

Reading Society of Model  
Engineers  
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Charity Number 1163244

# The Prospectus

February 2020



**President**

**Les Dawson**

0118 969 4654

**Trustees Chair**

**John Billard**

01189 340381

07834 998971

**Secretary**

**Peter Harrison**

079720 833546

**Editor**

**John Billard**

john@jegbillard

.plus.com

**Free to members**



Lily Scott in charge of s new electric locomotive—see  
page 8 Photo David Scott

**DAWSON'S DIARY  
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IT'S A LONG WAY TO STEVENAGE!  
SOMETHING FOR THE ELEVENTH**

## **DAWSON'S DIARY**

## **kept by the President**

2020 first public running Sunday on 5<sup>th</sup> January went with a steady flow of visitors riding the trains with two locos on the ground level, John Spokes's S Class and Nigel Penford's Baldwin. The raised track had a good turn out of motive power making it a very good start to the New Year. The club house was very busy with Pete Culham and Jackie dealing the tea etc! Many thanks from us all. It was rather cold outside; a hot cup of tea was most welcome! I must mention Pete Martin. He was having a hard time to keep up with the trains running with many snags on the layout.

We must soon get a new layout up and running as soon as possible. It is a good asset in the club house. Our Pete did a good job of keeping the layout going! Many thanks from us all.

Club running day was mostly fine but with a cold wind. This did not put off those members driving their locos. David Scott brought along his latest project, an 0-4-0 electric 5" chassis which ran very well for its first time out on the track. Other locos ran steam and electric – all in all a good day in the park!

## **A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR**

## **John Billard**

The trustees were pleased to welcome Ivan Hurst to their January meeting to talk about the Southern Federation Rally to be held at our tracks on 26th September. This is an annual event hosted by clubs around the country and RSME has stepped forward for this year.

While this takes place on the Saturday it is likely that running will also carry on Sunday for those who wish to stay over. During the occasion a trophy will be given on behalf of the Australian Association of Live Steamers for the best locomotive running representing a working design of the British Commonwealth. You will be hearing more about this as the year goes by.

The trustees have considered further the attendance of members at its meetings. It can be said that any member is welcome to attend to put forward any proposal or to make any specific particular ideas about the running of RSME. We just ask for notice to be given of any such attendance to be given to the Secretary at least a week before the date of the meeting.

Thursday 23rd January was marked by a fascinating insight by our member Alec Bray on the subject of TV studio work in the pre digital age. To see how those 100lb (45kg) cameras were flung around the studio was amazing and the quality of the mechanical engineering that allowed it was outstanding. All behind the scenes and it was ironic that Alec pointed out that there is little footage available of it in action to reveal now that this technology has largely disappeared.

The next talk is by Mike Sinclair on 27 February on the 40-year history of the 00 gauge at RSME. Don't miss it!

# It's a long way from Westminster to Stevenage

by John Spokes

In January I attended the 2020 Show of the Chiltern Model Railway Association. I should admit that the last time I visited such an event the venue was The Central Hall Westminster; which model rail *aficionados* will date as some considerable time ago. 60 years to be precise.

So why this sudden impulse? Well, with my, as the medics say, 'age-related wear in the lumbar region', there will come a time when lugging around large locos will have to be substituted with something more manageable. I noticed an ad for this Show in a pre-Christmas copy of 'Steam Railway'. It was more the location, Stevenage, that caught my eye as it was not far from St Albans, where an anorak-pal of mine resides. In fact, I subsequently discovered that from 1965 to 2016 this show was held in St. Albans but relocated as it outgrew its original home.

From my perspective, the choice of scales and gauges was somewhat bewildering and with eyesight getting worse, Z and N-gauges are too optically challenging for me. In this respect O-gauge is more user-friendly, but you can't get much layout in a given space; however, considering the price of O-gauge locos and rolling stock that's probably not a bad thing. Anyway, the jury's still out on this.

It was a tenner to get in and what fantastic value; included in the admission was a very professionally produced Show Guide, containing a detailed summary for each of the 115 exhibitors and coloured Track Plans for each of the 33 layouts on show. I am not averse to reading the odd railway modelling magazine, but the pictures contained therein do very little justice compared with seeing the real thing. The quality of modelling was excellent, and I am amazed how the layouts could be sectionalised and yet fitted together so well. (As Eric Morecambe was wont to remark, "You can't see the join.") It is not my intention to describe everything. (What's that - Thank goodness?). However, I attach a few photographs of the displays I found most pleasing. Again, they do not give justice to reality.

## ***Wemblesden (photos A,B,C,)***

This OO gauge layout is based on the area around Wembley/Willesden and Stonebridge Park in the mid-80s. There is much use of scratch-built OHLE, all very convincing and to emphasise this a small white LED on the loco pantograph was made to flash periodically to simulate arcing. It means nothing to me, a simple chemical engineer, but the write-up says, 'it's old-school DC control using the MERG superbloc system'. Ah well! Anyway, one of my photos shows some electronic wizardry, which, I guess, made it all go tickety-boo.



A



B



C

All photos John Spokes





***Little Salkeld (photo E,F,G)***

Going down in scale now to N, this was an impressive layout, however, more an expansive diorama using finescale rail. Apparently, it featured in the March 2019 Railway Modeller. Although it was end-to-end, or seemingly so, there was a profusion of trains, all running at prototypical speeds. Little Salkeld was a station on the S&C near Penrith, but the railway has that look (for those that know it) of Quorn and Woodhouse on the Great Central.

E

F





G

**Nonesuch (photo H)**

A 7mm scale/ 16.5mm gauge (O16.5) railway based on Tudor times (back to BR, then?), all staffed by mice. This layout is a follow-on from the modeller, Derek Reeve's, earlier railway called "Wensleydale", which portrayed a cheese mine, again populated with the cuddly rodents. Apparently, Mr Reeve is referred to in modelling circles as "The Mousey Man", for obvious reasons. This nickname, however, was originally given to the late Robert Thompson a well-known woodcarver and furniture maker from Mr Reeve's part of the

world – the West Riding of Yorkshire – who carved a small mouse, as a signature, on each item he made. Perhaps Mr Thompson, in turn, got the idea from Terence Cuneo!



H



**Slindon Vale Railway (photo J)**

Another O16.5, created by the South Downs Group of the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association. This is a modular layout forming one of several modules being constructed by various members of the 7mm NG Assoc. with the objective of combining to form a much larger railway. This module although relatively small was beautifully detailed with some very fine locos and rolling stock.



J

**Johnstown Road**

*Caption on page 8*



D

### ***Johnstown Road (photo D)***

This layout is built to Ofs scale, which according to the description in the Show Guide is 7mm scale on 32mm gauge track. It's based on the Welsh Tanat Valley Railway, which was part of the Cambrian Railway System. The appeal of this for me was the beautiful portrayal of a waterside scene using resin to simulate the water with such effect. This approach was used on many of the layouts on show and there was an obvious desire to include a riverside or harbour theme in conjunction with the railway.

If I have one complaint of the show it is that some of the layouts were not very competently operated – lots of messing around and a few disagreements between the various persons running a particular layout. As an example, I waited 20 minutes to take the photo of the loco on the bridge on the Johnstown Road layout while the operators 'got their act together'.

Anyway, highly recommended for railway modellers in 2021 and that gives me a lead-in to remind you that Mike Sinclair will be presenting a talk on the 27<sup>st</sup> February about the development of the RSME's OO gauge layout. Perhaps *he* can tell me what is the "old-school DC control using the MERG superbloc system".

## **SOMETHING FOR THE ELEVENTH by David Scott**

### **The next Club Running Day in January, 2020**

This side-project began as a better version of the electric Drill Driver Loco we have. As you will appreciate after the seventh lap and a battery change your hand is aching and wanting a rest. Bits of things turn up at many times and clutter the workshop and garage. And yes, just after you get rid of it... it comes in very handy for part of your next project.

Sometimes parts come together in ideas and either work or not and get left on the side again. In the case of the disabled scooter motors, the gearboxes slowed the final drive down too much so an alternative was planned. We could have shifted a whole ground level train they were very, very powerful, but in the legend of the Bluebell Railway. It would be quicker to walk when tried.

(British Railways wanted to close the line but a local lady pointed them in the direction of the original act which would mean another Act of Parliament to close it down! This enabled the preservationists to collect up enough money and save the line. Of course you have guessed it. British Rail ran trains so slowly that the locals reckoned that you could get off, pick a bunch of Bluebells and get back on! The Bessemer Arms at Sheffield Park is named after the lady).

These gearboxes got taken off and await a motor to power a spare small band-saw for metal slowly for one of them. The other waits as clutter or as



spare! And the bandsaw with a damaged motor? Another. If I don't take it home it goes in the skip item from previous work... then hangs about for years while we look at motors and move house and model engineering Society etc.

Then the problems started as I was dreaming that the motor spindles extended out neatly with a resident worm gear like the OO Triang X 4 motors I had grown up with. No. Welcome to slot drive hiding within the flange. Current Jessie bits completed for the day a long 5/8" rod was clamped in the vice and a thumbnail size end reduced down to resemble a large screwdriver with a stubby blade in the milling machine. Both ends as we need two. (Note to self to make another this size as they do come in handy) Yes and immediately as I went to check on the brushes. Remove and note which way round they go as they come out mark B1 B2 B3 B4. Yes we have all done this before and the motor is not so smooth until they bed themselves back in.

Ideas came and went but eventually rested on two squares of metal, sorry, steel, sitting upon a cross piece times two into which the motor was bolted. The steel was chosen. Cut, cleaned up and bored for the step on the motor to fit into and a bearing turned at the same time to keep them concentric. Then the outer ones, and finally eight round spacers. Hence taking a motor apart to get the right fit, lifting a heavy motor up to the lathe for checking on fit, did not seem to be a great idea. Both then got cleaned of carbon dust inside. And checked for the bearings running nicely.

Lots of holes M6 for the motors and M8 were drilled and tapped. And the spindle extension turned to a nice fit in the two bearings and the toothed pulley which had been bored out slightly smaller.

This is where a lathe with a clutch comes into its own. Bit more... Bit more off and do not forget a slight file to rid yourself of the fine ridges. Tight and perfect and on to the next. Yes at this stage the bearings were not pressed into the square pieces of steel and very portable to keep checking fits. They are 4 inches square and 16 millimetres thick. So lots more tractive effort!

On the cross pieces again of steel I decided upon slots for M8 bolts for adjustment to tighten the belts. The milling machines vice is now a permanent resident up at this end of the table.

The original two units had been made during the summer painting season with the aim of liftable and a battery going on, once on the track and joined up. A massive amount of weight pressing down on two steel wheels. A cheap seized up bogie which had been acquired had been tried between as I had one, now held the electrics but a pivoting bolt horizontal, seems far better and offers some suspension on the torsion. A full scale M10 of course! Tease. With a scattering of Nylock nuts.

Now comes the dry run with the parts and a little opening out of the holes sees everything going round. Tighten the outer bolt and it locks up. Ah, let's put a second bolt under the motor flanged square and leave out the second

outer one which pulled the extension spindle into jamming the bearings. Perfect. I can try with and without the bogie, putting the units together into it is easier.

I get to paint the first units additional parts... and prepare the second units collection of bits, all cleaned, masked off where the bearings fit... and outside it is raining and it is not a Wednesday I get out some 7¼ Jessie bits to file instead.

Tuesday and we get full sun. Everything gets dropped and we are out with the primer.

After breakfast the satin black is drying. Note to self that the cheaper paint is only useful to check on progress when sanding down or to preserve finished parts. I am so looking forward to cellulose paints if we can have them back at the end of January! Then the batteries go flat on us?

I dive into the internet for new ones and a look into battery jargon? For a mostly steam person! Amp hours seem to be the factor that enables us to do a constant drain on using one or in our case two which coupled together gives out 24 volts. 24 hour delivery and £24 each read the advert.

Only five minutes running said the small print. A local search with the words guarantee and family firm and go and Get Them Now began. As we are steaming towards the 11th hour some money gathers to be bunged. So Amp Hours can be bought at a price. 32A.H. say the current batteries! So in other words with the equipment's original use you could get down to the local pub and return all uphill and you are guaranteed of getting home on the scooter. For us a whole day of driving round the track and enjoying. Buying locally got us wonderful service, an interest in what we were doing, a £8 back on the old batteries each! Plus a surprise. I just couldn't believe the small size of the new charger. Coat pocket sized.

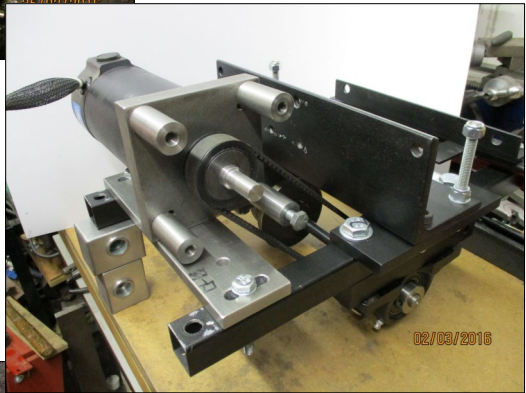
Friday afternoon the 10th saw the parts turn up in the sitting room and sat on three clean bricks.

Note to others that you can drill holes in the house just do them in a large bag. While I made a shelf for the electrics, On the top, in full view, and 100% accessible! I reused the original cables and a pair of connectors bordering on The Industrial. So keeping the idea of lifting four lumps onto the track and assembling in moments. A switch is recommended so enough cable for this. Oh and a fuse! Were factored in. Yes 11 PM is a bit late for a crimping party down the garden. These need a serious vice to do them. As you realise DC needs large diameter cable to pass the power and these are 6 millimetre round. And she runs... Midnight. Yes and yes, both motors go in the right direction and correspond to the instructions by the forward and reverse switch.

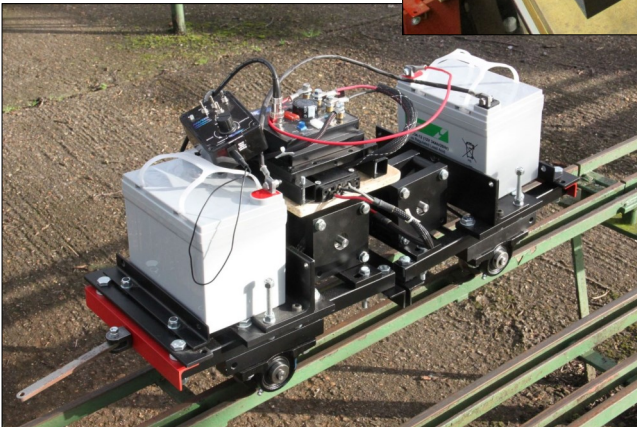
On the track and we have made it yes we did get it all ready by the eleventh hour. And she is perfect! And some of our Young Engineers get to take her round on the second lap! I make improvement notes on the height of the buff-

er-beams and some rail guards which will help when bolting the two halves together without assistance. They are very heavy. This works well and keeps all four wheels solidly on the track. And a bit fast so needs a good filled train behind to tame.

Thoughts return for something narrow gauge for the cover... Or leave her as she is for some serious smiles! Does anyone do a Pacer body yet? They have now become historic units. 7¼ size should cover all the bits? Then sit back and wait for an expert on the Class 219 to say I have it wrong!



Photos David Scott





## DIARY

### February 2020

Sunday	2nd	Public Running	13:00
Tuesday	4th	OO Gauge	19.30
Saturday	8th	Club running	11am
Monday	10th	Trustees meeting	19.30
Tuesday	11th	OO Gauge DCC	19.30
Monday	17th	Special Needs	13:30 to 16:00
Saturday	22nd	Club Running	11am
Thursday	27th	Clubhouse talk	20.00

### March 2020

Sunday	1st	Public Running	13.00
Tuesday	3rd	OO Gauge	19.30
Saturday	7th	Club Running	11am
Tuesday	10th	OO Gauge DCC	19.30
Saturday	21st	Club Running	11am

**Comments by RSME members on any subject appearing in Prospectus are welcomed by the editor.**

Opinions expressed in PROSPECTUS are the personal views of the contributor and cannot be taken as reflecting the views of the club committee or editor.

**The deadline for the March issue is 18 February. This is the final date.**

Contributions may be submitted in hard or soft copy to the editor.

John Billard Old Station House Twyford Reading RG10 9NA

01189 340381

john@jegbillard.plus.com