

Dear Member,

**A very warm welcome to 2026 with RMES**

We're delighted to welcome you into a brand-new year with Rainsbrook Model Engineering Society.

Before we look ahead, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to Howard Brewer for his incredible time, care, and dedication in producing these much-loved RMES newsletters over many years. His work has given us all a wonderful window into the effort, passion, and behind-the-scenes activity that keep the society running, and have kept us informed, connected, and proud of everything RMES achieves. Thank you Howard!

For those of us taking up the baton, we hope to continue in the same spirit — but can only do so with your help. We'd love to share more of the stories, projects, moments, and adventures that make our community so special.

If you have something interesting to share — whether it's from the site itself, a project at home, a visit to somewhere inspiring, or even a holiday discovery — please send it along to **[newsletter@rugbymes.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@rugbymes.co.uk)**. Photos are very welcome too and every contribution helps us create a newsletter that truly reflects the whole society.

**Wishing Jason a speedy recovery**

We were very sad to learn that Jason Dakin was taken poorly last week. We are glad to hear that he is now on the mend, and we wish him all the best for a full and speedy recovery.

**A busy month!**

We kicked off 2026 in great style with a New Year's Day members' running session. Despite the chilly weather, the day was bright, calm, and absolutely perfect for bringing out the locos for their first run of the year. What made the day even more special was the very first outing on our newly laid ground-level track — a fantastic achievement completed by members in the final days of December (see last month's newsletter for the full story).

Everything ran beautifully, and it was wonderful to see everyone catching up and enjoying the fresh start after the Christmas break.

*"Mixer", the first train over the new re-aligned track at 'the laurels' on the 1st January 2026.*

*Photo credit: Rolf Thomas*

Here are a few more photos of some of the engines that joined us on our New Year's Day celebration.

Dave Penney driving "Alfie" on the ground level track



*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*

Members and visitors enjoying New Year's Day running



*Photo credit: Peter Hill*

Although the track is now in its closed season, there has still been plenty happening behind the scenes!

### **Track update**

The track maintenance team have been busy around the site in January.



They have worked on the replacement of a short piece of rail near signal 11, to give a better insulated joint for the signal.

*Don Currie and Tony McGeechan fitting the new rail in.*

*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*

The steaming bay feeder road was suffering from many rotten sleepers and very dirty ballast. In order to give it an update, three track panels were lifted so that the ballast could be washed and track replaced with better sleepers.



*A big thank you to Kai and Rhys Bevan who can be seen here digging out the out the formation.*

*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*



*By the end of the session the formation has been dug out ready for washed ballast to go back in.*

*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*

Rolf Thomas, Don Currie, Tony McGeechan and Howard Brewer were busy on Wednesday January 7<sup>th</sup> finishing off the landscaping following the track re-alignment and re-laying at the 'Laurels'



*Loading up the excess soil using the flat waggon and two wheelbarrows pulled by 'Rufus'*

*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*



*Unloading on the embankment to build this up*

*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*

*Tony returning with 'Rufus' for another load*

*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*



*Job done and work just starting to replant signal 16 that had to be moved*

*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*



### **Engineering update**

In January the team have been continuing with sprucing up The Shay. Over the winter it needed to be de-cladded in order for its 7 year boiler inspection to be undertaken and the team have taken this opportunity to thoroughly refurbish the loco. Whilst paint work to the cladding continues, other parts of the loco are starting to be rebuilt. Phil has made a new smokebox front plate, to which the original door has been fitted by Martin and the rebuilding of its front bogie has begun with Logan and Erica assisting.

This month has also seen the installation of some new lighting in the workshop and carriage sheds, which will make a big difference.

The focus for February will be to get "The Shay" rebuild well underway.



*Logan and Phil rebuilding the bogie for The Shay.*

*Photo Credit: Kathryn Derby*

*Martin with the new smokebox front plate.*



*Photo Credit: Kathryn Derby*



*A smart new coat of paint on the cladding.*

*4 coats of undercoat and 4 coats of topcoat will be needed. This picture shows the first top coat looking good!*

*Photo Credit: Kathryn Derby*

*Logan and Erica working on the front bogie.*



*Photo Credit: Kathryn Derby*

## Carriage Maintenance

The carriage maintenance team headed up by the vice-chairman have been changing some more series 300 carriage bogies.



*Kai Bevan working under the changed bogie to fit the speedo sensor - always good to see our junior members getting involved!*

*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*

*Close up of the sensor and bogie from the top.*



*Photo credit: Howard Brewer*

**Scribblings January 2026 by Peter Hill**

Last month I got on with the LBSC 5" Pansy boiler to the stage of 3/16" firebox cross and longitudinal stays. I also drilled for the 116 or so 1/8" rivet side stays.



At this point I had to send for some more 1/8" copper rivets so put this boiler aside.

As a set of 10mm steel boiler flanging plates had arrived from Model Engineers Laser so I decided to get on with the boiler for Chris's 3.5" A4. I guess this is the most difficult boiler I have made. It has a combustion space with 6x vertical water tubes

The boiler plates were cut out from copper sheet with an angle grinder roughly to shape and finished accurately on the bandsaw. The flanging plates were pilot drilled 3mm and a small radius filed on the edges where the copper was to be bent to avoid cuts while hammering.



The copper boiler plates were annealed 4-5 times during flanging to avoid creases and to get a smooth bend radius.

I decided to make the firebox and combustion space first.

Once all the copper plates were tidied up and sides finished, a step drill was used for all the tube holes.



Now for the firebox wrapper.

An empty Shreddies carton was pressed into use again and a flat projection was drawn on it. This caused some brain ache using the A4 drawings, but LBSC came to the rescue in the form of Heilan Lassie drawings that showed an almost identical firebox wrapper in flat projection.

Using the plates a mock-up was sellotaped together noting where it was different and by how much.

The Shreddies packet wrapper template was modified until it matched the A4 drawing.



This was then cut out of the copper sheet.

At first I anticipated just taking the nice shiny flat copper sheet put in the two top longitudinal bends. Wrong - it was like a big spring so had to get the big propane burner on to get it red hot to anneal.

It was no longer shiny and flat but I could at least bend it a bit with a round bar in the vice. Several anneals and some grunting was needed to get it into shape.

The A4 drawing called for a swaged lap joint along the bottom of the combustion chamber. I tried a test joint with some scrap, however I failed. Instead I will use the age old method of a butt and rivetted strap joint.

Some copper for the fire hole ring arrived so that was turned up, squashed oval, the hole in the firebox doorplate marked/drilled/filed out, and the now oval ring silver soldered in.



Spencer boiler nearly ready for testing, waiting for some bushes.



### **And finally a bit of history...**



Here's a steel flanging firebox tube/door plate made some years ago for a replacement boiler for an LBSC 3.5" 0-6-0 Iris. It had been converted to a 2-6-0 tender and became "Wasiris".

It steamed really well with 17 tubes and 3 superheaters, although needed a lot of iron and lead weights to stop it slipping.

**Planning for a successful 2026...**

Our public running days are not only a huge amount of fun — they're also a vital source of income that helps keep our society thriving. They give families, railway fans, and curious visitors the chance to enjoy our beautiful track and wonderful locomotives. With that in mind, the committee has been exploring new ways to make sure these days are as well attended as possible.

We are looking forward welcoming more visitors than ever to our freshly branded **2026 Public Ride Days**.

We are working to increase our local visibility and next month sees the launch of our new Rainsbrook Valley Railway public focused website, packed with details about our public days, parties and other activities designed especially for families and the community.

We've also created a fresh logo for this public audience and are busy creating posters and other materials for local noticeboards etc — if you'd like to help spread the word by displaying one, just let us know.

Our first event of the year will be **Easter Sunday, 5th April**, and we're planning some truly *egg-cellent* fun for all. Don't forget that as a member your support with this event will be crucial in making it a success!

**RAINSBROOK VALLEY RAILWAY**  
**2026 SPRING SEASON**  
**PUBLIC RIDE DAYS**

**5th April**  
**26th April**  
**17th May**  
**27th May**  
**21st June**



- Just 5 minutes from central Rugby
- Free parking
- Friendly cafe & picnic area
- Beautiful scenery
- All ages welcome!

**Book Your Tickets Today**



**Great for all family and friends!**



Find out more at:  
[www.rainsbrookvalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.rainsbrookvalleyrailway.co.uk)

And here is a sneak peek of a spring ride days poster, including the new Rainsbrook Valley Railway logo. Website to be launched soon!

**Could You Lend a Hand at RMES in 2026?**

RMES is powered by amazing volunteers, and would like to thank everyone who gives up their time to help. There are so many ways to get involved — whether it's helping out on site, caring for our beautiful track and grounds, supporting the engineering team with loco maintenance, or welcoming visitors on our public running days.

We rely on an enthusiastic group of helpers to keep everything running smoothly, and you can give as much or as little time as you're able but every bit truly helps.

Our Public Ride Days are where we **especially** need extra hands — from helping with locos to supervising car parking to serving in the café and even chatting to the public about the loco's, there is a job to suit everyone. The more volunteers we have, the more we can share the workload... and the more smiles we get to see on the faces of families enjoying their day out!

If you can spare just a little time to help at Public Ride Days, it would make a huge difference. **Please consider helping us — we'd be thrilled to have you on board!** Please contact [secretary@rugbymes.co.uk](mailto:secretary@rugbymes.co.uk) for further information on how you can help.

**Dates for your diary**

Saturday 21st March (2pm) - RMES AGM

Sunday 29th March - Member's running

Sunday 5th April (pm) - Public Ride Day, details to follow

That's all for January and please remember to send through your stories and updates for the February newsletter by 15.02.26 to [newsletter@rugbymes.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@rugbymes.co.uk) so they can be included. We hope everyone has a good February!

Edited by Dawn Culling  
(30.01.2026)

Note: All photos by the author unless otherwise credited.