

Dear Member,

Welcome to our July Newsletter

The year is flying by and somehow, we are at the end of July already! This month has seen us hold member's running sessions, the narrow gauge rally, a public ride day and a number of parties. The heat has certainly made its presence known too, and we'd like to give special thanks to all our members who have been working in challenging conditions to keep everything running so smoothly.

This month's newsletter also features updates from around the site **(p3 – 7)**, 2 ½ inch gauge event **(p8)**, narrow gauge weekend **(p9 & 10)**, the public ride day **(p11)** as well as the latest happenings from Peter Hill **(p12 - 15)**.

Regular features can also be found:

Chairman's Line – An update from Rolf **(p2)**.

Whistle Stop — This month our quick-fire Q&A is with Aubyn Mee **(p16 - 18)**.

Notices – Please take the time to read through our important notices for this month too **(p19 & 20)**.



We have needed hats and suncream for the long hot days with beautiful blue skies at RMES in July.

Photo Credit: Dawn Culling

Chairman's Line**Wildfire risk at upcoming events**

There seems to be no end in sight to the exceptionally hot and dry weather we are currently experiencing. Many heritage railways have been cancelling or severely curtailing steam operations to avoid the risk of starting wildfires.

With additional precautions in place including more fire points with water filled bins at critical points around the track and the deployment of dedicated fire marshals we successfully avoided setting fire to our site and any of the neighbouring properties during the public ride event in July. Joking aside, this a major risk for us, particularly as the crop in the field to the south of us has yet to be harvested.

Our decision making in this area is based on the Natural England Wildfire risk maps which are updated daily. These have become the official 'go-to' for guidance on wildfire risk and we would therefore be negligent if we were to not consult this data source.

Assuming the dry conditions will not alter significantly in the coming weeks we will certainly need members to volunteer for Fire Marshal duties at the upcoming Standard Gauge Weekend (8/9 August) in addition to the usual call-out for members to steward the event. Please contact Event Organisers Martin Rose or Alan James if you are able to help.

Drive a loco day

A quick heads-up that the committee is investigating putting on a 'Drive a Loco' event for members who do not have their own locos. It would take place during a member's running day and would be on a booked, first-come basis. Not simply just sitting on the footplate driving for a few circuits, participants would also have to be involved in the loco preparation and disposal. More to follow on this topic.

Wheelchair carriage

Members will be aware that the wheelchair carriage is currently out of service pending engineering updates to facilitate loading/ unloading of wheelchair users at all platforms at both stations and also elsewhere along the track should an incident or emergency require it. The work is now in hand and once completed, the vehicle will be returned to service alongside updated training for staff.

Rolf

Track update

Even with the hot, dry weather July has seen progress on a few projects, as can be seen below.

Photo credits in this section: Howard Brewer



A RT signal needed to be moved, so the track gang took on the task, dug all around but needed Mini-Digger to give it a nudge.



Rolf digging the hole with his Mini-Digger to 're-plant the signal'



A narrow trench to re-bury the cable to the new signal position



Job done and signal in its new position, the new mower can now get by!

Thanks to some great teamwork, the ballast washing plant is progressing nicely.



The ballast washing plant is progressing with Geoff Broad and his gang - Geoff laying blocks.



Peter Barnett helping with the mortar mix



Ballast washer now in place



Peter Featherstone and John Powell fixing decking boards for standing on



Job getting nearer completion!

Engineering Update

Photo Credits on this page: Kathryn Derby and Ed Parrott

It has been another busy month in engineering with more maintenance to ensure that locos are ready for our events. Our younger helpers have also been working exceptionally hard!



Ed dug out 2 more holes for garden rail posts.



"Skye hooks" have been installed on the back of the shed door to mount the indicator discs that go on the last coach of a train.



Erica busy painting the traverser.



And hard at work with loco preparations for the next Public Ride Day.



New tap installed near the shed



Boiler wash out day for the Garrett.

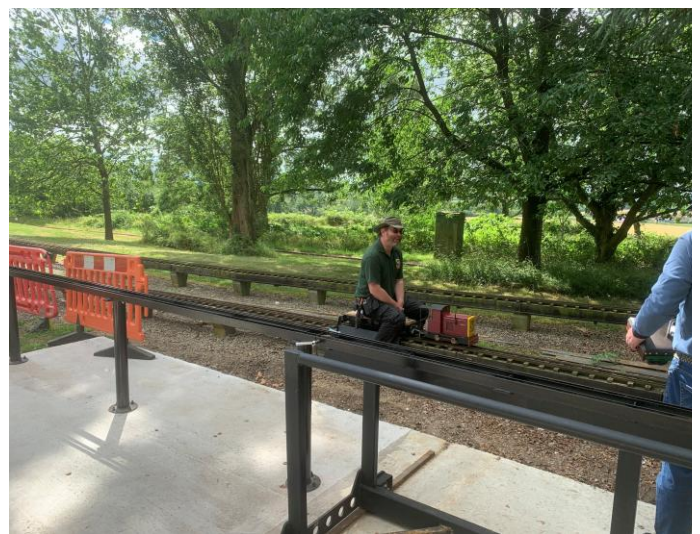
2 ½ inch gauge event

We were delighted to host our annual **2½-inch Gauge Day** on Sunday 28th June. It was wonderful to see so many people on site with their locomotives, enjoying a relaxed day of running and catching up.

The atmosphere was fantastic, and the **new steaming bays** proved their worth — as you'll see from the photos below, they were in constant use throughout the day.

Thanks to everyone for joining us, a great time was had by all.

Photo credits in this article Martin Rose.



Narrow gauge weekend

Lots of fun was also had at the narrow gauge weekend on 11th & 12th July. Thanks so much to everyone who helped on this weekend, especially to Gill and the catering team who gave a delicious spread!

Photo credits in this article Kathryn Derby.





July Public Ride Day

Our “**Schools Out**” **Public Ride Day** on 19th July took place in hot, dry weather — perfect for an afternoon of family fun. We welcomed plenty of visitors who enjoyed seeing the **new signals in action on the high track**, along with **three locomotives running** and the **new riding cars** proving very popular. Locos included the L150 Prairie, London Transport (steam) run by George Cannon, as can be seen below.

With the high temperatures, safety was a top priority. A dedicated team of **fire marshals** was assembled to keep a close eye on the site and respond quickly to any potential risks. Thanks to their vigilance — and the care taken by all members — their services weren’t needed, and families were able to enjoy a relaxed, trouble-free afternoon.

Photo credits in this section: Dawn & Ben Culling



Scribblings for July 2026

By Peter Hill (including all photo credits)

Quarry trucks.

At the beginning of the month, laser cut parts for the 4" scale quarry waste truck arrived. The plan is to build a Quarry train for Margwen (Alice class steam Hunslet) and Florence (Hudson-Hunslet diesel)



This was quickly assembled helped by slot and tag design and the chassis tack welded. The tipping hopper was also clamped up with the rivet holes aligned, drilled out and 4mm pop riveted. The hinge pin is galvanised 20mm conduit, and after assembling, the laser cut support hinge loops were welded up on the chassis ensuring the position allowed the hopper to free tip and rest on its chassis. Some cutting adjustment will be needed for tipper no2.



Narrow gauge couplings of the type fitted to the rest of the stock were welded up, finished with a flap wheel and then a stainless shackle and hook.



In other news, I was fortunate in being given a Father's Day gift in the form of a robot mower.

Studying the instructions, my lawn had to be mapped out by manually taking the mower for a run around the perimeter, controlled by my phone, marking obstacles such as a tree and washing whirligig. Once done I could relax with a cold beer.

Mowing the grass hitherto meant wrestling with a heavy Atco Empress 20" petrol mower. And lately a smaller Bosch mains rotary, tripping over the cable. I had been looking at a battery version, but this then arrived!



Naturally I had to build it a garage, I found a self-assembly kit for one online, made from pvc coated galvanised steel sheet. I fitted clear pvc front curtains so it could see its way to reverse back into its charging dock.

I added some 20mm conduit to an existing outside mains socket to provide its own dedicated plug connection.

The lawn is roughly 100 m sq, and it cuts it on about 80% battery. It takes about 2 hours. Cutting every couple of days means the small cuttings can be left on the grass to shrivel up and disappear. A map appears on the phone app which also gives a wi-fi real-time forward picture as it drives up and down mowing. I have set it to be triggered manually as with 5 dogs I have to do some shovelling up first.

A roof terrace completed the job!



The Whistle Stop: A monthly Q&A with one of our members

This month the tough questions are posed to Aubyn Mee

Tell us about your professional background.

I started work in an Apprenticeship in Toolmaking with a Plastic Injection Mold Tool Manufacturer called M&H Tools in Bognor Regis for 4 years and then spent 2 years on the shop floor making mold tools, then progressed into the design office to produce the detailed drawings that the shop floor toolmakers and machinists needed. I then got involved in the early days of rapid prototyping using a stereolithography laser modelling machine that cost over £50K at the time and a lot of my work was for a company called Hamlin RPD near Offchurch who eventually got me to move up to Rugby to work for them.

Things changed again and did several other jobs as a forklift engineer and then a team manager of engineers for a supermarket chain. My current role is an Engineer Surveyor in the Lift and Crane Discipline with Allianz Engineering where I carry out LOLER & PUWER examinations on a vast range of equipment.

How did you first get into model railway engineering?

I joined Chichester Model Engineering Society in 1989 when I was 14 years old and my first project was a petrol engined go-cart! And then built a Stuart Turner 10V vertical steam engine. I joined the committee when I was 18 years old and became Chairman at 24 years old for a period of two years.

When did you join RMES?

When I got head hunted for my job to move up to Rugby in 2004 one of my first things I did was to join RMES and then got very involved with many things! I became Chairman in 2006 and served in that role for 19 years helping to guide the club from its old 4.5 acre layout to its now 12 acre expansion!

What do you enjoy most about being part of the society

I have enjoyed seeing the club develop from when I joined to where we are now with developing our site and facilities for the benefit of our members and public alike.



Aubyn cutting our RMES 70th Anniversary cake in 2019...



...and inviting the Mayor to open the Rainsbrook Central Station during the celebrations.



Aubyn in his more usual headwear - hard at work with the latest project at RMES – the high track traverser!

What RMES activities are you known for?

Digger Man!! Chairman for most of my time. Welder and Fabricator - I welded the chassis of half of the 100 and all of 300 series carriages, made the ground level lift table, the front double gates, raised track girder bridge and recently new raised track steaming bays to name a few!

What has been your favourite locomotive experience?

I am not really into locomotives per say and more into the engineering that goes into them and other things and have been more into road steam in the past. I was part of the crew on HMS Sultans Super Sentinel Steam lorry for around 5 years and had fond memories of looking after a 10 Ton J.& H. McLaren Traction Engine and steamed it to many events.

**What is your preferred gauge?**

5 inch as I have 3 (currently not working!) petrol hydraulic locomotives that have run many times in the past. I also have a half built 7 1/4" Class 52 loco. All needing time and money and space to get going.

Do you have any hobbies or clubs outside RMES?

I used to have a few but not anymore. I used to be involved with the National Fire Museum in Weedon and even owned my own Bedford TK Fire engine. I used to do professional firework displays. I am currently rebuilding my Landrover to enable transport of my loco's.

Please tell us one thing about you that no-one at RMES would know

I don't think there is much that at least the longer term members know about me as I have been fairly open about things I have done in the past. One of my biggest past projects that some know about is the restoration of a Scammell Pioneer Heavy Artillery Breakdown lorry from a state of a tree growing through it to a fully operational machine.



Notices and Updates

We are still looking for volunteers to help on the public ride sessions for the second half of the year. The dates can be found on the poster below. Sessions start at 1pm and 2.30pm. Please do let Howard know if you can join us at all, the sessions are great fun and really do help to keep RMES running.

Email rmes.sec@hotmail.co.uk if you can join us

RAINSBROOK VALLEY RAILWAY

2026 SUMMER SEASON PUBLIC RIDE DAYS

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

Save the dates!

19th July
16th August
30th August
20th September
11th October
31st October

Book your tickets today



Great for all the family and friends!



Find out more at...
www.rainsbrookvalleyrailway.co.uk

Dates for your diary

Saturday 1st August – 1-3pm children's party. Contact Sandra if you can help.

Sunday 2nd August - Members running.

Sat 8th / Sun 9th August – Standard gauge weekend.

Sunday 16th August 1:00-4:00pm – Public running. Email rmes.sec@hotmail.co.uk to help.

Wednesday 19th August – 1:30-3:30pm Children's party. Contact Sandra if you can help.

Sunday 30th August 1:00-4:00pm – Public running. Email rmes.sec@hotmail.co.uk to help.

That's all for July

Thanks so much for the contributions this month, please can I ask for contributions for next month's newsletter by 15.08.26 to newsletter@rugbymes.co.uk.

Edited by Dawn Culling and Danny Culling
(31.07.2026)

Note: All photos by the author unless otherwise credited.