

**January 2010**

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**STEAMING AHEAD**



Not a train in sight—actually No track in sight

**Sutton Coldfield Model Engineering Society**

**Next Birthday Party 21st MARCH Please Help**

President Neil Harrison	0121-378-3992
Chairman Alan Leary	01827-892503
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Steve Whitson	01543-675852

**Co-opt to board**

Eric Davies	0121-308-6886
Ron Freeman	01922-632180

**Events This Month-**

Sun worshipping for some better weather

**Dates for Your Diary:**

Sun 7th Feb Steam up  
Thurs 11 Feb Meeting at Shenstone Hall—Film Night  
Sat 20th Feb Steam up/Birthday Party (junior member)

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**Copy Date is the last Tuesday of the month**

## **Next Birthday Party 21st MARCH Please Help**

### Chairman's Chunter.

*We have ended the year with three successful events.*

*The first of the Santa specials was a particularly good day, all went without incident and our special visitors, the children, had a great time.*

*The Santa special we staged a week later proved a little more demanding.*

*We suffered a few issues with rolling stock which were rectified efficiently but then a serious breakdown occurred. Thanks to alleged, but strongly denied, boy racer style driving the Jubilee (Roanoke) loco lost all drive.*

Subsequent diagnosis of the problem showed the drive had been relying on a single rollpin. It was also discovered the input and output shafts on the hydraulic unit were badly worn.

The unit has been stripped and the shafts are being repaired as we speak.

Even though we had problems our public had a brilliant time judging by the comments made.

Both of these events were such a success due to the commitment and effort of the members concerned. I thank them all unreservedly.

I also wish to pass on the thanks of all members to our willing non-member volunteers who freely give their time for the benefit of the society.

So as to ensure my future Christmas presents I must convey my personal thanks to Santa for his visits. (I was pleased with what he left on Christmas morning too).

The third event was the Society Christmas Social held at Shenston village hall.

The evening was enjoyed by all present. A quiz, a game and very pleasant company made a very worthwhile couple of hours, which included a buffet sufficient for twice the number present. Again thanks to those involved in the organisation of a much enjoyed evening.

Around Balleny Green, work has been at the mercy of the weather, yet some hardy types have soldiered on regardless.

A good length of cable duct has been dug in from the level crossing gate all the way to the

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rear of the carriage shed. The new track laid at the top of the site is being finally checked for level and ballasted. As mentioned earlier, regular maintenance and repairs continue to be carried out to rolling stock and motive power. In conclusion I wish everyone involved with the society, both members and non-members, a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2010.

Allan Leary.

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**MOTIVE POWER DEPARTMENT**

The motive power department has been relatively quiet over the past few months since the completion of Jubilee. However, towards the end of the second Santa Special, Jubilee lost power seemingly from its hydraulic drive motor. Inspection by Mike Brophy the following Tuesday revealed that the drive pulley mounted onto the motor input shaft was revolving on the shaf, due to the failure of a roll pin. Further

investigation showed that the pulley was originally fitted with a woodruff key which had long since disappeared causing major damage to the keyway - hence the roll pin. Mike has subsequently stripped the hydraulic unit down and removed the input shaft which has been sent to Steve Hodgetts for rectification. The exhaust system on the loco is also to be modified, to give easier access to the carburettor. It is hoped to have the loco back in service Mid January so that the Hymek can be withdrawn for modifications.

**ROLLING STOCK DEPARTMENT**

Routine maintenance has been carried out on all carriages and brake trucks, and repairs carried out as required.

GARRY TYSO.

**BEWARE TOLERANCES!**

I recently purchased a 7.1/4" gauge petrol/hydraulic Class 40 diesel locomotive. Having had problems with the ageing

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engine, I decided to fit a new 5HP Honda unit, and at the same time, overhaul the complete locomotive. The drive is transmitted from the hydraulic motor via bevel gears to the centre axle of the front bogie, from which it is transmitted to the other two axles by chain drives.

It was immediately apparent that one chain had considerably more slack than the other. My initial thought was that it had worn creating the slack, but further inspection disproved this. When both chains were de-greased and laid side by side, the difference in length was obvious.

Both chains were identical in pitch length. However, it was found that the roller pitch on the one chain, made by Sedis, was 0.002" less than the other manufactured by Rex. This difference multiplied by 73, gave an overall length difference of 0.146" - quite significant where chain tension is concerned. The problem was overcome by fitting jockey pulleys to take up the slack chain.

Both chains were within the manufacturer's stated

tolerances, and both were within BS chain specification.

GARRY TYSO.

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**DECEMBER 2009 ---  
GROUNDS  
MAINTENANCE DIARY  
AND MISC NOTES**

I hope you all had a good Christmas, and if not too late, I wish you all a very Prosperous and Healthy New Year. Well, what happened in December?

**TUESDAY 1st**

An absolutely beautiful still morning with John (W) and I standing in the club house looking out at the clear blue sky, frost covering everything and reflecting the orange glow of the sun as it climbed above the tree line. Being around two degrees below outside, as Grenville and Roger arrived, the first thing to do was get the coffee and tea going.

That done, it was getting out the rakes, leaf collection bags and big 'plastic hands' for picking up

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the leaves. We have Jim (Bayliss) to thank for the plastic hands which have been a great help and without which the job would have been much harder and taken longer. The three of us were joined by David (O) a bit later and it took all four of us until lunch to get the worst of the leaves cleared from around the site – a priority with the first Santa Special on Sunday.

Meanwhile Garry and his team worked on finishing the trailing point, adjacent to the level crossing and adding track ballast between the two, Allan and David (S) tucked into their small, dare I say warm bay in the maintenance store doing point things, Ossy and Mark doing signalling things and in discussion with Stuart and John (W) about ducting through the tunnel but see elsewhere for more detailed and other reports.

### **TUESDAY 8<sup>th</sup>**

The hort team have been sub-contracted to undertake digging the communications trench, laying fresh supplies of ducting and making good between the level crossing and the last signal

down that side. Only three of us (Grenville, Roger and self) today but we managed to complete just over 30 metres by the time Ivor rang the bell for soup and we sat down for lunch.

During the morning the requirement for laying the ducting was extended to a point adjacent to signal 9 (carriage shed point) – another 50 metre length -- at the request of the signalling team. Digging the trench next to an old hawthorn hedge is great fun – cutting through thick routes between every spade full dug out. Even better, in an e-mail Peter he tells me that he will have two of the concrete connection boxes ready to insert by Sunday (13<sup>th</sup> Dec) – wonder if Santa will volunteer!!!!!! or didn't by the time you read this.

At the other side of the level crossing Dave, Allan (D), Chris, Vic and Mike have commenced ballasting the first half dozen track lengths of the new track. Mark, Bill, Ossy and Mike concentrated on the signalling requirements while Stuart and John (W) worked on electrics

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and the point team, bathed in blue welding light, concentrated on the forth point.

### **TUESDAY 15<sup>th</sup>**

Another wet miserable day and just the Tuesday stalwarts turned up. After a warm coffee we got the tools and Grenville, Roger, Bill and I continued installing the communications ducting. A concrete junction box was installed adjacent to signal 8 with the ducting running through it and on down to the large main box close to the N/E corner.

The signalling ducting is routed via this box to enable Stuart to run an air line from the compressor in the maintenance store to the club house. This will save the need for a noisy generator on display events and be useful for other purposes. Having left enough ducting for the box we continued laying right up to the emergency door from the carriage shed. Next Tuesday, hopefully, we will complete the job with the final junction box installed adjacent to signal two.

Whilst we were getting on with that Garry, Vic and Chris were doing the short bit of ducting across the level crossing to the junction box on the far side from the club house. Only kidding chaps, whilst it is a short bit it does involve digging up the road. David, Mike and Peter took down and rolled up all the green fencing, in place since bonfire night, while Stuart and John continued installing external power points round the club house.

Most work had reached a convenient stage to call a halt by the time Ivor rang the bell for soup. A very good morning's work by everyone; we were all pleased to sit down and enjoy the mugs of hot soup with lunch in the marquee while the hardier one's had theirs in Santa's grotto – at some 22 degrees!!!! Stuart washed up all the mugs and cleaned the kitchen area after lunch – thanks Stuart.

### **TUESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>**

I arrived about 9.00am to find Mike (Birk) had already opened up and was outside enjoying the scenery. After several days of

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snow and hard frost the site looked lovely in the early morning sunshine. Not surprisingly only around 12/13 members today with only 4/5 of us enjoying working in the fresh air!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Obviously there was little work which could be attempted out in the open. However, Grenville joined me as I opened up the maintenance store and got out the wheel barrow, spades and shovels having first determined that the ground was not totally frozen along the carriage shed wall.

We set to digging the ducting trench, on from where we had finished last Tuesday, and laying the ducting for some 25/30 feet before hitting deep frosty soil; to frozen to get our spades in. Opportunely Roger and Bill joined as we finished and headed for coffees in the warm club house leaving Garry cutting holes in the large junction main box, close to the N/E corner, for the ducting. Allan (D) did a good job clearing leaves from under the carriage hoist – five bags.

In the warm club house we had coffee, joined in helping get Santa's Grotto down and put away for another year, while four of the 'signalling group' talked about signalling matters. Mike (Broph) made the soup today and did the clearing up afterwards – thanks Mike.

### **TUESDAY 29<sup>th</sup>**

I opened up a little before 9.00 and was then joined by the 'Two Allan's', Roger, David (S) and Vic followed shortly afterwards by Bill; but with the ground frozen there was nothing any of us could or were even inclined to do with the temperature hovering just above freezing. So coffee's and usual chat which gradually turned to track and signalling. A few more of the hardy one's joined us before lunch.

*Eric Davies 29th*

*December 2009*

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**TWO REQUESTS PLEASE**

1. Lost at Little Hay, 2 wheel 5" gauge rear pony truck for a Sweet Pea in red oxide finish. It was being used by Brian Oseman and myself for sensor testing but neither of us can find it. If anyone has seen it or knows where it is can they please contact Mark Bradley on 0121 353 4673.

2. Wanted by the signalling team. Some clear plastic bar of 1/4" to 3/8" (6-10mm) diameter for experiments with using LED for the feathers on the signals. If anyone has any suitable material can they please contact Mark Bradley on 0121 353 4673.

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**Gloucestershire  
Warwickshire Railway**

As Secretary of Avon Vale Model Engineering Society and a working volunteer for The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway I have been given the task of seeking Miniature Engine owners to exhibit/run at

Toddington for the Spring Gala which celebrates 175 years of the GWR.

The dates for this nine-day event are Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May to Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2010 inclusive. We are seeking GWR or Swindon built prototypical steam or diesel engines, carriages and wagons. If you have an item that meets these criteria and are interested in exhibiting/running at Toddington for part or all of the nine days please let me know by March 31st with the item/s that you would like to exhibit/run. We are happy to have 2½", 3½", 5" and 7¼" engines and stock of similar size and will be able to supply ground level track for 5/7 ¼" and raised track for 3½"/ 5" with a possibility of 2½" being added in time for the event.

The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway has space adjoining the railway for persons wishing to bring caravans or camper vans and will provide insurance cover for your engine whilst at Toddington. However if you

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wish to run your engine you must have full boiler certification.

Contact me by email – [silvanalanblackmanor@hotmail.com](mailto:silvanalanblackmanor@hotmail.com)

Or address  
S J Black,  
48 Delabere Road,  
Bishops Cleeve,  
Cheltenham,  
GL52 8AJ

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**CHRISTMAS CARD DONATIONS.**

We are pleased to report that the final total for the Christmas Card Donations was £62.00. A cheque has been forwarded to St. Giles Hospice for this amount. We would like to thank all members who participated. Mike and Cath Brophy

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**A note from Roger Timings originally posted on the club notice board**

**Christmas 2009**

Hi everyone,

Don't the years fly by as you get older it hardly seems any time at all since I was keyboarding last year's news letter. At the start of the year I was at a loss what to do with my spare time when, out of the blue my carer, Amanda, told me that her nephew, Alex, was doing his Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and needed to assist an old person to complete his social service element. She also added that they don't come much older than me – cheeky! So I thought it over and had a bright idea. He is interested in engineering so why not help me with my 7¼ inch gauge locomotive? He jumped at the chance to do some real engineering on real machines instead of the wood and cardboard mock ups that count as engineering in most schools these days in case the little dears cut themselves. I dug out my old workshop head gear

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and goggles and bought a large box of sticking plasters and we set to work.

I started him off with some “design and make” projects (shades of craft studies Terry?) and after some discussion we made a milling fixture for cutting the keyways in the driving axles so that they would all be correctly aligned and at right angles to each other. He was fascinated by the use of “tool makers’ buttons” to set up the location blocks for boring. We then went on to make drilling jigs to drill and ream the crank pin locations in the driving wheels. Finally we made a broaching fixture for cutting the keyways in the driving wheels. By then we had completed the Bronze Medal requirements.

Next we started on the Silver Medal by using the Bronze Medal tooling to actually mill the axles and machine the wheels. Another job was to make the steam brake mechanism and mount it in the locomotive chassis. A lot more head scratching and work than it sounds on paper since the designer had omitted this item.

During this exercise I acquired a brand new 15 ton hydraulic press in a bankrupt stock sale and we modified it into a vertical broaching machine. By now you will have guessed that I thoroughly enjoyed myself getting back to some teaching again even if it was a class of one! It was also enjoyable to watch Alex grow in confidence and mature. He is returning next summer to finish his Gold Medal when we will start to assemble things together on the chassis.

On a more depressing note, my super carer of three years has left me and now I have to break in a new carer. Not good when you are old and you want continuity. However Amanda still comes to see me regularly on a social basis which she is entitled to do now that I am no longer a client. Also my gardener of many years retired at the end of the summer to live in Nottingham with the new love of his life having separated from his first wife. However I have provisionally appointed a new gardener to look after the grounds at “Penrhyn Hall” starting next spring. He is the fifty year old son of a school

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friend of mine and has worked in gardening all his life and is fully qualified in all branches of horticulture – we will see if he is any good.

Molly and Daisy are growing up quickly. Molly has now started Primary School and Daisy is long established at nursery school. Mr Korky is still going strong but is covered in arthritic lumps and bumps when you stroke him. Valerie, Sally and their spouses are all keeping fit and Val and Paul are off to New Zealand (South Island) next week for their summer holiday but will be back for Christmas. They have friends there.

Apart from the sundry aches and pains associated with old age I am still keeping reasonably well but have little mobility these days and rarely go out except when Val takes me to the dentist twice a year. Never thought I would look forward to the dentist as an outing! This was another change since I can no longer climb the stairs to my old dentist. Why are they always upstairs? I have now found one on the ground floor with no steps to negotiate

and nearer home. He also has a Saturday morning surgery so it is more convenient for Val to take me there. I had better wish you all a HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND AN ENJOYABLE NEW YEAR before I run out of space.

Roger.

Thanks Roger for the update please feel free to write anything else for the news letter that you think may be of interest to us perhaps impart some of your vast engineering knowledge to our members ED.

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### Wanted

Some engineering hints & tips to publish in the Steaming Ahead or an up date on what you are building and how far you are. Articles can be hand written and I will come and take photos if that helps anything to get some more input

Steve

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