

November 2013

Steaming Ahead



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Sutton Coldfield Model Engineering Society

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Directors

David Smith	Brian Clarke
Mike Bentley	Mark Dale
Peter Robinson	Chris Greene
Stuart Harrison	John Cope
Bill Colman	

Events This Month

SUNDAY	03-Nov	STEAM-UP	10am
TUESDAY	05-Nov	BOARD MEETING	7.30pm
SATURDAY	09-Nov	BONFIRE NIGHT	6.00pm -- 9.00pm
SATURDAY	16-Nov	STEAM-UP	1pm

Events Next Month

SUNDAY	01-Dec	STEAM-UP	10am
TUESDAY	03-Dec	BOARD MEETING	7.30pm
SUNDAY	08-Dec	SANTA SPECIAL	OPEN 11.00am -- 3.00pm
SUNDAY	15-Dec	SANTA SPECIAL	OPEN 11.00am -- 3.00pm
FRIDAY	20-Dec	SCMES PARTY - SHENSTONE VILLAGE HALL	7.30pm
THURSDAY	26-Dec	BOXING DAY STEAM UP	10am onwards

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Press Date is the first Tuesday of the month

Front Cover: 'Great Northern' on its way back!

Santa Specials 8 and 15 December—please help if you can!

Chairman's Chunter

As part of my last offering I attempted to advertise two member's events, the steam locomotive driving competition and the shunting competition. The driving competition took place and a report appeared in last month's edition. The shunting event has been staged and proved to be a successful and enjoyable day. Both events were co-ordinated by John Cope who did an exceptional job considering he is relatively new to the co-ordinating game. A small army of members got involved in helping with the organisation on both days ensuring all the competitors didn't have a clue what was going on. Seriously, a great deal of enjoyment was had so I hope the organising stress was worth it in the end. For myself I wish to thank all who were involved giving me two very different and fun days. By the way I didn't win either, I believe money had change hands!

Looking to the future for a moment, staffing for the bonfire spectacular is still a little sparse so please, if you are able, do your best to help out on 9th November. If you can let me know in advance I would be grateful. Regarding this event, St Giles charity who has supplied us with lots of unwanted furniture for the bonfire in past years is now unable to supply material in any great quantity so I'm grateful to the people who have put much effort into locating and delivering bonfire material recently.

Earlier in the year the state of the paved area outside the clubhouse was subject to debate. It was agreed the uneven slabs required attention but, initially, how to complete the repair caused lengthy discussion. For a number of reasons a decision was taken to contract the work out. This work is planned and is due to be completed by the end of October.

Quite recently the regular Tuesday group entertained a group of autistic children and their families. For a couple of hours both the children and parents had a great time.

I am pleased to say that very soon we are going to entertain another group so that they too can benefit by having a couple of hours with us.

The October Board meeting proved to be very positive. The new directors have now settled in and have raised the motivation level. There is again freshness to action issues making the meetings fruitful. One outstanding issue highlighted related to individual director responsibilities.

Santa Specials 8 and 15 December—please help if you can!

This is being addressed and very close to being finalised. I would hope the next edition will contain a complete listing for your information.

The issue was raised regarding keeping the trees and bushes on the site in good order and the effort needed to do this. The society policy with respect to the non use of chainsaws was questioned. The Safety Officer had been tasked with gaining relevant information and after evaluating all the issues it was decided not to change the policy. As a result of the policy being unchanged it is understood we will need to use professional contractors when necessary.

Finally, forgive me for mentioning the C word but please be mindful of the Santa Special dates and do your best to make yourselves available.

Best wishes to all particularly if your health isn't what it could be.

Allan Leary.

Shunting Competition Sunday 6th October

It was another fine sunny day for the 2nd of our new competitions; our inaugural shunting competition.

The station area had been turned into a shunting yard with 6 sidings by adding temporary 'buffers' (traffic cones really!) midway along two of the 3 through roads. Bill Hall and Gary Tyso had kindly loaned a selection of wagons and brake van so that we had both 5" and 7 1/4" stock available.

Competitors were faced with a train of a few wagons plus brake, with others positioned in the sidings. Their challenge was to deliver specified wagons to the right sidings whilst making up a new train in the right order from the others. Points were scored based on careful moving of stock and 'efficient' shunting i.e. how many times the engine changed direction. This was no mean feat as it required careful thought and planning as well as skills at manoeuvring.

It was an extensive overall test that took each competitor 50-90 minutes (we will probably need to shorten the tasks next time). It also required running light engine and with stock around the inner circuit in both normal and reverse direction so that they could get from the sidings at one end of the station to the other. It offered plenty of chances to find that you had blocked yourself in with wagons or got them in the wrong order!

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I think all competitors enjoyed the day, as did the rest of us as spectators. We also had a number of casual visitors who were fascinated to see such an unusual scene at the club. Again I think this has revealed a need to look at improving our pointwork so that reverse running and shunting gives a smoother ride, especially with 5" stock.

And the winner was..... Mick McKie, with Bill Hall as a very close runner up.

My special thanks to the four bold souls, Allan, Bill, Mick and Peter, who were prepared to put their shunting and puzzle solving skills to the test in front of an audience. Our thanks also go to all who helped make this successful, especially to Bill C and David S, our competition judges, members who acted as shunters/pointsmen and especially Bill and Gary for loaning their stock.

All in all it was great to just be playing trains instead of fundraising, or working hard on maintaining and developing our facilities. The conversation at the club today (Tuesday) seemed to be that both the driving and shunting competitions are worth repeating next year. What do other members think? Please let me or another board member know. Its your club and we want to make it fun for you too.

John Cope

New Engine Shed

The electrical work, by Stuart and John, is just about completed. There is even a fly lead so the charging can take place on the track. Brian has been constructing two trolleys that will carry a loco from the shed and straight onto the track. These are near completion.

First Aid

There is now a first aid bag which is kept on top of the first aid cupboard. If there is need for first aid on the site all you have to do grab the bag, as inside, is everything you may need.

Mike Bentley – Safety Officer.

Last month in Pictures ...



Stuart working on the wiring for the new shed



Graham busy repainting the footbridge

Last month in Pictures ...



Steve cutting material for the new high level trolleys



Malcolm's SM32 loco and trucks out for a run

Santa Specials 8 and 15 December—please help if you can!

Christmas Party – Shenstone Village Hall – Friday 20th December 7.30.

This year we are having a hot buffet which will be subsidised by the club. Please get your name down. List on clubhouse notice board. Any ideas for entertainment / games – we would welcome - please see me.

Tombola

This year we are having a tombola which will be present at our public events before Christmas. We hope this will help to swell club funds. If you have any suitable prizes please bring them to the clubhouse –thank you.

Mike Bentley – Safety Officer.

Great Northern Returns

Tuesday 24 September was a red letter day for me as we were able to give Great Northern its first trial run following the rebuild which has been ongoing since mid January.

At the time of writing it is still without its body, which is being super detailed in Garry Tyso's home workshop. Also we await production of the bogie side frames which are currently being manufactured by the original supplier, our former member Derek Payne. As that is little more than a cosmetic details, the side frames are not likely to be fitted until the new year.

The trial run did highlight some adjustments to be made.

Step 1 was to test the brakes. They came on perfectly but would not release by any means. After a lot of head scratching, David Moseley discovered that a non return valve in the air circuit had been installed the wrong way round, so that was easily rectified.

Once out on the track, Mark Dale and I took turns at the controls, progressively increasing the speed. It was just as well that there were not too many people in the club house to witness the speeds recorded on the signalling monitor! When we put the loco away, the downside was revealed – there was hardly any reverse motion in the hydraulic linkage! We should be able to cure that by adjustment of the hydraulic control lever in the next few days. Bonfire night is just over 5 weeks away. I am confident that by then, Great Northern will be serviceable although not fully refurbished.

Chris Greene

Santa Specials 8 and 15 December—please help if you can!

Carriage Shed

We now have a white board on the wall at the rear of the carriage shed. This has been labelled for all the rolling stock to try and keep track of maintenance/exams and any faults that develop.

If you notice something wrong with a vehicle can you please fill in the board with the fault next to the vehicle number / name with the dry marker pen.

Hopefully this will stop people from saying what's wrong with that, or it didn't work last time we used it!

Mark Dale

Grounds Maintenance Report

TUESDAY 3RD

Today we trimmed the Beech hedge and the Laurel hedge behind the station; both had put on a lot of growth and now there is a large pile to dry out before it can be burnt. Also, the low Horse Chestnut tree branches which were removed coupled with the work referred to above has made a clear safe walkway to the high level station from the footbridge. Steve is doing a good job with the hedge cutter trimming back the hedges whilst Ron and I do the clearing up.

Rod continues work installing the new fencing round the pool and current pictures can be seen on the web pages. Meanwhile Rodney continues replacing and cleaning the water bins and the slabbed areas they stand on.

Finally, Ron and I ran the mowers round the areas to be used for the birthday party at the coming weekend – now tidy once again.

TUESDAY 10TH

Followed Stuart in this morning and with half a gallon of diesel last weeks hedge cuttings were quickly well alight. Ron joined me by the bonfire and we discussed were to start the mowing this week without Grenville – same as any week but just more to do without him. Ron did a lot more this morning but without three of us some bits get left for 'next week'!!!

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Steve joined us just after we started mowing and did a very good job of strimming the difficult areas round the tunnels and then the humps by the level crossing. Having been mowing for about a couple of hours I went and made the tea and coffee for the team.

Roger is back from his few weeks holiday -- so Rod went off playing golf again leaving Roger to continue tidying up the pool and also doing a good job of tidying the lower copse. Around the tracks Rodney finished cleaning and replacing the water bins and buckets; after which he made a start stencilling them with the word 'FIRE'. The slabs they stand on have all been reposition and cleared of all weeds and grass; he's made a good job of a long overdue job.

I finished mowing a bit early in order to tackle some of the weeds that seem to know that Grenville's on holiday. I brought my own sprayer as the society one is heavy and having got the weed killer from the loft, mixed the first lot. I'm not quite sure of the right quantity so if the weeds die – I got it right, if holes appear in the ground I made it a bit strong.

During lunch chatted about security of the new shed and after a 'technical inspection' believe it's sorted – now it's down to the metal men.

TUESDAY 17TH

Very pleased to see Grenville back off his holiday in the sunshine – so it's just him with Ron and I hedging today. Having got all the tools we started work on the shrubbery on the small mounds behind the pool. These had not been done for a couple years so needed a lot of work before we moved on to the laurel hedge between the pool and high level track.

With Grenville cutting, Ron and I collecting and dumping on the bonfire site, the pile quickly grew to a substantial one. While we were doing this Rodney arrived and asked if he could go and fetch some wood and pallets he' obtained for the bonfire. He was very quickly on his way and we returned to the hedge cutting.

In order to get the air under the bonfire cuttings; the base was built using a small amount of the wood for the bonfire. Then on to this the wood and cuttings from the shrubbery and finally the laurel from the hedge by the pool.

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This method worked well a fortnight ago; the air can get under and the laurels help keep the rain off – we will see next week all being well.

Lunch came around 12.00 when the rain started. I'd just finished mine when Rodney arrived back with his friend Martin Fisher in a land rover type vehicle hauling a double axle trailer piled high with wood and pallets. Martin is Chairman of the Aston Manor Transport Museum Aldridge – ex Aston Cross Tram Depot – and it's through his and Rodney's good offices that we got the help with the bonfire supplies. Thanks to Rodney and Rodney please pass them on to Martin.

TUESDAY 24TH

Today bonfire, mowing and clearing the tracks of dead leaves. Yes, it's that time of year and its going to keep Grenville, Ron, Rodney and I very busy trying to get it all done. Allan D made a good job of mowing the hump inside the SM32 track while Roger worked on the waterfall.

While some of us were sitting talking, after lunch, there was the sound of a familiar petrol engine from the maintenance area and much to the delight of everyone Great Northern appeared hauling a coach up the outer track. It sounded and was performing well but I'll leave the full details to those looking after it.

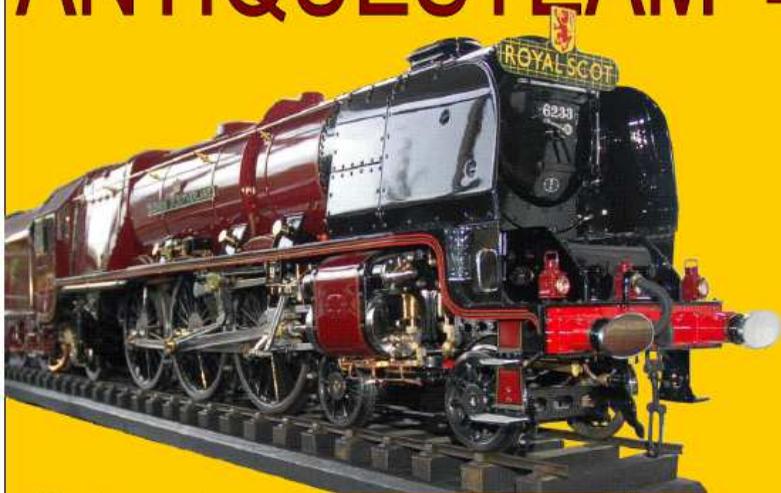
Final word --- I wish to put on record how much I value and appreciate the help I'm given and the work the team put into the job each and every week. Having the right tools and equipment is essential with the way in which Balleny Green was establish in the formative years and now has to be maintained.

The work has to be thought about, visualised and worked out in terms of weeks, a couple of years, in five years and beyond. Unlike most other work around Balleny Green, the work is long term, repetitive and never ending. If it were not for the pleasure Balleny Green gives to members, visitors and the team ??????????

Eric Davies

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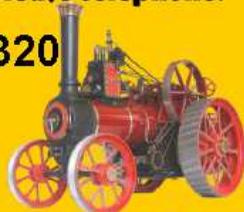
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