

December 2020/January 2021

# Steaming Ahead



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**Sutton Coldfield Model Engineering Society**

## **Sutton Coldfield Model Engineering Society**

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**The next edition of Steaming Ahead will be  
published late January 2021**

**Please send articles to the editor by  
January 20th 2021.**

**Front Cover: Memorial Garden**

## Editor's Notes

Welcome to the latest edition of Steaming Ahead, which would normally have reports on Bonfire Night and other activities, and with Santa on the horizon as well. Not so this year, but members have not let us down and the articles are still flowing in. Bill Hall has let us have a copy of an article he wrote for "Engineering in Miniature" back in 1989, which describes the construction of the raised track at Lea Marston. This was later moved to Balleny Green where it continues to be well used.

Apart from all the regular features we have a couple of constructional items and some interesting, if a little concerning, information on page 9 from Peter about the future of suitable coal supplies.

Sadly we also have to mark the death of Allan Duckworth, who many of us knew, and Allan Leary's tribute is on page 6.

I am going to end with my usual request for items for future magazines. They can be of any length on any topic that may be of interest to members, so please send stuff to me at any time. For example:-

- How did you get started in Model Engineering?
- Models you have built or are building.
- More Society history (the locos, the buildings, the site)
- Workshop hints, tips and shortcuts.
- Visits to other clubs, events and railways.



Keep it coming, and have as good a Christmas as possible in the current climate, but mostly, stay safe,

Tony Critchley

Santa arrives in less stressful times

## **Chairman's Chunter for November 2020**

At the time of writing this article, we are just at the mid-point of the second Coronavirus Lockdown of four weeks duration and although all club activities have had to stop for the time being, there may be a chink of light at the end of the tunnel if the vaccines now being tested work as successfully as early indications suggest.

I am happy to be able to report that the Event Planning Team (Tony Critchley, Martyn Cozens, Mike Bentley and Clive Burrows) have made a start on putting together a plan of events commencing March next year. Let's keep our fingers crossed that none (or very few) will have to be cancelled.

With the onset of the colder months the monthly board meetings have reverted to being carried out via conference calls so that the necessary club administration activities can continue more-or-less as normal.

As we have been unable to hold any events this year, the only income coming into the society this year is that from members subscriptions – which do not cover all the fixed outgoing expenses. Unfortunately, we are having to replace the central heating boiler in the clubhouse which has become obsolete and very unreliable. This has been in the offing for some time, but if we don't replace it now, we may well end up with more expensive damage occurring to the fabric of the clubhouse should we have a hard winter.

As it is unlikely that we will be able to resume events until the middle of next year and thus regain that income stream, the board request that any member needing to make a purchase on behalf of the club please obtain prior authorisation from our Treasurer (Chris Greene).

As of now, it is impossible to predict exactly when the lockdown will end and what restrictions will be put in place when that

happens. Your board have therefore decided to wait until the Government announces details before devising any club re-opening plans. If necessary, the timing of the December board meeting will be adjusted so that no time is lost in implementing and advising our members of the re-opening plans.

It is at times like now where being able to pursue a hobby (or hobbies?) pays dividends in many ways, and model engineering is a good one of those. In my case, now that work in the garden has subsided (apart from still having to sweep up the leaves!) the current lockdown discourages one from being away from home, thus more time is available to spend in the workshop. This has enabled me to spend some more time working on Holmside (7¼" Gauge 0-6-0ST), the current phase is to complete the work on the coupling and connecting rods. Being an industrial type engine, the rods are fairly plain

having no fluting on them. None-the-less, it is surprising how much metal there is to remove having hewn them from ½" and 5/8" x 2¼" section bar stock. Although as much material as possible was band-sawed off, it has been quite a time-consuming task milling the rest off with my comparatively light milling machine – but I'm getting there.



Just please don't mention decorating!

Peter McMillan (Chairman)  
20<sup>th</sup> November 2020

## Allan Duckworth.

2020 will be a year remembered in world history. People and families have had to endure cruel experiences. I'm certain we have all or know someone who has lost a dear one.

This week it was my turn.

Allan Duckworth was a great, dear friend. He passed away Friday 20 November.

Allan had suffered debilitating illness for five months, privately. He suffered for almost four months before he let me in to his world.

I met Allan thirty years ago when I popped my head around the door of the Tamworth clubroom and enquired about membership. I recall ten or twelve pairs of eyes and a silence lasting a week it seemed. One member broke the ice and another grunted (no prizes who). Over the years Allan and I endured each other, he thought I was a d\*\*k and I thought he was Mr Happy, not. Time progressed and we recognised each other's commitment to Tamworth club becoming very close friends.

Close friends? Yes but Allan's privacy remained paramount.

Commitment should have been Allan's middle name because once he was involved in a project he was there to see it through. In his early time as a member of SCMES he dug his heart out along with others to install the carriage shed lift, then spent hours and hours with David Mosely surveying the ground level trackbed and building all the track sections when most of the track was relayed. His effort and commitment can never be questioned.

When the building of a SM32 garden railway was given the go ahead, Allan's creative character exploded. The SM32 layout that has gained commendations time and time again is testament in a great part to the effort and imagination of Allan Duckworth.

Allan was a prickly pear, thorny on the exterior but once the shell was breached there was a kind, generous even sweet interior and once you were accepted you had a friend indeed.

It is so unfortunate that Allan's relationship with the society soured but he had his reasons, right or wrong. That said, it cannot be denied, while it lasted he was an asset to the society and his efforts remain a substantial legacy for the club.

My friendship with Allan had many facets but I believe my lasting memories will be the endless time in Tamworth clubhouse discussing our projects so much so that progress was slow. The hours he spent drafting drawings on my behalf can never now be repaid.

I shall miss my miserable mate. Rest in peace.

Allan Duckworth was no fool; the fob on his club keys stated  
"I'm NOT prejudiced – I Hate everyone"

Allan Leary



## An oil pump NRV by Maninshed.

I thought members might find this little item interesting, I take no credit for the idea as it was passed on to me by a member of the Rugeley Society.

So what do we have then? It's a non return valve (NRV) made from a car tyre valve assembly. What is it used for? Standard practice is to fit a spring biased ball and seat NRV in the oil line between the mechanical lubricator and the steam inlet tee on a model steam loco or traction engine. This type of valve can be susceptible to sticking open or not seating properly so steam leaks back into the lubricator tank and emulsifies the oil, also the lubricator will not pump. Using a car or cycle tyre valve gives more reliable sealing however this type of valve should not be used for injectors or steam applications.

How's it's made? First you need a tyre valve assembly, ask at your local tyre centre for some old valves (see top of photo) do make sure it's a proper brass one, the new ones seem to be anodized aluminium, which I think would not be as strong also it would corrode, the valve at the bottom of the picture is an aluminium one. Modus operandi is, first remove the actual valve then cut all the rubber off the brass body you need a sharp knife so take care. Once you have the brass



body cleaned up, the threaded end that the dust cap fits on is conveniently 5/16" x 32tpi, which can be used for chucking. A female threaded inserts probably best so everything's concentric. The other end can be turned down and threaded 7/32" x 40tpi as in the bottom of the photo or a brass sleeve could be silver soldered on and threaded to 5/16" x 32tpi as unit in centre of photo. The overall length is not critical but the ones I made were 13/16" long.

An important note from Chris Greene.

A couple of years ago I started an emergency contact scheme so that, should a member become incapacitated for any reason whilst at Balleny Green, we would be able to notify whoever needed to know without undue delay.

Thankfully since then, although one or two members have had minor accidents, it has never been necessary to contact anyone in a hurry so the scheme has largely been overlooked or forgotten about.

The purpose of this note is to advise mainly the newer members of the existence of this scheme. If anyone needs to know more please phone me on 0121 351 3509 or talk to me as and when meetings reconvene at |Balleny Green

When the scheme was introduced I suggested that we should amend membership application forms to include contact details but it was feared that we might be in breach of data protection rules. GDPR which was undergoing changes at that time.

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**The coal that keeps our boilers fed...**

**What is happening & why?**

For many years now the British coal industry has been in decline, a situation brought about by political pressures and the reduction or completely phasing out of coal usage in homes, railways and industry via the Clean Air Act. However the UK still uses about five million tonnes of coal every year for steel and cement production and another 26,000 tonnes per year by heritage railways. As mines have closed the shortfalls have been made up by importing coal mainly from Russia, America and Australia.

Not all coal is the same!

There are four basic types of coal :

**Lignite** – age up to 250 million years, very soft and mainly used for power generation and manufacture of chemical based products.

**Sub-bituminous** – age around 250 million years, low sulphur content. Mainly used for power generation.

**Bituminous** (types are **Thermal** (or **Steam Coal**) and **Metallurgical**) – Higher carbon and sulphur content than sub-bituminous coal. Steam Coal is used in power generation and steam plants. Metallurgical coal is mainly used in steel and cement manufacture.

**Anthracite** – Oldest of all types of coal, highest carbon and heat content. Mainly used for home heating. Used as a smokeless coal in domestic and industrial applications.

The two types of coal of interest to us as model engineers are Steam Coal and Anthracite.



Definitely Bituminous!

## ***Evolving situation***

As of September 2020 the only UK coal mine producing steam coal is Ffos-Y-Fran near Merthyr Tydfil which is expected to close by 2022.

Prior to that, the only other producer of steam coal in the UK was Kellingley (North Yorkshire) which closed in 2015 and was the last deep mine in the UK.

A new surface mine producing steam grade coal was planned at Highthorn (Northumberland) but after a five year battle was finally refused planning permission in September 8<sup>th</sup> of this year.

Of the handful of currently remaining surface mines, none are producing steam grade coal and all appear due to close within the next year or two.

Under the initiative to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions it appears that it is now a matter of policy (in England, Wales & Scotland) that any Planning Permission Applications submitted for coal mining activities will be automatically be refused.

## ***How we are affected?***

Already, many of the local coal merchants have closed down as a consequence

of the diminishing demand for coal. I think we now have only one local supplier from whom we can purchase supplies.

The type and sizes of coal we use are :

- Anthracite Beans – general use in 3½”, 5” and 7¼” engines
- Anthracite Grains – mainly used in 2½” and 3½” engines
- Steam Coal Nuts – for larger engines and traction engines

As a rough guess we probably get through about ½ tonne in total each year.

## ***What are we doing to temporarily mitigate our situation?***

Already coal availability is rapidly diminishing and the price is rising quickly. When the mine at Ffos-Y-Fran closes it would appear that the only means of obtaining suitable coal will be to import it.

Your board has agreed that we purchase a suitable quantity of the three grades of coal as soon as possible to act as a buffer against probable short-term disruption of supply. Clearly there is a limit to how much we can hold and to how long it will last, so we would ask members to use it miserly.

As an aside, it has been said to me that stored coal loses its calorific value over time. I don't know whether or how much of a problem this might be, but if anyone out there is a chemist and could explain the reasons then I would very much like to know and pass the information on.

## ***The future***

I have not been able to find the exact source of where the anthracite we have obtained in the past has been mined. I assume that it has either been mined alongside steam coal seams in the UK or has been imported.

The Heritage Railway Association has been looking into this supply situation and has reported that although it may be possible for heritage railways to arrange to directly import suitable coal, the cost of doing so for many railways might be simply unaffordable. In addition, the CO2 emissions incurred by transporting the coal half way round the Earth make a complete nonsense of not mining the coal from under our feet whoever the customer is!

It may be possible under a Heritage Railway Association initiative for the heritage railways to group together and combine the buying power of the sector to make it happen.

What we model engineering societies can do to secure supplies for the future is unclear.

Peter McMillan  
19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

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Nick Clark looks at what “Model Engineer”  
was discussing 50 years ago.

While ‘Model Engineer’ magazine has a title that ‘does what it says on the tin!’, there have been other magazines for our hobby. For much of the time from the 1920s to the 1960s English Mechanics was another source of designs and information. LBSC wrote in the magazine, but there was no chat to accompany his instructions, unlike in the column in Model Engineer. Some well known designs of his, including Speedy, Princess Marina and Bantam Cock were published there. Today we have Model Engineer, Model Engineer’s Workshop and Engineering in Miniature. But while there have always been some minor publications, for a few years from the mid 1960s until 1979 when EiM came on the scene ME had the field to itself.

Looking back at ME 50 years ago in 1970 they are several things that stand out. Firstly one of the more important ones for me was that 1970 was the year that I joined the Nottingham SMEE and started to take the ME, from the first issue that year.

Locomotive serials that ran through that year included County Carlow, a GWR 4-4-0 by Don Young - which was interspersed with reminiscences of his time as an apprentice at the LNER Doncaster works. He then went on to start a serial on building Elaine – a 2½” Southern Railway King Arthur class which I suspect was the last 2½” locomotive to be described in full in the magazine. The editor at the time, Martin Evans (not the same Martin Evans who is editor now) often described two locomotives at a time in alternating issues. In 1970 he completed a description of an O gauge propane fired Royal Scot and also the instructions

for a 5" gauge LNER 2-8-0 he called Nigel Gresley; before beginning the write-up of a Midland Railway single, "Princess of Wales." In addition, although not as fully a detailed description, Ken Swan started to write about Bridget his 7¼" 0-4-2 tank. This, by the way, was only the third 7¼" locomotive to be given a constructional serial in ME, the previous two being Midge, a GWR dock tank in the 1930s and Highlander, a Black 5 design, announced in August 1964 but with the first instalment not published until January 1965.

F.L Davies described in a long series how to make diesel electric locomotives, concentrating particularly on the control gear. No electronics but contactors worked by cams and rotating drums with brass contacts fixed to them.

A description of a small (but only in American terms!) 7½" gauge railway was very carefully described as being in a small town called Cupertino, near San Francisco, California – perhaps now Apple are based there more people have heard of it in this country!

Moving away from Locomotives, 1970 saw the completion of the New Model Engineer Traction Engine – a 1" scale design by L.C. Mason that has since proved very popular with builders.

During the year the death of Edgar T. Westbury occurred. The designer of many IC and steam engines and a championship winning model hydroplane racer he wrote for ME for nearly fifty years, editing it for a short period after the death of Percival Marshall its founder. Under various pseudonyms he also wrote about movie and slide projectors and workshop equipment, including the Dore-Westbury light vertical milling machine, one of the first that could be built in the average amateur's workshop. Apart from his 4 cylinder engines Seal (15cc) and Sealion (30cc OHC) engines he also described an IC engined road roller and wrote the first (or only??) constructional series on an IC engined locomotive, the 3½" gauge '1831'

Also to pass away in 1970 was AWG Tucker of Bramhall in

Cheshire, one of the finest model engineers ever – winner of several silver medals for locomotive models at the ME exhibition, two championship cups and also the Duke of Edinburgh's Trophy - twice. He made a beautiful 5" gauge GNR Atlantic, a ¾" scale 0-4-0 + 0-4-0 Garratt and an immaculate model of the GER 'Decapod' for 3½" gauge amongst others.

Anyone who complains about the cost of 'brand name' tools today might be interested to see the advert from Buck & Ryan where they advertise a Myford ML7 at £106 and the Super 7 at £148 without motors or chucks. An Austrian Emcomat 7, admittedly motorised with a mill/drill attached was of high quality, but a little expensive at £299 as was a FOBCO bench drill at £56-15s-0p. An Elliott Unimat was £39. In another issue was an advert for apprenticeships in the Royal Navy, suggesting that in your early twenties you could rise to become a Chief Petty Officer earning over £1600 pa (if married!)

Finally, writing about the metric (SI) system, Martin Evans stated that "It is not by any means certain that the country as a whole will embrace it. In view of this I think it would be premature for the model engineering movement to make any changes just yet"

Nick Clark

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What are we doing today?

Hello Folks!

What a difference a year makes! In 2019 we had numerous birthday parties, club visits, a garden party, and a rather wet and soggy bonfire night, and we should be now preparing for our Santa Specials weekend. I think "What are we doing today Brian?" should for the present time be called "What are we NOT doing today John"

Well unfortunately we are back in another lock down again, and for how long, who knows! So I expect it'll be back to our sheds and jobs in the home again, and I'm sure Tony will welcome any information, stories or other interests that we are up to, until we are able to get back to Little Hay again.



We have now received some more sleeper material, which will now allow us, when we can, to continue to replace some of the old deteriorating wooden one's, which Reece and Peter Edwards have already started to do.

## Kind Thoughts!

You will have read elsewhere in the magazine of the sad death of Allan Duckworth. Our thoughts go out to all his family and friends.

To Peter Robinson who is not well again, and Mike Bentley who has been in hospital we send our best wishes for a speedy recovery, and let's not forget any other members and their families who are not so well at the moment.

I'm pleased to report that Brian Dale has at long last, had his operation on 28th September, and is now on the way to recovery, and to help it along is now able to get back in his shed and do a bit of modelling again. and he sends his thanks to everyone for all their messages of best wishes for his recovery to good health.

John Genders.

## **Focus on Safety –November 2020**

Unfortunately due to the second lockdown we have had to close the site again.

Overall, we have been lucky that we have been able to open the site up to members since June but this has not been the case for a number of other clubs.

There is a lot of information on the government website concerning the regulations and it is difficult to establish which applies to our club. Also, the different tiers of lockdown creates a problem when members attend from different regions around the West Midlands and wider afield.

Furthermore, do we come under the auspices of social activities, or recreational activities, or work activities as this makes a big difference as to what we are permitted to do?

From my view we fall into all three.

- 1/ Members come down to socialise and talk to other members.
- 2/ Members come down to run their locomotives which is recreational.
- 3/ Members come down to work. Gardening team and any maintenance on the site.

This makes the situation with the government permission on how we can operate our club unclear in certain circumstances.

The recent situation with Birmingham in Tier 2 and Lichfield in Tier 1 also creates conflicts with our temporary rules.

For example, members from Tier 2 are not allowed to congregate inside. So no use of the workshop or clubhouse. Tier 1 can. Which rules do we apply?

Where do we go from here?

The board will take all these points in consideration when further news is published on what is allowed after 2<sup>nd</sup> December and will advise all members promptly.

Meanwhile, I can concentrate on amalgamating the newly published document “HS2020:- Managing Health and Safety at

passenger carrying miniature railways” into our documentation. For those of you who are looking for things to do during lockdown, have time on their hands and are looking for some intellectual stimulation, I have attached a link to this document on the website. If you have any comments, thoughts or suggestions please email them to me at [martynscot@aol.com](mailto:martynscot@aol.com).

From my behalf there is not much I can report other than what I am doing to keep myself sane. I have recently completed my first project of building a “Speedy” model which I was able to run round the high level track on the Sunday before lockdown. This has taken me about 4 years to complete and I have enjoyed most of the build. I look forward to giving this another run with more payload when permitted. I have now moved on to building a Paddington locomotive which I have recently acquired. This is substantially built by some good modelling engineers and requires the sheet metal work, piping, painting and approvals to complete. At my rate this will probably take another year. I hope everyone remains well and I look forward to seeing everyone down at Balleny Green when we open up again.

Thank you  
Martyn Scott, Safety Officer

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“I told you I could fit he radiator nicely into that corner!”  
From Bill Hall

# Elevated Track by Bill Hall

## Part 1.

Many years ago I was asked to give a talk on concrete at a model engineering society meeting. Why members of a model engineering society should be interested in such a subject was beyond my comprehension. "Oh, it might be easier for them to understand if you relate it to a 6"x8" beam" said the Programme Secretary.

The Society's loco on the original track, (now on display in the club-house.)

After a quarter of an hour into the talk a motion had been put forward, seconded by all present and carried with only me voting against, that I prepare proposals for reconstructing the Society's track at Lea Marston in Warwickshire, using an concrete beam cast around the existing steel strip multigauge track.



Several factors had combined to give problems when running. For benefit of readers these were as I recall through the mists of time: (a) expansion distortion at the end of one straight; (b) local settlement on soft ground and on the embankment, aggravated by a high water table; (c) the original rectangular section steel had distorted which proved difficult to correct; and (d) washers.

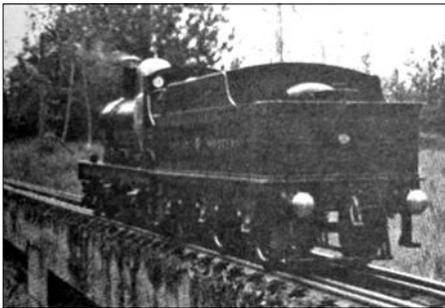
Deep in the folk lore and legend of model engineering societies are past events which stir our longer serving members who were privileged to have known the characters involved but who, alas, were long ago called to that greater workshop. Such was the battle of the washers. Apparently after much calculation and midnight oil being burnt it was decided to incorporate washers on curved multigauge track for 5", 3½" and 2½" so that locomotives would not bind their wheel flanges and de-rail. Some locomotives stayed on, some derailed, some fell through and our slide rules required new gib strips! When I joined the Society, the washers had been selectively removed but the problems were not entirely

overcome, nor the theories proven conclusively.

When constructed the original track was without gradients and the radius on all curves was 40 foot. The members decided that gradients would give a more interesting road for the driver and instructed accordingly through the committee that gradients should be incorporated - the maximum gradient was to be  $\frac{3}{8}$ " for each 5'-8" bay to allow for 2½" gauge limitations. At the summit one bay rose  $\frac{3}{4}$ " to sort out the drivers' skills. Concrete beams were to be cast around the existing steel track and aluminium rail would be used to provide the same gauges. A voice at the back called out "what, no washers?" and "tea break" was immediately declared by the Chairman.

British Rail design criteria was consulted, and the scaled 6" maximum super-elevation for 5" gauge was considered excessive for safety if a train was halted on a corner with passengers! A super-elevation of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " in 8" was adopted with a transition over one bay length. The maximum plan transition was limited by an existing 18" concrete block supporting the columns, but this was generally adjusted and has proved remarkably smooth and effective.

Expansion was the next major talking point once the decision had been made to use aluminium track. Calculation showed that both the steel and the concrete beam would move approximately 2%"



Weathering and mossy growth on the surface locally after 10 years—the track is as good as the day it was built.

and the aluminium would move 4%" over a 100 degree F temperature range. A recommendation was put forward that  $\frac{1}{16}$ " joints be put at 8'-0" centres. This was convenient because the rails were supplied in 16'-0" lengths and would be transported by goodwill of members. Upon hearing the cost of additional fishplates the thou' merchants reckoned there were

three to spare and they carried the day! Portable track fund raising efforts were well supported and the treasurer gave a green light in June 1972 to proceed with the project.

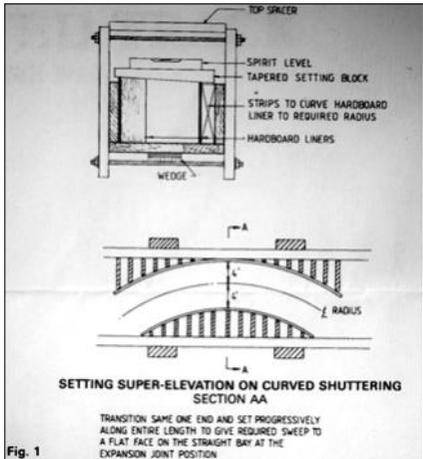


Fig. 1

During this activity, levels had been taken on all support positions and a gradient profile produced with a 6" overall difference for the new trackbed. Shuttering had been designed and a rough packing thickness determined to support the shuttering at each column. Each shutter consisted of an easily assembled and moved unit which was equally easily reassembled for final optical levelling. (fig 1). The alignment was given from a string centreline from a radius peg. Each

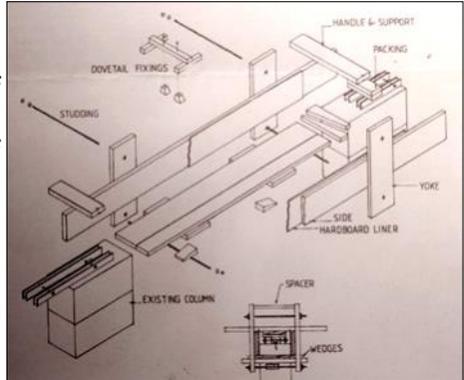
of five curved shutters and three straights were used eight times and the reversible transition was used six times. Levelling and line alignment was only required four times on the 482 ft track by concreting alternative bays and then infilling the following week — why make work? Included were dovetail plastic fixing blocks positioned on a cross batten which also helped to tie the shutter and prevent it spreading when hand compacting the concrete, but these did restrict the trowelling.

The shutter sides consisted of some 6' nominal sawn packing case timbers which were lined with hardboard to give a smooth surface and a level top edge. The theory was that we would be able to trowel off and fix the track directly to the concrete. This did not work out too well in practice, though it was by no means anything to be ashamed of. The curved shutters were set out full size on cardboard on the lawn at home to the neighbours' amusement and the offsets were measured. Strips of wood to the required thickness were nailed onto 6"x1" timber and the hardboard was added as before.

Each side had two yokes attached through which 'all thread' rod -

studding - was passed top and bottom. This studding was cheaper than using bolts and was re-used later on the fencing. The bottom board was clamped between the side yokes and located vertically by a wedge placed on top of each bottom 'stud'. A timber spacer was placed between the yokes at the top. The end gaps were closed by folding wedges positioned between the column face and the bottom shutter ends. The stop ends were put between shutter sides and propped against the packers to contain the concrete at the ends.

When stripping the mould only a spanner was needed. A couple of turns on the top nuts, take off one nut on each bottom piece of studding and pull them out. The bottom dropped off, the sides were picked up as a unit and moved to their next designated position where a quick application of mould oil and re-assembly took place.



This article is reproduced from “Engineering in Miniature” magazine, March 1989, by kind permission of Chris Deeth.

Part two will follow in the February/March Steaming Ahead.



The club loco on display today.

## The Bure Valley Railway

I was lucky enough to go on a 5 day coach holiday to Great Yarmouth, the week before this latest lock down, and although we had our fair share of rain, it was warm for the time of year and we were lucky enough to have wall to wall sunshine on our free day.

One of our days out was to the Bure Valley Railway, which is a nine-mile 15-inch narrow gauge railway operating on a not-for-profit basis. Runs between the historic market town of Aylsham and bustling town of Wroxham, at the heart of the Norfolk Broads.

The standard gauge East Norfolk Railway opened the line from Wroxham to Aylsham on 1st January 1880. The line was soon taken over by the much larger Great Eastern Railway and in 1923 it became part of the London North Eastern Railway. The line always struggled to show a profit and was considered for closure

as early as the 1930's. It was saved by the opening of RAF Coltishall. This was the base for Sir Douglas Bader during the second world war when traffic was brisk, supplying both munitions and personnel for the base. With peace in 1945, tranquillity returned to the line. In 1948, the railways were nationalised, and the line became part of the newly formed British Railways. Even before the infamous Beeching Report of 1963 was published, it had become apparent to the new owners that the line was losing money and in 1952 passenger services were withdrawn.



However, freight continued to show a healthy profit and ensured the line's survival. Freight traffic continued until 1982 when British Rail finally closed the line.

The track remained in place until 1984 when it was finally lifted and many thought that this was the end of the route as a railway. In 1989, a group of enthusiasts with the support of the local authority felt it would be possible to re-open the route as a 15-inch gauge steam railway. The reason for the choice of the narrow gauge was to allow a footpath to parallel the railway for its entire length and the Bure Valley Railway opened on 10th July 1990. Passenger numbers have continued to grow, and the railway has gone from strength to strength, carrying more passengers each year than it did in its previous incarnation.

John Genders.



# Gallery

Leaves on the line (1)



Leaves on the line (2)

The neighbour's been trimming his hedge again.



A new railcar for the LD&C,  
(More next time)



In the next edition:-

Part 2 of Bill's article about the raised track

Maninshed writes about Floating Piston Valves

An SM32 railcar modelled on the Harz Schmalspurbahnen

Plus items which lots of members will be sending in!