

Month Year

Steaming Ahead



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Sutton Coldfield Model Engineering Society

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President Allan Leary
Chairman Bill Colman
Secretary Vacant
Treasurer Chris Greene

Directors

Brian Clarke	Mark Bradley
Mike Bentley	Mark Dale
Peter Robinson	Chris Greene
Stuart Harrison	John Cope

Events February 2015

Sunday 01	Steam Up	10am
Saturday 14	Steam Up	10am

Events March 2015

Sunday	01	Steam Up	10am
Saturday	14	Steam Up	10am
Sunday	22	Birthday Party (Free To Be Booked)	2pm

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Press Date is the first Tuesday of the month

Front Cover: Steve Whitson braving the cold at the Boxing Day steam-up

2015 events programme now online!

Chairman's Chunter

It is a bit late but a happy New Year to you all. We celebrated Christmas with an excellent party at Shenstone. It was sad that more members could not come. It was too near to Christmas and so many people were away. We have scheduled this year's party earlier in December.

The two Santa Days were very successful but the second one was marred by an accident on the bend approaching the crossing merge when a carriage tilted. Several visitors were hurt but luckily none of them seriously. Although it is not clear what caused it we are taking steps to help prevent a reoccurrence by giving clearer instructions to passenger loaders and by delaying the approach release of the signals before the merge.

I am afraid that the recent steam ups have been non-events because of the icy cold weather. Let's hope it warms up soon.

I am very pleased to record that we are starting to make progress on the L & B loco. A well attended positive planning meeting was held on 20th January and we expect to hold another in February. The frames have been cut down and are ready for re-machining. The pistons have been made and the cylinders have been trued up. It is already good to see more members becoming involved and greater interest being shown. Even I have had a go.

There is still some finishing work to do on the new shed. We have a lot of discussion on the workshop layout. I think that a sensible compromise has been reached to remove only a small length of the wall between the welding shop and the central bay. This will enable large locos to be manoeuvred between bays without doing too much civil engineering. I look forward to the time when we can concentrate on building the loco alone.

I have become excited about a new event based on Mark Dale's idea of having a Driving experience day on Sunday 10th May. Although the tickets for the trainee drivers will probably be £35 each they will get a lot for their money. They will start with a talk covering an introduction to railway systems - Sections/Blocks, Signals, Points etc. followed by an explanation of our ground level layout and its control. They will then learn the basic construction of a steam loco and how it functions. They will move outside and have 15 minute slots on the high level and ground level having tuition on driving a sweet Pea and at least one Stafford.

2015 events programme now online!

While waiting for their turn they can receive practical tuition on our ground level track and learn to drive the Hymek, Great Northern and Roanoke. We also hope to have the 32mm running. A simple hot lunch will be included. This will replace our Spring Event which has not proved successful in recent years.

Now we are moving to a bimonthly Steaming Ahead we want to get the bulletin system going. Please respond to John Cope's requests for authorisation.

Bill Colman

L & B Anonymous Article

Steve Kesterton received a letter and anonymous article regarding the wisdom of continuing with the production of the L & B loco. Copies of these were also sent to a number of members including me.

This person made a well argued case for ceasing work on this project and selling the loco off. It was well written and balanced. I do not necessarily agree with it but that is not the point.

The author indicates that the reason it was submitted anonymously was :- "what happened when a longstanding member ventured to express an opinion in writing".

Let me make it quite clear that while I have been on the Board no member has ever been disciplined for expressing an opinion that is not offensive or insulting and they will not be in the future.

The Board has decided not to publish any anonymous material. However I would strongly advise the author of this good article to put his name to it so it can be in the next Steaming Ahead.

Bill Colman

SCRS Exhibition 2015

A reminder that our Society has again been invited to attend SCRS model railway exhibition at Bishop Walsh School on the weekend of 25th and 26th April. This local exhibition is an opportunity to show the results of our hobby to the general public, attract visitors and possibly pick new members. However to run the exhibition we need our members to volunteer bring their models to the school for display over the weekend.

2015 events programme now online!

So I would appeal to those of you who have not exhibited before or have new items that have not been shown before to get in touch with either myself or Peter McMillan.

Remember we are a model engineering society so stationary plant, tools, clocks, ships, internal combustion engines etc are equally acceptable. Items in the course of construction are welcome as these allow visitors to see how they are put together, the quality of the workmanship and how they work.

Mark Bradley mark@mybradley.me.uk 0121 353 4673
Peter McMillan peter.mcmillan@btinternet.com 0121 308 2957

Membership News

Its that time of the year again when annual subscriptions are due. The board decided at the January meeting to increase subscriptions for Full and Senior members by £1 but to hold the fees unchanged for Junior and Associate members. This means the new 2015 rates from 1st April will be:

Full £57
Senior £47
Junior/Associate £16

We regret this increase but the society has faced, like the rest of us, increases in the costs of running the club like utilities, insurance and postage. As we did last year, if you pay by 31st March, we will renew your subscription at the old 2014 prices.

This month we welcome another new member to the society. The board has approved Len Ingram for Senior Membership. Regulars at the club will have seen him actively helping with various tasks including the gardening team.

John Cope

SM32 Update

Looking back over the year we've made fantastic progress on the extension. If we go back to May, Dave had finished the bridge over the water fall & we had just finished the mould for the pillars & started casting them, this was a learning curve but now after 30 or so pillars I think we've got the knack! (only about another 30 to go).

Last month in Pictures ...



Excellent progress being made on the SM32 viaduct



Ron making soup to keep the troops warm!

Last month in Pictures ...



Track laying on the SM32 extension



Hedge cutting by the access road, a great team effort!

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During the summer we were able to produce 2 pillars and arch sides a week but with the cold weather now on us progress has slowed to 1 of each a week. The plan is make a stock up ready for the Spring when we can get going again. We have found it better to erect at least six pillars in one bash, this way we can see where we are going and make adjustments as we go especially on the bends.

By the time July came we decided to get the track bed along the back of the pool in place this would be built the same as the existing part of the layout made from plywood boards. Scaffolding poles were concreted in & adjusters fitted in the poles. Then we cut the boards to fit on the top, these had a coat of resin to seal them. Once in place fibre glass was put over the top followed by roofing felt. We have just completed this section by fitting a fence along the side to stop anything heading in the direction of the pool!

All of the erected viaduct has now had a coat of masonry paint to weather proof it and I think now with the different shades of black & grey it really looks good. The track bed on the viaduct has had a coat of resin applied to seal it.

Around the back of the waterfall we plan to make a raised bed using old railway sleepers. On this will be a passing loop & siding, we should make a start on this in the next couple of months.

If we can continue like this in 2015 hopefully we'll have trains running around for the Santa specials if not before.

Have a look on the website under SM32 to see how it all went during the year.

My many thanks to the small working team of Allan Duckworth, Rod Gregory, Ian Scot & Dave Osbourne.

Mark Dale

December 2014 Grounds Maintenance Diary

TUESDAY 2ND

For the second day of December it was very good and the whole team were on site and ready for action. The object was to complete the trimming of the conifer hedge on the grounds side of the level crossing

2015 events programme now online!

TUESDAY 9TH

Very cold frosty morning with Steve, Ron, Bill, Rodney and I working cutting back the beech and laurel hedges behind the steaming bay. These needed cutting back for several reasons, not least was to enable children to be better monitored when waiting for the high level trains, reduced to the board agreed health and safety level, open up the view now the old carriage shed has gone etc. Bill brought his long reach cutter, Steve on the hedge trimmer and Ron, Rodney and myself tidying and dumping the cuttings.

It went very well and we were able to finish it shortly after the midmorning break. Ron went off and joined the group erecting the marque, Rodney with assistance from Roger sorting out pallets he had brought – some planks for loft floor and the rest to the bonfire.

TUESDAYS

I left the team members for the last three Tuesdays and enjoyed the sunshine round the Canaries and Cape Verde Islands over Christmas. The team has made a start clearing and cutting back the Myatts hedge towards the front gate, starting at the level crossing.

There is a lot of hedge to deal with although it is quite thin in patches towards the front gate. It will require some strengthening but the whole operation has been worth it for the improvement and annual saving to the team cutting it back. While working Richard Myatt arrived and again said how much they appreciated the work we had done and how great full they were.

Earlier in the month I had put a note through Mrs Myatt's door explaining what we had finished and that the 150 or so hawthorn whips had a good start. Hopefully, we should complete the hedge to the gate by the end of January, of course subject to the weather and a team of fit members.

Eric Davies

January 2015 Grounds Maintenance Diary

TUESDAY 6TH

The team made good progress working on the hedge from the level crossing to the turning circle. It had been started last week and will continue next until fully clear down to the agreed height.

The great pile of cuttings on the bonfire almost doubled with today's work and means that I will have to consider burning it if possible next week.

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TUESDAY 13TH

I had called and picked up Mr Diesel and although earlyish Ron was sitting waiting in his van by the gate. We opened up and pulled the trailer with all the tools in up to the area by the level crossing. I took my car round to by the bonfire and introduced Mr Diesel the very large bonfire pile. In the process I shoowed off all the blackbirds eating the holly berries before lighting the fire.

There was little or no wind and even when it did get up it was blowing the small amount of smoke down towards Barletts fields and waterworks, not causing any nuisance.

Today the weather was good and enabled the team to almost complete the hedging right up to the turning circle. The large pile of cuttings left from last week, shown in the photo, had to be introduced to Mr Diesel and together with today's, they almost doubled the amount actually burnt.

Half way through Rodney and I heard squeals coming from the fire and shortly after I saw a large rabbit shoot out of the unburnt cuttings across the red hot embers and run off across the field. A few seconds later a second rabbit did the same thing. I'd cleared all the blackbirds off but never thought of there being any other inhabitants!!!!!!!

TUESDAY 20TH

A lot was achieved today, Grenville, Ron and Len worked hard on the final leg of the Myatt hedge.

Bill joined them later after fitting a new starter motor, he purchased, to the tractor and it's back working fine now. However, the battery terminal +Ve needs attention -- it keeps coming loose.

After the usual mid-morning break Bill joined the team working on the hedge. 70% of the last leg has been cut but there remains a good morning's work to do the last 30% and a lot of clearing up the cuttings in Myatt's field. All that is then required is a final check on the height and planting the Hawthorn whips left over from the work by the maintenance store.

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TUESDAY 27TH

Weather good and in addition to the normal team Len and Tony joined in making eight of us. This enabled the team to complete the hedge up to the front gate and the final trim from the level crossing to the turning area. Roger also joined in having cleared the pathway behind the pool.

All that remains is to fill in the gaps with hawthorn whips. Whilst the hedges look bear and open they will all green up in the spring but it takes about a couple of years to really see the improvement. Mrs Myatt and son Richard stopped to talk and again were very pleased with the work we have done.

So next month's it's got to be mowing, low branches and the last of the shrubbery – subject of course to the weather. Finally a big thank you to the team who have worked very hard to get the work finished.

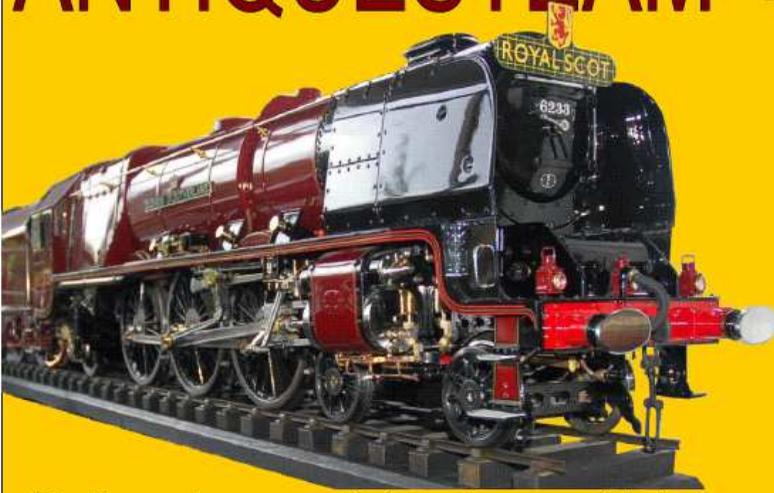
Eric Davies



Work taking place to add the roof to the new shed

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