



INSIDE MOTION

News and Views from the
TYNESIDE SOCIETY of MODEL and EXPERIMENTAL ENGINEERS
No. 60 February 2026

Preamble

As the world at large pursues its seemingly unstoppable journey to hell in a hand-cart, TSMEE continues to provide a refuge of sense, sanity and productive purpose. Long may it remain so, and Happy New Year.

Club matters

Bill Lancaster

An appreciation by Steve Lowe



It is with great sadness and deep regret that we have to advise of the death of our long standing Society President Bill Lancaster. He was 99, an amazing age !

Whilst our early archive records are a little scant, Bill had certainly been a member of TSMEE since the early 1950s, maybe longer, and had served on the Committee since 1957 in several roles including Vice Chairman, Chairman and then Honorary President.

Bill's tenure as Chairman was from the early to mid '70s which was one of the Club's most enjoyable and progressive periods. In 1972 TSMEE was host to IMLEC (International Model Locomotive Efficiency Competition) and, in his own words, it was one of the proudest moments of his life. Bill's late wife Phyllis, son Phillip and daughter Lynn were also regulars at the track supporting the Club. TSMEE was a family affair for them all.

As one of our most regular attenders, Bill was rarely absent on meeting days and probably held the record for AGMs, always sat at the front keeping an eye on the proceedings, prompting the Top Table when required. He was very keen that things were conducted properly !

Bill was a great ambassador for TSMEE. When the new Clubhouse was finished he would often be heard saying "This Club now, it's one of the best", and even after Covid, clearly identifying as a very vulnerable person because of his advancing years, he made the effort to attend on Sunday mornings, masked up but determined to show the flag !

After service in the army, Bill was a Vickers-Armstrong's man from his early life, working at the famous Scotswood works for many years as a Millwright, moving on when the works closed to Tyneside's other giant, C A Parsons, to work in a similar role where he stayed until his retirement.

The tales of Vickers were legendary in the Clubhouse. I think we all heard them so many times, but with hindsight now it was a privilege to hear about such an engineering powerhouse. It must have been amazing seeing it in its heyday !

TSMEE has lost one of its stalwarts. He is the last from the "Old Brigade" of Club history, gone but never forgotten. RIP Bill.



IMLEC '72 – one of Bill's proudest days

I to r – Ian Spencer (then Secretary) Bob Taylor, Bill, George Clark (Northern Gas Chairman, funding the catering), Richard Taylor, ????

Subscription Reminder

Membership subs. were due by the end of December 2025. If you haven't paid yet, please do so asap. 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.

Projects Day

To kick off the year's event calendar a Projects Day will be held on **Sunday 22nd February**. Bring along your latest masterpiece or work-in-progress to amaze and inspire your colleagues.

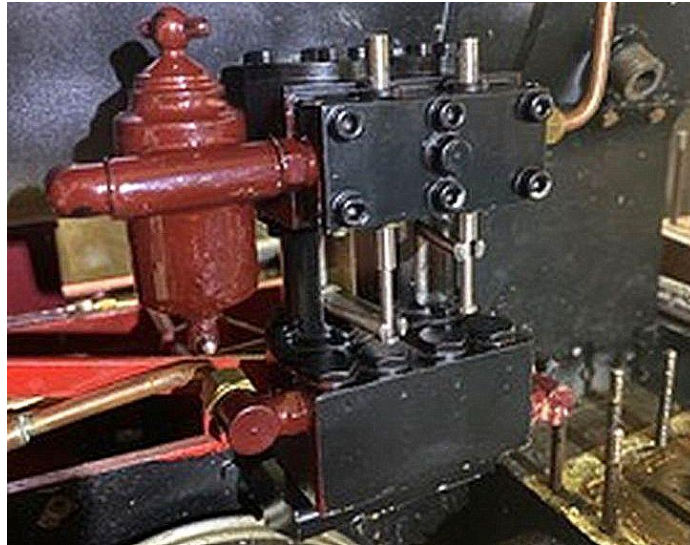
Open Day

The annual TSMEE Open Day will be held this year on **Saturday 13th June**.

Member's musings

Bill Van Brocklin Feed Pumps

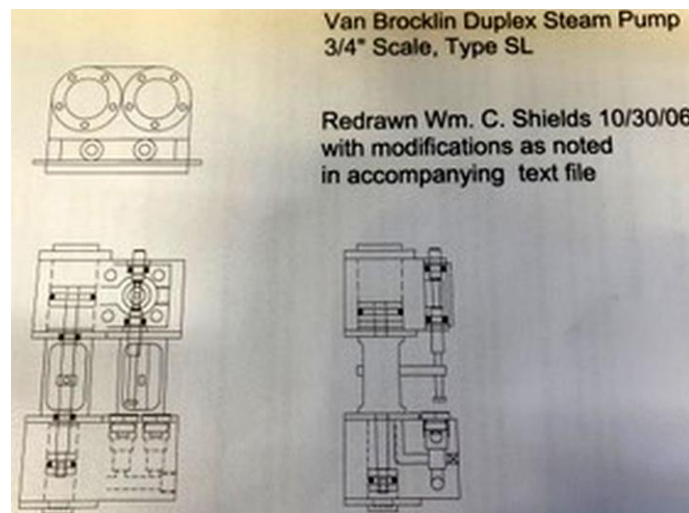
Peter Newby



Bill Van Brocklin was a very prolific American model engineer from the 1940's to around 2000 and produced many different locos, thought to be around forty-one. He was famous for his range of pump designs although he also made Live Steam Injectors. Now, this has to be put in context. Our American model engineering cousins have never taken to injectors for a couple of reasons. Firstly, no one manufactures them commercially in the USA so it's make your own. Secondly, in some places high ambient temperatures makes the feed water hot, and so is not conducive to reliable injector operation. When I ran my "Sweet Pea" in Saudi I had to fill the water tank with ice.

The first Van Brocklin pump I came across was via Brian Nicholls and, compared to the Southworth pump, seemed to be a lot more reliable as far as starting goes. Another American model engineer, Bill Shields, has redrawn the Van Brocklin sketches into CAD and produced a set of drilling sequence drawings, which greatly simplifies the drilling of the steam passageways. Bill has given two designs, which are 1½" and 1" scale. As an aside, I worked with Bill Shields many years ago in Saudi. He was the Superintendent of the Aramco main machine shop in Dhahran and also a member of our model engineering fraternity within Aramco. At the time he was building a 3½" New York Central Hudson - a large and very nice model.

All the pump drawings are available on line FOC complete with a detailed set of instructions and building notes - www.mehrs.com. No castings are required - just a couple of lumps of bronze bar machined from 2" round. The dimensions on some parts are very critical but not difficult to achieve.



Postamble

Many thanks to Steve Lowe for his tribute to Bill Lancaster (and Linda Nicholls for the archive photos) and Peter Newby for his musing.

If I get some more items to publish or there is news that won't wait, I'll see you in March. Otherwise it will be April when Public Running starts up again and the Sun might be out.

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Gallery



Ethan Morrison has finished building his Roundhouse "Fowler" locomotive and it successfully passed its steam test. A very proud Junior Engineer (Linda Nicholls)

