



MAIDSTONE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SPRING 2003



TRACK



WORKS



THE START OF
THE RUNNING
SEASON

WE'VE GOT
OUR OWN
LOCO NOW!



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2002 / 2003

The 2002 season was as busy as ever, with a good turnout of locos most Sundays. Despite losing a few running days at the end of the season the track revenue remains on a par with previous years. The charity and goodwill runs, which are part of our summer programme, were also generously supported. Disappointingly, we still had the ongoing difficulty of manning the station, with the same few people filling the breach.

The renewal and painting of the trolley store ceiling was completed and the clubroom redecorated. Unfortunately, we suffered at the hands of the vandals and graffiti artists, which necessitated the bricking up of the side windows and application of anti-graffiti paint on all shutters.

At the end of the running season we started a heavy winter maintenance programme. Track columns have been refurbished, beams numbered to assist in easy identification of any problem areas in the future and bridge decking extended. The rebuild of the original bend, between the station and bridge, which entailed the casting and replacement of 18 new beams, is almost complete. All of which, would not have been possible without the commitment of the Wednesday and Sunday volunteers.



The plans have been passed for a new trolley store, with associated sidings and traverser, a major undertaking that will need the full support of all who are able to assist.

Thanks to all who helped throughout the year, whether making tea, mixing concrete, running their engines, or generally lending a hand at anything that needed to be done, and good luck for the coming season.

Geoff Riddell

7th March 2003.

WORKING FOR HORNBY HOBBIES IN THE LATE 1970s part two by David Chalk

After steam toys, myself with two other workmates were informed by the Director: "That there are too many companies also making slot car racing sets like our Scalextric. So I wish to leapfrog the opposition. We require a new type where you can steer the cars anywhere on a track surface, but not in any way radio controlled".

I stumbled over the idea of using two electric motors, one to drive each rear wheel independently, thereby able to steer. Myself, an electronics expert and a designer put the idea forward. The Director said, "Go ahead, have a go", but he wanted the scale of the cars to be as Scalextric. The largest Scalextric car of the time was the Rover 2000 Saloon, not large enough to house all the bits. So we used a model of a Volkswagen Golf, a Plastic Kit, about 4" long, plenty of space, just to prove the idea. The road surface was slabs of resin about 1' by 9" with 3/4" width strips of tin plate and 3/4" width resin dead flush. We cast 3 a day until we had a fair area, we soldered wires on the underside to ensure conductance of electrical signals.

Below each car were three 3/8 diameter carbon plungers, set on a pitch diameter so two were always in contact with the tin strips, with diodes on the pickups so all electrical signals could be transmitted. We used a steering wheel, throttle pedal, and it worked, you could drive at any angle across the track fast, slow, and turn round. The most difficult thing was to steer a car when coming fast towards you around obstacles. The snags were the cost of the electronics in each car, twice because of two motors, each car cost £50 and you need two to make it a game, so the interest was lost. Maybe this day and age with up to date electronics it might have been feasible.

Space Craft 3.D.S. (Three dimensional system)

This was a model spacecraft which ran on plastic track 3/4" x 3/8" x 18", four steel rails moulded in, with support holes on one side, which made a pylon type support, having a double sided 1" square sticky pad base, so that it could be attached to the floor, wall, or ceiling. Four tracks supplied power for flashing lights etc. All made in Hong Kong.

Back to Scalextric racing. I made a revolving track surface to simulate oil on the track, but the cars passed over so fast, and spun the discs with no effect to the car. Then I made a pukker racer, independent rear suspension, a copy of the Lotus 22 Formula 3 car, rear drive shafts with 4 universal joints which were about 1/4" diameter 1/4" long, but it was no faster than with an old live axle rear end. I guess I lost power from the motor, having to drive all the extra bits (we had to use the Mitsubishi motor). There were times we just had to give time to just race Scalextric cars, trying new bits like sponge rubber or silicone rubber rear tyres, lap counters etc. We had a dead smooth test track, anything up to 18-foot straights and 4 lanes.

From a model shop in Bromley I bought a model slot car, which was the same scale as Scalextric in the form of a Ford GT 40, which had an American 12 volt monogram motor, soft rear tyres, at last I could see off anything the lads at work made. I had to keep quiet about this as when running the power was there, so much so that the Scalextric plastic hand control overheated.



Now when chatting with my Hornby workmates who are all retired, like myself, we all agree that working in those days was not perhaps doing a proper job. Anyway, Scalextric is still going, with the railways, so we could not have done much harm to the company.

FRED'S MINIATURE LIVE STEAM LOCOMOTIVE *by Ed Nutter*

Fred had longed for a miniature live steam locomotive since he was a boy. He could remember being taken to a town carnival and seeing boys and girls, mums and dads riding on a miniature railway. A miniature live steam locomotive operating on a short up and down track pulled the train. How he marvelled at that wonderful little engine pulling all those passengers.

Many years had now passed since that day during his childhood and though he had lived an eventful life, married, had a family and managed a small successful business, until his middle age he had never come across another of these miniature steam engines until he happened to visit a public park whilst on holiday. Tucked away in one obscure corner of the park was a passenger carrying miniature railway. How he marvelled at the several miniature steam engines pulling many times their own weight around an oval track. He now just had to have one of these engines.

Now Fred was a bit of a loner and was reluctant to join a club. He made enquiries to the availability of these engines and was told of kit engines being readily available. He visited factory showrooms and gazed at displays of working model steam locomotives. He found it hard to understand how he had not learned of the existence of such models until now.

Fred was a successful man and money had never been a problem. The nearest he had got to doing anything himself was to lift the telephone!

Fred did so want to be able to make one of these engines himself. He enquired as to the difficulty of assembling a machined kit and was persuaded that almost anyone could do it. He therefore selected a kit engine to build and placed his order. He couldn't wait until the first stage of his kit arrived. He started to collect together a few basic tools: saws, files, hammers, screwdrivers, spanners etc.

It was some six weeks or more later when having nearly forgotten about his order a carrier pulled up at his house one Saturday morning with a large box. Suddenly he remembered about his order for a real working miniature live steam locomotive. His heart raced as he collected the box from the deliveryman. He was however surprised how light the box was for its size.

He hurried with the box into the house and placed it on the kitchen table and cut the straps. Opening the box revealed reams of paper shredding which after removing and littering the kitchen floor revealed a few chassis components, nuts and bolts etc at the bottom of the box. He carefully checked all the paper shredding to ensure he hadn't missed any small item, and then cleared all the packing material away leaving the few components of the first stage of his miniature live steam locomotive. He now pulled out a chair, sat down, scratched his head and gazed at these few components. Included were several pages of type written notes and sketches describing how to assemble the components. Painting should be done before assembly, they said.

Fred now had a hobby. He was building a miniature live steam locomotive. Television and football were now of little interest to him. He went out and purchased some paint and brushes in colours, which he thought suitable and after covering the kitchen table with newspaper, commenced with painting the steel chassis and cast iron wheels. A short while later he noticed that the buffer beam red he had used for the buffer beams and inside of the main chassis members, was drying into brown blotches. This puzzled him, as the paint seemed to be dry. He read the instructions again this time reading a bit further on. 'Do not use water based paint' was emphasised in bold underlined print. He checked the instructions on the paint tin. It included the words: wash out brushes in cold water. Must be a water based gloss paint he mused. His first mistake. What should he do now he wondered?

He tried sandpapering and scraping but the paint was deep in the 'grain' of the cast iron and mild steel. He discussed the problem with a painter and decorator. 'Best thing is to burn it off' he advised. Fred remembered having an old propane gas blowlamp in his shed and having searched it out, dusted it off and checked it for gas. The attached gas cylinder was about half full he thought. So he turned on the gas and struck a match and held it to the gas. Whoosh, not only did the gas ignite at the burner but at the neck where it attached the gas cylinder. Fred quickly threw the blowlamp into the garden where he was able to smother the flames. The washer seal between bottle and torch was perished.

This had now put him into shock and the building of his miniature live steam locomotive was abandoned for a few weeks.

A while later Fred had been doing a bit of gardening involving hedge cutting and cutting back of woody shrubs. A bonfire was needed. Quite a bit of dry wood was available and a good hot bonfire quickly disposed of the garden rubbish. It suddenly dawned on him to put the painted miniature live steam locomotive components in the hot embers of the bonfire to burn off the paint. This he promptly did. He intended to leave them in the fire and collect them before retiring to bed, but he forgot. Later that night it rained heavily and quickly put the bonfire out.

On waking in the morning Fred suddenly remembered the components of his beloved miniature live steam locomotive still in the bonfire. He rushed out of the house and carefully picked out the cast iron wheels, which now seemed cleaned of paint but were covered with a heavy coating of red/brown rust. He picked out the frames, which were not only covered with carbon and rust but were now heavily distorted. He threw the components in the shed in disgust and retreated to the house.

Some weeks later he got out the frames and wheels and inspected their sorry state. Having now acquired an electric drill with abrasive attachments he set to work cleaning up the components. After several hours work the frames and wheels closely resembled the condition they were delivered in except that arises were all well rounded and the frames had many hammer marks were Fred had attempted to straighten them. However Fred was quite pleased with the result. Having now taken the trouble to acquire specially formulated oil base paint for model locomotives, Fred started painting the cast iron wheels. He found is very laborious painting the many spokes and suddenly had an idea. He found a shallow vessel large enough to take a wheel. Emptied sufficient paint in it to just cover a wheel when dipped in it. In no time at all he had applied paint to all the wheels. He now painted the frames.

After a couple of days he inspected his handiwork. The frames seemed fine, but the paint on the wheels seemed to have a crinkly skin appearance, which could be scraped away with a fingernail revealing soft unhardened paint beneath. He again consulted his 'painter & decorator' friend. 'Put them in the oven mate' was the advice he received. This he did which seemed to harden off the paint but the top 'skinned' layer of paint remained deformed and wrinkled. However he was quite pleased with the result, which he decided to accept. He did have a spot of bother with Mrs Fred who kept complaining that the oven smelt and the food had an odd taste for several days.

Fred was now quite excited because he could now get on with bolting his miniature live steam locomotive chassis together. Assembly of the frames and stretchers went without too much of a problem but he did find that some of the hexagon bolts were inferior as the heads easily sheared off while using the 9" adjustable spanner he had acquired. However each stretcher had several bolts attaching it so one or two missing did not seem too important. One of the next jobs was to stick the wheels on the axles. This surprised Fred. Never had he heard of sticking metal to metal. He carefully read the instructions on the small bottle of adhesive which was quite clearly intended for the gluing of metal axles to wheels. He checked the fit of the axles to the wheels. The holes did not seem to be large enough as the axles wouldn't fit.

He had read the instructions on the glue bottle, which stated that the joint should allow a sufficient gap for the glue. Having found a large round file he set about easing the borehole in the wheel. The first several file strokes removed mostly rust before cutting metal. He then tried the axle in the first wheel. The axle now fell into the wheel hole with considerable side play. He was now concerned that the wheel was too loose. Easing the next wheel he was much more careful and just removed mainly rust from the borehole. He glued the wheels to the axles carefully aligning them by using the loaned quartering jig and set them aside to set. A day or two later on checking his handy work he suddenly remembered reading 'be sure to assemble the axle boxes and eccentrics to the axles before attaching the wheels'. Fred had made another mistake! How was he going to get the wheels off he wondered?

Fred now quickly lost interest in making his live steam model locomotive. He had spent many hours preparing, painting and assembling the chassis and considered the time spent to be beyond all reason. He calculated that he had probably spent over fifty hours so far on his model and the chassis alone was far from complete. He abandoned the building of his live steam model locomotive and slipped back into his usual routine.

It was now some three years later when Fred received a telephone call from his married daughter Jane. 'Isn't it about time you came to see us?' she asked. Fred felt a pang of guilt. It must be several years since he last travelled the length of the country to see his daughter and family. 'We have something I want you to see' his daughter continued. Several weeks later Fred and Mrs Fred arrived at their daughter's house during the middle of a Saturday afternoon after starting out early that morning. Fred immediately noticed how much his grandson Simon had grown. Now in his middle teenage years his voice had matured and he now stood slightly taller than Fred. Following dinner and much enjoyable chat exchanging all the latest news and gossip, Fred's daughter Jane announced 'we are taking you for a drive in the morning, be sure and be ready by 9.30am'.

Next morning after breakfast they all piled into Fred's son-in-law's car and set off, destination unknown to Fred. Fred did notice that Simon was not about but didn't give it any more thought. Half hour or so later they drove through the gates of their nearest town public park. Fred looked puzzled. His daughter smiled. The car turned a corner and there to his amazement was a miniature railway. A group of people obscured a section of the steaming bays.

Fred got out of the car and walked towards the group of people. Suddenly he spotted his grandson Simon busily tending a model locomotive. Fred's eyes glazed over, it was his locomotive, the real live steam locomotive he had always wanted and now here it was resplendent in exactly the livery he had always imagined.

Simon looked up and their eyes met. Fred didn't know what to say. Simon grinned as did the group of club members. Simon continued to tend Fred's engine, which was now in steam with the needle of the pressure gauge nudging the red line. Simon opened the fire door to cool the fire and indicated to his friends that he was ready for the track.

Fred's engine was now moved to the track and coupled to a passenger trolley. Fred felt so proud as he travelled on the train driven by his grandson and pulled by his real live steam model locomotive. He was now so pleased that he had passed the kit of parts to his daughter and redirected the remaining kit stages those several years earlier. Apparently Simon had approached their local Model Engineering Society who had been delighted to accept him as an active member and the membership had given him an enormous amount of encouragement, help and advice enabling him to complete and operate Fred's real live steam model locomotive.

All persons and events in this article are fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons and/or events is purely coincidental.

NEVER FAR AWAY by Paul Rolleston

Following on from Anoraknaphobic Reflections. At the close of which I had covered my life up to the age of seven, by such time my train spotting and model railway activities had built a firm foundation for my progression in the following years to becoming a fully-fledged Anorak. Looking back over my life I now realise that, whatever I did and wherever I went, I was Never Far Away from a railway. Perhaps the patron saint of Anoraks (St.?) was guiding me on my way.

I lived not far away from Gillingham Strand, which was the closest thing to a seaside for many people living in the Medway Towns. To this resort we would walk from Twydall, along the cinder path past the cemetery for some Ad-Hoc train spotting en-route, visit the Gads Hill/Dial road relatives on the way, where Granny would usually give us some pocket money for our day trip to the 'Seaside'. The Strands main attractions were a small beach, three open air pools; paddling, swimming and boating, tennis courts, a putting green AND a 7 ¼" gauge passenger carrying steam railway.

It was a short 'L' shaped track with the train going out forwards and returning in reverse and on each run it went through a tunnel which doubled up as an engine shed. There was always someone on board who had to scream in the tunnel. It would take the threat of ice cream to tear me away from this particular attraction. The aroma of the steam engines had to work hard to make itself appreciated over the pong from the adjacent gasworks and also the Medway mud if the tide was out.

In later years the two steam locos were replaced with a diesel engine and making it an oval circuit lengthened the track. It is sad to see that the original paddling pool, and the boating pool have now become car parks, but we must have progress. However, I still have my childhood memories and recalling them to write Newsletter articles seems to evoke other related experiences and therefore I will digress slightly for one paragraph.

I wasn't totally single minded in my boyhood activities; there were other things in life for boys of my age back in the fifties. Mode of transport for small boys on any expedition, Trainspotting or otherwise, was as varied as the coats (Anoraks Ha!) we wore; - Shanks' pony, bikes, scooters, roller skates or a barrow as we called them, but in other areas of the country they were known as soap carts; because the body of the vehicle was a soap box, as also was used at Hyde Park Corner by Orators, Preachers and anybody else who wanted to have a good squawk about something. Anyway, the 'Barrow' was probably the next most important item in the life of many small boys after train spotting, especially me as I didn't 'ave no bike in them days. Its building was very much the product of a Heath Robinson imagination, Artful Dodger resourcefulness in acquiring bits and pieces and a Harry Hayseed indifference to the unconstructive advice given by the impromptu design team that always seemed to gather around anyone who was trying to build a barrow.

In those days, not long after the war, there was a prevalent mentality that made people hang on to things, not only because it may be useful at some later date, but also because most things had a street value and this was certainly the case regarding wheels suitable for barrows. It has taken me half my lifetime to shake off this hoard it culture but I do now actually throw some things away. The most favoured source of barrow wheels was the large prams (hands up all who can remember them being called Perambulators) and second best was pushchairs. The acquisition of wheels was just as much an activity in itself, as the actual building of the barrow. The 'wheeling' and dealing that took place was educational in that it helped to develop an astuteness that we know today as being Streetwise.

May I digress again here slightly? Just a little bit more, thank you.

There came a point in my life, much much later in my life, when I found myself treading the same path with my youngest son Oliver who was eight years old at the time. He wanted to build a Buggy (Barrow), one that could fly, float, submerge and other impossible things. I told him tales of my experiences in trying to get hold of wheels but he kept on and on and on like kids do until I couldn't ignore him any longer.

He desperately wanted to build a Buggy but I knew that it would be very difficult to find suitable wheels. However, it's a father's duty and all that sort of thing, so I hunted high and low for wheels on axles until in the end I found myself buying a whole pram, second-hand for £30, just to get the wheels. The original concept of an 'ard-up kids' project has now been superseded by a Go for Broke and Build It at Any Cost strategy.

Anyway, I digressed a bit didn't I, and I shall carry on digressing.

By the time that Dad left the Army (Signal Corp) he had acquired a trade skill as a radio mechanic and had a job in a local electrical wholesalers repairing all manner of appliances. In due course he learned enough to be able to repair televisions as well, in early days they were quite prone to developing faults, and eventually he developed a nice little spare time earner repairing televisions at home. Consequently we nearly always had a TV in the house, it wouldn't have been ours, but it was there and so we watched it if we had the chance.

I am now coming to the point, whilst I am pounding the keyboard, here I am also enjoying music on the computers media player, Scheherzades' The Young Prince and Princess which, whenever I hear it, reminds of an early Children's TV serialised story: The Railway Children, in glorious Black and White. This music, if my memory serves me correctly, was the signature tune to the programme that brought Sunday evening to a close before bath and bedtime for small boys. A railway was Never Far Away.

Now, back to pre digression. Apart from trips to the Gillingham Strand there was a special occasion when a more adventurous seaside trip took us to Sheerness on a paddle steamer; the Medway Queen. It was my first trip on a ship and there was such a lot of things for a small boy to take in; the funnel belching smoke, the paddles churning the water and making roaring splashing sounds, but the best bit was the observation window to the engine room through which I could see the massive crank and connecting rod driving the paddles. Dad had to lift me up for that and by the time we got to Sheerness his arms must have ached.

A year later we did it again, but this time we stayed on the ship when it got to Sheerness, 'Are we going to get off Dad?' 'No Son we are going on to Southend'. The Southend lights could be seen from our house at Twydall, on a clear night across the Medway and Thames Estuaries, and as that was the closest I had ever been to Southend, so, this seaside trip became even more exciting. Steaming across the Thames estuary from Sheerness was an additional adventure for that day trip, but more was to come. When we disembarked from the ship onto the pier head we had a short walk until we found the last thing I expected; - a Train. The longest pier in the country had a railway for the best part of its length. It wasn't steam, it was electric, but none the less once again I was Never Far Away from a railway.

At the age of ten we (Mum, Dad, me and my brother) went on our first ever holiday, to Dymchurch. Here trainspotting entered a new realm: The RHDR. We arrived at Pipers caravan and chalet field in the back of a Threshers van that was driven by a friend of dad who was the Manager of a local Off-Licence. To us this was arriving in Style.

We got ourselves settled in and then went for a walk from the caravan site into Dymchurch and with perfect timing ‘Hurricane’ crossed the road ahead of us. I could not believe my eyes. At the distance we were from it, the track couldn’t be seen and therefore it came as a quite a surprise when Hurricane emerged from behind some trees and bushes. Dad had told me that we were going to see it but when I did, it was totally unexpected and at the same time it was so impressive that to this day the memory is still vivid in my mind, and frequently recalled.

One evening, on our way back from the town, we waited at the crossing for a train to go through and when it did the engine was spitting fireflies into the twilight. I hadn’t seen a firefly before and so that event became another magic memory. Memorable was the holiday, Dymchurch and the R.H.D.R. and again, for the whole week, I was never far away from a railway.

I think it’s time to digress again here for a few lines. In later working life I was sent on some career development courses and on one such course I was being coached in the skills of public speaking, by an actor of the Shakespearian / Thespian ilk (Alas poor Yorick, and all that heavy stuff). As part of the course I had to present speeches on my life’s most profound experiences.

I’ll draw a veil over some of them, but on the subject of ‘A Memorable Experience’ I related the story of how on the first day of this holiday I saw this 15-inch mechanical marvel called Hurricane. The presentation of my speech went well but as you might expect, the subject matter affected my standing in the company as I had proven myself to be a Trainspotting Anorak and consequently thereafter I also suffered the attendant contemptuous attitudes of colleagues who were uninformed heathen Philistines and that had no appreciation for such fine things.

Ultimately I was made redundant from the same company that had earlier sought to nurture and develop my abilities, and I will always have the thought at the back of my mind that my self confessed anoraknophobia may have contributed to my involuntary departure.

To be continued.

IT’S A FARE COP:

*Pleas note that fares have been increased for all members of the public from 20p to **30p** with immediate effect. The last increase up to 20p was over a decade ago. This is to help raise funds towards the improvements planned, i.e. trolley storage, siding, fencing, gauge one layout, which will all take time, manpower (or rather member power) and, especially, money for materials. We are also putting out the donation box should any of the public wish to give more (as we are cheaper than many attractions). In fact if any member feels they would also like to donate money towards the improvements, then please feel free!*

NEW MEMBERS MUG SHOTS

WE WELCOME:



Allan Springett, an electrical fitter from East Farleigh, whose activities have included model aircraft, woodworking including turning and cabinet making, and motorcycle restoration.

Brian Remnant, an electrical engineer from Dymchurch. Some of you may know him already as he is a member of Romney, and is often seen driving his Sweet Pea, accompanied by wife Margaret. His model making activities are live steam locos etc.



Carol Calverley, a carer, better known to most of us as Paul's mum, from Maidstone, joins us to support Paul and the Club. Well done Carol! She is pictured here behind Paul and the Club Loco.

Chris Eden-Green, a student, from Larkfield, whose model making activities so far have included 00 gauge models.



And here are the two pictures of new(ish) members I missed from the Autumn 2002 newsletter:

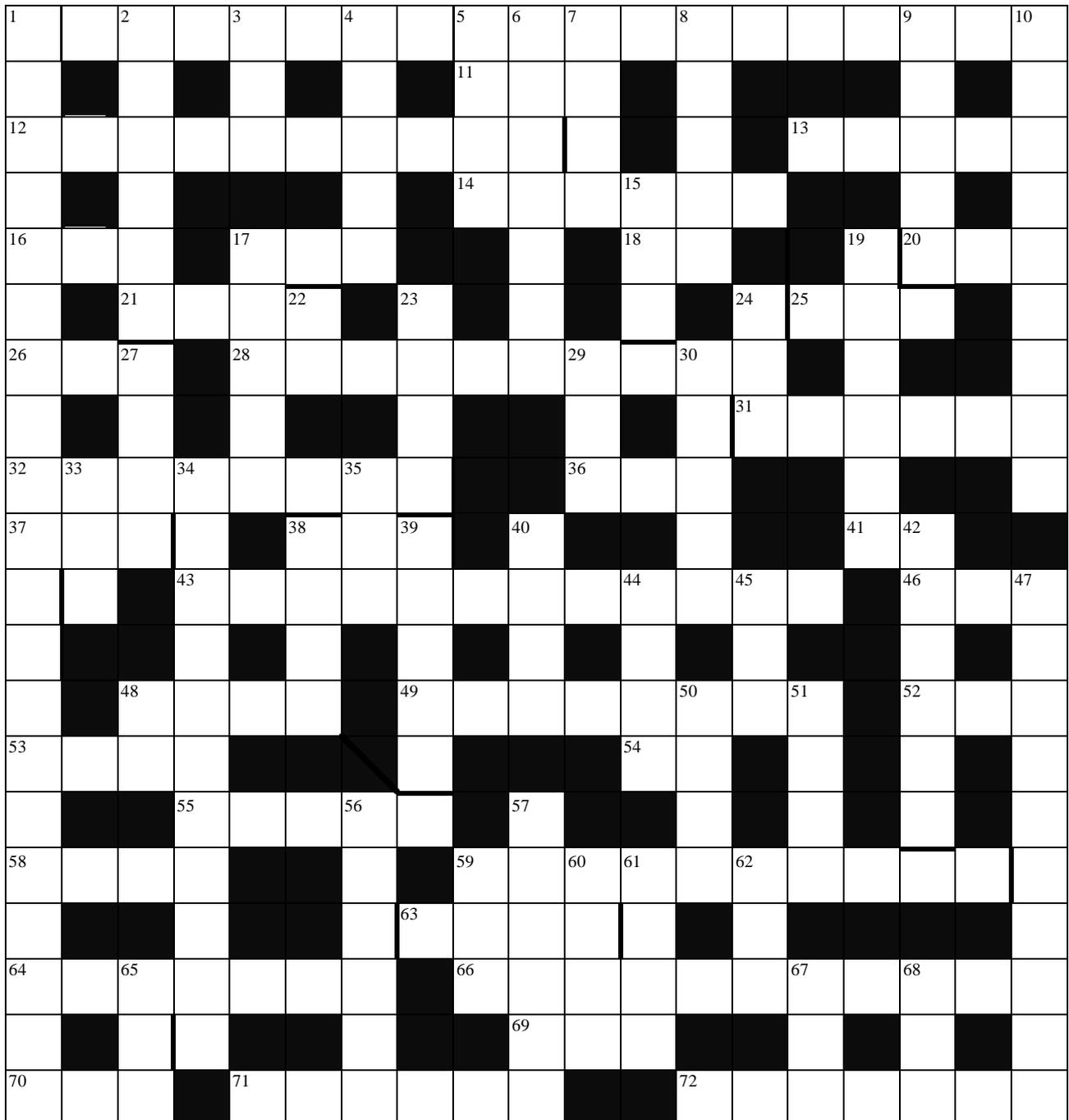
Colin Camp



John Walker

THE MAY 2003 CROSSWORD

By Roger Vane



MAY 2003 CROSSWORD CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Longest preserved railway in UK. (4, 8, 7)
11 Of advanced years. (3)
12 Provides guidance in the dark. (10)
13 Guide. (5)
14 Famous station could be a bench. (6)
16 This body encompasses preserved railways (abb). (3)
17 Part of a shoe. (3)
18 These two letters could help you to find your way. (2)
20 Who "Who dares wins"? (3)
21 Doing this in the dark may provide an uncertain outcome. (4)
25 Pea holder. (3)
26 Helps you to surf. (abb). (3)
28 Nominal rent for loco designer? (10)
31 Smart in appearance or movement. (6)
32 Southern loco. technical assistant with Swindon background. (8)
36 Means of acquiring possession. (3)
37 A place frequented by animals or fish, but is it true? (3)
38 Rude turf. (3)
41 Who set this crossword? (2)
43 This pacific was a first (and only?) (3, 5, 4)
46 To provide direction. (3)
48 Small open vessel. (4)
49 Atlantic Islands. (8)
52 Local river. (3)
53 Guarding the skies down under (abb). (4)
54 This junior sleuth is short on letters. (2)
55 Temporary cessation of hostilities. (5)
58 Fictitious engine. (4)
59 Northern city takes flight? (10)
63 Flower. (4)
64 Man of war. (7)
66 Dickens of a rail crash here. (11)
69 Raw material. (3)
70 Edible tuber. (3)
71 Aircraft named after a loco Foundry? (6)
72 In use at `Bits and Pieces` evenings. (7)

DOWN

- 1 Rebuilding from Caernarfon. (5, 8, 7)
2 Controls the `road`. (6)
3 Prepare your machine? (3)
4 Large member of deer family. (5)
5 Half of a former Scottish County. (4)
6 This part of the railway is fast asleep. (7)
7 Set in order for publication. (4)
8 One half of a famous partnership. (5)
9 Nautical `birds`. (5)
10 One county in pre-grouping Railway. (9)
15 This cat would like to drive your engine. (3)
17 Morse may have used this long waxed wick. (5)
19 Metallic law enforcement. (6)
22 School subject. (2)
23 `X` may mark this. (4)
24 Finish. (3)
27 Eccentrics may be said to be `up` this. (4)
29 Small horse or Ffestiniog feature? (3)
30 The other half of a famous partnership. (5)
33 Crude commodity. (3)
34 Early rail speed record holder. (4, 2, 5)
35 Water droplets suspended in the atmosphere. (3)
38 Badgers would feel at home here. (4)
39 Type of fishing net. (5)
40 Means of propulsion. (4)
42 Depressed land. (6)
44 Brave. (4)
45 Girls` name. (3)
47 This city was once a leading centre for the manufacture of cotton textiles. (10)
48 This degree may help you to see the world. (2)
50 `Minor` spot of bother? (4)
51 Pre-arranged combat. (4)
56 Form of music. (6)
57 London Underground station. (6)
59 Help! (3)
60 Close by. (4)
61 A treatment for fabric. (4)
62 Aromatic flowering plant. (3)
65 Spirit. (3)
67 Nomadic Mongol people. (3)
68 Pulling this could whisk you off your feet. (3)

Answers further on in the newsletter – don't cheat!

Sue's Spot

Hello folks, hope this finds you happy and healthy or at least heading in that direction. Yes, this was going to be a newsletter for Easter, but it's now an after Easter one – which is at least earlier than being a next Easter one. Time is at a premium these days; I need at least twenty-five hours in a day and eight days a week (but then who doesn't). I think what I'm trying to say is sorry it's late – again! I'll apologise now if I've spelt anyfink rong, or missed things – I have a lot of sleepless nights these days due to looking after my dear old dad, so I'm not as alert as I once was!



WINTER PAST

A lot of hard work has been put in over the winter months with complete replacement of the beams (which needed casting first), and various remedial works around the track, which should keep any itinerant surveyors happy. The Wednesday Workers as well as our Sunday Stalwarts achieved a great deal – well done boys! We also had to completely replace the roof on the coal shed as this had sprung a leak.

SPRING INTO ACTION

To herald the spring, we had the carpet tiles in the Clubhouse professionally cleaned, and Pat Riddles did a sterling job spring-cleaning the place (with slight help from myself) as well. Please remember to keep it clean and tidy and not to leave stuff hanging around in there.

NOTICE ME

I also updated and tidied all the noticeboards in the clubhouse. If you put a "For Sale" sign up, please date it, and secondly remember to remove it when the item is sold. Remember up to date events are displayed and any changes to the Club Diary. Also the club by-laws are pinned to one of the noticeboards too – everyone should be aware of these. If you don't know what is involved in being a Traffic Controller (commonly known as "Duty Dog") a list of these duties is also on the noticeboard, as are a list of committee members for this year and the areas they look after. I haven't put in details of boiler tests required this season in the newsletter, again this is on the noticeboard and most of you know when yours expire anyway!

WORK HARD PLAY LATER

The Members Playtime Runs every third Wednesday afternoon have started already, and what a gorgeous hot sunny day it was for the April one. If it's nice it's always possible a committee member will open up in the morning, but check before you come! Wednesday Workdays are soon starting on the other Wednesdays, and maybe some Sunday mornings, as we want to crack on as soon as possible with our new siding, storage, fencing etc. In facet we've already started sorting the fencing out. We would like to have it all finished in time for our celebrations next year; there will be a lot to do. If time permits we can get the Gauge One layout done as well – but that bit will probably be after the major building works. If you can come and help please do, and as mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, donations of the money kind will also be appreciated, if you want to do your bit but can't physically. I suspect the Wednesday gaffer will again be Dave Deller (telephone number 01732 841194) if you are volunteering your services; he will be able to advise.

ANSWER ME THIS...

Whose team won the 2003 Quiz Night? Yes, you guessed, Paul Clark continues his unbroken run! This year he was aided and abetted by Paul Calverley, Roy Harman and Edgar Playfoot. Many thanks

to Wallace and Gromit (Mike and Roger) for an entertaining evening. Still, we'll stop Paul winning next year...he's running it!

KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON!

Our Queens of cross stitch, happy stitch and any other stitch, Ann Playfoot and Marie Hawkins, are now able to sew the Club Badge or locomotive, plus the Club name and your name, onto any shirt you care to provide. Please see them for details; they are at the Club most Sundays.

STEAMY FILMS

The Railway Video Collection in the Clubhouse bookcase is now up to almost twenty – many thanks; we're always ready to accept more. If you borrow one, please ensure that you bring it back. Whilst on the subject of videos, if anyone ever wants a copy of the Club Year, as put together annually by our beloved (well, my beloved) secretary, please contact us. Years available: 2001 and 2002 (and at the end of the year, 2003!)

STEAM DREAMS

I haven't forgotten re-arranging our Steam Dreams trip, which you may recall, was cancelled at the last moment last October due to the failure of Canadian Pacific. I have in mind sometime this summer – but will wait until nearer the time. Please let me know a.s.a.p if you are interested and I will keep you posted.

TROLLEY DOLLIES REQUIRED

Back on safety and insurance and recommendations with relation to public running. Any locomotive pulling more than one trolley **MUST** have a guard seated at the back of the last trolley. Yes, even with our articulated sets of trolleys, which behave as one trolley (we checked). As a member of many years standing, and even more sitting down, I always feel are a lot safer at the front of a double set than a single trolley, even without a guard. But there you go!

STICK 'EM UP.....

Car Stickers with the Club Badge on are available from the Secretary at cost price - £1-50 each. Useful to have in your car especially when driving into the Park, it might stop the walking public glaring at you as you sweep past.

.....DON'T PICK 'EM UP

I'm talking about passenger loading and young children. It's a sad sign of society today that we even have to be considering someone might accuse us of sexual harassment just for lifting a child onto a passenger trolley. The decision is: Don't. Let the parent lift the child onto the trolley, or if the parent is nearby, get their permission first. Explain to them how to get on the trolley, help them by the arm if you must, and just use common sense.

CLUB CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR & 75TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCH 2004

Well, you have to book early for these things! I have booked us a room at the Grangemoor Hotel, which is just off the Tonbridge Road in Maidstone, on Sunday January 4th 2004, 12-30 for 1pm. The price is £12-25 per head for a 3-course meal, and you need to choose what you are going to have by the middle of December (don't worry, I'll be in touch). A specimen menu is on the noticeboard in the Clubhouse and in this newsletter. To reserve a place, as these will be limited, please pay a deposit of £2-25 a head to me, Sue, as the Club has had to pay a deposit (if paying by cheque please make them payable to Maidstone Model Engineering Society, and no, we don't take credit cards!). Other halves of course or companions welcome (what's that joke you chaps have – I'd bring my girlfriend but the wife might find out!). It should be a wonderful event, so book your place now! Two dozen of us dined at

The Hilton in Maidstone on the first Sunday in January this year and really enjoyed ourselves. There is a maximum number of people for the room we have, so please let me know a.s.a.p. if you intend to come and so avoid being disappointed.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

We're having two charity runs this year, at Whitsun and August Bank Holidays, on the Sundays – and if the weather is inclement, we can then continue the charity run into Monday as well. Our chosen charities this year are Mid Kent Breast Cancer Research Appeal, and the Macmillan Nurses. The MKBCRA is a local charity; run by a network of volunteers with no administration overheads. Every £1 donated is spent on patient care. The current aim of the charity is to provide a one-stop clinic whereby a worried woman can be diagnosed and advised during one clinic visit. This will be far better than the current system of having a biopsy and then returning a week later for the result. The waiting and the worry for anyone in this situation (and I should know!) can be almost intolerable. This charity run will be on Sunday May 25th.

The second charity run will be on Sunday August 24th, in aid of the Macmillan Nurses. Again, we have members who have had experience close hand of the wonderful work they do in caring for those with cancer. This terrible disease needs specialised care, and Macmillan nurses are also there to support those close to the sufferers, who can often feel at breaking point.

Please come and support the Club and feel free to also donate yourselves towards these good causes.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

Spark Arresters are the latest 'hot potato' and after much discussion in committee, it is now going to be ***MANDATORY FOR SPARK ARRESTERS TO BE FITTED*** on all steam locomotives running at Mote Park. It is now recommended by our insurers and the Southern Federation and already a requirement at a lot of societies, and advisable at others. As we have already had a claim at this Club to replace the shirt of a member of the public who had a small burn hole (naturally it was one of those expensive football team shirts, a couple of years ago), it has been decided to make it a requirement for M.M.E.S. Better to be safe than sorry! So please ensure your steam engine (if you have one) is fitted with a spark arrester or deflector as soon as possible. As it's only fair to allow time for this to be done, locomotives must have spark arresters fitted by May 25th 2003.

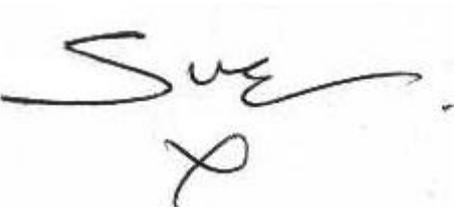
I have to say that someone on the committee said soon we'll have to carry a torch and a spare pair of underpants while driving the public.....

M.O.G.S?

It's been reported to me that there is now a sub-section in the society called the Mogs – Miserable Old Geysers! Perhaps they'll cheer up a bit now summer is on the way.

Heartfelt thanks as ever to all my contributors – without them, there would be no newsletter. I'm accepting articles from NOW onwards for the next newsletter – and depending how much I get will dictate whether the next newsletter is summer, autumn or Christmas. Get writing!

I wish everyone a wonderful summer with loads of good steaming. As I finish this newsletter it's nearly May, so I can't resist repeating this weeks joke: - May the 4th Be With You!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue', with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

LOCHWOOD'S NEW BOILER by JB

Throughout many running seasons lots of members have had the pleasure of driving the 2-6-0 LMS Mogul 'Lochwood'. Most Sundays it could be seen hauling a double trolley load at a brisk speed, with a good reserve of steam. But all good things come to an end, and so it was during the 2000 running season that Lochwood's driver (me) was finding it increasingly difficult to maintain any sensible steam pressure. Firstly, the coal was blamed (sorry Pete), but then increasing use of the blower still could not keep the pressure up. Hindsight is an exacting science so they say, so it should have been (expletive) obvious that something was seriously wrong when the water consumption soared. During one particularly difficult day in October it was decided to retire early in the afternoon to investigate while a little pressure remained on the gauge. On opening the smokebox door the interior was found to be rather wet, at least two tubes were leaking quite badly.

One from the archives – John Winser driving Lochwood



All is revealed



the internal stays and other bits were needed to copy the original design, which had served so well. Although the boiler was old, the outer case proved to be extremely strong, calling for hard work with hacksaw, drill, hammer and chisel. Eventually sufficient cutting allowed a large flap to be levered open revealing the internals. Fortunately the crown stays, of the girder type, were riveted to the outer case, but had the join been silver soldered, cutting would have been much more difficult. It was now possible to measure the crown and cross stays, permitting the details to be finalised.

I had intended to reuse the boiler fittings wherever possible, but then problem no. 2, identifying the various threads used. The safety valves were threaded ¼" gas which you all know is 0.518" O.D. x 19 TPI, so much delving through the miscellaneous tap and die box until EUREKA – the right tap was found to make the new bushes.

The gauge glass blow-down valve had been seized for years and it was thought prudent not to force the handwheel with pliers while in service in case the whole fitting turned thus breaking the glass.

During the next week, Lochwood's boiler was removed from the frames and a more detailed examination done. Not a pretty sight, the tubes were well eroded, but considering the many years of hard work done, no complaints. The boiler was definitely past reclamation, so a new one had to be built – problem No. 1, no drawings. Well, it's fairly easy to measure up the outside of something, but what about the inside? Details of

Now it was dismantled, force could be applied after the application of Plus Gas, but to no avail – the valve stem snapped neatly off rendering the whole fitting US.

Lochwood's boiler is of the Belpaire type with a small taper on the barrel, and this was the first piece to be cut from the standard 4' by 2' sheet of 1/8" copper. To use this material economically needs some careful planning if excessive wastage is to be avoided. The next largest piece was the Belpaire outer wrapper, 24" by 11" leaving about 4 square feet for the remaining plates. A variable speed jigsaw is the tool for cutting 1/8" thick copper sheet, and it's worth buying some good quality HSS blades especially for this task. Progress is slow when cutting out the various shapes; so numerous tea breaks can be taken to allow the jigsaw to cool down.



Belpaire throatplate and formers

4 MDF formers for the firebox and outside wrappers



To save time, a start was made on the plate formers. Slices of MDF were cut to build up the two wrapper formers with small irregularities being smoothed out with car body filler. End plate formers were made in the usual way – 1/8" thick mild steel attached to plywood backing with wood screws. The Belpaire throatplate proved to be a challenge as it is double flanged, as shown in the photo. About 5/8" was allowed for forming each flange, and a hide mallet used

as it will be found that copper contracts neater when hit with something softer. Repeated annealing is called for of course, the Belpaire plate needing about ten reheats. The circular flange was made first, this then being clamped firmly to a disc bolted to the main Belpaire former to make the second flange.

For years Lochwood had performed well with the superheater elements removed, so it was decided to omit them from the replacement boiler. This enabled the tube layout to be revised with the absence of S/H flues. Popular thinking on fire tubes is that 16 SWG will ensure a longer boiler life and as Lochwood is intended to be a workhorse, that gauge was chosen for the new tube bundle. When the tube layout had been finalized, the firebox tubeplate was marked out and then clamped down on the milling machine for precise drilling. Silverflo 24 was used to join the tubes to the firebox tubeplate and there is a special holding jig kept in the Club Workshop for this purpose (not a lot of people know that). Once the tubes had been silver soldered, there was a great danger of bending them, so a thin pre-drilled supporting plate was pushed onto the free ends. Before the other tubeplate could be made, it was necessary to roll up the boiler barrel to establish the exact internal diameter. A single butt joint was used with a 1 1/2" wide strap attached externally to the barrel by a few 4 BA csk. Bronze screws. Once again Silverflo 24 was used for this joint, as the melting point is about 150 degrees C above Easyflo No. 2, which will be for the later joints.

HI HO! or AUSTRIA PART 3 by Brian Harris

So on the last day of our stay we had a free day. Go wherever you want. Do whatever you like. Here are a few ideas. A trip round a silver mine. Sounds good to me. Yes dear!

We took the train to Schwaz, which was two stops down the line from Jenbach, caught the post bus outside the station and had an enjoyable country ride out to the mine. The bus stopped right outside a rather posh, all wood, chalet style building, which turned out to be the visitor centre so in we went.

Now at this stage I thought, bit strange. I haven't seen any spoil tips or industrial looking buildings with conveyors and noise and dust. In fact we were in quite a nice residential area with locals cutting grass on the bank outside for winter animal feed. The only mining clue was a selection of 60cm-gauge rolling stock in the car park outside.



So we booked a guided tour and were promptly issued with a very large, silver grey, water proof coat and hard hat each. We were hurried across the road to where an English language tour was about to start. There was an arch shaped opening in the rock face and the last truck of an eight-truck train pulled by an electric mine type loco. “Keep your arms crossed and elbows in please”, and we were off.

After about ten minutes bumping and jolting along this, dripping wet, rather rough hewn, poorly lit, hole, our train reached its destination. A larger, better lit, roughly hewn, hole in the mountain, from which a very interesting tour commenced. “You are now about 1.5km inside the mountain and above you is about 1.8km of Dolomite stone, and as we walk round this restored part of an ancient and extensive mine you will see an exhibition of mining throughout the ages.”

The guide informed us, we had travelled down an original entrance that was excavated in the hardest stone, (harder than granite), currently used in the construction industry. Hacked out initially by fire weakening the stone then by hand pick and hammer, as the miners went deeper by pick and hammer only (smoke became a problem). The rate of advance would be typically 2 to 10 millimetres per day.

The Falkenstein is the area around Jenbach and Schwaz, in the Austrian Tyrol, which from Neolithic times has been exploited for the deposits of copper, antimony, zinc, silver, mercury, arsenic and separately, further along the valley, iron. From the 10th Century mining became more organised. By 1488 the region was producing 85% of all the silver produced in European mines.

Large deposits of natural silver do not occur. Dependent on the area, silver is mixed with the other metals mentioned above, or, as in Cornwall, it is a valuable by-product of tin mining. It occurs in narrow veins within the rock and in the Schwaz area there are estimated to be 500km of tunnels and shafts, the ore yielding typically 1.5kg silver for every 100kg of copper.

We learned that, as in Cornwall, ventilation and water became serious problems as the miners delved deeper and by the mid 1500s giant, man operated, bellows were in use to get air to the work face, and man operated “pumps” to reduce the water problem were in use. The pumps were animal skin buckets attached to ropes or chains literally filled by hand and tipped down a convenient hole.

In the mid 1600s a giant, twin, overshot waterwheel was constructed underground to lift large buckets made from two whole ox hides. But in the end the water won!

The mines in the area became unprofitable to run and by the early 1700s had all closed but in 1856 existing galleries were reopened but closed again in 1870. Then the Austrian State opened up but the mine was unprofitable and closed in 1912 but a private association continued until the 1950s.

Today there is an industrial interest in the extraction of dolomite stone for road construction, and just maybe, if the price of copper or silver were to rise!

AN ENJOYABLE SESSION *by Ed Nutter*

Marigold was telling me how he recently had a most enjoyable and sensual session in his workshop without any protection whatever. Hand protection that is! How delightful he found the intimate touch of the milling machines knobs and wheels. It was such a contrast to the usual drag of the latex gloves.

He had just finished doing a spot of gardening without any hand protection; this is a rarity itself, with slightly grubby hands he decided to dispense with the usual ritual of donning the surgeon's gloves prior to continuing with some milling.

Cast gunmetal was being machined and being a relatively clean material he decided to proceed with the milling procedures without any hand protection. Filing and hand finishing was also completed without any hand protection whatever.

How much quicker the work was completed. The work could quickly be adjusted and secured in the machine vice. Normally with gloved hands, care has to be taken to avoid snagging the gloves in the vice on tightening.

Marigold has worn gloves for most manual jobs for as long as I have known him. He told me that he developed a kind of dermatitis on his hands about forty years ago. He thinks he got it from using resin glues in the joiners shop. On joining the 'white collar' brigade and entering management the condition much improved but salt water from his sailing activities seemed to aggravate it.

On returning to mostly manual work about 10 years ago, his hands were soft and delicate and without any protection his hands would develop lesions and cracking to fingers and palms. These were very painful and difficult to heal. He therefore developed a habit for wearing gloves. Mostly these were heavy leather or plastic.

When first taking up model engineering he used to wear tight fitting PVC gloves. These were like washing up gloves but heavier and thicker. Being tight fitting they made it fairly easy to handle the work, but were difficult to get on and off.

Later he tried thin translucent vinyl gloves. These were quite good but tore easily and being non-stretch did not fit very snug.

For several years now he has been using a good quality latex surgeon's type short glove and keeps two sizes. The smaller size being better for very small and delicate work such as handling small nuts and bolts etc., 12 BA included! The larger size of glove he uses for more general work. With care these gloves can be used several times over. They do not like being flooded with oil, oil makes them swell and distort. If the oil is quickly wiped off, the gloves quickly recover.

If the hands are at all sticky, a generous application of talcum powder makes putting them on a doddle. Talcum powder on the outside of the gloves also reduces the drag of the gloves on machine controls etc.

The first surgeon's type gloves he obtained were rather thin and tore easily. Later he found a source of better quality thicker gloves, these seemed ideal for model engineering. Several boxes were then obtained.

An even better glove seen in a recent catalogue may be a Nitrile glove, which is claimed to be more resistant to abrasions. When his present stocks decline he may try this alternative.

For years he used to avoid wearing the gloves at the club, as he didn't want to appear a sissy. But nowadays-personal protection is becoming more and more fashionable and it is now commonplace to see fitters and engineers wearing protection including surgeon's gloves. He therefore now regards the habit as sensible.

He suggests that the model engineering fraternity should adopt standard hand protection suitable for the maintenance and driving of model engines. After all most other hobbies and sports have purpose designed protective clothing.

The wearing of gloves not only protects the hands from dirt and grime, but also helps prevent finger marks on bright metals, which on steel usually means rust created by hand/finger moisture and acids. However the reverse can happen such as when using corrosive fluxes like Bakers soldering fluid. The gloves do seem good at transferring this corrosive acid to the clean steel of work pieces, tools and machines. So it is a good idea to change the gloves after using corrosives.

He finds the gloves ideal for driving miniature steam locomotives. They enable small/hot controls to be handled comfortably. The main disadvantage being that the hands sweat in very hot weather.

Barrier creams and general hand creams are helpful, but these are not lasting and can be messy. Applying barrier creams is almost as much trouble as wearing gloves.

Regular use of most 'after work' hand cleansers dry out the skin, which then becomes dry and deep grained. The skin splits around the fingers. Deep cracks develop particularly during the winter months and are very slow to heal.

He says that wearing gloves leaves his hands soft and clean. At the end of a work session he quickly removes the gloves by drawing them over themselves and a quick rinse under the tap leaves them clean and fresh. He thinks the nuisance of wearing gloves well worth the trouble for hands clean and free of minor cuts and abrasions.

THE POWER OF THE BRITS by Dennis Mortimer

As a member of a club with a penchant for models of the BR 7000 class I crib this piece as a reminder of the power of this revolutionary class – for it was at that time, i.e. The Festival Of Britain. This piece was recorded on Boxing Day 1967. 70013 with a 13 coach, 451-ton load stopped at Tebay to call up a banker, but none was available. So the Britannia had to climb the six miles to Shap summit from a dead halt. This must have been some sight and sound. Can you wonder that those of us who have such models give thanks to the memory of LBSC who first gave us the inspiration to have a go.

(The journal referred to: Steam World January 2003, under the title 35 Years On by Paul Cooper)

CANADA BY TRAIN, 2002 part one of two by Pat & Geoff Riddles

We arrived in Canada on a beautiful balmy evening, having had an amazing view of Ottawa city with a vast expanse of the Ottawa river, as the plane banked for its landing approach (camera in bag as usual). This would be a holiday that would take us from east to west over 3,000 miles through four time zones and six provinces, along rail routes used since the creation of the first national railway line constructed by the Canadian Pacific Railway between 1881 and 1885. A project that at the time, was dubbed, ‘an act of insane recklessness’.

Ottawa, as with all the places we visited on this trip, was a short stay. Just one glorious sunny day to take in the sights of a bright and cheerful city, with a really friendly feel. As we like to walk, that was how we did it.

Starting from our hotel, which was just a few minutes from the imposing Parliament buildings (pictured), guarded by Royal Canadian Mounted Police (including lady Mounties) on the south side of the river. We ended up at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, which explores 1000 years of Canadian history, including a superb collection of totem poles, on the north side, covering as much as possible in between. By evening we were back on the south side for a final lazy stroll in the late evening sunshine. Wandering past a magnificent hotel (name escapes us) which was built by the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company in the early 1900’s and whose British-made furniture went down with the Titanic. Down the staircase of locks on the Rideau Canal and along the banks of the Ottawa River - we slept very well that night.



We left Ottawa, by train, heading for Toronto. Lunch aboard, and an afternoon journey which soon had us out of the city and into the countryside, running close to the shore of Lake Ontario through Kingston, gateway to the beautiful 1,000 islands. By late afternoon Toronto’s distinctive skyline was in view, with the CN Tower standing like a city guard as we arrived at Union Station. A magnificent building, the largest and most opulent train station erected in Canada during the last great phase in railway station construction, begun in 1913, but delayed for several years because of the First World War, it was officially opened by the Prince of Wales on 6th August 1927, with the first passenger trains leaving on 11th August. A bus tour of the city, the largest in Canada, on our way to the hotel, was the only time we had for sightseeing, apart from two evening strolls down to the waterfront, with its cosmopolitan bars and restaurants. There was the bulging Sky Dome, a spectacular stadium with the world’s first fully retractable roof, which weighs 11,000 tons, has 250,000 bolts, spans eight acres and rises 282 feet from field level, at its highest point. The many different cultural districts, Chinese, Italian, Greek, Caribbean, Portuguese and Indian, to name but a few. The amazing Eaton Centre, with its stunning glass galleria. Located in the heart of the city, it has some 300 shops, on 5 levels (90% of which are underground) and receives approximately one million visitors a week. We were assured it was the ‘Retail Therapy’ experience of a lifetime - we didn’t check.

We couldn’t be in Toronto, a name given by the Huron tribes, which means ‘‘a place of meetings,’’ without ‘Doing the Tower’. Canadian National (CN) who wanted to demonstrate the strength of Canadian Industry

built it in 1976 by building a tower taller than any other in the world. It has a total height of 1815ft. 5ins with an enclosed observation deck at 1136ft, below which is the outdoor viewing level and glass floor, where we stood and looked straight down 1122ft to the concourse level (that was really unnerving because the glass creaks).

Our next port of call was the Niagara Parks where the river and falls were a spectacular sight. At about 170 feet, The Canadian Horseshoe Falls are by no means the highest in the world but their height, combined with the volume of water (6 million cubic feet per minute), make them incredibly beautiful. We did all the tourist things that you have to do if you are at Niagara. We visited the museum, with its history of “Stunting” and display of “Contraptions” in which people have gone over the falls. The first person over was Annie Taylor, a 63-year-old schoolteacher, who in 1901, decided that a trip over Niagara, in a barrel, was the way to fame and fortune. She survived and found the fame but apparently not the fortune; she was destitute when she died twenty years later. There have been fifteen since Annie Taylor, the last one in 1995 when Robert Overacker went over the Canadian Horseshoe Falls on a single jet ski with a rocket propelled parachute on his back. The parachute failed to discharge and he did not survive. Captain Matthew Webb, the first man to swim the English Channel, lost his life when he disappeared in the first huge wave of rapids whilst attempting to swim the Niagara River. There are the stories of the men who have challenged the river and the whirlpool rapids in a variety of modified boats and barrels and the astonishing feats of those that crossed the Niagara Gorge on tightropes over a hundred years ago. Including the only woman, Maria Spelterina, in 1867, who apparently walked backwards, with a paper bag over her head, just to make it look really tricky.

We made the trip on the ‘Maid of the Mist’ boat, which goes to the base of the American Falls then into the swirling water as close as it can get to the base of the Horseshoe Falls. We stood out on the deck of a boat dwarfed by the towering wall of water, getting absolutely drenched by the spray (despite the coverall cape they gave us before we boarded), as millions of gallons crashed down just ahead of us - it was great. Most exciting of all, was the helicopter flight we made “over the falls” (pictured).

The Niagara River is the natural outlet from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario with half of the 326 feet elevation occurring at the falls. The Gorge extends 7 miles downstream from the falls, including the one mile long Whirlpool Rapids, with the water surface dropping 50 feet to the 1700 feet long, 1200 feet wide, Whirlpool Basin where the river makes a sharp right turn. Below



the Whirlpool is another set of rapids, which drop approximately 40 feet. Further downstream are the lake and dam where water taken from the Niagara River, upstream from the falls, is used for Hydroelectric power generation. We flew over it all; it was the ride of a lifetime.

We spent the next three days on VIA Rail’s premier train ‘The Canadian’. About a third of a mile long with 3 locomotives and 22 gleaming stainless steel cars, each about 70ft, it was originally put into service in 1955 and has been restored to its 1950’s style, but with modern amenities. It had domed observatories, a bullet shaped lounge with wrap-around windows and elegant art-deco dinning cars (silver service and gourmet meals). The Canadian rolled out of Toronto, to cross Ontario on the first leg of our journey, first stop Washago. We were scheduled to be there just ten minutes, to pick up a few more passengers, but were actually there for a couple of hours waiting for track maintenance to finish. An ideal opportunity to have a

wander round and get a good look at this magnificent train that was to be home for the next 2,000 plus miles. Washago, like all the small townships along the route, had a station building and sidings but no platforms or entrance/exit gates.

It was amusing to see that things were just like the old movies. The car attendant leapt off the train with the 'step' and everyone wandered around just about wherever they liked, including up into the small township. If you were back on the train when it left, fine, if not, you probably wouldn't be missed for several hundred miles. Ontario is the richest and most populated Canadian province. The word Ontario means 'shining waters' in the language of the Iroquois people and it's an apt name because the province contains one-fourth of the world's fresh water. As we headed west the view changed to the rock country, where hard stone ribs jut out marking the Canadian Shield, a region of billion-years-old rock that lies between the Great Lakes and Hudson Bay, where, in places, outcrops of pink, grey and black granite towered over the track. Through towns and settlements with names such as Capreol, Gogama, Hornepayne, Longlac and Sioux Lookout, many of which grew to service the locomotives. They were put at 150-mile intervals but with the development of electric-diesel engines many towns were erased from the map and the hamlets that remain are remembered only by the name of the sidings. Not surprisingly, having being thrown together since leaving Heathrow several days before, we had very quickly got to know most of the other people in our group and our time was spent relaxing in good company, chatting, reading, watching the passing view, walking (it took 15 to 20 minutes to walk the length of the train), and, of course, partaking of a small tippie now and then.

Considering the available space, it was a pleasant surprise to find how comfortable our sleeper cabin was. We had one room, with various cunningly placed storage areas, and small, slightly restricting, en-suite facilities. There was a large picture window, armchairs for use during the day, which folded away to make room for the beds to be put down at night - all of which was handled by our car attendant, a lovely chatty lady who was never without a story to tell when we saw her. We slept reasonably well the first night, although we had both woken at about two o'clock when the train stopped. We were curious to know why. It was single line track, there was no station or sidings so it was unlikely that we were making one of the usual stops to give way for a freight train, perhaps there was a problem. No, we had stopped, in what appeared to be the middle of nowhere, to unload a few boxes of supplies and let two guys, with their dugout canoes, off the train. This line, though an absolutely amazing journey for the tourist, was a lifeline for the more remote homesteads and was still the main method for servicing the needs of the small communities along the route, in the same way that the original line had been.

One of the most pleasant ways to start any day has got to be lying in bed rocking to the rhythm of the moving train, the sun shining, watching the scenery go by and listening to the blasts of the loco whistle. Apparently, the use of a train whistle can be traced back to Britain in 1832, when a stationmaster suggested to George Stephenson that new locomotives should have an audible warning device. Enginemen still follow the established whistle codes. The most ominous is the signal, two long blasts, one short and one long, used at level crossings, because it is the first four notes of the 'Funeral March'. In little more than 24 hours we had covered nearly 1,000 miles, changed from Eastern to Central time and crossed the border into Manitoba, which is one of the three Prairie provinces between the wilderness of Western Ontario and the foothills of the Rocky



Mountains (pictured).

By late afternoon of the second day aboard, we were approaching Winnipeg, which is at the junction of three rivers and was a meeting place for many hundreds of years for the Cree and Assiniboine tribes, who made the great prairies their hunting preserve. The Canadian crossed 53 feet above the Seine and Red Rivers on its arrival in Winnipeg, where we had a couple of hours to stretch our legs on solid ground. No leaping off with the step and wandering about here, this was a “proper” station - with platforms. Winnipeg is a natural transportation hub and modern industrial city, with a rich European history from the early explorers who developed the fur trade and introduced their lifestyles from home. Union Station, built in 1911, has a massive dome and was designed by the same architects who created New York’s famous Grand Central Station. The light-grey stone walls are faced with local Tyndall limestone, the final resting place of many prehistoric fossils, seaweed, crab shells and ammonites, from the ancient seabeds that once covered the Prairies.

Leaving Winnipeg, we crossed the Assiniboine River and passed the imposing Legislature Building, with a 240 feet high dome topped by Manitoba’s symbol, the Gold Boy, with a sheaf of wheat under his arm. We continued on across Manitoba, passing the forests, lakes and prairie of the western lowlands, into Saskatchewan, center of the vast expanse of the Prairies. The Plains tribes called this part of the country “kisiskatchewan” meaning ‘swiftly flowing water’ after the great river that crossed their territory. When the settlers flooded in after the railways were built, the new province adopted the river’s name. The wheat fields stretch as far as you can see and they harvest with up to five enormous combines working in a line, round the clock, seven days a week. Not surprisingly, it’s known as the breadbasket of Canada, producing over 54% of the country’s wheat. Although agriculture is the mainstay of Saskatchewan’s economy its natural resources include uranium and oil and it also has the worlds largest known deposits of potash. By



the time we crossed the Saskatchewan – Alberta border, having moved forward another hour from Central to Mountain Time, and clocked up approximately 1830 miles, we were into our third and final day on the Canadian. We were in the part of the country where the Plains tribes hunted buffalo before the arrival of the European settlers and from the windows on the northern side it was possible to imagine them still there, thundering along the immense Battle River Valley (pictured). Our train crossed 200 feet above this impressive river on a steel trestle 2,900 feet long as it continued its journey. The landscape changed to bush and Lakeland as we headed northwest through Edmonton

and on towards the Rocky Mountains. Alberta is the largest coal-producing province in Canada, about 31 million tonnes in 2001, out of the total production of 70.5. Coal is the single largest commodity carried by Canadian Railways so it was no surprise that we regularly saw the giant coal trains, each with over a hundred trucks and sometimes with as many as three locomotives, enroute to either Vancouver or Thunder Bay, on Lake Superior. We passed through a town called ‘Entrance’, which is the official start to the Rockies, and crossing the Athabasca river, which originates in the Columbia Icefields, we travelled through Jasper National Park to the town of Jasper itself, about 2220ish miles from Toronto, and the end of the most astonishing train journey we are ever likely to make.

To be continued.

ANSWERS FOR THE SPRING 2003 CROSSWORD

ACROSS

(1) West Somerset Railway, (11) old, (12) lighthouse, (13) steer, (14) Settle, (16) HRA, (17) toe, (18) OS, (20) SAS, (21) leap, (25) pod, (26) ISP, (28) Peppercorn, (31) dapper, (32) Holcroft, (36) buy, (37) lie, (37) sod, (41) RV, (43) The Great Bear, (46) aim, (48) boat, (49) Falkland, (52) Len, (53) RAAF, (54) DC, (55) truce, (58) Ivor, (59) Sunderland, (63) rose, (64) Warrior, (66) Staplehurst, (69) ore, (70) yam, (71) Vulcan, (72) vinegar.

DOWN

(1) Welsh Highland Railway, (2) signal, (3) set, (4) moose, (5) Ross, (6) sleeper, (7) edit, (8) Rolls, (9) Wrens, (10) Yorkshire, (15) Tom, (17) taper, (19) copper, (22) PE, (23) spot, (24) end, (27) pole, (29) Cob, (30) Royce, (33) oil, (34) City of Truro, (35) fog, (38) sett, (39) drift, (40) sail, (42) Valley, (44) bold, (45) Ann, (47) Manchester, (48) BA, (50) acne, (51) duel, (56) choral, (57) Euston, (59) SOS, (60) near, (61) dope, (62) rue, (65) rum, (67) Hun, (68) rug.

THE HAT (*origin unknown*)

An old lady was standing on a station platform with a hat on her head, holding onto it tightly so that it would not blow off in the wind.

A gentleman approached her and said: "Pardon me, madam, I do not intend to be forward, but did you know that your dress is blowing up in this high wind?"

"Yes, I know," said the old lady.

"But madam, you must know that your private parts are exposed!" said the gentleman in embarrassment.

The woman looked down a moment, and then looked back at the man.

She replied: "Sir, anything you see down there is eighty-five years old. I just bought this hat yesterday!"

MMES DIARY DATES 2003:

Friday May 2:	Videos and Toasted Teacakes
Wednesday May 21:	MAPR – Running Clockwise
Sunday May 25:	Charity Run to raise funds for Mid Kent Breast Cancer Research Appeal
Friday June 6:	Evening Run Clockwise and Jacket Potatoes with Chili or Cheese (or both!)
Wednesday June 18:	MAPR
Friday July 4:	Evening Run and Hot Dogs/Bacon Butties
Wednesday July 16:	MAPR
Saturday July 12:	Invite to Birchley, Biddenden, 10 ¼” Train Rides for Biddenden Village
Saturday July 19:	Visit to Beech Hurst
Friday August 1:	Evening Run and Barbecue (bring your own grub)
Saturday August 9:	Visit to North London
Wednesday August 20:	MAPR – Running Clockwise
Sunday August 24:	Charity Run to raise funds for Macmillan Nurses
Friday September 5:	Evening Run and Fish and Chips
Wednesday September 17:	MAPR
Saturday September 27:	Beech Hurst Visit To MMES
Friday October 3:	Guest Speaker: Roy Clench & Forms of Transport Slideshow
Sunday October 12:	Run 10am – 12 for members of The Heywood Society
Wednesday October 15:	MAPR – last of season
Sunday October 26:	Last Public Run (End of British Summertime)
Friday November 7:	Videos and Cakes
Friday December 5:	Bits ‘n’ Pieces ‘n’ Crumpets
Friday December 26:	Boxing Day Run
Friday January 2, 2004:	Look Back over 2003 for MMES
Sunday January 4, 2004:	MMES Xmas/New Year/75 th Anniversary Lunch at Grangemoor Hotel

Other events of possible interest to you in 2003 that I know about:

May 3 Welling Open Day, May 9-11 Harrogate ME Exhibition, May 10-11 Romney Open Weekend, May 17-18 Southern Federation Spring Rally then Open Day at Bromsgrove, May 17-18 Chesterfield & DMES Steam Weekend, May 24-30 Canvey Modellers Week, May 31-June 1 Pembrokeshire ME Rally at Milford Haven, May 31 – June 1 Peterborough Miniature Loco Rally,

June 7-8 Welsh National Locomotive Rally at Cardiff, June 14-15 Gravesend Open Days to celebrate Society's 50th year, June 14-15 Harrow and Wembley Open Days, June 14-16 Welsh IMLEC at Llanelli, June 21-22 Hereford Open Weekend, June 21-22 Stanier Weekend at Brighouse, June 28 –29 Cambridge Rally, June 28-29 East Herts Miniature Railway Open Days,

July 12-13 IMLEC at Bristol, July 19-20 Guildford 36th Rally and Exhibition, July 26-27 Dreaming Spires Rally at Oxford,

August 15-17 Frimley Lodge Open Weekend, August 23-25 Harrow and Wembley Open Days, September 6 Northern Association Rally at Leicester, September 12-14 East Herts Miniature Railway Open Days, September 13-14 Birmingham Society National Locomotive Rally, September 20-21 Southern Federation Autumn Rally the Open Day at Saffron Walden, September 20-21 Lincoln 70th Anniversary Open Weekend,

October 4 Welling Open Day, October 18-23 Midlands ME Exhibition at Donington Park

Soon be Christmas again!

All dates liable to change addition where changing circumstances dictate so please keep an eye on the noticeboard copy or at www.maidstonemes.co.uk

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY.....

Once upon a time there was a model engineering society who had their track in a public park. One day they couldn't find any member willing to man the station. So they couldn't run their locomotives for the public, or raise money for the club. The local council became very unhappy as the public complained it was no good having a railway with no rides. They agreed. So the council told the club they would have to vacate the Park. The club hadn't got any money, as it hadn't been giving rides so it couldn't afford to buy anywhere to go. The Club folded. Nobody lived happily ever after.

Do you want that to be us?

THINGS I HAVE TO DO:

1. Telephone John Hawkins to **volunteer myself for a stint as Fare Collector** (it's only fair!) one public running day.
2. Telephone Dave Deller about helping out on a Wednesday Work-in or Sunday .
3. Telephone John Hawkins to **volunteer myself for a stint as Passenger Loader** one public running day.
4. Ensure I'm available to be a Trolley Dolly when I'm at the Park on a Sunday if I'm not on station duties.
5. Telephone John Hawkins to **volunteer myself for a stint as Traffic Controller** one public running day.
6. If I've got an engine, make sure I do my bit by running for the public sometimes.
7. Let Sue know if a) I'd like to go on a Steam Dreams Trip and to keep me posted
b) I want to go to the Club Lunch in January and here's £2-25 for each person.
8. Remember I'm a member – I want to be part of the club, not apart from the club. That's why I joined! So I'll do what I can. Even if it's just making the tea or washing up one day.