

Dear Member,

It may be the closed season but there is plenty going on at Rainsbrook! An additional member's running, then on with the winter work on the ground track, something to keep us warm on chilly days!

The first Sunday of the month saw the holding of an Extraordinary General Meeting of the society. It was well attended and a slide presentation was given by the chairman on our proposals for future development. This centres on expanding our facilities with the aid of a Heritage Lottery Grant. The presentation was well received and the meeting gave the go-ahead to progress to the next stage.

After the meeting a training session was held on CPR, kindly given by Sue Morgan who had brought along a manikin for members to practice on. It was a very informative session and was well received by those who attended.

The same day had also been declared an additional member's running session and quite a few members took advantage of the fine weather.



A chance for members to see our new build 'Criccieth Castle' out on the tracks.

Peter Hill giving 'Florence' a run



John Lewis giving his Loco a run

It was nice to see John Travis back with his loco steamed up and all ready to go!



Aubyn Mee had the digger in use as well:-



Looks as if he is building 'Aubyn's Fell' – I hope he never 'fell off'!

The following Wednesday saw the ground level track closed so the track gang could make a start on the Laurels Up-Line re-alignment.



The track panels were 'shuffled' and put back on the approximate new alignment



This gave us a good idea of where the ground works would be required.

Track panels were removed the following Sunday having first marked the position of the new alignment.



Alain Foote has been busy making a new riding truck/tender for Hampton. He has sent me the following:

We tested out the driving truck/tender for "Hampton" and ultimately "Liassic". Having had a tender on "Fiji" we decided that we needed something more comfortable than the slate truck that I built back in the mid-1980s! There is space in the back for a water tank, which we'll fit later.



Photos:
Alain Foote

The work continues on the Laurels 'up' line re-alignment. Sunday 16th saw Aubyn busy with the mini-digger recovering some of the ballast ready for washing.



Kai Bevan barrowing spent ballast away ready for washing.



Then the groundworks for the new alignment were dug out using measurements from the fence posts to the centre of the track and the Laser level to get the correct depth.



We are still chasing an elusive water leak on the feed to the old station and steaming bays. This is made more difficult as no-one seems to remember where the pipe runs are. So a gang started to investigate on the old station, first by the mid-station taps between platforms 1 and 2.



This determined that the feed did not come up that platform so next we looked under the blocks between platforms 2 and 3.

A 'Tee' was found so we now know where the feed comes from as the pipe appears to be heading in the direction of the water crane. Sadly no leak was found but at least we now know the pipe layout and feed for these taps.

The leak continues to be managed by turning off that limb of the main.



Our regular contributor Peter Hill has been busy both on and off site!

November saw the final push to get the raised track signalling done. The fifteenth and final new signal head (spare) got fixed as we found a faulty relay had been used. John Thomas's new head tester came into its own making diagnosis that much easier.

John manufactured 100's of standard and some extra-long rail jumpers. All are now fitted thanks to the team. A special mention goes to John Lewis working away on his own fitting them and to the lads that drilled all the holes.

Photo: Peter Hill

Shortly we will be finally testing the whole system before declaring it operational. Numbering of the signals will start at the new raised track station with no. "51". Proper labels will be fitted but felt tip will have to do for the moment.



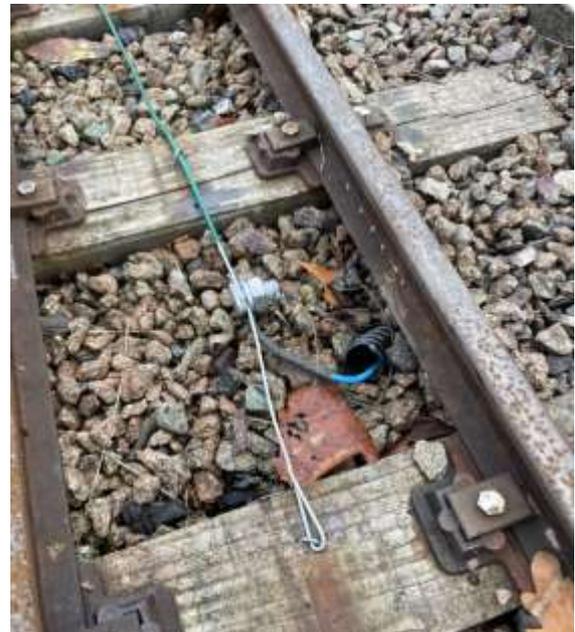
On the ground level some repairs to the insulated central 24v wire feed was necessary. At both the old and new stations drivers of steam locos had allowed hot ashes to spill out onto the track while stationary. This had melted the insulation and destroying the galvanising resulting in rust. At one point it had rotted through.

The cure has been not to scream at the drivers but to relay the wire inside trunking alongside the track at those sections. Two section lengths of 3m at each station.

This will not prevent sleepers burning or rail chairs melting however!



Photos: Peter Hill



Workshop clock

Back in the workshop I dug out a used V12 engine head cover that Chris gave me some time ago, and then scoured eBay for a quartz clock mechanism kit. £8 got me a complete unit with suitable brass hands.



All I had to do was drill a suitably sized hole in the cast alloy engine cover, poke the clock spindle through and do up the nut. The hands pushed on to their relative concentric spindles, popped in a single AA cell and it was away. A bit of fiddling was necessary to ensure the hands did not hit each other as they swept round. I also made up an extension hanging loop out of some stiff MIG wire. A screw into the workshop wall saw the finished clock erected and functioning.

Boilers

The beginning of the month saw Martin Rose's DeWinton type loco vertical boiler finally assembled and ready for a burn up. Martin had chosen yours truly to assist based on his belief that I was an "expert" (where x = zero and spurt a drip under pressure). We set to in the club welding lean to, using the medium propane burner.



Photos: Peter Hill

I left Martin to pickle and clean up. Joints all seemed ok, so now to clean out the threads, making up and fit threaded bungs ready for a pressure test. We will then see what further soldering is needed.

My own 3.5" gauge Roedean and Maisie boilers have progressed with the various large and small bushes being turned up in bronze or gunmetal. Bushes were then silver soldered in and attention turned to the wet header and regulator bushes. These are a bit more complicated as I did not want to thread the boiler copper, rather to use supplementary bronze/gunmetal threaded bushes soldered in. Needed to use 7/16" and 5/16" x 40 for concentric threads.. So the superheaters were also made up. This is on-going and hopefully will be ready for shell pressure tests in a few weeks.



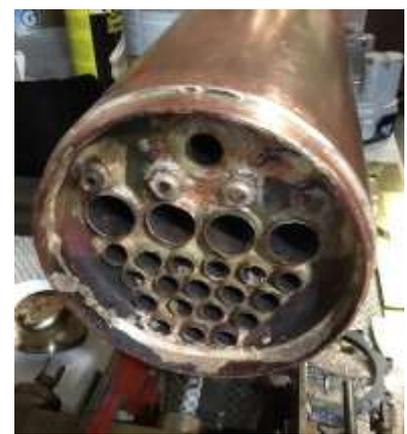
On Maisie I made up and fitted the longitudinal stays, one solid 1/4" rod and the other a hollow one for the blower. I'll do a burn up soon and solder these and the regulator/wet header bushes as well.



Photos: Peter Hill

There are a few "revisits" to existing soldering on the foundation ring and tube plate where the silver solder has not flowed to my liking. The inner dome I turned up from a lump of bronze, a pig to machine, not very free cutting. I used a lathe Chuck mounted on the rotary table in the vertical mill to machine the 12 tapping sized holes at 30degrees, I'll spot through to the dome ring bush then drill/ tap M2.5 for stainless socket cap screws.

Roedean is all soldered up and the cast inner dome bolted on 6x M3.. Now I need to finish the regulator bushes and to make up/ fit bungs for testing.



Superheaters



Two row for Maisie and four for Roedean. Roedean is well short of the firebox but Maisie pokes out into the furnace. LBSC called for brazed superheater spears. I made these up but the extra brazing heat melted a spot on the end of the thin 1/4" copper tube so will have to repair or rethink.



Photos: Peter Hill



Club Shay

Another boiler getting attention was the steel boiler from the club Shay. Here a boiler test is due so Connor and Phil are chiselling, loosening and breaking up the thick slabs of scale that had built up on the inner surfaces. Additional "mud holes" were cut as the original ones would not allow full tool movement within the boiler shell. I believe a steel thickness test is booked.

**Gardening**

On a sunny day I added a bit more trellis to our garden pergola. A bit more wind shelter for the hot tub when it comes out again in the spring. Also some shade to tone down the bright sun steaming into the workshop windows (blinds ½ down). This made good use of some left over roof slating lath. Management is working on some more tubs with climbers!



Photos: Peter Hill



The next work session at the 'Laurels' saw the track re-alignment centre of track pegs put in (plain pegs). We then followed up with white pegs every 3 metres to get the gradient sorted. Tony McGeechan is seen using the laser level whilst Rolf Thomas is banging in the pegs to the right height.



Photo: Peter Featherstone

When we had completed the section it was time to lay a membrane for weed suppression. The membrane was carefully placed in position and fixed down with wire staples all ready for ballast.



Photo: Peter Featherstone



We intend washing the ballast at the site, so Greg Winton got busy with the brush cutter to cut back all the brambles for us – thanks Greg!



The next session saw ballast washing commence and the following enough ballast washed for levelling of the bed to commence. Don & Rolf hard at it!





I just managed to get a candid shot of Ian Clipston giving his traction engine a run following a steam test!



Our latest (and youngest) junior member has been busy this weekend and appears to be a 'dab-hand' with a paint brush! Here's what his mum has to say.

We've been prepping the Shays panels for painting for a few sessions. Today was a wet n dry rub down and another undercoat, plus a primer coat to a bogey.



Photos:
Kathryn Derby



This morning saw more work of ballast washing by the track gang and a further 6m of washed ballast is being raked level by another junior member Sathvik Sooraj.

We also have our first 6m of the re-laid track in position with plastic sleepers all ready to be fixed down. Well done all for the progress so far!

**RMES Welcomes:**

Paul Caine – Joins us as a full member and lives in Warwick. He is an HGV mechanic and wishes to get involved in model engineering.



Early in the month I took a shot of the Lime tree avenue, just in time, before the winds blew away the autumn colours!

The work never stops at RMES, so if you want to try your hand at any of the many tasks that face us you would be very welcome!

Note: All photos by the author unless otherwise credited.

Howard Brewer (Secretary)
30 November 2025