

January 2014

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

WEDNESDAY	01-Jan	NEW YEARS DAY - BANK HOLIDAY	
SUNDAY	05-Jan	STEAM-UP	10am onwards
TUESDAY	07-Jan	BOARD MEETING	7.00pm
SATURDAY	18-Jan	STEAM-UP	10am onwards

Events Next Month

SUNDAY	02-Feb	STEAM-UP	10am onwards
TUESDAY	04-Feb	BOARD MEETING	7.00pm
SATURDAY	15-Feb	STEAM-UP	10am onwards
TUESDAY	18-Feb	EVENING MEETING	7.00pm onwards

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Press Date is the first Tuesday of the month

Front Cover: 'Our Celia' arrives at the station to entertain the crowds before Santa makes his appearance!

2014 events list now out—please help where you can!

Chairman's Chunter

Well here we are, 2014. These years seem to come around quicker and quicker. The old year, as far as the society is concerned, ended on a very successful high. The last three fund raising events all exceeded expectations and received justified acclaim. It is very satisfying to know our guests leave an event having had more than just a good time. It is a fact that we must endeavour to continue to deliver what our visitors have come to expect as, at the end of the day, it is these people who keep our subscription fees at less than one pound per week. All three events, bonfire night and the two Santa specials attained such success due to the ongoing commitment of many members. Along with these the society is blessed with more than a few volunteers who give up so much of their time and effort for the benefit of the club. My personal gratitude is unending considering many of them are the public face of our society. I feel they probably enjoy themselves too.

The Bonfire night spectacular lived up to its title particularly the fire works display. I get a tremendous buzz listening to the oohs and ahhs from the crowd and this year's display produced many. Both Santa Specials were well received even though a little of the limelight was hijacked by a nutty fairy calling herself Celia. Thankfully the weather was so cold Celia's extremities froze off and she had to get dressed. I know she had a good time and I hope her presence was enjoyed.

The Christmas party at Shenstone hall proved to be a particularly social affair. Thanks to a great deal of effort from Cath and Mike Brophy and one or two others the evening went very well. It had been decided much earlier in the year to upgrade the buffet for the party as it was believed the regular members who put so much into the club deserved a little more. The names list appeared on the notice board for some weeks and a good number of names were added. The total was counted and the buffet ordered at almost £10.00 per head, no problem so far. On the evening of what turned out to be, I repeat, a very enjoyable party seven listed people did not turn up. At ten pounds per head you don't need to be a genius to calculate the loss. The party is always subsidised by club funds, which is accepted, but I don't believe it's acceptable for this to be abused. Having said this I did receive one valid apology early the following morning. The issue was discussed and it has been decided that, in future, full payment will be required when places are booked.

The Board meeting, January 7th, proved to be fruitful. A proposition to extend the SM32 track, including a bridge over the waterfall, was given the go ahead. The project will result in quite a spectacle and is worth looking forward to.

2014 events list now out—please help where you can!

New guard duty cards are being produced and, once issued the instructions will be followed much more than at present. It is intended to develop similar duty cards for drivers.

I think the time is right to inform all members that at the next AGM we will be losing some directors, including myself, from the Board having fulfilled the maximum six years allowed in service. It is a fact the Society has to be managed, making unpopular decisions at times but non the less a committed Board of Directors is necessary. The Board members in post since the last AGM have worked very well and a refreshing momentum is obvious at meetings. I sincerely hope this continues so please consider giving your society a little extra, it is very rewarding.

Happy New Year to all and to those whose health is not too good, I hope you feel much better very soon.

Allan Leary

Subscriptions

The Directors agreed at the last board meeting to increase the subs for most classes of members by £1. The new rates will apply from 1 April 2014 onwards, so members who pay before the end of March will qualify for the current rates of: Seniors £45, Full members £55, Juniors and Associates £15. Honorary members will continue to enjoy free membership and new introductory membership terms are unchanged.

Chris Greene

Great Northern

That was a superb 'ex works' photo of Great Northern on the front cover of Decembers Steaming Ahead.

Many thanks to all those who played a part in its overhaul and rebuild.

Since it was returned to service towards the end of October, it has played a major role in our three biggest events of the year - Bonfire Night and the two Santa Specials. It performed almost impeccably throughout each event, the only glitch being an unexplained minor derailment on Bonfire Night when the leading bogie left the track.

2014 events list now out—please help where you can!

Fortunately no harm was done and we were soon re-railed and back underway, thanks to several strong armed helpers.

One final thought, I am pleased to see and hear that members now give this loco its proper name instead of referring to it as “Chris’s engine”, which used to be the norm. I have never tried to claim any rights to it and will always be happy to show anyone who wants to, how to drive it.

Chris Greene

All at Balleny Green

We would like to say thank you to everyone who sponsored our Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge charity event that we completed in the summer.

We have now raised over an amazing £4100 incl Gift Aid for our chosen charity, Michael Sobel Hospice, the hospice relies on donations to remain open and thanks to events like ours manages to provide specialised end of life care and support to local people, their families, friends and carers.

Thank you very much for your support both this year and the past few years, it is very much appreciated

Gareth Parker (Betty’s grandson) and all at Team F.I.N.D

Thank you

Once again I am writing to say a VERY BIG THANK YOU to all who so very generously donated to the Michael Sobell Hospice for which my grandson Gareth and some of his work colleagues and friends did a sponsored walk (sorry hill climb) back in August, up the 3 Yorkshire Peaks, namely Pennyghent, Whernside and Ingleborough. In fact they did it in just over 9 hours, much less than the allotted time of 12 hours, so they were quite proud of themselves, despite a few blisters between them.

The total amount they collected was £4,100 for which the Hospice was delighted and very appreciative, and “the lads” were really pleased with the reception they got on handing the cheque over. As one lady who gave me a donation said, “Every hospice is truly grateful for every penny they are given.” It transpired that she herself works in a Hospice. I collected on two Sundays at B.G. and finished with £300.

Last month in Pictures ...

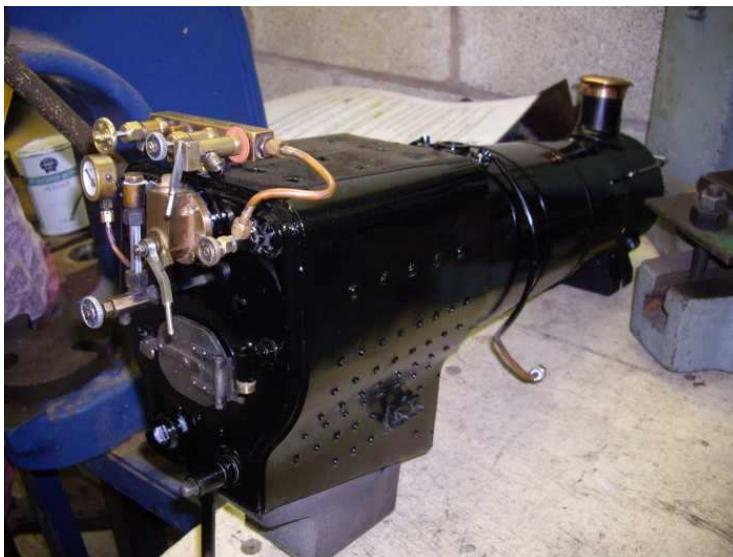


Roger taking the club Hymek for a trip



Eric and his team busy clearing leaves

Last month in Pictures ...



The clubs Speedy boiler repainted and ready for refitting



John Cope getting steam up

2014 events list now out—please help where you can!

The one Sunday was the 2.1/2 Gauge Rally, many of whom Barry (my late Husband) and I have known for a good many years and I still count as friends. I actually had to stop some of them giving me as much as they wanted to. I told them 5p 10p or maybe 50p was quite sufficient, but they still insisted on giving more; some of them even giving me notes with comments such as, "It is a good cause, and who knows, I may need to be in a Hospice myself one day" This will be the last time I shall be collecting as I have been given to understand that someone objected and wrote a letter of complaint to the Board of Directors who decided, after a discussion, against me doing the collection again.

So once more I wish to say a VERY big thank you to everyone who gave so VERY VERY generously over the 4 years that I have been collecting for the projects that Gareth and his friends have been doing their thing for - twice for the Help the Heroes, once for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and this year for the Michael Sobell Hospice. Over the 4 years they have collected £9,700. Again my thanks to all the extremely generous Model Engineers and their wives and friends who came to BG.

Betty Wincott

Rheilffordd Onetree Railway

When we were looking at properties, last item on our check list was if the garden might be suitable for a 5" railway. (Jeana might not entirely agree). This would be nice but not a priority.

Previous reference to Martin Evan's book on this matter advises a flat site and not on clay. The property we acquired was basically sound but tired. All hedges 20ft high and wide. We knew there was a space alongside the garage which when preliminary glimpsed at with difficulty and aid of a whip and chair, the bemused estate agent and Jeana suggested it might be just possible to get 5" trackwork through. Vegetation was so dense only an optimistic guess could be made. It was easy to determine we were upon clay with what turned out to be a 1 : 10 gradient down the back lawn. Perfect!

After getting the property back into some form of order, a start was made on reclaiming the garden. In due course a survey was made and 10' – 0" level grid added. Limitations would be position of greenhouse we resurrected, by pulling back to vertical where pushed by hedge and 50% reglazed. Cutting a way through to garden shed on opposite boundary lent itself to a reverse curve.

2014 events list now out—please help where you can!

Alongside the garage looked as though it had been part backfilled about 3'-0" towards front corner. Garage side neighbour sounded us out about a fence to replace the hedge. Done!

By this time basic track layout was established. 27'-0" governing radius with 1 in 50 gradient throughout. Levels along the garage warranted a small retaining wall to suit next door's paving and would be perfect for a tunnel whose roof joists would secure tall fence panels. Electric service cable depth dictated summit by front gate. Unexpectedly, bungalow rear right corner was critical setting out location at rear.

Co-ordinates were steel tape measured off corners of bungalow through dense bushes. Where tapes intercepted was initially good enough. Each corner had a different colour allocated and these were written at peg positions on drawings.

One day sitting in a clearing near the back door for lunch, we heard splashing. Investigation under the hedge revealed a scale lake. Two short lengths of trackbed were set out with pegs where straightforward so basic cut and fill track formation began. Local builders merchant and garden centre had a corner for broken slabs and discontinued items which proved a useful economic source for all sorts of interesting ideas. Bedstead angle for steaming bays was duly donated by neighbours. New houses were being constructed opposite. They kindly gave written permission to remove authorised waste and site manager would come over to tell me which area he wanted clearing. This was usually chipped or offcut bricks and after a purchaser's alterations, some reconstructed stone. I was invited to clear a redundant document storage rack made of slotted angle. Some of the straight viaduct support walls were set-out at centres to suit its lengths as an ornamental capping holding felt waterproofing edge in place. In all there are 16 spans. Passing loop is at the lowest point on our railway that is also highest span.

Viaduct was built with joists and shuttering ply deck on cross walls with faced spandrels with an upstand scale parapet having arches below. These arches are curved both on plan and elevation. Inner radius arches are shorter span and simple arch. Outer arches are compound triple radius. All have a brick intrados and decorative wall faces which are permanent shuttering for concrete innerface. Because each span repeats, supporting temporary works (centring) were multi used. A second set was made to speed up production. Wye Valley Society members were a tremendous help throughout. They come and have a run every now and then. Halloween being a particular favourite.

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Maximum design speed is 4mph with built in super elevation. Remarkably only one significant landscape bush had to be removed. Several are a bit close but this adds to the interest and makes it a drivers railway where ever changing scenery and visibility require constant vigilance while managing a locomotive.

When preparing trackbed formation along the garage, rock was encountered. We look across to the west coast of England from our viaduct. A trench cutting was formed across the drive. Our local garage had finished altering a wall built of stone blocks Surplus was going to be dumped so they were delighted to get rid of it. This faced the cutting. Footpath excavation trench covers were purchased and are used when we are not running. To date we have had the following loco designs running around successfully. Speedy, Panzy, Metro, Manor, 3521 class, Netta 0-8-0 with flexible wheelbase, Jinty, Super simplex, Baby Deltic, Hymek and Class 37s. Unfortunately four wheel battery electric locos tend to lose their feet on our gradients. Aluminium track was obtained at auction of late Peter Morgan of Morgan cars railway at Malvern.

The opening ceremony was by the Mayor of Monmouth on 50th anniversary of last service train. Track laying had continued into the previous night by candle light and the golden spike went in half an hour after official opening time. A big thank you to all those who made it possible. The pull handle was that previously used by HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother when opening Birmingham School of Music. To date we have had visitors from Yorkshire, West Somerset, Hereford, Newport, Wye Valley, Kinver, Manchester, Blackpool and GL5

Bill Hall

Ground Maintenance Report

TUESDAY 3RD

Stuart had arrived and opened up when I arrived just before 9.00am and having emptied the post box I joined him in the clubhouse. Ron followed shortly and we agreed for him to start the leaf collect while I got the bonfire started.

We made good progress and were joined by Rodney who cleared away the leaves around the top of the field tracks. We took an early break and then worked through till around 12.00pm by which time we had cleared the main areas likely to cause trouble on Sunday for the Santa Special running.

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Fortunately most of the leaves were dry and so 6/7 collection bag full were able to be burnt instead of dumped in the lower copse. Ron then continued clearing down behind the clubhouse with the blower, the tunnel exits and area around Pool Junction while I ensured the last bits on the bonfire had burnt out.

TUESDAY 10TH

Just Stuart in when I arrived but I was quickly followed by Ron and Grenville. Cold dry morning and so we stood chatting in 'Santa's Grotto' only to be joined by the two Allan's a little while later.

Sunday had been the first Santa Special and there was obviously quite a lot to finish off, not least erecting the marquee. The other major job was to clear all the leaves which the storm on Thursday had brought down – apart from the evergreen trees it only left a few leaves on the Oaks and Beech hedge. With a small team it took almost two hours to clear all the main circulation areas and track. After using the blower for that length of time, for the rest of the day, I couldn't hold a cup of tea in my right hand without spilling or dropping it. However, a good job done by the small team.

So again today clearing leaves was the priority from all other areas and were some had been piled up on Sunday. Queuing areas, high level station area, the green area inside the high level track, pool edges, south end of the tunnels, maintenance store and still other non urgent locations.

The jobs to tackle, after the Santa's, will be the Laurel hedges, shrubbery, crossing gate hedges, low branches and not least drive hedge and down behind the club house again. Because the Laurel leaves are oily they can be burnt and since they are likely to be the next thing to be tackled I asked Ron and Rodney to build a good bonfire base. This makes a good hot fire base with plenty of air and hopefully not too much smoke – if you believe that!!!!!!

TUESDAY 17TH – 31st

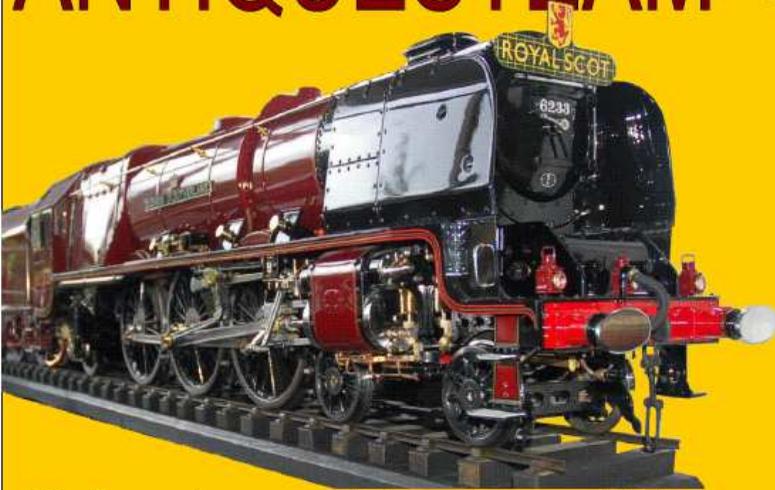
Now back from Malta after two weeks, mainly in nice warm sunshine. However, in spite of the weather the team have done a good job, not least completing the trimming of the conifer hedges near the level crossing.

The forecast weather for the next few weeks means that completing the hedging is going to run on to well into the New Year.

Eric Davies

2014 events list now out—please help where you can!

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