



LeedsLines

Newsletter of The Leeds Society of Model and Experimental Engineers

Editorial—Track Availability

For the duration of the track renewal project the track will be available for all scheduled Running Days. Between those published dates every attempt will be made to maintain the track in a serviceable condition for members' Private Running but there may be occasions when this is not possible. Track Status will be updated weekly on the web site or alternatively members can ring Hon. Sec. before setting out to make sure that the track is serviceable. If track work does leave the track unusable for a short time then that fact will also be recorded in the Signing In Book. Members intending Private Running are reminded that they should carry out a full circuit track check as part of their pre-running checks in any event as unauthorised third party interference with the track can never be ruled out.

From the Chair

Jack Salter

Engineers = Ingenuity

There is an old saying that an engineer can make for 6d what anyone can make for 10 bob (or variations on in).

I believe that the term engineer is derived from ingenuity.

This was demonstrated at a recent portable track event where a tractor is usually provided to move our trailer to where the track is being laid, however the owners had bought a new tractor and had failed to notice that it was not fitted with a tow ball! After LSMEE members checked the vintage tractors on display for suitable tow balls (none) another solution had to be found with available resources!

We got the trailer as near as possible to the site and looked for solutions to move the track with the least physical effort! The heaviest item of portable track equipment is the riding car, our solution was to strap Geoff's sack truck to the riding car using a luggage strap from the boot of my car and then two members wheeled the assembly using the 2 rear lifting handles, the track was moved using a similar method, engineers using ingenuity.

Many of our facilities at Eggborough have been built by members reusing items intended for other purposes, finding an ingenious new use.

I am always amazed at the most unlikely items being eagerly snapped up by members at our August Rallies, who can envisage another use – some re appear in subsequent sales, but others get incorporated into “work on the table” projects.

The internet now means that items we used to spend years looking for are now often instantly available, but I hope that members will still spot items at our Jumble sales and rallies that inspire then for a future project! Don't forget that one of our trophies on trophy night is for one offs – projects that demonstrate ingenuity rather than published designs.

Remember Engineer + Ingenuity.

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Roger Spence 21 May 1937 – 25 March 2015**Nigel Bennett**

Members who have not heard already will be sad to hear that Roger Spence passed away on 25th March after a long illness. He suffered a stroke a few years ago and lost the use of his right arm and had difficulty in walking. Up until then he had been his wife's carer, as Mavis had also had a stroke which had left her almost blind.

Despite this, they managed to spend most of the time together at their home in Aberford with daily assistance from some professional carers.

Many of you will know that he was the nephew of our late President Ted Tait. When Ted passed away, Roger acquired Ted's 5"G "Mabel" LNWR 2-4-0. Roger joined the Society in June 2004 in order to run it, but in this he was beset by a problem – it wouldn't run! In order to assist in sorting it, Roger acquired a rather lovely ML7 lathe with a large number of attachments, and I recall helping him in dismantling it and transporting it home, feeling fairly green with envy at some of the accompanying gadgets he had acquired.

Another acquisition from his late Uncle was Ted's cat Topsy. The pair of them seemed to take to each other, and when Topsy passed away, Topsy II had to be acquired and she has been a great comfort to Roger in recent years.

Roger took a genuine delight in attending the Monday Working Parties with its cheerful banter, and he spent a lot of time painting and quietly getting on with a number of tasks.

He was, for a large part of his life, a cinema projectionist, latterly owning a share in Wetherby's Cinema. He was also employed as a Service Engineer for Dictaphones and similar office equipment, which took him around the country. This cinematic interest also manifested itself in his 9.5mm film-making, where he won a number of prizes for the films he and Mavis made. His house is liberally decorated with the trophies! Older Members may recall a number of excellent film shows he did for the Society; Roger also filmed the 2002 IMLEC at Leeds and many Model Engineers have copies of the video he made of the event.

Roger was also in the RAF for his National Service, undertaking ground duties.

He and Mavis loved walking – which is how they met – and they have completed a lot of the country's Long Distance walks – such as the Pennine Way and Lyke Wake Walk. They also went abroad on holiday for walking, some of which were vertically challenging. Roger had always had an interest in railways, and he and Mavis visited South Africa in order to film and travel behind the NGG16 Garratts that had been purchased by the Ffestiniog Railway for use on the new Welsh Highland line. They also travelled on the Trans-Siberian Railway. He always had an interest in Narrow Gauge railways – as shown by the books in his library – and also in Leeds Trams. He had the complete set of Soper's definitive books on the subject.

When Roger became incapacitated, he donated "Mabel" to the Society, an act of generosity that led to his becoming a Life Member. Sadly, that Life Membership was all too short. I am pleased to have called him a friend and I will miss him.

Soviet Era Bargain

'Looks like a duck, quacks like a duck . . .' - it's certainly not a lemon!

Alan can start the account . . .

'Which embarrasses you more, the kilt or the Skoda?' Cheeky kid; and his prejudice must have been based on hearsay rather than experience, at least as far as the Skoda was concerned.

I was wearing my kilt on a charity fund-raising day when, for a small fine / 'donation', the inmates of the school where I worked were released from the tyranny of collar and tie – or tracksuit and trainers. The kilt and I had ridden to school in a Communist era Skoda, which was not part of the silly costume game but a serious piece of budget transport, having joined the strength under slightly bizarre circumstances.

Now Ian takes up the story . . .

'Free to anyone who will tax and insure it.' My attention had strayed during a masters' meeting. ('Strayed' is insufficient: driven to despair by the drowsy dullness of official business my attention had firmly departed in search of diversion.) My eye was caught by the word 'free' on a notice. 'It' was described as a 1983 Skoda Estelle complete with MoT, four doors and five more-or-less round wheels. I had not seen this advertisement during the previous couple of months but the car's price had dropped from £250 to £150 without attracting a buyer. The Skoda's keepers were now tired of paying insurance for a vehicle which lurked unused under a tree, gathering dead leaves, growing moss and affording the birds target practice. Hence the non price. Scruffy, mocked and in need of mucking out though it was, the car could hardly lose, so I investigated.

When one's expectations are nil, even the successful functioning of door lock or window winder becomes an entry on the credit side of the ledger. Despite not having been driven for a couple of months the engine cranked over quite briskly and eventually started, to the accompaniment of a cloud of blue smoke from the (new) tailpipe and protests from the occupants of the tree-cum-shooting-gallery: three more points to chalk up.

Yes, the car could move under its own power and when it also proved able to stop I became quite enthusiastic. The shades of my Scots ancestors must have nodded their approval as I said 'Yes please', even though my every neurotic and perfectionist instinct was screaming, 'No!' Hagglng strategies honed in the ancient school of car purchase were pouncing on faults and blemishes, but when there is no price the would-be haggler is rendered impotent and bewildered.



Photo by [Jon RB](#)

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After laying out thousands or even hundreds of pounds to buy a car, a fiver's outlay on a wiper blade or a couple of pounds on polish seems perfectly legitimate, even money well spent. When the car has genuinely cost nothing, one's perspective changes. I hesitated meanly over replacing the fuse in the courtesy light circuit – 20p – and really became quite thoughtful over a suspect rubber washer. Motoring becomes an entirely different exercise when the most expensive part of the vehicle will be a pressure cap costing £2.46: putting petrol in the tank assumes the seriousness of a capital investment.

This trip down memory lane was proving to be quite enjoyable. My first two cars were rear-engined Renaults, a Dauphine then an R8, and I rejoiced to find that Skoda, like Renault, used only one design of front seat. The upholstery of the driver's seat was wearing thin so I duly swapped driver's side to passenger and vice versa. Seat covers? Certainly not, since that would have meant expenditure,

but then I found some ginger, furry nylon items entombed behind the rear seats. The same hoard also yielded a petrol reserve can, a pair of jump leads, anti-freeze, brake fluid and half a litre of engine oil. Let's live!

With the advent of computerized, fuel-injected, hydraulic tappeted vehicles, most automotive DIY diagnostic aids became otiose relics, so I had no difficulty in borrowing a dwell meter and timing light and went back for another browse in the archives . . . Points condition, just about OK – phew, no expenditure – dwell re-set, idling set, air intake converted to the winter setting. (None of your automatic nonsense here: you transfer a bung between holes and connect a length of cardboard hose between exhaust manifold shroud and air cleaner.) The ignition timing proved to be generously advanced from nominal – presumably in appreciation of British petrol rather than the Eastern European furniture polish of the day; anyway the engine didn't pink so I left it alone on the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' principle. Yes I actually risked full throttle to test it and to hell with the expense.

Who says that the age of adventure is dead? Alan cadged a lift from Nottingham to Oxford (we're talking about a free car here, remember) only parted with cash at the Tesco filling station and headed cautiously north in the 'new' non purchase. Of course he arrived home safely if not speedily having suffered no untoward delays, and in due course reported to school in Estelle and kilt. (*v.s!*)

Mockery was not confined to gibbering schoolboys. Old technology begat ancient humour: remember all those VW Beetle gags? they were re-cycled as Skoda jokes. But apart from the fact that it was a perfectly adequate vehicle, the car could only have been a better bargain had we been paid to take it away.

As so often Dr. Samuel Johnson, 'the great lexicographer', gets the last word . . .

Having provocatively defined a pension in his Dictionary of 1755 as 'pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country', Johnson later accepted a pension from King George III. It is said that his response to the resultant teasing was the retort, 'Sir, I wish the jeers twice as loud and the pension twice as great!'

Ian Macdonald.

Model Engineer to Marine Engineer (Part1)

David Beale

Have you ever considered building a steamboat? If so I hope that the following will demonstrate that a model engineer's workshop is capable of producing the necessary parts.

My earliest recollection of small passenger carrying steamboats was in the 1970's. I was in London for the Model Engineer Exhibition also visiting the London Boat show where Bossom's had on display a 30 feet steam launch named *Patricia*. She was elegant with high gloss varnish and bronze fittings that sparkled under the exhibition lighting. An enquiry about the cost quickly cooled my enthusiasm.

The interest lay dormant until an advertisement in a 1980 Model Engineer for an 18 feet hull stimulated immediate action. My Model Engineer was delivered on Saturday, I was in Norfolk on Sunday viewing the vessel! It was affordable and could be purchased in many forms from just the hull moulding to complete and ready to go. A hand shake and a signature on a contract before leaving to return home saw the beginning of a new commitment to steam on the water. The hull was going to be ready for collection in about 9 months' time.

The intervening time was spent making the steam plant together with a trailer for transportation and launching. This was just the beginning of our ever-growing enthusiasm for the hobby. At this time I did not know of any club supporting such activities but this was soon to change.

I had previously built Speedy and a 5" Britannia was almost complete. My workshop facilities at this time were a Myford ML7 and a self-built Dore Westbury milling machine. It proved possible to produce the steam plant that is necessary for a small hull in a workshop with these facilities.

The name chosen for the boat was *SL Cherub* which seemed appropriate for an elegant hull of 18 feet overall length and 4ft 6ins beam. (I had recently seen a popular Mozart opera hence the name). *SL Cherub* was to be focal point of many waterway holidays in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales for the next 18 years until she was displaced in favour of a Stanley Steam Car.



SL Cherubino at Ambleside (Photo 1)

The departure from steamboat ownership lasted for about 6 years but steam on the road can be very stressful and came to an end when being tail-gated by juggernauts became a nuisance. Another hull was ordered and the construction of boiler, engine, feed pump, stern tube and propeller shaft was underway yet again. The name for this new boat? What about *SL Cherubino*?

SL Cherubino is 16 ft long x 5ft 9ins beam and weighs on its trailer 1800lbs (3/4 ton). She is seen (Photo 1) moored at Ambleside public jetty gently blowing off after a journey of 6 miles. She will carry 6 adult passengers on canals and rivers cruising at up to 5 miles per hour. Once again the construction is a glass fibre hull decked and fitted out in varnished hardwood, a combination that gives robust longevity with minimal maintenance, subject to undercover storage. Prolonged exposure to the sun causes varnish deterioration and after the combination of rain and frost readily opens joints in woodwork.

As before I purchased a hull and made the interesting components of boiler, engine feed pumps, stern tube, propeller shaft and all other mechanical fittings in a workshop now boasting a Super 7, VMC milling machine, a Boxford shaper and a Harrison M300 lathe. The M300 is not essential but does make some tasks easier.

The choice of boat is made to suit your facilities, the scope is great from the small *SL Minnow* to the other extreme *SL Mosquito*. Both are self-build projects, but the equipment and skills used in their construction is proportionate to their size and complexity. *SL Minnow* (Photo 2) is 10 feet in length *SL Mosquito* 46 feet.



SL Minnow (Photo 2)



SL Mosquito (Photo 3)



Photo 4

To digress *SL Mosquito*, shown in photo 3, coming into moorings is the ultimate in self build fast steamboats, with an estimated 100 shaft horse power she has demonstrated her ability to keep pace with skiers before the Lake Windermere speed limit came into force. She was constructed by an accomplished engineer who made every part from drawings to completed vessel including patterns, castings, plate-work and woodwork. She must be considered the ultimate in self build. Photo 4 shows the boiler being loaded for transportation to the workshop clearly indicating that this size is not within the scope of most model engineers. I have been lucky to enjoy many happy hours on board *SL Mosquito*.

Choosing a Vessel.

You must be asking; how does one decide on a suitable vessel and a suitable steam plant? In choosing the vessel the following must be considered:

The ability of the towing vehicle to safely handle the all up weight of boat and trailer.

The ability of the vehicle to competently launch and recover the boat on slipways.

A place to store the boat on its trailer, ideally under cover if maintenance is to be kept to a minimum. Wood work can deteriorate very quickly if exposed to sunlight, rain and frosts.

How many passengers do you wish to carry?

The cost of purchase, upkeep and use. When in use most waterways require you to have a licence for which charges are based on the size of vessel and duration on the water.

Do you desire a vessel displaying Edwardian elegance or a fit for purpose workboat?

Do you wish to construct the hull or purchase a glass reinforced moulding?

Do you live on a hill, have a steeply sloping drive? Remember it may be necessary to manoeuvre the boat and trailer manually.

The next issue of LeedsLines will see an article on boiler choice and construction.

LSMEE Trophies 2015

The Wanless Trophy

For a current steam project, was awarded to Geoff Shackleton for his model Murdoch and Aitken Steeple Engine.



The model is of an engine made by the firm of Murdoch and Aitken of Glasgow. An engraving of Murdoch and Aitken's 'Steeple' Engine appeared in the book 'The Engineer and Machinist's Assistant' published in 1847 in two volumes by Blackie and Son of Glasgow. The engine was offered as an alternative to a beam engine in situations where limited space required that the engine must have a small 'footprint' area. On seeing the engraving in these books, Harry Clarkson of the firm Clarksons of York, produced three sheets of drawings in 1972 for a model of the engine to a scale of 1 inch to the foot.

Patterns were made and by 1974 sets of castings were offered for sale. However, sales of castings may have been impacted upon by a four page article which appeared in 'Model Engineer' in 1979. This article claimed that the model was difficult, if not impossible to build, due to a variety of problems ranging from hardness and 'blow holes' in castings, drawing

errors, not all parts being detailed on the drawings, the bottom crosshead hitting the entablature support columns, the top crosshead not connecting with the feed pump rod and a variety of other 'frustrations'. Geoff found that the issues raised in 'Model Engineer' were not without foundation, but experienced model engineers also know that Clarkson's drawings were intended for engineers to interpret and work with and should not to be blindly relied upon by a beginner lacking in experience. Indeed, Geoff made numerous modifications not only to work around the various problems, but also to improve the scale appearance of the model.

In common with Geoff's other stationary engines, studs were reduced in size and sometimes increased in number, the seating for most nuts being 'spot faced' and detail which really matters such as the fluting on columns was 'ground out' to give a uniform appearance. Perhaps the 'Model Engineer' article and the fact that Clarksons closed in the early 1980s explains why examples of the model are relatively rare.

The 'One Off Trophy'

Mike Waters described the platforms he had made which supported a camera which took photographs whilst airborne flying from a kite. His current design had a camera suspended on strings which took around 70 pictures over a period of 2½ minutes but a new design would have a remotely controlled camera suspended on a pendulum. Mike showed some photos he had taken with the airborne camera.

The Presidents Cup

The 'Presidents' Cup' for a non-steam model was not awarded this year as all models presented on the evening were steam related..

The Leeds Trophy — March 2015



This year The Leeds Trophy was awarded to David Wood for his 'Coffee Pot' engine which was judged to the 'Best Presented Engine' and it performed reliably all day

David is seen here driving the engine and accepting the Trophy from Jack Salter.



Harrogate Exhibition 2015

First of all a big thank you is due to all society members who provided exhibits for display and also to the stewards who manned the stand and interfaced with the visitors. Without your support it would not be possible to put on such a good display.

This year we targeted models that had not been on display for some years or would be making their first appearance. The reason for that was simply that visitors have good memories and recognise when Clubs bring some of the same models year after year. I think that it is right to avoid repetition although visitors have been known to appear at the stand looking for particular models they saw the previous year! This year we had a large number of 5ins. gauge locomotives on display, probably the best display of its type in the Exhibition Hall.

The display was a little crowded since we never get the number of tables we request. This year there were two tables less, last year there were two extra tables than asked for!



As I write, the Flower Hall, which is the Hall in which we have our stand is about to be demolished as part of a £15M re-development of the Show Ground. The New Exhibition Hall which will be built in its place will also extend over the disabled parking area in front of the existing hall. The plan is for the new building to be ready by June 2016. There will be a temporary building, apparently the largest of its type in Europe, erected elsewhere on the site to allow for continued use until works are complete.

Working Party Update – July 2015

Hon. Sec. Geoff

Track renewal: Since the last Newsletter in April the ‘back straight’ between the No.1 golf tee and the ladies tee has been re-laid and locomotive drivers have reported the new track to be ‘smooth running’. Now that the working party has assessed a lot more of the concrete track beams it is apparent that the top surface of some beams is not absolutely flat due to imperfections in the mould when the beams were cast. A number of beams have been successfully covered in self-levelling compound. This compound has a propensity to stick to everything.....boots, overalls, clamps, tools.....and it is hoped that it will stand the test of time and trains. It had been intended to continue around the bend by the ladies golf tee but surveying has revealed that a large amount of work is needed on the beams which would have created a problem in leaving the track in a serviceable condition for summer running days. Therefore, rather than continue clockwise with the track renewal we have gone back to the start and lifted the track between the tunnel and the south traverser which needed less remedial work on the beams. During May and June we have seen temperature changes from near freezing up to 20 degrees and the track joints have been monitored to check that the rails are expanding and contracting normally. These checks were important because the type of fishplates and provision for expansion is very different to that on the old track.



Other work: A lot of other work has been done despite concentrating on track renewal. Steaming bay air supply quick release connectors and isolating valves have been overhauled, the ball float on the trackside water header tanks has been overhauled and the water isolating valve in the garage has been replaced. The garage has also been subjected to a ‘spring clean’ and the resulting visit to the scrap yard raised £97!

For Sale

Gauge 3 (3½”) Hornby *Rocket* (Gas fired live steam) with approx. 50ft of track and 2 “Y” points. 25ft of the track and the points are in original boxes. *Rocket* itself is a little faded due to use as a window ornament (hence the “crew”!), but there is no reason to suppose that it has suffered mechanically. There are no instructions with it, but these, fuel and other spares are readily available. (This is not a passenger hauler, but a “scenic” locomotive. It would be fun running it round the track at Eggborough, though!)



See Nigel. £95.

Society Officers and Committee

President:	Arthur Bellamy
Chairman:	Jack Salter
Secretary:	Geoff Shackleton
Treasurer:	Nigel Bennett*
<u>Committee:</u>	John Hunt
	Steve Russell*
	Peter Smith
	Nick Morley
* Boiler Inspectors plus	
	Tony Wall
	Martyn Chapman

Leeds S.M.E.E - Dates for Your Diary – Summer 2015

Working Party	Steaming Days/Meetings
Working Parties every Monday whilst track renewal takes place <i>Excluding Bank Holidays</i>	12 th July – Running Day
	15 th July – Summer Wed Steam Up (Bassetlaw Visit)
	26 th July – Running Day
	8 th / 9 th August – August Rally
	19 th August – Summer Wed Steam Up
	30 th August – Running Day
	2 nd September – ‘Three Short Talks’
	13 th September – Running Day
	16 th September – ‘Building Yorkie’ *
	20 th September – Running Day

* The talk on 16th September ‘Building Yorkie – A 16mm Locomotive’ is a change to the published programme of talks.

Newsletter by E-mail

You can save the Society postage costs by electing to have the newsletter, in pdf format and in full colour, delivered to your personal E-mail address.

Simply e-mail your request to **Glynne Hughes** and it should happen automatically.

Send articles for inclusion in the newsletter to the **Editor** or via mail to the Club Secretary

The Society web page can be found here

<http://www.leedssmee.btck.co.uk/>

Please note the society now has a new web address although visiting the old web site will provide a link to the new one.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE VIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE