

**Reading Society
of Model
Engineers
Charity Number
1163244**



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The Prospectus

March 2026



A busy moment at the 00 Group on 24 February 2026
Photo John Billard

**TRUSTEE NEWS
ACCOUNTS REPORT
LUNCH PICTURES
SIGNALMAN
FIVE INCH TRAM
1913 RSME EXHIBITION REPORT**

THE VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

John Billard

A visit to the club for Saturday running last week showed plenty of activity including engines being tested and tried out. Also the other night I went to the Tuesday 00 group and it was nice to meet a group of members that I don't see very often. There was plenty going on working on track and engines and carriages. What made me attend was that I have been given an 00 gauge Claud Hamilton as a birthday present and I thought it would be pleasant to see it run – which it did. Far in advance if my 5 inch gauge version!

The last time I operated at that small scale was my Hornby Dublo 3-rail in my teens which is still in my loft somewhere. The great difference was in the high detail and fragility of the modern product. In fact I was successful in breaking it getting it out of the box! Thankfully group member Daniel was able to put it right for me. New members are always welcome at this group and it is always worthwhile just turning up to see what is going on. The first Tuesday of the month is when the whole layout is operating by digital control.

The trustees met as usual on the 9th February with the usual range of items to consider. We continue to plan for a change over in the way our finances are handled by using a digital program. This will make it easier for trustee members to keep track all changes enter keep an eye on the numbers. We approved the monthly accounts for January.

Things are fairly quiet on the projects and maintenance fronts This is not helped by the continuing wet weather. We're having to look at improving the record keeping relating to the club's engines and carriages and this work has been assigned.

The January public running was successful as usual although there were a number of matters arising. This included making sure that wagons were safe to run with coupling pins and inter coach boards in place. We considered the activities of the track marshals which cover both ground and raised tracks. Quite a responsibility for one person. It was important to minimise loading time at stations but making sure that passengers were given advice about travelling safely.

Regarding safety issues we are aware of overcrowding on the platforms during busy times. There is no quick solution other than having sufficient staff to keep people in the right place. Extending the ground level platform is one possibility.

On communication It was noted that the March Prospectus will be the last to be produced by the present editor but it was pleasing to note that Tom Biddle was volunteering to take over in some form.

A future event was announced for 13th of September consisting of a competition held nationally for engines built to the designs of the late LBSC known as "Curly". It was noted that there was a probable requirement for the 2 1/2 inch gauge track.

Peter Culham was absent but send to report to say that he had a reduced number of birthday parties this year with a tendency to combine the with public running. There had been a request to use our car park by a charity involved in the Reading half marathon and this was being investigated.

Other issues considered was the appointment of Daniel Reece to be appointed as a further administrator on our Charity Commission website. On safeguarding it was agreed that the club does not provide specific services to children. This avoids the requirement for DBS checking. It was noted that the Federation AGM was to be held on 14th of March 2026 and will be attended by Nigel Penford and John Billard on behalf of the club.

PROSPECTUS

This is my last issue as editor of Prospectus. Over the past twenty years I have produced some 250 issues; on average that is 2,500 pages for our members.

None of this would have been possible without the contribution of members and others and I would like to remember Alan Davidson, Cliff Perry, Wolverton Pug, John Spokes and many others who have contributed over the years and still do so. They are remembered and far from forgotten.

I am very pleased to say that Tom Biddle has offered to take over. He is one of our younger members and I am sure he will have new ideas. This is a big responsibility for him and I hope that you will give him every support in the future. His contact details are on the back page.

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES **Independent Examiner's report on the accounts**

The RSME trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. This requires an independent examination by Rachel Eden which has now been carried out under the terms of the Charities Act 2011.

We are pleased to report that, for the year ended 31 March 2025, no material matters have come to the examiners attention to say that the accounting records were not kept in accordance with the act and regulations. No other matters in connection with the examination has prevented a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

The full report will be found on the club notice board in the clubhouse. This is the second year running that we have achieved a clean report. Thanks goes to all those that has made this possible.



CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2025

Held at the Southcote
Beefeater on
4th December.



Thank you, Val and Richard Coleman, for your superb organisation of our Christmas lunch once more.

Regrettably I mislaid the photos on my computer so Richard had to re send them. They arrived just after the previous issue of Prospectus had been published. (Ed)

THE SIGNALMAN Part 2

from Alec Bray

Ding ... Call Attention. This time it was Ernie calling the box in the rear. Ding ... Acknowledge. Ding Ding Pause Ding ... Train out of section. The train was on the branch line, not on the main line, but also it was not actually out of section. Ernie's heart was heavy. Ding Ding Pause Ding ... Acknowledge.

"Better enter this in the Train Register," thought Ernie, "Once they have unloaded, they will actually go down the branch to the end and somehow, by using the run-round loop or a bit of fly-shunting, get the diesel shunter back to the front of the train." Ernie started to walk across the box, but as he did so, he began to get a strange feeling inside his head. The signal box suddenly started to spin round. Ernie grabbed hold of the nearest signal lever, but the box kept spinning. It was getting faster and faster. Ernie knew he has standing straight, he knew that he was holding onto something firm, but even so the whole box seemed to be spinning round, spinning now in all directions. Ernie was feeling extremely sick, he let go of the signal lever and fell to his knees: still the box was spinning, spinning, spinning and Ernie was feeling weak and nauseous. Somehow Ernie crawled across the floor to the coal bucket, and he threw up violently into the coal dust. He sank down, resting his elbows on the floor.

Slowly, slowly, the signal box stopped spinning. Slowly, slowly, Ernie's head stopped spinning. How long? There were no sounds, just the wishing of the wind round the timber-framed upper part of the signal box. Ernie slowly dragged himself to his chair, and leaning heavily on the table, heaved himself up and slumped onto the seat. Gradually his head began to clear, but what had recently happened seemed wrapped in a fog.

Ding ... Call Attention - from the box in the rear. Ernie dragged himself to his feet and staggered to his instrument shelf. Ding ... Acknowledge. But Ernie was not feeling at all well, and could taste the vomit in his mouth. Ding Ding Ding Ding ... Is line clear for an express train?

Ernie lurched back to his table, poured some water from his jug onto a rag, and gave his face a quick wipe. He looked at the lever frame. All signals were "ON", all point levers were set for the main through route, all connected track circuits were showing clear. He was about to acknowledge that the line was clearBut, but...

There was a nagging thought at the back of his mind, but it was blurred and Ernie was not felling well. He ignored the bell.

Ding Ding Ding Ding ... Is line clear for an express train? Repeated. Ernie needed to clear his head: perhaps fresh air would help. Using the lever frame for support, Ernie made his way to the door of his box and opened it. He stepped out onto the landing - at least the fresh air revived him somewhat. Ernie peered at the junction, some hundred yards away, suddenly noticing something that horrified him. He rushed back into the box and lunged for the tappet for the box in the rear.

DingDingDingDingDingDingDingDingDingDing ... Emergency call attention – a number of beats in rapid succession. “Please, please,” whispered Ernie to himself. Ding ... Acknowledge. Ding Ding Ding Ding Ding ... Obstruction Danger. “Please, please, be in time,” whispered Ernie to himself, but louder this time. Ding Ding Ding Ding Ding Ding ... Acknowledged Obstruction Danger. “Thank you, thank you,” whispered Ernie.

Ernie turned back to the signalbox door, and stepped out onto the landing once more, this time going to the end of the landing and leaned out round the balcony.

Then he remembered the goods train! The goods train was stationary behind his box, the diesel shunter with its engine shut down. The crew, guard, and loaders were sat some distance away, eating sandwiches and crisps. A plan began to form in Ernie’s somewhat still befuddled brain. Cautiously, still feeling a bit unsteady, Ernie climbed down the steps from his box and walked towards the group of workers. The youth looked up: “Alright, mate?” he asked by way of greeting.

“No, mate,” said Ernie, with heavy emphasis on the mate. “We have a situation.”

“Nah, just you, mate,” responded the youth. Ernie saw the flash of the guard’s badge on the youth’s jacket.

“No, my friend,” said Ernie, with as much good grace as he could muster. “We have a situation.” Emphasis on the we. “If you don’t help, you and your train will be stuck here and won’t be released!”

“S our lunch break, grandad. Not doin’ nuffin’ during our break.” That was one of the youths in the loading gang .

“Lunch break? Lunch break? People are waiting in trains, missing meetings, missing family reunions, missing lovers, just because you want to finish a bag of grotty chips”. Ernie’s anger was beginning to show, and at least the driver of the shunter recognised this “What do we do?” he asked. Ernie explained to him, at least, that the point rodding seemed to be broken, and the points were still set for the branch, and could not be worked from the box.

“Well, that’s OK,” said the youth, the guard. “We just move off the branch, no probs. Send us onto the Up main, that’s what should happen anyway, and we head for home.”

“Don’t think that’s the answer,” said Ernie firmly. At best, Ernie explained, the locomotive would be at the wrong end of the train, and pushing a loose-coupled goods train along the Up main was not the best idea. He also explained that if the point rodding was broken, it could have fouled the other nearby point rods, or those rods might be likely to fail just as the one in question had. The whole situation would then be much worse! There was a train in the preceding block section on the Down main – and hopefully held at the home signal – so there was no escape by just running onto the Down main either!

“Now then,” said Ernie, “My plan is this. You set back off the branch as

you said, but onto the Down main. Just clear the pointwork. I'll unlock the point lock – that seems to be working. That will free the tie bar. With your crowbars and rods, you could move the tongue blades to the main line, and with clamps or clips, you can fasten the switch blades to the straight stock rails. I'll then relock the points: just you be on hand to make sure the lock re-engages with the tie bar. Then you go forward over the reset points along the Down main line. This will actually test your work. You can go down to Cauley, the next station, and then shunt there so that you can return back to base on the Up main."

The Gronk's driver gave a thumbs up, "Come on, lads," he shouted, "Let's do this." He climbed into the cab on the diesel shunter and started the engine. Accompanied by a lot of grumbling, the loading crew and the guard piled into the guard's vans. Meanwhile Ernie had climbed the stairs back into his box.

Ding ... Call attention - to the box in the rear. Ding ... Acknowledge. Ding Ding Pause Ding Ding Ding Ding ... Blocking back inside home signal. Ding Ding Pause Ding Ding Ding Ding ... Acknowledge.

Time for Ernie to go back out onto his landing, this time with his set of flags. Unfurling the green flag, he waved it from the end of the landing. The guard whistled. Ernie was rewarded with a long "hoooot" from the diesel shunter, and slowly the goods train set back towards the main line.

Ernie went back into this box and pulled off the blue facing point lock. Reaching up to the instrument shelf, he picked up the handset for the telephone to the box in the rear. Ernie briefly explained his plan, something that needed more information than could be sent using the bell codes.

The gang got to work with crowbars and clamps, setting the points to the main line. They not only clipped the switch blades to the stock rail, but clamped part of the rodding to the mounting brackets. The Gronk gave a loud hoot, just as a face peered round the signal box door.

"All done, squire" announced the face "OK?" Ernie replied with a thumbs up.

Ding ... Call attention – to the box in advance. Ding ... Acknowledge. Ding Ding Ding Is line clear for a freight train stopping at intermediate stations? Ding Ding DingAcknowledge.

Ernie pulled off his home and starting signals and went out onto his landing . He waved his green flag and watched at the diesel shunter and train moved over the pointwork along the main line. Re-entering his box, his refuge, Ernie tensely watched the track circuits. Finally they were all clear. Ernie reversed the home and starting signals and went to the bell instrument for the box in the rear.

Ding ... Call attention - sent to the box in the rear Ding ... Acknowledge. Ding Ding Pause Ding ... Train out of section, obstruction removed Ding Ding Pause Ding ... Acknowledge. 7

Ding.... Call attention - from the box in the rear Ding ... Acknowledge.

Ding Ding Ding Pause Ding ... Is line clear for an ordinary passenger train?
Ding Ding Ding Pause Ding ... Acknowledge.

Ernie pulled off his home and starting signals ready for the passenger train (an express no longer). It passed slowly – obviously warned of the track-work repair. Ernie filled in the Train Register in his meticulous handwriting. Another four hours before he could switch out his box, which today for Ernie could not come quick enough. What a time! Meanwhile, he had a bucket of vomit to get rid of. He was sure that all the local wildlife would have a feast as he threw the contents of his coal bucket far away from the bottom step of his box. It wouldn't be there for long...

"And neither will I", thought Ernie, as he caught a glimpse of the pile of colour-light signal posts covering his imagined kitchen garden...

A NEW TRAM IN 5 INCH GAUGE Part 2

By Terry Wood

I started off making the chassis using 30 x 30 mm angle iron cutting with an



angle grinder a 60 degree v shape and grinding a shallow slot on the adjacent side in order to get a sharp 60 degree bend in each corner so that it could be welded afterwards. I continued with this operation until I had completed an oblong with three bends at each end. I then spent a long time bending all the corners up until they were all at the same angle and the whole assembly held together on its own with no stresses and was

completely flat. Once this was achieved I welded each corner up until I had a solid oblong in order to mount everything to. I then cut the remainder of the angle iron in half length ways to form two strips which will be used to make the girders to bolt the wheel bearings to. After I had cut the angle iron into two strips I discovered that they were very flimsy but then I had an idea if I weld the strips to the chassis they would act as suspension for the wheels providing I raise all the brackets for the batteries and the motor mounting off the chassis by means of nuts/bolts and spacers.

I then proceeded with fitting the wheel bearings to the flexible girders once they'd been welded on, and once the wheels and axles arrived from SMR Engineering. I dismantled one set using a press in order to fit a 3055m toothed pulley cog to the inside of the wheel set. The wheel set proved very difficult to press apart



due to the tight interference fit of the wheels so I had to choose the wheel set with the wheel that had the "loosest" press fit. Before I could fit the driving cog. I had to machine the cog out slightly because the hole in it was 12mm and the axle was 1/2" diameter. Once I had fitted the cog I then had to re-assemble the wheel set which proved very difficult due to the tight press fit so I had to rub the axle down slightly using some fine wet and dry paper and some oil in order to be able to press the wheel set back together again.

Once I lined up the wheels sets so they were parallel and had bolted the wheel bearings up I then proceeded to make the two battery holders out



of the same size angle iron as the rest by making four long pieces and four short pieces and welding them together making sure that the batteries fitted ok before I welded them up which I forgot to do on the first one and ending up grinding all the weld off and starting again! I then proceeded to make the motor mount in the same fashion and drilling all the holes to fit them to the chassis. Once the drive belt had arrived I could then drill the holes in the

chassis to mount the motor in the correct position so that the belt was at the correct tension.



I then concentrated on fitting the control panel to the rear of the tram so that all the controls for on/off, forward and reverse could be at hand and the controller could easily be plugged in, I also fitted a fuse holder to accommodate a 50 amp fuse to protect the batteries and the wiring. The trolley coupling was also fitted at the base of the panel

and because the tram sits very low to the track had to be raised to locate on the trolley coupling.

When I first took the assy on the track for the first time I discovered that the torque adjuster which forms part of the motor was slipping so I had to make up a spacer to prevent the adjuster from slipping. This I made out of two strips of aluminium wrapped around the slipper to stop it moving and lock it into position. The two halves were then clamped together using a large tye-wrap, I tried using a jubilee clip but there was not enough room.

To be continued.

Model Engineers at Reading.

An Interesting Exhibition

Extracts from The Model Engineer and Electrician. February 13, 1913

We think the Reading Society of Model Engineers are to be cordially congratulated on the excellent display of work which they placed before the public at their recent exhibition, the first event of the kind which they have undertaken. The Society is fortunate in having as its President Mr. E. Hubert Foster, of Pangbourne, who, in addition to being a keen enthusiast in all branches of model engineering, is himself an active worker in the art. Old readers of the M.E. will no doubt remember that in January, 1902, we published a most interesting account of the building of an 18-ft. model battleship in which Mr. Foster took a prominent share.

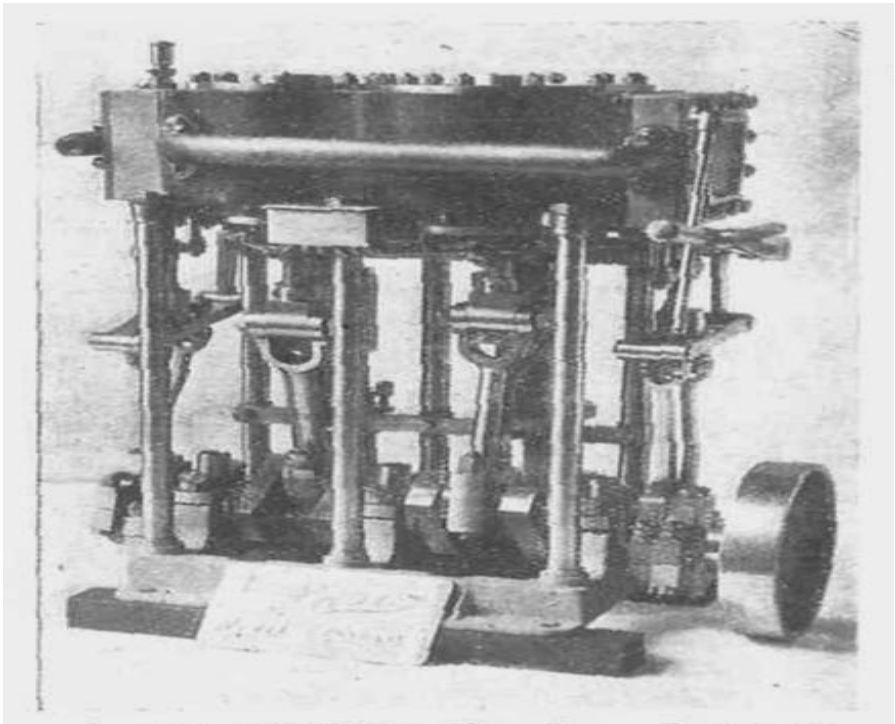
Since those days the President of the Reading S.M.E. has turned his attention to model railway construction, and has recently laid down one of the best planned and most complete electrically operated model railway systems we have yet seen. The installation of the permanent way, which runs into several hundred feet, and the building of the stations, bridges, and tunnels, have been carried out by Mr. Foster himself, so that it will be gathered that he is unusually well qualified for the office he holds. When he invited us to come down to Reading and assist him in judging the competition work of the members, we accepted with pleasure, for we felt that the visit would be a pleasant one.

We were not disappointed, for amongst the work on view, both in the competition and the loan sections, were several exhibits which were fit to take a place in any model exhibition, while the average quality of the other work was surprisingly good. In spite of the bad weather which prevailed, there was an excellent attendance of the public, the hall at times being very crowded. The Reading Society will no doubt feel encouraged to repeat the experiment another year, and with the experience they have already gained, and the increased local interest in model work, which the present exhibition will undoubtedly promote, they should meet with even greater success.

An exhibit which attracted considerable attention was the model petrol engine, for which Mr. A. T. Hawkins, a member of the Society, was awarded the prize in the recent competition promoted by Messrs. Drummond Bros. Ltd. Particulars of this model appear elsewhere in this issue. Mr. E. A. Tunbridge and Mr. A. Herbert gave X-ray demonstrations during the evening, and were kept very busily occupied. Mr. Foster presented the prizes during the course of the evening, making a very happy and encouraging little speech to the members. We give below a list of the prize-winners in the various classes, and also some particulars of the principal loan exhibits, and ~~are~~ ^{are} pleased to be able to add photographs of some of the successful models, from which our readers will get a good idea of the abilities of their fellow enthusiasts in Reading.

Competition Prize-Winners.

Class A: Model Engines (prizes presented by Mr. E. H. Foster).



First, Mr. E. Lush, high-speed compound condensing marine engine;
Pictured above

Second. Mr. E. H. Aldridge, vertical gas engine;

Third. Mr. A. T. Hawkins, petrol-driven aeroplane ;

Fourth, Mr. A. Herbert, gas engine.

Class B: Boats (prizes presented by Mr. E. H. Foster

DIARY

MARCH 2026

1st	Public running	Setting up from 09.30
7th	Club running	10.30 onwards
9th	Trustees meeting	19.30
21st	Club running	10 30 onwards

APRIL 2025

5th	Public running	Setting up from 09.30
11th	Club running	10.30 onwards
13th	Trustees meeting	19.30
25th	Club running	10.30 onwards

Meetings are normally held every Thursday at 19.30 in the club house.

The Wednesday Warriors continue the hard work at the club site from 09.30.Wednesdays unless notified.

The 00 Group meets at he club house on Tuesdays 19.30 to 22.00.

Thanks to Jim Brown for discovering the 1913 of the RSME Exhibition report in Model Engineer

*Opinions expressed in PROSPECTUS are the personal views of the contributor and cannot be taken as reflecting the views of the trustees or editor. **The deadline for the April issue is 20 March** Contributions may be submitted to the editor.
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