPOSAL AT BALLENY GREEN TUESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER.

That time of year is here when our finances get a good boost. Three events over a relatively short period.

The first, obviously, is the bonfire special on Saturday 13 November, and all extra staffing will be appreciated, even if it is for the daytime setup only.

The two others are the Santa specials and I appeal to all who are able to do their bit.

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Again, best wishes to all, especially those who are unwell, Allan.

INSTALLATION OF POND JUNCTION 19 - 22 JULY 2010

As many members will know, the ongoing track replacement programme had reached a stage at which the complete ground level facility was required to be put out of action whilst two new crossovers were installed. It was decided that a 'window of opportunity' was available between 19th and 25th July 2010, as no events were scheduled.

Immediately after the Garden Party, a small group, lead by David Moseley, removed all the outer track from the North West corner of the site up to the facing point which led into the station.

On Monday 19th July, the writer, assisted by Mike Bentley, removed the facing point and associated rail, so that the revised track layout could be

installed. At the same time, David Moseley was leading a team preparing and leveling the track bed from the North West corner towards the South West corner. In addition, Mike Birkenshaw with another small team was removing all the existing inner loop track panels, as these needed re-aligning for the revised layout.



By the end of work on Monday, the revised track bed was complete and 'wacked', as were the staff!!

Tuesday saw a similar number of members lending a hand, and by the end of work, all the new outer track was installed, as were the two crossovers.

Wednesday saw ballasting being completed, and adjustments to the levels taking

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place, as well as the re-aligned inner loop being completed.

Thursday was spent making 'final' adjustments, and installing a hand lever to operate the facing point into the station. The first train ran around the circuit around 4.00pm

The ride was good, about 8.5/10 some adjustments inevitably being required.



In all, a satisfactory outcome from a lot of hard, hot, work. Thanks to all of the members who gave their time and effort to achieve this excellent result,

Garry Tyso.

**JULY 2010 - GROUNDS
MAINTAINANCE DIARY
AND MISC NOTES
TUESDAY 6th**

The dry sunny weather continues – no complaints – and for the first time there is no grass cutting giving the team a break to work on the communications ducting from 'Ted's Hut' to the box by the carriage shed. Dave's team, having done about as much preparatory work on Pool Junction as reasonable, has got his team lined up for the same work.

The ground was/is bone dry and very hard but with picks, crow bars, shovels, wheel barrows, muck truck and a lot of grunting both teams set to work, assisted by our latest two new members. Dave's team having grown from the usual number to around eight persons started working from 'Ted's Hut' end, along the edge of the track, while Grenville, Roger and I started from the other putting in the connection boxes.

Apart from a break for coffee about 10.30 am work continued until around noon by which time the teams, now working together, had reached the south east corner. A very

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good effort by all having laid about 150 yards of ducting – doesn't sound a lot but considering the ground condition – a successful morning.

There was a good turn out in addition to the normal stalwarts. Elsewhere on the site Stuart & John worked on Betty's loco trailer, Graham put the finishing touches to the hydraulic lift, Mike (B) & David (O) did a good job clearing all the overgrown edges round the pool, Osy and Bill sorted out some signalling matters.

I'd left the copse areas and banks untouched this year to let them seed down and provide food for the nesting birds but now they need cutting because of becoming a fire risk. Equally, the birds have finished nesting and it's that time of year when we have to start seriously thinking about hedge cutting. Hopefully, by the time you read this, Bill will be more mobile and be able to provide some assistance. It's pretty desperate when you snap an Achilles tendon playing tennis

to have to rest and watch Wimbledon and not least enjoy relaxing under the canopy talking about signals and drinking coffee!!!! Sorry Bill, not serious and hope that your OK; I know it's a long job as son-in-law has just gone through the same thing twice.

TUESDAY 13th

I was only able to call into Little Hay for half an hour or so today because of having repairs done to my bungalow roof. With the dry weather there was no need to mow this week but the banks and the copse need the long grass clearing. When I arrived Dave was hard at work doing a very good job of clearing them with a hand sickle. Neal had the working strimmer and was also doing a good job clearing the grass and covering himself in grass seed heads.

Down the field Roger and Derek were clearing the weeds and track bed bank edges in the new Pool Junction alignment in preparation for the track laying 'work in' commencing on Monday 19th.

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After last weeks very good turn out today was relatively quiet with Allan (L) putting the final adjustments to the point work, Garry and Chris working on the point to the station, Stuart and John busy in the maintenance store and Dave (M) with Allan (D) getting things ready for his track work -in on Monday.

As I was about to leave Mike (B) arrived with the disc containing the draft minutes, from the board meeting, Kath had typed up for me. Thanks Kath – it's a big help as I settle in to being the Co. Sec.

On the way out I stopped and spoke to Dave who was raking up the cut grass from the banks by the level crossing that he and Neal had cleared. A good job and helps Neal stop worrying about grass fires with the Wolverhampton MES visit on Saturday and the Garden Party on Sunday.

TUESDAY 20TH

After a busy Saturday and Sunday, with the Wolverhampton MES and then the Garden Party, Dave (M)

and his team with Garry's and Allan's (L) teams had made an excellent start on Monday working on the planned new track work.

Dave (M) with Allan (D) were already there working when I arrived and therefore, a bit later when there were enough helpers, I decided the urgent need was to continue clearing the remaining banks of grass and weeds.

Today, in addition to Dave's, Garry's and Allan's teams, there were three from the hort team and a number of other helpers working on the new tracks, connecting up the track work and not least doing a lot of the associated work, e.g. connecting up point motors, levers and ground work. You can read all about it elsewhere.

With the continuing dry weather there was a growing fire risk, so I got the strimmer going and commenced strimming my way round from the two banks near the level crossing that Dave (Brooks) and Neal had cleared last

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week. I was soon joined by Dave who did a good job raking up the grass both on the banks and later, after I had mowed the copses, those also. They look good now and it should be possible to run the mowers over them.

Having finished and had a break for coffee I joined Bill (C) where the track laying was going on. We discussed additional ducting for the signalling and connecting up the point motors; it's now up to Bill to set out what's required.

THURSDAY 22nd

Since I was at Little Hay on Tuesday a great deal of work has been done and the tracks and points are in except for a short bit of track between the point to the station and the old track up the bank. After getting the very large pile of grass on the bonfire burning I joined Roger and we helped with the work that Dave, Garry and the others were concentrating on.

The rain started mid morning, only lightly at first but

sufficient for Chris to get a gazebo out to protect Garry working on a point lever --- much safer with the welder and electric's in the dry. However, shortly before lunch six of us joined Garry under the gazebo as the heavens opened - very cosy. I had to leave around 3.0pm and left everyone waiting for Garry to complete the point lever and do a first test run through with Roanoake - but see elsewhere for full detailed accounts.

TUESDAY 27th

Well, the last Tuesday in another month. Not having mowed for some weeks there were areas that did require attention to make the site look good for the 2.5" Rally and SCRS visit on Sunday. While Grenville and I concentrated on the mowing Roger and Dave (Brooks) joined the teams working on the new tracks and moved trailer loads of soil to build up the area between the two new tracks. After the usual break I joined Roger and Dave while Grenville continued mowing.

For most of the morning there

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were 18 or so of the usual Tuesday stalwarts working on the new installation – points, point motors & levers, ground works, comms & point motor cabling and not least installing new site lighting. A very good day with a great atmosphere – I'll be back next month!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Eric Davies 27th July 2010

HINTS AND TIPS

I recently had some scratches and chips removed from my wife's car and noted that the man doing the job was using what appeared to be a finely pointed paint brush, except, it did not 'fan out' when pressure was put onto the brush. He explained that it was a soft rubber tip, not a brush, and he used it to fill chips as a small amount of paint could be put right into the chip without any paint spreading over the surrounding area. He stated that a couple of drops would normally fill any chip. I purchased one of the items - known as a 'paint mover' from

Hobbycraft. They come in all sizes and shapes, the one I purchased being a fine point at a cost of £3.78.

I have subsequently found it useful for painting locomotive shed plates as well as removing excess paint from areas where it is not wanted!

Garry Tyso.

The Club Signal System Update

An industrial computer is a dumb box which does its job very well but without some sort of interface you cannot tell what is happening inside it. A visual display is required either a physical mimic of the site or a display screen on a PC or both. A month ago I was frustrated because I could not get the PC graphics to run. In the end this problem was overcome and I have spent most of my hobby time learning to use this comprehensive professional package.

Having got a reasonable graphics mimic going I am now trying to work out how to handle faults with the system. These

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are most likely to be caused by faulty detectors or points. Point failure is easy to sense but train detectors are more difficult as there are 34 of them and they can fail in two different modes. The programme is to finish the software by early October, demonstrate it to the signal committee soon afterwards, then to the Board at the end of October and finally to all interested club members. If everyone is content we would hope to have a shutdown early in 2011 and change the systems over.

We held the first signal meeting for some time and a lot of progress was made. Peter demonstrated some very interesting work he had completed. It was agreed to buy a number of proximity sensors for use in train detectors or point position sensors.

Out on the track we have electrified the first essential point and Mark has started to modify the old system to give temporary cover. He has also started to develop a site cable plan and has established that most of the new runs can be made using our existing cable stock.

Peter R. and a small team have been busy installing cable ducting at the bottom of the site. I hope they will also help to pull in cables for the new system before long.

Ossy has tested a horizontal guide rail track detector at home and found that it was not reliable with 5" gauge trains. He and Mike B. have produced a prototype treadle unit using a proximity sensor. We have decided to make twelve of these which are in progress.

Bill Colman
24.08.10

**Wolverhampton & District
M.E.S. Visit to Balleny Green**

Saturday 17th July 2010

The day started cool and dull our usual luck for a visit to Balleny Green. However by 12 Noon after a shower or two we had a lovely sunny afternoon.

It was good to see our "old" friends from Wolverhampton Particularly the two Johns Who

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have the usual Black Country humour.

The visitors seemed to have an enjoyable time, particularly when partaking of the goodies being served from the hatch including Betty's cakes and her apple pie and cream.

The golden oldies made the best of the sunshine and sat under the canopy talking and doing nothing. We were joined by Steve Whitson, who actually sat and relaxed with us. That has to be a first.

We left about 4pm having had a very enjoyable and interesting day

RFH

Card received from Gareth Parker

(Betty Wincott's grandson)

To everyone at Balleny Green,

Thank you for all your support.

The money raised by you all totalled £205.13 including gift aid.

We will inform you all of how it goes and may include some pictures of our blisters.

Kind regards Gareth & team.

Betty collected sponsorship for Gareth & his team who took on the Three Peaks Challenge in aid of Help for Hero's charity.

The challenge involves climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell and Snowdon in under 24 hours including travel time.

I have been informed the challenge was completed in 23hrs 50 minutes.

Very well done chaps, having done it I know what a challenge it is.

Allan.

**AUGUST 2010 ---
GROUNDS**

MAINTENANCE DIARY AND MISC NOTES

SUNDAY 1st

We got the site nice a tidy, with limited mowing, in readiness for the 2½” Rally and annual visit by the Sutton Coldfield Railway Society. It was a good turnout by the 2½” members and a very good day was had by all. Just a pity, however, that other than the three SCMES with dual membership less than ten of the SCRS members turned up. Consequently it raises the question of whether it’s worth inviting them again next year.

TUESDAY 3rd

With the dry weather the grass has given us a bit of respite from mowing and time to provide assistance with the work on Pool Junction. So what did the team do? Roger, John and I transported trailer loads of soil and built up the area between the new tracks whilst Dave (Brooks) took on the task of mowing the two humps by the level crossing that he strimmed last week. A nice job – thanks Dave.

Grenville meanwhile took on the job of spraying to keep down the weeds which seem to thrive in this weather. Roger, John and I having finished building up the pool area junction made a start clearing lower tree branches in the N/W area and soon had a growing pile on the bonfire.

This week is the prelude to commencing the annual task of tackling all the hedges and shrubbery and making a much larger pile on the bonfire. This usually takes at least four of us about 4/5 weeks to complete; taking into account both sides and top its about 2000 feet of hedging and then the shrubbery — HAY HO it’s off to work we go!!!

The usual elsewhere – Ron is concentrating on sorting out the library; Vic, Stuart & John the cabling to the S/E new lamp; Bill & Mark signalling and pulling cables (the station point switch is now operational again); Mike (Br) & Ossy working on detectors; Neal & Allan (D) sorting the camber and packing the new track ballast; Allan (L),

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David and Chris fine tuning the point mechanism with Mike (Br) when not on detectors. See full reports elsewhere.

Another good day's work by everyone.

TUESDAY 10th

The site was very quiet except for the clatter of two hedge trimmers hard at work. Yes, the annual hedge and shrubbery cutting has started and with six of us very good progress has been made. The six were Greville and Dave Brooks on the hedge trimmers and Roger, John, Derek and myself clearing up and building up the bonfire.

As I said, with six very good progress was made completing the hedges from the carriage siding right round to the main gate, and roadside completed. Part way through I sat down with Ossy and Mark for half an hour to talk about signalling system testing and the detail of how the system(s) will work. There are two stages, the first an intermediate being produced by Peter Mac and the second and main system using a PLC by Bill

Colman.

Bills diagrams show the detectors as well as the signals since it is needed for programming whereas mine is at the level of what the driver will see as he proceeds round the various routes. Mark commented that there was a need to establish common symbols, colours and software, e.g. excel running on Professional XP to be discussed by the Signalling Team.

A lot of work was going on around the site; for full reports see elsewhere but briefly, Stuart & John completed the installation of the lamp in the S/E corner, Vic & Peter completed trenching another length of ducting, Allan (D), Allan (L) & Dave (S) worked on the points and track, Mark also pulled more cables, Ron continued tidying up the library and David Marchant fitted the lawn tractor bonnet back on having repaired it. Lastly Mike Bentley did the mug and plate washing up after lunch – thanks from all of us Mike.

As you can see it was a very

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busy and a good morning with a lot of progress made. Each week there is a significant amount of work done and the site is looking better and better operationally and visually.

TUESDAY 17TH

In spite of the rain overnight it had cleared and stayed dry until after dinner. First job was for Grenville, Dave and John to start mowing the areas that showed growth while I sorted out the areas between and at the side of the pool junction tracks in readiness for turfing.

I had ordered 100 sq. yds (100 rolls) of meadow turf early Monday morning and having been cut earlier this morning it arrived ready to lay around 11.00am. Dave and Grenville with me and the driver got it unloaded and stacked by the goat hedge crossing pretty quickly. Having got the trailer we proceeded to move the turf and lay it between the two tracks and along the embankment between the ground level and high level tracks.

The four of us worked very well and had it all down by lunch time. Mike (W) joined us half way through and watered it in. The whole area is now coming together well and looks the part with the new turf down. If you haven't seen it at Little Hay, have a look on the SCMES web site, Steve's pages under 'What Happened Today' ---- Tuesday 17th August.

Not a soul in sight in the photo but elsewhere Stuart, John and Vic had worked to set up a power supply point adjacent to the new lamp. Mark, Bill and Ossy had sorted out more signalling, Garry, Allan (D) and Chris worked on the brake tracks, while Allan (L) fine tuning the points with David (S). In the maint store Dave (merchant) worked finishing off the bonnet on the lawn tractor he had repaired and sorted out a strimmer for us.

It's Friday 20th August and I'm sitting in my lounge watching the rain knowing the new turf we laid at Little Hay is being looked after very well. So now all I have to do is thank BBC 'Country File' for the weather forecast which I

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used to judge when to do the turfing.

TUESDAY 24th

The weather ended all hope of continuing with the hedging this week, coupled with which there were only Dave, John and myself for a variety of reasons. John and Dave took the initiative and got two pairs of shares and did a good job of tidying up some of the difficult areas were its impossible to get the mowers round.

I spent the first part of the morning with Bill (C) and Ossy talking about Approach Control (diverging junctions) and Approach Release (converging junctions) systems as they should/would work with the new signalling system. However, because of our operating safety requirements and situations we can't follow precisely those used by Network Rail, but we do follow the basic principles. If anyone would like to know more please see me or Bill.

Having got the approach control and release systems out of the way I got out the strimmer and

joined Dave and John tidying up round the edges of the site and the shrubbery between the rain showers. The nylon strimming line finally gave up just before lunch and having put a new length in the strimmer I headed for the club house and lunch.

Round the site, Ron continued sorting out the library, Stuart, John & Vic finishing the wiring and installation of the new lamp and power supply, Peter & David (O) installing the last length of ducting up to the northeast corner, Dave (M) & Allan (D) started surveying and Allan (L), Dave (S), Chris etc. etc., working on the track but see reports elsewhere.

Well, I'm on holiday from the end of the month; so the next time I will be at Little Hay will be Tuesday 14th September. If I've timed it right, all the hedging and cutting back of the shrubbery will be complete!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

*Eric Davies August 2010 Grounds
Maintenance Report*

The Club Signal System Update

The main problem with the signal team this month is that most of them have been on holiday. I actually managed to have two holidays in September so not much has been achieved.

Having found that the horizontal train detectors were unsatisfactory a new design was developed which used a treadle sensed by a proximity detector. A prototype was made and worked. Twelve more have now been constructed by Mike Brophy and are ready for installation.

More work needs to be done on the temporary signal system so the present track layout is safe to use. I am sure Peter and Mark will give this their attention as soon as Mark is home. Having finished the basic software for the PLC I started detail testing and found a design fault that could occur when several trains follow each other close together on the same line. Although it is unlikely to arise in practice it is still unsatisfactory

and I am in the process of overcoming it. Software design is a process of two steps forward and one back. As long as we find most of the bugs before commissioning we will be doing fine.

I hope to demonstrate the PLC system to the signal committee and the Board during October. This will be a progress report rather than a pass off parade because there is still a lot of software to be written and tested before the system is installed early next year. I will use these meetings to resolve some of the operational issues that have come to light while designing the system.

During October we need to make more progress in preparing the site for the changes. Signals need to be installed, cables pulled in, detectors mounted and point motors modified and commissioned but we remain on programme.

Bill Colman

**SEPTEMBER 2010 ---
GROUNDS
MAINTENAINCE DIARY
AND MISC NOTES**

TUESDAY 14th

Well a wet first day back after our holidays for both Roger and I. Grenville, Bill and Dave away but with John and Derek making four of us on site; the first priority was to catch up with some serious grass cutting.

The new turf has now been down for four weeks, has taken very well and so it should with all the rain it's had. Although the grass was wet we were able to complete around 95% of the site before the rain re-started and we had to put the mowers back in store.

The remaining section between the tracks has now had the board sides put in place and the centre built up with soil in readiness for turfing. Hopefully next week the weather will be right and we can complete the job. Dave's small team have dug out, ballasted and laid new track panels as far as the level

crossing which remains to be rebuilt and aligned.

The whole area is now coming together well and looks very good; it even has its own 'street' light curtesy of Stuart and John. Dave is pushing on with surveying and planning the replacement of the rest of the old outer track, which now becomes the inner. Lots of other work going on but read about it elsewhere.

TUESDAY 21st

A beautiful morning, dry, no wind and the bonfire asking to be sorted -- a gallon of diesel and a match did the trick. 9.30 am and most of the usual members turned up while we were having our first cup of coffee.

Two things to do this week:-

1. I'd ordered 40 sq yds turf to fill in the last of the area between the tracks and adjacent areas plus a bit to do the old fish pond bank -- scheduled for delivery around 11.00am.
2. I'd also seen my friend Bob at the St Giles

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Hospice shop and arranged for him to drop the usual flat pack stuff, furniture and of course chairs.

While waiting for it all to arrive, Roger said he would get the tractor and trailer out in anticipation of its arrival. I got a strimmer and tidied up the edges of the tracks over the whole of pool junction while Derek ran a mower over the last lot of turf laid and the areas either side of the tracks.

I said to Roger we needed to cut back some of the longer bits of hedge behind the club house and then tackle low branches round the site where they affected/were low over the tracks. Roger and I had got as far round as the maintenance store when we were joined by Mike Bentley and Derek (W) who had finished mowing. They helped load the branches on the trailer and keep a watch out for Garry who was testing his 4F loco.

Around 11.00am David (S) came down to tell me that the

turf had arrived and we all went to help unload the lorry. Mike, Derek, Roger and I assisted the driver unloading and then Roger brought the tractor and trailer up. We loaded it and took it over to the track -- could not use the level crossing as it has been dug out for relaying and was being worked on by Dave's team.

About this time Michael (W) arrived and asked if there was anything for him to do -- he suggested strimming the two banks by the level crossing gate and knowing they had grown a bit I said yes -- he did a good job clearing them and left around lunch time.

While we were laying the turf Chris Greene asked if we needed the hose pipe and watering. Welcome to the hort team Chris -- he watered as we completed the area between the tracks and triangle adjacent to the point into the station where the two tree's had been together with the worn grass track edges.

I'd estimated 40 sq yds to give

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some spare to cover the bank in the old pool area - worked out well and it also looks very much better now. Having got that lot completed we sat down for lunch around 1.00pm. Around 1.30pm I saw the radiator of the hospice van in the gateway and went over to show them where to drop the furniture. Gave them a hand to unload and they were away within about twenty minutes.

After that it was watering in all the turf where Chris had left off - -- gave it a good soaking and with rain forecast for Thursday it should be just about right.

Final job was to tow the large diesel cement mixer up to the 'goat crossing' where the old outer track was being completely re-laid by Dave, Allan and the team.

All in all a very busy day and I'm very grateful for all the help on the hort side – thanks.

TUESDAY 28th

A grey dull morning with everywhere wet after the overnight rain, John (W) and I had coffee while we waited to

see who else was going to arrive; first in was Bill (C) quickly followed by Grenville, Allan (D), David (M) and Roger. The good news is that Grenville and Bill are back from holiday.

At this time of year it always seems the amount to do on site is getting away from us but Bill had brought his hedge trimming equipment and started on the hedge behind the club house while Grenville and I got out the mowers. Grenville and I were getting on well with the mowing when Roger shouted to me that he couldn't get the other tractor to start.

Roger had gone for the tractor and trailer to collect the hedge cuttings but even with the mowing tractor and a set of jump leads none of us could get it to start. David (M)'s team needed the large diesel cement mixer towing up to the level crossing (goat hedge), so Garry tied it to the mower and I towed it up the field. Roger and John (W) pushed the other tractor back into the store and put it on charge.

Without the towing capability of the other tractor it causes lots of problems, however, Roger suggested he swap the ball hitch over to the mower. I left Roger changing the ball hitch over and joined John who was helping rake up the hedge cuttings. Michael (W) arrives and says he will carry on strimming the banks and long grass round the site; its hard work but an essential task.

Roger brought up the trailer and we cleared half the cuttings to the bonfire and then joined Grenville for mid morning coffee. Seems one of those days, the clutch cable on the large mower that Grenville is using has all but two strands of the clutch cable snapped and he is pushing it part of the time.

Coffee time over it's back to the grind but we get the hedge cuttings cleared from the side behind the club house and then tackle the conifers by the level crossing, grounds side. Sides are fine but we still have the top to cut back and then the conifers the entrance side next week.

While Bill, Grenville, Roger, Michael and John finish off

tidying up and putting the equipment away I finish mowing for this week and join them for lunch after parking the tractor next to David's team, who are concreting the level crossing. The turf laid last week is looking very good and with 90% of the perimeter hedge cutting complete, mowing done and the grounds looking good I leave feeling much happier with the hort situation.

Eric Davies 28th September 2010

The Club Signal System Update

While I was on holiday I was thinking about this project and I realised that although the software I had written worked quite well it was not very elegant and would be difficult for other people to understand so I spent the last week in September and the first in October rewriting it all. I am now satisfied that it is as simple as it can be.

I have made two presentations showing the PLC attached to the test mimic. The first was to signal committee where a number of helpful suggestions

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were made. I had time to implement all of these before the second presentation was made to the Board last night. I had problems with the graphics on the first presentation but cured it in time for the second. The second went well technically but it was difficult for some people to see what was going on in such a small room with so much equipment. We need an extension!!

I hope that everyone who has seen a demonstration now has a good idea how the system will work. The one question that remains is whether the inner track up the hill should be a permissive block. Although the signal committee members may be biased towards a permissive block the Board seemed to be against it. I am against it and have made my views known but I will now leave the matter and let the Board decide without me interfering.

I am making a further presentation to club members on Tuesday 9th November at the Club House at 7.30pm. All are welcome.

We have started to make progress on the site work. Mark

has pulled a new cable through the tunnel. Mike B. has made twelve treadle detectors and machined a set of feather light housings. Ron Freeman is working on the new signal posts. Ossy has developed a method of extending detector cables with a "watertight" bit of plumbing that seems to work. He is making twenty of these. Stuart and John have agreed to modify six point drive units so they are suitable to work off the PLC.

If the Board settle the final signal positions next week the site can be marked out and the new equipment can start to be installed. We are still on track to changeover systems early in 2011. This could be done regardless of the progress being made on the inner track laying.
Bill Colman

**OCTOBER 2010 --- GROUNDS
MAINTAINANCE AND MISC
NOTES**

TUESDAY 5TH

Opened up this morning and was quickly followed by John

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(W) and Bill; while we were talking about what to do Grenville arrived, quickly followed by Roger and Dave (M). In anticipation of finding some more hedging work Bill had brought his long reach saw, however, I asked him to walk the grounds with me and sort out the low branches and where others needed attention because of them crowding adjacent trees. Grenville said he would go round with the weed killer as there was a lot of grass and weeds showing in the tracks.

Roger went for the tractor and trailer, Grenville got the weed killer and spray, Bill and I started working our way round the field from the level crossing. David (M) met us by the maintenance store, saying that he had just popped down for a short while to repair the clutch cable on the one self propelled mower. John (C) arrived and took the repaired mower and tackled a lot of the grass around Pool Junction, maintenance store and over the tunnels. We made very good progress and cleared a large amount of branches round the

whole site and were back at the club house just after 10.0am ready to join Roger and Derek (W) clearing the branches to the bonfire. While I joined Roger and Derek, Bill went to sort out signalling matters and Grenville was back for another fill of weed killer.

While Bill and I were at the bottom of the field St Giles Hospice arrived and dropped some wood and a large number of wooden chairs. Just after lunch they were back with a half van load of furniture we quickly unloaded – at this rate we are going to have plenty of wood to burn on bonfire night. However, we do need a large number of pallets to form the base/main structure of the fire.

After coffee and a breather Roger, Derek and I went back to finishing clearing the branches cut earlier; there is now a very large pile of wood and branches ready to burn when it's dried out I bit more.

TUESDAY 26th

Well, first Tuesday back having spent the previous two weeks on

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holiday; the first on the Jacobite Steam Train (44871) Fort William to Malliag and the second in Paris Disney with grandson. The Jacobite was very good and so was Disney but very tiring trying to keep up with a 6 year old grandson.

The site looked good and the team have obviously been doing a good job. The mowing had been done as had the grass banks – very good. Bill had done a thorough job cutting back all the hedges and shrubbery and adding to the pile to be burnt on the bonfire. With Bonfire Night just a couple of weeks away it was important to get it burnt off – so that was my first task but, with it so wet and raining it took quite a lot to get it going and there was some smoke. Fortunately blowing away from the village; success thought, by lunch time 95% of it had gone.

As it was cold and raining it limited much of what could be done outside and therefore, there was a hive of activity in the maintenance store but see reports elsewhere. On the hort

side Grenville took one of the mowers over grass areas the team did not get the chance to complete last week because of ongoing work. Bill (C) with help, from John, had cut back all the hedges, bushes and shrubbery on the lower half of the site last week but had had to leave piles of cuttings which Roger and John collected up and dumped in the lower copse. They also collected a large amount of leaves from the Horse Chestnut tree adjacent to the station; first lot this year and the Silver Birch still to drop theirs.

When you've been away for a couple of weeks it's surprising to see just how much has been achieved by the relatively small number of members who make a contribution on Tuesdays and Sundays. First thing I noticed was the general appearance of the site, how the replacement of the old outer track has advanced and Steve (W)'s project to install a new loading facility for the high level track, but see elsewhere for their reports.

The pile of Bonfire Night material has grown significantly

with more deliveries by St Giles Hospice; whilst we are doing them a favour by taking their unwanted furniture, it's a bigger favour to us because without it we would be struggling. All that is required now is more pallets to help build a stable fire. Two more deliveries today.

Eric Davies October 26th 2010

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Bill Colman

DORDRECHT IN STEAM.

Cath and I were fortunate enough to be visiting our son in Rotterdam during the Dordrecht Steam Festival which took place from 28th to 30th May, 2010. (Apparently this event is held bi-annually.) We decided to

catch the water-bus to Dordrecht on the Saturday and thoroughly enjoyed the journey. The water-bus was full to capacity with people and bicycles.

When we got to Dordrecht everything was in full swing and there were crowds of people. All round the harbour were different makes of full size Traction Engines and Steam Rollers (several from England) – all “ticking over” nicely. Also to my delight there were model traction engines and a couple were 3” Allchin’s. There was also some model Foden



Wagons. All the owner’s were very friendly although we did have some language problems. The one owner of a 3” Allchin was German and spoke no English,

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but we did manage to understand that he had purchased the castings from England.

There were other exhibits round the harbour showing a steam sawmill, a 1915 Stanley Steam



Car and even a steam bicycle! One exhibit was a very old horse drawn 1876 Shand Mason Fire Engine with the crew in uniform of the time.



The horses were very well behaved and on the back of one of them was a Jack Russell dog fast asleep. (see picture). There was also a hot riveting demonstration on a large boiler – 6“?

There were long queues of people waiting for the various Steam Boats which were taking trips up the river. I understand that there were over 20 different Steam Boats on show over the weekend including a Light Ship and a Dredger.

We were amused to see a group of men and **ladies**, all dressed very smartly in blue blazers sitting round a table smoking clay pipes. Apparently they were members of the Dordrecht



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Tobacco Smoking Society.

At various places round the harbour there were choirs singing Sea Shanties, which gave the festival a really good atmosphere.

By the end of the day most people were slowly making their way back to the water-buses and there were long queues. As we were returning to Rotterdam the rain came. We had had an enjoyable day and planned to return on the Sunday to look at more models etc. which were on show in Dordrecht town. There were also some old-time buses and lorries, which we had not had time to see and of course the Steam Loco's at Dordrecht Railway Station. However on Sunday it was pouring with rain, so we decided to stay in Rotterdam.

I expect some members of the Club have already visited this event, but if you haven't and you get the opportunity to go, it is well worth visiting.

Mike Brophy

Sealed bid Auction

The society has been given a part built locomotive, it is a 3.5" gauge Heilan' Lassie and was a complete chassis with 3 cylinders which he said had run on air,



In addition, there was a boiler wrapper, firebox - unattached, together with the flanged back head and a smoke box door.



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Also, there was a package of drawings numbered LO 1 - 9 inclusive, and LO11 - it appears LO 10 is missing - together with

a letter from TEE listing all the Model Engineers that the loco appeared in. Several of the Model Engineers are present, as are a considerable number of loose pages which appear to describe the manufacture of the locomotive.

Any member interested should send a SEALED BID in excess of £250.00 to the Company Secretary Eric Davis before the next board meeting at which they will be opened by the board .

If no bids are received, then we will advertise it on Ebay.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Once again Christmas is nearly upon us and we wonder if

members would like to make a donation to Charity instead of sending out Christmas Cards. You may remember that last year the Society was able to send a donation to St. Giles Hospice.

A large Christmas Card will be put on the Notice Board for members to sign. Mike is willing to collect donations from members and if anyone would like to nominate another local Charity, we would be interested to know.

We hope you will want to take part in this again.

Mike and Cath Brophy

Club House Extension

Having received a small number of suggestion from members these have been noted and a revised sketch was presented to the board, which after lengthy discussions was approved.

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We have now move on to the next stage the preparation of the pre-application.

Steve Whitson

A bit more than 16 Slabs

Well we started with approval by the board to lay 16 slabs as a level unloading area for trailers for the raised track. One Monday evening John, Bill, James, Bob, Len and myself had dug out an area ready to lay the slabs, James moved the soil away to the top corner and we were ready to return on Thursday weather permitting to lay the slabs.

for the link bridge to fix to so the blocking of the ground level track could be reduced.

By Thursday because of the rise in the field we all agreed that we could build a hydraulic traverser .



Back to the board with a costing for this and away we go.

We found some large angle in the north east corner and made a set of rails. I said I would turn up some wheels ("Big mouth")

There must be something in the air at Balleney Green because by Wednesday night a phone call to me and it had grown to a fixed bit of track in the ground



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the metal for the blanks was provided by Mike Brophy and



tough stuff it was to. One and a half evenings a wheel it took me and produced more swarf than



any other turning job I have done. Bored out and oillite bushes fitted they are finished. Then I ground to a holt A trapped

nerve in my back put me out of action for a while. John and I established the levels for the rails and a team of the Tuesday workers got very wet

but managed to lay the concrete base which Dave Mosley calculated to the last bag.

A big thank you to all who helped my back could not of done any of it.

The frame has been welded and is now being painted the axels are made cross drilled with brass oilers in so we can feed oil in periodically.



That it so fare next job will be to lay the slabs we started with to the edge of the traverser as hard standing for cars and trailers. But for the time being the area has been cleared and will be fenced ready for bonfire night

Steve Whitson.

