



West Wiltshire Society of Model Engineers Newsletter

Issue No.31 June / July 2023



Calendar

June

3rd – Saturday Steam Up. 10am-4pm.

Public Running Open Day. 10:30am-3:30pm

17th – Saturday Steam Up. 10am-4pm.

17th (& 18th?) - Bath Motor Club (Landsdown)

July

1st – Saturday Steam Up. 10am-4pm.

Public Running Open Day. 10:30am-3:30pm

15th – Saturday Steam Up. 10am-4pm.

August

5th – Saturday Steam Up. 10am-4pm.

Public Running Open Day. 10:30am-3:30pm

12th – Seend Fete.

19th – Saturday Steam Up. 10am-4pm.



News

Storage for Members Locos

By Jon Clarke

We have received some positive interest from members about facilities to store members' locomotives on site in a new container. We also received some points of discussion and some negative feedback about this suggestion. The committee has considered all the feedback and has decided against another additional container currently. The plan is now to progress with relocating some items from an existing container to free up space for locomotive storage. The costs are far lower and also have the advantage of being able to provide power more easily for battery electric locomotive charging. Initial thoughts are to use either the rear compartment of the 'trailer container' or the main body of the other container, if the mower is stored elsewhere. We will look at various options now we have an agreed way forward. If you have not yet formally registered your interest in storing your loco on site, and would like to do so, please email secretary@wwsme.org.uk or write to/contact the secretary.

Changes to the Committee

By Jon Clarke

At the AGM some changes to the committee took place. The following came to the end of their term in office:

- Peter Brougham (Chair) – chose to not stand for Chair, and was elected as Vice-Chair
- Barry Statham (Membership Secretary) – re-elected
- David Clarke – re-elected

- Richard Walker – chose not to stand for election to the committee this year.

Our thanks go to Richard for his many years' service on the committee, including his time as chair during a particularly difficult time for the club.

Mike Pepler was co-opted onto the committee during the past year as Fete / Public Running Secretary. Mike kindly picked up this role as Jon Clarke was very busy last year, and was not always able to coordinate the events and volunteers. Our thanks go to Mike for this, and he has now been elected by the members to that role.

Jon Lawes was newly elected to the committee. Jon has been a member for a number of years now, and he has a wide variety of engineering interests. We welcome Jon and look forward to his help, support and input that he can bring to the committee.

Jonathan (Jon) Clarke, who was mid-term in office, also stood down so that he could stand for election as Chair. He was successfully voted into the role by the members.

For clarity, the committee for 2023 are as follows:

- Chair – Jonathan (Jon) Clarke
- Vice-Chair – Peter Brougham
- Secretary – Colin Wade
- Membership Secretary – Barry Statham (also 16mm lead)
- Treasurer – Simon Nuttall
- Fete / Public Running Secretary – Mike Pepler
- Committee Members without formal officer role: Peter Carter (Maintenance lead), Dave Allan (Webmaster), Terry Neary (Permanent Track lead), David Clarke (Club Representative at Southern Fed), Jon Lawes.

Annual Subscription Cost Agreed

By Jon Clarke

At the AGM the membership subscriptions for 2023-2024 were voted on to return to the previous cost of £45 for 'Ordinary Membership' and 'Family Membership', £24 for 'Country Membership' and £5 for 'Junior Membership'. Last years' lower costs for one year were in response to the Covid pandemic. Payment for subscriptions is now due. Payment should preferably be made by BACS bank transfer, or cash, but not cheques if possible since they are now harder for WWSME to process.

If paying by bank transfer, the WWSME Lloyds bank sort code is 30-99-13, and account number is 00477779, and please put your name and 'SUBS' in the reference box for identification. A confirmation email to the Membership Secretary (membership@wwsme.org.uk) would also be appreciated.

Extra donations are gratefully received to contribute towards WWSME developments. These have included recently the ground level 5 inch track, the new WWSME steam locomotive and the new 16mm garden railway under development. Such donations are purely voluntary, but are very welcome.



The Closure of the Great Bulkington Railway

By Peter Devrell

The Great Bulkington Railway in the grounds of the home of Neville and Thelma Boulton at Bulkington has finally closed.

Neville and a party of friends built the railway shortly before he retired between 1984 to 1988. For the past 35 years the GBR was open for many public and private events and has raised well over £20,000 for local Charities. Many members of our Society have regularly ran their engines there. It was a delightful Railway to visit. The line consisted of a 1,000 feet running circuit of aluminium track, a station, tunnel, sidings and steaming bays. The electric signal box controlled the point work and a coloured light aspect signalling system.



During the interim years when the Queens Road track closed, the GBR served as the West Wilts running track until the new site at Lafarge opened. At that time Des Clark was the club Chairman and Nev was the Hon secretary and they were both responsible for negotiating many favourable deals including two £10,000 lottery grants to get our new site and track up and running.

The final train to operate on the GBR ran on Friday 7th April. We will miss the GBR with so many happy memories. Thank you Nev for making it happen.

Members Show & Tell Evening

By Colin Wade

The "lockdown projects" evening was well attended with many examples of projects complete and underway during the last three years. The new club Molly Ann, sponsored by Eurocast was on display as the prime exhibit.



Wessex Stationary Engine Club Spring Gala

By Colin Wade

On Sunday 16th April the Wessex Stationary Engine Club held their spring gala on the car park outside our site. Claire, Julie and Barbara offered catering with Peter Carter, Dave Huddy and Mike Pepler doing the BBQ for both Wessex group and our members and visitors. The event was the first public running on site since the end of 2019. The day also saw the first public operation of the new ground level line. It was successful for us with £230 raised for club funds and several of our "old regular" visitors back on site for rides. Thank you to all who helped set up and run this.





Dezincification of Boiler Fittings

By Peter Pearson

Yet again the dreaded dezincification of boiler fittings has struck one of our members. Peter Pearson was removing one of the clack valves fitted to his Ajax when the $\frac{5}{16}$ " x 32TPI thread into the boiler crumbled in his fingers, leaving part behind in the boiler. Fortunately, he managed to remove the bit left behind and discovered that the original builder had obviously made the clacks out of brass, not phosphor bronze which they should have been, and the thread had become just a reddish-brown sponge full of holes where the copper was left behind and the zinc in the brass had been dissolved by the boiler water:





Exactly the same thing happened to the blowdown valve on Peter's loco 5 years ago. He had bought a new blowdown valve from a well-known UK supplier and it too failed in exactly the same way after only 17 months in service.



The supplier refused to accept that this was dezincification and claimed that the blowdown valve had failed because Peter had over-tightened it.

At the time Peter said to the supplier:

"I saw no external signs of problems, in fact the disintegrated pieces of valve still show shiny brass threads on the outside, so spotting dezincification of brass boiler fittings will be extremely difficult. All the more reason to insist on Phosphor Bronze."

Perhaps it was running the loco on Bristol water for 10 years that did the damage? Or perhaps it is

the occasional use of distilled water collected from a domestic dehumidifier that is to blame? After all they use ultra-pure water as an extremely aggressive solvent in plants manufacturing silicon wafers for the semi-conductor industry, so perhaps using distilled water in a boiler is a really bad idea? Possibly the dissolved solids in raw water are needed to act as a buffer to stop water becoming a solvent? Certainly Peter won't be using distilled water in his loco again.

The moral of this story is very clear though – use phosphor bronze not brass for boiler fittings, and check with suppliers before you buy blowdown valves or clack valves to see what they are made of. The majority on sale are made from brass, and Peter was lucky because he discovered both failures during routine maintenance, but a catastrophic failure of a boiler fitting in service doesn't bear thinking about, particularly if it could happen during public running. Your boiler inspector can ask you to remove boiler fittings every 10 years as part of the boiler test so they can check the adequacy of the screw threads (see The Boiler Test Code 2018 Part 1 para 9.6 f) but from Peter's experience even that might not spot internal dezincification is taking place. Use phosphor bronze instead to avoid the problem and save yourselves the worry.

**West Wiltshire Society Of
Model Engineers
Open Day
June 3rd 10:30-15:50**

**These events take place at the
White Horse Country Park
Westbury Wilts BA13 4LX
<https://wwwsrne.org/>**