



INSIDE MOTION

News and Views from the
TYNESIDE SOCIETY of MODEL and EXPERIMENTAL ENGINEERS
No. 53 May 2025

Preamble

April turned into a nice month – the cold easterly winds finally went away and we were treated to some fine, sunny weather. However, it was not to last ...

Club matters

Public Running

November returned on May 4th with a biting northerly wind all day and sheeting rain squalls in the morning. In true British spirit though plenty of people came along for the Jesmond Festival Special event – enough to keep two trains busy for most of the day.



Kudos to all who pitched in and endured the bone-chilling cold for four hours. Bank Holiday Weekend weather, eh ... ?

Junior Engineers

Robert Hopper and two colleagues from the Stephenson Railway Museum spent a day at TSMEE trying their hands at firing and driving the 7 ¼" Wren recently gifted to the Club by Adrian Morley. The petrol engine was also dragged from the back of the bunker and given a spin.



Anything we can do to attract and keep youngsters into the fold is important, otherwise the Club will simply fade away.

Member's musings

The New Clubhouse – Episode One

Linda Nicholls

On May 23rd, 11 years ago, we received planning consent for a new Clubhouse. This was the next step in the development of TSMEE. The raised track had been renewed and the ground-level track installed thanks to the hard work of a number of members.



The Track Gang

Ian Spencer, Jim Stephenson, Eddie Ions, Stu Davidson, Brian Nicholls, Norman Blackburn, Phil Work, John Bolter, Dave Nesbitt, Gordon Liddle.

(Jim, Eddie & Gordon are now deceased)

The old wooden Clubhouse buildings were rotten and had suffered a number of break-ins, including one where they lifted the roof to gain access ! What had been a “workshop” had become a store, too cold and damp for machinery. We had no toilet facilities, and only a sink, cooker and short counter for a kitchen.



The old Clubhouse (left) and Workshop buildings



The deteriorating condition

The Committee knew something had to be done, but finance was a massive issue. The first step was to negotiate a new twenty-five year lease with the City Council, the previous one was for six months. We could not invest thousands in a new building without some security.

Intense fund-raising started with contributions from members, public running etc. This gave us the core funding to start the project.

Two other stars aligned for us – the refurbishment of Exhibition Park using Heritage Lottery funding and the take-over of the Palace of the Arts by Wylam Brewery. As part of the work in the Park, the drainage system was refurbished and we were able to piggy-back on to that, installing a drainpipe from our site to a new drain to the side of the Brewery.



Dave Nesbitt on the mini excavator



On the left Linda Nicholls, Ian Spencer, Millie the Border Collie and Robin Evans. In the ditch Brian Nicholls, Norman Blackburn and Jim Scott. On the right Dave Nesbitt

It then took another year to raise sufficient funds before work could start, including a grant from the Reece Foundation for £10,000.

(to be continued)

Toolmaker Tool Chests

Peter Newby

I first became aware of the rather nice wood tool chests, normally in oak or mahogany, with felt-lined drawers in the early 1970s. I bought my first one from a Kay's Mail Order catalogue that Sheila, Eddie Gibbons' sister was using. Since then I have bought another slightly different model but the same construction and finish. There appears to have been three brands all the same simply badge engineered these are Union, Nelslein and Moore & Wright. There is very little history available but from what I have found it appears a London company called Salmen, well known for their wooden carpenter's tools, were the manufacturers. In their catalogue they show the logos for both Union and Nelslein.

Quite independently another company was the American company of Union who also made wood as well as metal felt-lined toolmakers chests and were made available from a number of companies including Sears.

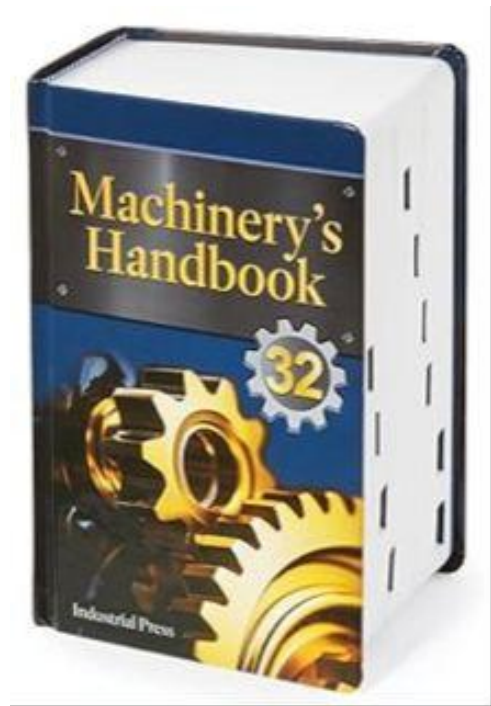
The one company that still exists is the Gerstner Toolbox Company of Dayton, Ohio in the USA. These are the "Rolls-Royce" of toolmakers chests, usually made in American white oak or walnut. They are of course green felt lined and have a couple of unusual features. There is normally an odd-shaped drawer - narrow but tall. When removed, it allows the American Machinery's Handbook to be stored there. Another feature is the mirror in the toolbox lid. When first made, in the early 1900s, washing and medical facilities were not common in the workplace and the mirror helped if you had something in your eye or other personal hygiene issues.

American Kennedy Tool Chests – these are of metal construction with a brown crinkle finish they in truth are a much better option. Similar in overall size to their wooden cousins the drawers while still being felt lined but sheet metal and have much more internal space. My example came from my company's scrap yard in Saudi Arabia and cost me \$7 and a bit of work to clean it up.

I have included a photo of Machinery's Handbook – this is the “Bible” for American engineers and machinists. A lot of tool chests had a special-sized opening to store a copy.



Left – my two Union toolchests are slightly different. Right – Gerstner toolmaker chest



Left – stack of American Kennedy Tool Makers tool chests. Right - the Machinery's Handbook

Postamble

Many thanks to Linda and Peter for supplying the “meat” of an otherwise boney issue. I knew a little of the new Clubhouse story as it was barely a year old when I joined the Club, but unaware of the extraordinary mix of determination, tenacity, hard graft and skills which took it from concept to completion. Those of you who were involved at the time will probably shrug it off with a “Aw, shucks, it was just another job.” To those (like me) who came later, be in no doubt as the story unfolds of what a huge accomplishment it is which we now all enjoy.

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Recent Sightings



Left – Steve Fisher's "Jubilee" 2-6-4T Right – Norman Blackburn's Highland Railway "Loch" Class 4-4-0 "Loch Laoghal"



Jim Mountjoy (photo L Nicholls) and Steve Lowe give the ex-Beamish Rack Koppel (built by Ken Swan) a run