



INSIDE MOTION



News and Views from the
TYNESIDE SOCIETY of MODEL and EXPERIMENTAL ENGINEERS
No. 59 December 2025

Preamble

Another year bites the dust with the Club ticking over nicely. Perhaps the most notable thing has been the boon of the Container and new access path to the steaming bays – a huge improvement in managing 7 ¼" locomotives.

Club matters

Public Running

The last event of the calendar is usually one of our busiest, but an inauspicious weather forecast rather dampened things this year. The day started fine enough and plenty of visitors came to ride and visit Santa but it did not last and the rain had set in with a vengeance by early afternoon. A great shame as a lot of work goes into setting things up beforehand and clearing up after.



The Moat

The gravel boards which form the outer retaining wall of the moat surrounding the Clubhouse are beyond their life expectancy and are rotting and collapsing in parts. Work is underway to replace them with recycled plastic boarding, which should last for decades rather than just a few years.



A Date to Note

Santa Run - Sunday 21st December - this takes place across the Town Moor and Exhibition Park. The infrastructure, start and finish are in Exhibition Park. The start and finish will be on the avenue of trees. There will be restricted access through the park and **no vehicle access from 8am - 12noon on the day.**

Annual Subscription

A reminder that your annual subscription is due at the end of the December. Fees are currently held at £40 for Single and £50 for Family Membership. Cheques should be made payable to "TSMEE Ltd", posted to Norman Blacklock at 10 Bowesville, Burnopfield, Newcastle upon Tyne NE16 6DZ or handed to him at the Clubhouse. If you prefer to pay by Bank Transfer, the full details are "The Tyneside Society of Model and Experimental Engineers Ltd", Sort Code 40 37 37, Acc. No. 41383817.

Stephenson Memorial Trials

The 69th Trials Event was held on the 20th September 2025 and hosted by The Carlisle and District Society of Model Engineers. Eddie Gibbons has produced a comprehensive report on this latest event, a copy of which is posted on the Clubhouse notice board.

Member's Musings

The New Clubhouse – Episode 3

Linda Nicholls

After Christmas 2015, work on the exterior of the building was completed with the addition of windows and security shutters. Over the next five months the interior of the metal shell was turned into the clubhouse you now see. First insulation was laid with boards on top to create a warm sturdy floor that would withstand the use of machinery as well as humans.



Next was first fix plumbing and electrics before the walls were built, framed & lined with plasterboards.



The electrics were planned & installed by Robin Evans



A suspended ceiling was installed

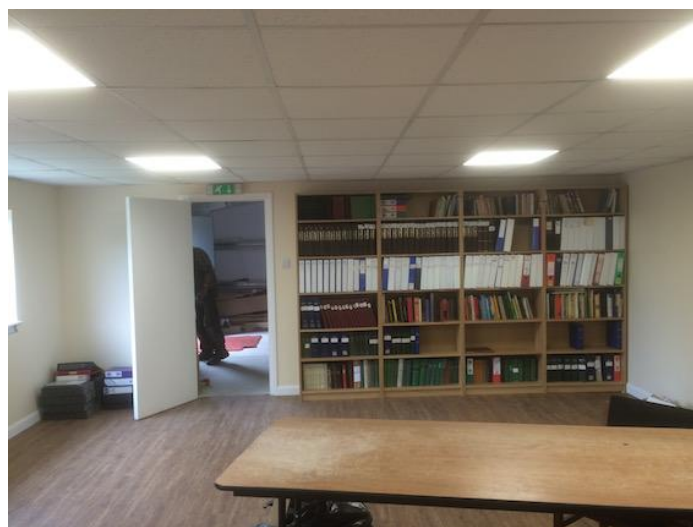


We managed to buy a second-hand kitchen on EBay for £600 which included a fridge, freezer, oven and sink. Many thanks to the clever carpentry skills of Peter Newby & John Rowley - you would think it was made for the space.

My personal favourite of the whole build was the installation of the toilet. There are those of you who have joined in the last decade may not have realised we had no toilet facilities at all prior to this. The gents was behind the tin hut. The ladies just didn't drink anything ! For events like the Open Weekend we hired a Portaloo.



Then began final finishing like the flooring. Our then Librarian, John Bolter, purchased bookcases for the library. Previously these had been stored in the old hut and had suffered damage from damp.



We finally moved into the building in June 2016 in time for the AGM.



We owe a vote of thanks to those who spent about a year of their time creating the Clubhouse we now take for granted. Sadly some of them are no longer with us, but the ones that are probably wouldn't be fit enough to take on the task again now !!

While this internal work was ongoing, another crew was working outside – but that's a tale for next time !

Greggs Van

Carrie Morrison

Ethan has made a Greggs van for his College 00 Railway Club. He did this because a friend made a model of a Greggs shop. The van is made from a Dapol wagon. He matched the paint to the Greggs logo colour and then added transfers. Unbeknown to Ethan his Nanna had emailed the picture to Greggs and within two hours Greggs responded saying "It has cheered the office up. They were taking it to a Senior meeting as an ice breaker". They put £6 on his Nanna's Greggs account so he could buy sausage rolls !



A Question for the Brains Trust

Jim Scott

How heavy is a connecting rod as fitted to a British Railways Class A1 Pacific loco...?

This was the question posed by the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust at the National Railway Museum's "Railfest" event some twenty years ago. As part of their fund raising efforts to build "Tornado", the first new main line steam locomotive to be built in the UK since 1960, a brand new, beautifully machined connecting rod was displayed on their stand, with the public invited to guess the weight. The closest guess would be rewarded with a small prize (I can't remember what this was) but unexpectedly the near misses were also acknowledged with a very nice framed print of A1 60145 "St Mungo". For me this was better than winning, as I recall seeing "St Mungo" at Gateshead sheds in the '60s during my "train spotting" days. No longer in blue, but just as magnificent in BR green – even when dirty...



So how do you estimate the weight of a large lump of shiny metal ? Well it's a guess of course but I thought it unlikely I could lift even the little end let alone the big end. However maybe four 12 stone chaps could lift it, assuming that each could reasonably lift half their own body weight. This would give an estimated weight of 336 lbs ... Far too many assumptions so in fact my estimate of 332lbs really was just an educated guess

And the actual weight ? This is disclosed in the following letter from the Trust's Marketing Director, along with the winner's name and number of entries etc. The print does indeed reside in my workshop as a backdrop to my long term loco project, LBSCR Class A1 "Earlswood".

The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust

Darlington

Jim Scott

10th June 2004

Dear Jim

Thank you for visiting our stand at the Railfest event in York on Tuesday. I hope that you enjoyed the rest of the show.

You will already have seen that I have sent you a print of "St Mungo" – the last of the A1's and may wonder why.

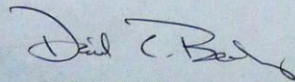
We had over 900 entries for our "guess the weight" competition but no one got the exact weight – which was 334 lbs. Your guess of 332 lbs was one of 11 that were closest so we made a draw for the winner who was Michael Croft of Hertfordshire. However, in recognition of the closeness of the entries we decided that we would award all those in the final draw a consolation prize of a copy of the enclosed print which I hope you like.

I notice that on your entry form you have marked that you did not wish to receive details of the Trust so none are enclosed and I would also confirm that, in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, your name and address are not added to our database and that you will not receive information from us unless requested.

I hope that the print will find a suitable place in your home and provide you with an ongoing reminder of your visit to Railfest and of our project.

Thank you again for your interest and for entering the competition

Yours Sincerely



David C. Bedding

Marketing Director

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Postamble

That wraps up another year. Many thanks to Linda, Carrie and Jim for their "stocking fillers". All that remains is to wish you all the very best for the season, perhaps raise a glass in memory of absent friends and hope for another successful new year.

Contact information

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