

Chairman's Thoughts

I had a walk around the track and it was good to see we have had some snowdrops planted, thanks Pipa; they do look nice. Maybe in a few years time, if they flourish, we could have a Snowdrop Run. The wind has blown down a lot of branches, so it is important that the track is walked prior to any running to clear the debris.

We were intending to lay new carpet tiles in the station building, but unfortunately we have found that a couple of the logs have some rot in them so I will be ordering some replacements from the manufacturers, who are in Holland. However, the local dealer said that there should not be a problem in getting replacements, so when the weather dries out we will replace them.

We now have a subcommittee looking after the organisation of IMLEC (next meeting of the subcommittee Wednesday 12th February at 12.00 noon at the track) and we have sorted out a budget as requested. A list of repairs and jobs to be carried out before the event and on the day has been formulated. I will be canvassing Members for their support to carry out specific jobs on the two days of the event.

A list of the repairs to be done will be displayed in the Engine Shed, so please take on a task so it is not just left to a few. This brings me on to the slabs in the Steaming Bay. They need some urgent attention, so we are looking for a volunteer to run a working party to take on the task of sorting them out. Please contact me if you are interested at davidm@littledownrailway.co.uk (Needs to be somebody young and fit for the task, but again we need the weather to dry up.)

If you are planning to de-scale your boiler this year Aldi are selling 400ml bottles of Kilrock-k for £1.99 - trouble is with their products they sell out fast, so you will need to be quick. They also had washing machine descaler at the same price. <https://www.aldi.co.uk/en/specialbuys/>

David Martin

Editor's Ramblings

The Society's Annual Dinner at the Crooked Beam Restaurant was, as in the past, very enjoyable. There were slightly fewer diners than last year, so we weren't quite so squashed. I have made a provisional booking for the fourth Wednesday in January next year - unless the restaurant has been demolished, of course.

The monthly TechChat Meetings are, for those who attend, one of the highlights of the month. With no agenda, every meeting is a magical mystery tour.

The February meeting was no exception, with a very wide range of topics being explored. John Hoyle's picture shows us watching as Neil's 3D printer builds a small green Android figure before our very eyes. The printing process is not a fast one - a bit like watching paint dry!

So, come along to next month's TechChat and see what interesting subjects come up for discussion. Bring something along to discuss. It can be something you have built or something you are currently building. Do you have a problem? Bring that along and see if discussing it will help to find a solution.

To give you an indication of what could be on the table, apart from Neil's printer, we had a Sweet Pea cylinder block, a 1cc twin diesel engine that John had designed and built, an indoor radio controlled flying machine, a 16mm live steam loco under construction, a G1 electric 0-6-0 tank loco, the crankcase of a Nano 0.1cc diesel engine and some Scale7 coach and wagon wheels, made about 40 years ago, using acrylic resin for the centres cast in rubber moulds with steel tyres.



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Gas Tank Testing

The Southern Federation have issued a clarification regarding the testing of gas tanks. The initial hydraulic test only needs to be performed when the tank is made and lasts the life of the tank. The Safeguard ('soapy water') Test needs to be carried out every two years.

This makes a lot more sense. The thought of filling my gas tank with water and pumping it up to 560 psig every two years was worrying me.

Dick Ganderton

Committee Matters

The March 2014 Committee Meeting will be held at the Littledown Centre at 7.30pm on Wednesday 5th March 2014. The Minutes of the February Committee Meeting will be available for perusal at the February 2014 Meeting.

George Wheatley, Secretary

Direction of Running

The way in which we alternate the direction of running at the Littledown Miniature Railway has been changed. The direction of running will now be clockwise for even months and anticlockwise for odd months. So February 2014 will be clockwise and March 2014 anticlockwise.

The 16mm Narrow Gauge Garden Railway will still be running on the First and Third Sundays of each month, weather permitting. The next dates are 16th February, 2nd & 16th March 2014.

Engine Shed Mobile Phone

A Mobile Phone has been installed in the Engine Shed at Littledown for the convenience of Members. It can be used for outgoing calls on Society business and in an emergency. Members who are at the track can also be contacted if required. The number, **07879355399**, is on the 'Contacts' page of the Society's Website **www.littledownrailway.co.uk**

Insurance & Membership Lists

The Policy for the Society has been renewed. A copy of the policy has been placed in the desk in the Engine Shed. The original documents are held by the Secretary and can be viewed by arrangement.

For Members who wish to run their locomotives at locations which require evidence of Public Liability cover there are a number of copies of the Certificate at the back of the same folder as the copy of the policy. This will need to be signed by a Committee Member on an individual basis before it becomes valid.

The success of the redesigned Application and Renewal Forms has made it possible to keep our Membership Lists up-to-date and as all the Forms were signed, details can be distributed to other members. An abbreviated list, which omits addresses, can be obtained on application to the Secretary. A copy is kept in the desk in the Engine Shed

George Wheatley, Secretary

B&DSME Diary Dates.

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 19 th February 2014 | Monthly Meeting; 7.30 pm. Muscliff Community Centre.
<i>Topic to be advised.</i> |
| 6 th March 2014 | Tech-Chat (Informal Discussion Meeting); 7.00 for 7.30 pm.
Gordon Miles. <i>Please let Gordon know if you are attending.</i> |
| 19 th March 2014 | Monthly Meeting; 7.30 pm. Muscliff Community Centre.
<i>Richard Knott's Video Show.</i> |

Luscombe Valley Happenings

www.luscombevalleysteam.com

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|------------|---|
| Cobweb Run | April 19 th & 20 th |
| Grand Gala | July 26 th & 27 th |
| Autumn Run | September 20 th & 21 st |
| Humbug Day | December 20 th |

Newsletter By E-mail

If you want to receive your copy of the Society's monthly Newsletter as a .pdf file, in full colour, you **must** let Dick know, by e-mail, sent from the computer you want to receive it on.

Typeset by Dick Ganderton in Gill Sans using Adobe InDesign CS5 v7.0 on an Apple Mac mini 2.3GHz Intel Core i5 running Mac OS X v10.9 Mavericks.

Southern Federation Newsletter

The latest issue of the Southern Federation Newsletter has been published. Those members who receive their B&DSME Newsletter by e-mail will find a PDF version attached to their e-mail along with this Newsletter.

Those members who receive their B&DSME Newsletter by post will not receive a copy - it is 12 pages and would be prohibitively expensive to print out and post. Sorry, but that's the way it is. The Southern Federation no longer post copies.

A printed copy will be posted in the Engine Shed and will also be available to read at the February Meeting.

Dick Ganderton

IMLEC 2014



Plans are well advanced for IMLEC 2014 to be run at Littledown Miniature Railway on 12th & 13th July 2014. Please keep these dates free in your diaries as we will need all the help we can muster to ensure that the event runs smoothly.

Merlin's Mutterings

I would like to comment on how dirty the trolleys have become due to all the very wet weather. It is very wet under foot so all the muck transfers from feet to the foot boards and side panels of the trolleys and, of course, they are being put away in a dirty state.

On Sunday, 2nd February, I wiped two of them with a damp cloth, which only took me a few minutes, so can I ask anyone who puts a trolley away, please give it a quick wipe over with a damp cloth. Offering the public a ride on a dirty trolley does not create a very good impression.

The next thing I would like to mention is that the brush waggon does not seem to be used very often, the result being the brake gear on one trolley ended up being gummed solid with rusty, muddy, gunge. Using the brush waggon does get rid of quite a lot of the loose rusty mess on the rails so please, before public running, run the brush waggon around the track.

That's all this time, so thanks in advance.

Merlin

For Sale

MYFORD Super 7B Lathe for sale, complete with metal cabinet stand and tray, quick-change gearbox, countershaft clutch unit, interchangeable tool holder with four holders, swivelling vertical slide, Burnerd Griptru 3-jaw chuck, independent 4-jaw chuck, steadies, etc. £1400.

MYFORD Dividing attachment complete with three division plates. £200.

Gordon Miles, Tel: 01202 708734. e-mail: miles@thecoast.eclipse.co.uk

Ron's Award

Richard Knott took the opportunity of the Society's Annual Dinner to present Ron Challener with an award for his long term service to the Luscombe Valley Railway and for his friendship and engineering prowess. Richard said that they have been friends now for over thirty years and took him under LVR's wing after his wife died and reinvigorated his interest in model engineering. He was also a flyer in model form for years.



Running a 7¼ gauge locomotive in the Gulf

Kevin Patience

It all started in Zanzibar in 1977 when I was working in a shipyard in Mombasa, Kenya, but was sent to Zanzibar to repair one of our ships. When the job was over I had the opportunity to dive on the wreck of a British cruiser *HMS Pegasus* sunk in the First World War. There was not a great deal left other than broken steel plate and small brass and copper items. Out to one side was the remains of the hull and steam engine of the ship's twenty one foot cutter. The wooden hull had almost disintegrated but the machinery was still intact and I recovered a brass plate off the engine that read 'Plenty & Son, Newbury, No. 1596.' I kept it as a souvenir until I was next in UK and able to visit Plenty who were still making pumps. Their records showed this was one of a batch of compound steam engines supplied to the Royal Navy in 1896 for cutters aboard a class of cruisers of which *Pegasus* was one. I gave them the plate for their museum.

However what really interested me in the MD's office was what was obviously a large model steam engine under a sheet. It turned out to be a 7¼" gauge, Keith Wilson built, Great Western 2-8-0 tender engine, 4701, eight feet long. I was stunned, having never seen such a large model, all lined out with Great Western on the tender. It was owned by John Hall Craggs, who was Plenty's MD and was almost mint, having only been steamed three or four times since it was built. As I left I casually mentioned if he wished to sell it I was interested.

Now at this point I was working in Bahrain in partnership with two others running a diving and salvage company. Some months later the phone rang and it was John offering me the loco. That night I flew back to London, drove to Newbury, bought the engine for the grand sum of £3,000 and having phoned Keith Wilson, delivered it to him to upgrade the regulator and superheater. A few days later I drove back to Heathrow, had it boxed and that night it flew with me back to Bahrain. Three days later it cleared Customs and ended up on a table in the office. We gave it a polish and the brass steam dome and copper topped funnel look resplendent in the bright sunshine. As my partner, Mike, said 'Great Western turned out some fine looking engines'.

A week later a friend dropped by and stared. His comment being, 'What on earth are you going to do with that'. 'Run it says I. In that case I can build you some track'. A week later I had four hundred feet of steel flat bar track in twenty foot lengths which slotted together. We laid the track in the car park, wood fired the loco and ran up and down to the amazement of all the workers in the office block. Unbeknown to us a photographer from the daily paper had taken some photos, two of which appeared in the press next day under the heading 'Bahrain's first steam train'. The phone leapt off the hook. We had invitations from hotels, schools and assorted expatriates to run the loco at a variety of functions.

Mike was the first to step in and help, and we built a carriage eight feet long from Dexion angle and then using the old boy network had General Electric make two sets of four wheel bogies with roller bearings. Using the company truck we shifted the rails to our first venue, which was the American School. This really was an eye opener as the kids had never seen a live steam engine and were intrigued by the coal fire. Of course there were some odd comments like where does the petrol go and does this actually run on water. Fuel was going to be a big problem, or so I thought, but in fact the answer was outside the office.

Across the road from us was a forge that made wrought iron fittings for dhows and other small boats and they used coal. We quickly bought a shopping bag full and fired the engine. The smoke was noxious and had that old fashioned acrid smell that was prevalent in Britain in the 60s. The coal came from India and was in fact a low quality type sometimes referred to as lignite, but it burnt relatively well and did produce some ash. Fortunately the firebox had an ash pan. The afternoon went well and by the time we shut down we had carried over three hundred kids, ten at a time up and down our track.

Water was also going to be a problem as the local tap water contained minerals, but was still drinkable. However one of the numerous enthusiasts one encounters immediately there is mention of steam, happened to work in the local power station which was powered by steam turbines and as they have boiler water of a very high standard I was given access to distilled water by the ton. My water problem was over, it just meant that every time we steamed I had to collect at least thirty gallons of distilled water in plastic cans. Lube oil was not a problem as the stuff came out the ground not far away. Steam oil was a different, few had heard of it and it was not available locally. I had about a litre to begin with but as this came to towards the end Mike came to the rescue again. He phoned all the oil companies in the telephone book, most said they couldn't help.



But Gulf Oil, an American company fell over themselves. They rang the States and within a week couriered a gallon of best American steam oil. It was good publicity and as the newspapers loved a story on the train it made headlines, 'Giant corporation aids little train'.

The newspapers printed numerous pictures and wrote up articles and with the coming of Christmas the Diplomat Hotel rang to ask if they could have the loco to carry kids to Santa's Grotto. I had a meeting with the hotel's chief engineer Russ and looked at the possible venues to lay track. In the end it was decided to lay the track round the swimming pool on the green plastic Astroturf. When I explained the loco dripped oil and dropped ash from time to time it was of no concern as it would be replaced after Christmas. Walking round the pool I realised there was not enough track and also the radius would be a little tight. Russ immediately got his Indian and Filipino workshop crew to build track to fit the route. While we were laying track one afternoon adjacent to the pool a British Airways crew took their places on the sun beds and ordered their drinks. The captain was looking over his sun glasses and eventually asked if this was a railway. One of the Filipina crew replied that it was.



He continued to watch and eventually said he had been all over the world but never seen a swimming pool with a railway round it. Within five days we had laid a complete circle and the loco and carriage were pushed round to see that they did not derail and after that we steamed and went round and round carrying the hotel staff to check the load and clearances. Word spread like wildfire and when the grotto opened we were inundated with children of all nationalities eager to ride behind a steam train. The hotel had never been so busy. I drove round and dropped kids off at the Grotto, then back to the pickup point and off with the next load. Santa was overwhelmed and one of Santa's little helpers rushed out to tell me to do two circuits with the kids to ease the backlog. The most amazing sight was seeing an Arab dressed in white accompanied by his four wives dressed in black on the coach. That evening after we had shut up shop, emptied the fire and put the loco away Russ and I surveyed the track. There was this dirty, dusty, oily black line running round the pool. The cleaners arrived and within a couple of hours had reduced it to a grey line. We steamed every day up to Christmas Eve and the hotel booked us again for the following year. I was given the track, the hotel relaid the Astroturf and every thing went back to normal.

I was kept busy, but occasionally had to decline if I was offshore on a salvage job. The highlight had to be a call from the Royal Household to bring the train to the palace of the Amir. It was the grandson's birthday and we laid track across the beautifully manicured lawn through a flower bed and out via a hole in the hedge cut for the purpose on orders from His Highness. The kids arrived and we ran back and forth for two hours, after which my co-driver and I were presented to the Amir and partook of tea and cakes. It was not every day one met the Boss.

The loco ran faultlessly for four years until one day when I was asked if I wished to take over a diving company in Kenya. There was no question of no, so the loco and all the rails and belongings were shipped off to Mombasa. The contract unfortunately only lasted a couple of years, but the loco ran in the tropics and then set sail once again back to Bahrain. I had been offered a job with a new company. The loco arrived a few weeks later and within a week was back in steam and hauling kids once more. It was if I had never been away. The hotels queued up and we were called to all sorts of celebrations including steaming in the dining hall of one hotel having raised steam and emptied the fire out. It was an amazing sight to see a team of waiters open the side door into the room and lay track in under a minute across the maroon carpet and for me to steam in whistle blowing with Santa on the carriage with a sack load of toys. It brought the house down...

In 1987 I was back in the UK on family business and I got to hear about a quarter scale Burrell traction engine for sale. The temptation was too much and ten days later the Burrell was in steam with 4701 at a school fete. They made a great pair. There was of course no end of volunteer drivers and my co-driver for a while was a civil engineer, Graham, who years later I discovered living round the corner in Poole, as well as my brother based in Hong Kong but being in the airline business flew through Bahrain on a regular basis.



In 1990 we had the first Gulf War and the resultant mass evacuation of expatriates. I was on contract to the US Navy so couldn't leave as we had dozens of warships to look after including the battleship *Wisconsin*. When it was over the train and Burrell came out of their boxes and we were back in steam but the island had changed and there wasn't quite the same feeling as before. Two years later steam had run its course and perhaps the writing was on the wall. New expatriates of a different type arrived and my wife and I made the decision to send 4701 and the Burrell back to the UK. They had been great fun and earned a small fortune over the years. It was a great tribute to Keith in that during the fourteen years I owned 4701 it never failed. A friend of mine advertised it for sale and it was bought by a gent in South Wales who reboiled and overhauled the loco. He subsequently sold it and I recently found some U tube footage of my old loco performing at a recent Llanelly steam rally. It's a great feeling to see an old friend after twenty years and I hope to see it in reality before too long...