

December 2011

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STEAMING AHEAD



Sutton Coldfield Model Engineering Society

Don't forget the Boxing Day Steam-Up!

President Neil Harrison	0121-378-3992
Chairman Alan Leary	01827-892503
Secretary Eric Davies	0121-308-6886
Treasurer Chris Greene	0121-351-3509

Directors

Bill Betts	01543-683729
Mike Brophy	0121-353-6233
Bill Colman	
Ron Freeman	01922-632180
Stuart Harrison	
Peter Robinson	01543-253343
David Smith	0121-351-7876

Events This Month-

December 2011

Sunday	4th	Santa Specials	11:00
Sunday	11th	Santa Specials	11:00
Friday	16th	Members Xmas Party	19:30
Monday	26th	Boxing Day Steam Up	10:00

Dates for Your Diary

The 2012 events calendar is currently being finalised and will hopefully be published in the January 2012 edition of 'Steaming Ahead'.

Editor : Steve Kesterton
Mobile 07946 025 151
Email steamingahead@scmes.co.uk

Press Date is the first Tuesday of the month

Don't forget the Boxing Day Steam-Up!

Chairman's Chunter.

As the end of 2011 fast approaches, I wonder where the year has gone. The bonfire night spectacular has passed and we are about to stage our two other most important events, the Santa specials. Thinking back to this time last year the preparations for the first Santa special included building a six foot snowman. Looking out at the weather this morning, cloudless and bright, I think the snowman will be putting in his apologies this year. Not so Santa, I hope.

The year has brought some quite exciting developments to our railway. The ground level track improvement project has been officially completed and what a great job has been done. We have a signalling system, all but completed, including the second signal box which must be the envy of many other societies. The raised steaming bays together with the hydraulic turntable are well within completion and the addition of the high level track unloading lift is a welcome facility. All of these projects were either in the planning stage or ongoing at the end of 2010.

I think we should take a moment and recognise the development that has taken place over recent years. We must not forget, of course, the massive amount of work done since the site was purchased converting it from a meadow field to a working railway. I am sure the task was far greater. Although some of the effort is seen much more is done unseen developing projects and people tend not to be recognised for their time. My thanks goes to all these members and to all involved in the projects.

Bonfire night.- A brilliant team effort resulted in an equally brilliant spectacle. Although I was the named co-ordinator the success of the evening was down to the members and volunteers present. The positive feedback was most welcome. Pip and his mate treated us to a tremendous fireworks display, our public were wowed and they showed it with a great round of applause. Bob Whitfield did a wonderful job with his Shay loco, thank you Bob.

We now have the Santa specials on top of us. I'm sure we will give value for money and entertain our paying guests well.

Don't forget the Boxing Day Steam-Up!

This will be made far easier if we all pull together so if you are able to assist for a few hours for the two days please do so. I must admit the way the weather is I'm finding it difficult to dig out the Christmas hat. I'm hoping when I find it there's some Christmas spirit inside. (miserable devil)

This being the last Steaming Ahead before Christmas may I wish you all a very peaceful, healthy and joy filled time.

Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year to you all.

Allan Leary

Your assistance required please

Amongst the bonfire material I found a large number of confidential papers, e.g. bank, legal, pension, insurance and personal papers belonging to **Miss Alison Green** at two addresses:

53 Dunbar Grove, Great Barr,
Birmingham B43 7PT

389 Walmley Road, Sutton
Coldfield, West Midlands B76 1PB

Also, one addressed to her as
Financial Accountant, Financial

Control, Griffin Credit Services,
Royton House, Birmingham.

Would anyone who has knowledge of this person please get in touch with: Eric Davies SCMES Company Secretary- e-mail

address: janded@blueyonder.co.uk

Eric Davies

Steaming Ahead Press Date

To get any important Board decisions to you as quickly as possible, the press date for Steaming Ahead has been moved back by 1 week to fit in with the Board Meeting schedule. Please have all your items to me by the evening of the first Tuesday of every month at the latest.

Steve Kesterton

Christmas Cards

Thank you to everyone who gave donations for the Christmas Card Fund. We are pleased to report that we collected £75.00 and a cheque for this amount has been sent to St. Giles Hospice.

Best Wishes for the New Year.

Mike and Cath Brophy.

Don't forget the Boxing Day Steam-Up!

Locomotive Dept. Update

At last my workshop is clear and I can now start on restoring the Society Hymek. The locomotive is to be fully reworked electrically, and detail to the body added. It will be removed from Balleny Green on Tuesday 3 January 2012, and it is hoped to have it delivered back early in March, complete with BR logos numbered D7101 and named 'George Weedon'.

Garry Tyso.

Driving licences

Several members have requested a driving test to enable them to drive and pull the general public at events.

At this time, the questions and answer sheet for the oral part of the test is completely out of date due to the revised layout of the track, and the new signalling system.

It is anticipated that we will be in a position to issue new question and answer sheets by the end of January, with a view to having a test weekend in March 2012.

During this period, all those wishing to take a test should have as much practice driving as possible, particularly those wishing to take a steam driving licence, as you must be able to be in full control of your locomotive at all times, and will be required to pull a fully loaded train safely. Even if you have a licence to drive diesel locomotives, you must be fully familiar with the steam locomotive you are going to drive.

After March 1st 2012, all existing drivers will be required to attend a course covering the new track layout and signalling system **BEFORE THEY WILL BE ALLOWED TO PULL THE GENERAL PUBLIC.**

Additional driving examiners will be appointed during February 2012.

Garry Tyso.

What do we do now?

With the completion of the ground level track project, and the raised level steaming bay project, there are currently no projects being suggested other than the extension to the raised level track.

Don't forget the Boxing Day Steam-Up!

Although the above projects have largely been carried out by those members attending on Tuesdays, both projects have drawn additional members at weekends, or the occasional 'work in', and created a lot of interest within the Society. It is this interest that needs to be continued and built on to encourage not only existing members to come and get involved, but also to show the Society as strong and vibrant and hopefully encourage others to join. For these reasons, it is important to have future projects, both large and small.

Listed below are just a few ideas for you to think about, and if you think any of them are worth pursuing, make your views known, or suggest alternatives. In any event, we cannot stand still, otherwise we will stagnate and the Society will die.

1. Motorise the existing ground level hydraulic lift, and extend the table to 10' 0"

2. Install a bridge over the two mounds either side of the track adjacent to the level crossing, and create ramps for pedestrians to access the station without having to interrupt trains.

3. Convert the end bay of the NE corner into an engine storage facility, and re-locate the horticultural equipment into a new facility outside the main building. Convert the vacant bay into a work area with easier access.

4. Remove the bank between the raised level track and the ground level track at the exit from the station and build a brick 'shed' with a water tank on top. Pump the water from the sump up into the tank, thereby creating a head of water for 3 water cranes located on the station platforms. The items stored in the existing shed could be relocated in the new facility, and the existing shed removed, opening up the station area further.

5. Dig a large hole prior to the merging point prior to the level crossing, and install a 2 track bridge over the hole for trains to 'rumble' over.

6. Fill in the pond and create a large waterfall. Use the rest of the area for 32mm gauge layout.

7. Extend the steaming bay canopy in line with the existing railings, thereby keeping the turntable and all steaming bays under cover.

Don't forget the Boxing Day Steam-Up!

8. Extend the steaming bay canopy to join up with the existing building canopy, creating a train shed, and dry area for passengers and trains.

9. Remove bottom half of Signal box and replace with brick.

10. Create a station in the SW corner by adding a loop, and water facilities etc, to be used if extended raised level track is in use.

You will note that all the above will not add to the existing overheads of the Society.

I am sure there are a lot more ideas out there, so let's hear them, and get some of them into being.

Garry Tyso

The resurrection of Pandora

History of Original Owner

Chris Strong, a long standing member of the Society, put in a bid on behalf of the Members in the 1970's to purchase a piece of land at Little Hay, which was successful and was later called Balleny Green. A bench in memory of Chris is under the tree by the tunnels.

Pandora's Life Story

Pandora was made in the 70's by Chris Strong, who was very proud of it, but the chassis history was unknown. Chris had an electrical business and that is why he converted it to a diesel rather than a steam engine.

After he died the engine was donated to the Society for their use. It was later found very unstable and did not run smoothly. Many members tried in vain to correct its problems, to no avail, and one member said that it bounced up and down like a pogo stick. Interest was lost in it so it was stored in the old machine shop. During its storage it became damaged after being tampered with. It got lodged behind the workshop door with the power switched on and the motor became overheated, which burnt it and the electrics out.

At this point in time the Committee decided to scrap it. Upon hearing this news Betty Wincott said, in no uncertain terms, "you can't scrap it" and rather than see it destroyed Betty and Barry offered to keep it in his workshop at home and Iris agreed to this, with a view to Barry having a look at it to see if it was repairable.

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After Barry's death it was offered for sale to various members. I had a look at it and decided to take the plunge and see what I could do to save it, although I was warned by many members that it seemed a hopeless case. I paid Iris for it via Betty and took it home to begin the resurrection.

After looking at it more thoroughly I wondered if I had done the right thing but carried on regardless, although I had a lot of negative comments from members. After stripping it down and removing all the rust and dirt, I put it back together with existing motors which Barry must have installed. It run from a small sprocket onto the lay shaft sprocket and onto the fly crank sprocket but we found it ran very slow.

After taking the two small motors off and taking away all the lay shaft I found an old 12v lawn mower motor and fitted that without the lay shaft. This ran very sluggishly, so Mark and I decided to put two 12v batteries on. I set off and smoke started coming out of the motor and as it approached the tunnel flames also started coming out. At that point I thought it was time to stop. That was the end of the lawn mower motor!!!

I then asked various members about electric motors and one was found on the internet which I purchased and installed with a small sprocket on the end of the motor, doing away with the lay shaft. A larger sprocket which was fitted to the fly crank proved successful, also cutting the buffer beam to get the large sprocket in.

It appears that I have conquered the impossible and Pandora is once again running reasonably well and looks very proud. Thanks to Mark Bradley for all his hard work on the electrics (without whom I could not have completed this project).

P.S Does anyone know the make of the chassis? (If so please contact me). One of the older member's thought it was a 5" LBSC Netta, but looking through Reeves catalogue the dimensions and the valve gear are not right for this model.

Dimensions:-

Gauge: 5"

Length: 39"

Height: 6" Chassis

Width: 11.3/4"

Driving Wheel Dia: 4.3/4" 0-8-0

Loco

John Rous

Don't forget the Boxing Day Steam-Up!

Ground Maintenance and Misc Notes

TUESDAY 1ST

I arrived late today and the team were working well, Grenville going round with the weed killer, Rod clearing the bonfire ash, Roger and John busy doing maintenance work and assisting other teams. Rod also collected up leaves and (after lunch) Roger and myself did a bit of work in the lower copse in anticipation of the large amount of leaves which are going to be dumped there.

Thanks also to Allan D and Dave who cleared and collected a lot of leaves that had built on the road side tracks. The large builder's delivery sack, brought by Bill, is a big help as it holds many times that of the small domestic leaf collection bags the society has.

TUESDAY 8TH

A very wet miserable morning but with bonfire night on Saturday that is the priority. So Grenville, Roger, John, Dave, Rod and myself started the day erecting the green and orange perimeter safety netting round field area from the level crossing to the signal box.

It was good to have the six of us all working together and got it finished in time for the usual break at 10.30.

Next the netting forming the queuing route from the footbridge to the high level station was done and then to the store to get the marquee. After sorting out the poles, which are now losing these numbers, we got it erected -- just the roof -- no sides -- to make circulation by the refreshment window easier and somewhere dry if it's a wet night. Just finished putting away the tractor and marquee trailer when Ron rang the bell for lunch time soup.

Last Thursday (3rd) Steve W rang me from Bellany Green to say he and a contact of his were there with a five ton lorry loaded with mixed pallets. The driver was almost out of driving hours so all they could do was tip the load off and leave. On Sunday I set out twenty normal pallets to form the bonfire base and, having talked to Roger agreed that we would save and stack the small pallets tidy ready to use on the Santa's.

Don't forget the Boxing Day Steam-Up!

We were all back at the club house when the St Giles Hospice van arrived with the final load --- a load of very substantial furniture which took a bit of effort to get stacked. With that done Allan L called us – he wanted a loaded test run with Jubilee.

So with fourteen of us on three carriages he got the answer – only two carriages on bonfire night. Thanks to all who helped unload the SGH van.

BONFIRE NIGHT 12TH NOVEMBER

I opened up at 8.50am and was followed in by Ron and a few minutes later Roger and Grenville. Having opened up it was off to the bonfire to start work where we were joined by several others as the morning progressed. Cath very kindly brought us all tea & coffee about 10.30 which gave us a bit of a break. Thanks to all who helped build the bonfire. Elsewhere on site, members were busy, erecting the hot potato gazebo, getting trains ready and in the kitchen a hive of activity.

The great pile of pallets and furniture, donated by St Giles Hospice, shrank in the copse as the bonfire grew.

Much to Roger and my surprise were used all the material in the copse before completing the bonfire around 11.30 and going for a break. Thanks to everyone who helped Roger and I build it; in the event it was a great success on the night with 40/50 foot flames and the usual scorched grass around it.

Without SGH deliveries of old furniture and chairs and the good work of Steve W there would not have been sufficient material for the bonfire.

TUESDAY 15TH

A dull cool start to the day as Grenville and myself got the mowers while Ron and Rod got the wheelbarrow, brush, rakes and shovel to clear the bonfire ash. Later John got the other mower and joined us.

The mowing had two purposes, one to chop up the leaves so they would mulch down easier and second to reduce the amount being blown about and onto the tracks. Equally clearing the bonfire ash had two objects, one to recover all the metal and glass and two to dispose of the ash as fertiliser down the hedges. However, as the fire was still burning only half the ash was cleared.

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TUESDAY 22ND

It's been months since the inner track and station approach were finished but because of the dry weather it's not been suitable to turf the bare patches or build up the ballast shoulders. Earlier in the month I had agreed with Dave M and Roger A the areas and amount of turf that would be required to complete the track work as we had done with Pool Junction.

I walked round the site and decided there was sufficient moisture in the ground for us to go ahead with turfing and complete the job. I e-mailed and spoke the team and directors who confirmed the go-ahead at the weekend. I rang Sutton Turf, who had supplied the previous two lots, and ordered 150 yds of meadow turf for delivery early Tuesday (today) delivery.

While we waited for the turf Grenville, with assistance from Rod, planted 60 plus wild saplings which Mike B had given me on Sunday; sent to his daughter and donated to the society in the same way as last year. They have been planted in the front hedge and down the car park hedge from the front gate. Mike B please convey our thanks to Ann.

I'd just got the tractor and trailer up to the club house when the lorry arrived with the turf; a ten ton lorry and no way to get it onto the field. So with help from Dave M and Allan D, Grenville, Roger, Dave, John, Rod and myself stacked the 150 rolls of turf in the turning area. The hort five then worked hard loading the trailer (about 16-20 rolls each time) and taking it to the various areas and laying it before going for the next load. Areas from the sidings and station approach right round to the level crossing and finishing in the station area, high level track footbridge area, passenger loading gate area next to the signal box and finally under the patio. We all sat down to a well earned lunch just after Ron had rung the soup lunch bell – thanks team for a very good mornings work.

TUESDAY 28TH

The strong winds had blown the marquee sideways and caused damage to some of the poles and junction pieces and it was leaning against the track side fence. So the first job was to get it taken down and sort out the damaged sections after which it was loaded into its trailer and put away.

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Allan L has taken note of the damaged items and assembly instructions to get in touch with Crocodile Trading for replacements.

That done Grenville, Rod, Roger and I went to finish tidying up the last of the bonfire material into black sacks while Dave and John cleared away the last of the bonfire ash into the hedges. 11.00 and a break for the refreshment before some leaf clearing with other members.

This is the last report before Christmas, so I'll wish you all a very good Christmas and New Year.

Eric Davies

