

Dear Member,

Welcome to our June Newsletter

It's been a wonderfully busy month at RMES. We have shared stories at the Members' BBQ, had fun hosting the Sweet Pea Rally, received lots of smiles from Dads at the Father's Day public running, as well as our Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday meet-ups. Reviews and photos from each event can be found later in the newsletter **p9 – 12**. We are also delighted that the new defibrillator has been installed to help keep everyone safe on site (**p8**).

This month's newsletter also features updates from around the site (**p3 – 7**), an article from Mike Boddy in Australia (**p 13 - 16**), an update on signals from John Thomas (**p17 - 19**) and Peter Hill, as well as the latest happenings from Peter Hill (**p20 - 23**) and Howard's archive (**p 25 & 26**).

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 club vice-chairman Tony McGeechan (**p27 & 28**).

Notices – Please take the time to read through our important notices for this month too (**p30 & 31**).



Flowers around the site are looking gorgeous this June.

Photo Credit: Millie Culling

Chairman's Line

As I write this it looks like both sessions of the public ride day tomorrow (Father's Day, 21st June) will be sold out. By tomorrow afternoon we will have welcomed over 1600 visitors old and young to our railway so far this year, a 23% increase over the same period last year, despite cost pressures forcing us to raise ticket prices. The sterling efforts of the members who volunteer for duty at these events ensures that our visiting public have an enjoyable and relaxed day out.

Unseen by the public is the huge amount of work carried out during the rest of the year by members constructing, repairing, maintaining, cutting, painting, digging etc, etc across our 12-acre site, not to mention what is needed to develop and curate our internet and social media presence.

It is perhaps the latter which has been the steepest learning curve for us since we stepped more boldly into this space this year and we have moved quickly to both respond to public comments and to adapt operations to address identified issues.

To those members who volunteer at public ride events and who are in direct contact with the public, your professionalism and conduct in carrying out your assigned duties is at the heart of a Great Day Out for our visitors. Indeed, the same sentiment applies to all events at the club where we welcome non-members.

RMES is held in high regard within the hobby (the 'Sweet Peas' were extremely impressed!) and has a growing profile within the local community and borough council. Let's stay focussed and not do anything detrimental to the interests of the Society.

I'll close this month with a couple of quotes:

'It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation and only one bad one to lose it' (Benjamin Franklin).

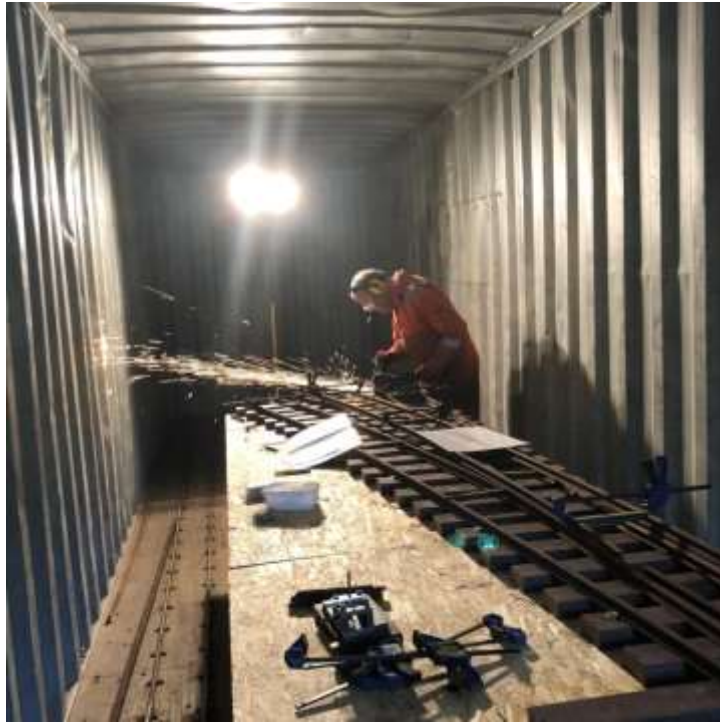
'It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that you'll do things differently' (Warren Buffett)

Rolf

Track update

Progress on the new project is moving along. Even with warm weather and a few holidays, the team is keeping momentum, and every week brings visible steps ahead.

Photo credits in this section: Howard Brewer



Work on the tandem point progresses slowly with Rolf doing some angle grinding in situ.



Both Rolf and Don busy angle grinding outside working on parts of the first point frog.

High track traverser

We are delighted that the High Track Traverser is now nearing completion and has had its inaugural use at the Sweet Pea Rally. We owe a huge thank you to Aubyn for the hours of planning, on-site work, sweat (and no doubt tears!) that have gone in to getting this new, important piece of kit up and running, so far it has been more than 300 hours in the making! Thanks to his work, the high track can now comfortably handle many more locomotives, placing our club firmly at the forefront of miniature railway innovation.

Below are the latest photos of the new steaming bays constructed by Aubyn during the second week of June — a week that required some impressive shower-dodging to keep the work moving!

Whilst undertaking most of the engineering work by himself, Aubyn has been supported by Nick Ingram, by many RMES members during concrete pours and by Ben and Danny Culling who took on the painting of the completed installation.

Aubyn says "I will be taking a break from this for a good few weeks now as they are working as they are. We are planning to finish off the concrete and put in the remaining bays from September time onwards."

The new traverser was really put through its paces at the Sweet Pea rally where over 20 locos moved on and off the high track with ease. The system made the whole process seamless — from steaming bay, to mover, to joining track, and finally onto the main line.

Many congratulations and heartfelt thanks to Aubyn and the team.

All photos in this section credited to Aubyn Mee and Ben Culling





Engineering Update

Photo Credits on this page: Kathryn Derby and Ed Parrott

The engineering team have been exceptionally busy this month, carrying out essential locomotive maintenance and ensuring every piece of equipment is in top condition. This work is vital in keeping the railway running smoothly and ready for our full calendar of Public Ride Days and upcoming events.



John guiding Logan on filling MK's water tank at Logan's first public running.



John on the oiling round of MK (needed every 3-4 laps).





Prep work being done with the Shay.



Cleaning MK before the next Public Ride Day.



George and Logan rebuilding the new high rail carriages.



John and Martin on the tools



John working on the lubrication system on the Royal Scot.

Defibrillator now installed

We are delighted to share that, thanks to an outstanding fundraising effort, our brand-new on-site **defibrillator** has now been purchased and installed. It is available 24 hours a day, should it ever be needed.

The arrival of this unit means we can all feel reassured knowing that safe, simple, lifesaving equipment is close at hand. The defibrillator is housed in a bright yellow cabinet on the side of **Carriage Shed 2** and can be accessed using the code C159X. Posters displaying the code have been placed in member-only areas for quick reference.

The device is also registered on the **NHS national defibrillator database**, so if the code is ever forgotten during an emergency, the 999 call handler will be able to provide it immediately.

A heartfelt thank you goes to every member and member of the public who contributed to the appeal—your generosity made this possible. We also extend huge thanks to Mike and Sue Morgan for their hard work in organising and bringing the project to fruition.

Sue is planning some on-site training sessions on how to safely access and use the defibrillator; details of upcoming sessions will be shared by email in due course.



The new cabinet looking smart. Please help to keep the area clear so that it can be accessed easily if needed.



The cabinet on the side of Carriage shed 2.



The defibrillator unit inside the cabinet.



The defibrillator unit.

Members BBQ

The weather was absolutely gorgeous on Sunday 7th June, creating the perfect backdrop for our Members' BBQ. It was wonderful to see so many members on site, enjoying a relaxed morning running locos and afternoon of catching up and good company. A heartfelt thank-you goes to everyone who helped make the event happen — especially Aubyn for manning the BBQ, and Sandra and the team for preparing such lovely salads and sides.

Here are just a few pictures from the day.



Sweet Pea Rally

It was a real honour to host the 33rd Annual national Sweet Pea Rally. The weather was bright, calm and perfect for the weekend dedicated to these special locos. This was the second time RMES have hosted the day.

The Sweet Pea Rally has been run every year from 1993 when it first took place in Leeds and has been organised by Blackgates Engineering at various clubs around the country. RMES hosted it in 2017 just as we had started to expand the site with only the outer ground level track being extended at the time with only the old original raised track layout to run on.

Event organiser Aubyn says "This event went very well with 24 locomotives on the Raised Track and 8 on the Ground Level with everyone having a good time. Everyone was very impressed with the new steaming bays and our extended track and I want to thank Gill and the ladies for putting on a great lunch and providing drinks and beverages throughout the day."



The original sweet pea loco in the café.

A brief introduction to the "Sweet Pea" locomotive

First appearing in the late 1970s, the **Sweet Pea** class of locomotives — designed by **Jack Buckler** — has become one of the most recognisable and well-loved small steam engines in the model engineering world. Buckler set out to create a locomotive that was *practical, buildable, and endlessly charming*, and the result was a rugged 0-4-0 tank engine that quickly earned a loyal following.

What makes the Sweet Pea special is its combination of **straightforward construction** and **excellent steaming ability**. Builders appreciate the generous boiler, the forgiving proportions, and the fact that it can be assembled with modest workshop equipment. Drivers love it because it's a lively, willing performer that handles passenger hauling with surprising confidence.

Over the decades, Sweet Peas have appeared in every colour imaginable, from traditional greens to cheerful seaside pastels, and many have been personalised with cabs, tenders, and clever home-built modifications. Today, they remain a favourite first locomotive for newcomers and a nostalgic classic for long-time members.

Here are a few pictures from the day (and a few more can be seen at the end of Peter Hill's article):

Photo credits Aubyn Mee and Millie Culling



June Public Ride Day

The public ride day on 21st June coincided nicely with Father's Day. The weather was gorgeous and we were delighted to be joined for a full afternoon by so many Dads and Grandads spending a special day with their family. Many stayed for the afternoon enjoying picnics, refreshments and our photo opportunity with Criccieth Castle. Many thanks to all the volunteers for making this a memorable day for so many families.

Photo credits in this section: Kathryn Derby, Ellen Penney and Millie Culling



Mike Boddy – an update from Australia

I'm sure many of you know Mike, our long-standing member from Australia. He has kindly shared an update on his locomotives, along with an article about the over-oiling of his Sir Nigel Gresley A4, which you'll find below.

Mike has been a member of the RMES club for several years and has visited the club on a couple of occasions.

Mike continues: "My first visit was before the elevated rack was extended and then the second trip was after it was completed.

Both times I came to the UK I brought my 2-1/2" Fayette engine to get the opportunity to run on your lovely long 2-1/2" track. There are only a couple of 2-1/2" tracks in Australia, and the 2-1/2" track at the club I belong to is only approx. 73m around.

The last trip when I came to the UK, I had a problem with my engine. To transport the engine, I have a purpose-built box for each the engine and tender; there are securing brackets inside the box to hold the engine from moving around and bubble wrap to protect the sides. Also, when flying with heavy and fragile items I use the department at the airport for FRAGILE and HEAVY luggage, that way my hope is they would be handled with care, BUT when I arrived in the UK and examining the engine I noticed the engine had been damaged.

I checked it and found the frames were twisted badly locking the drive wheels from turning, also some pipes had been damaged, and several small parts broken off.

So not to be done out of having the opportunity to run in the UK, I used the Rugby workshop to repair the engine. I turned it over on its back and with a long sash clamp and attached it from opposite corners of the frame I pulled it back into square, the wheels now turned freely. I fired it up and took it out for a run but found a problem keeping steam supply up.

As I had arranged to run my engine at other clubs in the UK, I didn't have time to diagnose the problem and fix it I just had to limp around and persevere with the lack of steam.

These pictures show the box, packaging and broken retaining bracket also the sash clamp trying to square engine frame.





When examining the box, I could not find any damage on it but the engine retaining bracket was broken. To Break this bracket, it must have been dropped on its end, and the weight of the engine came down with considerable force smashing the bracket and twisting the frames.

The picture shows the engine stripped down showing what I had to do to fix all the damaged parts, squashed pipes, broken handrail stations and bent foot plate brackets.

My trip included a run at Worthing, Sutton, Yeovil, Bromsgrove, Leicester and others I cannot remember now. Apart from the problem of running out of steam the 2-1/2" engines had difficulties running on aluminium tracks, the wheels kept slipping on the track, but nevertheless it was fun just getting to run around a nice long tracks.

When I got home, I did find out why it kept running out of steam. As the box was dropped on its end the weight of the boiler pulled out from the smoke box breaking the seal between them, this caused air leaks around the smokebox reducing the draft through fire tubes. The engine has now been completely rebuilt and the join between the boiler and smokebox has been sealed.

As I was extremely upset that my engine had been damaged on the trip to the UK, I contacted the airline and ask for compensation for the damage, initially they refused but after considerable communication with the airline management, they finally accepted

their responsibility for the damage and offered me compensation of \$3000.00, this I accepted.

I do enjoy getting the opportunity to run on the tracks in UK, as they are long and comfortable to drive on, it's a shame I cannot bring my 5" Sir Nigel Gresley A4 as it is my favourite and it runs so well.."



Three of my finished engines;
the 5" A4 the 3-1/2" Maisie and the 2-1/2" Fayette.

And now to Mike's most recent project...

Subject: Lubricator

Engine: Sir Nigel Gresley A4

Problem: Over Oiling

Recently I have been test running my engine on a rolling road and found it was delivering too much lubrication oil to the cylinders.

I did a few tests to establish the amount of oil it was delivering and was faced with the smoke box covered with oil.

The next thing was to establish the size of the drop of oil. The pump is a Jum Ewins design and known locally as the Sooty Pump. It consists of two "O" rings with a spacer between them, the thickness of the spacer determines the size of the drop of oil and in my case the spacer is only 0.45mm thick.

Ok, the drop of oil is I believe the minimum size drop. So now I looked at the drive from the main drive wheel eccentric. The ratio is the number of turns the drive wheel rotates to one turn of the lubricator pump and in my case it's 6-1.

The drive wheel is 175mm dia. x π = 550mm x 6 / 1000 = 3.3m, so every 3.3m the cylinders get one drop of oil, this I felt was excessive.

To remedy the problem, I designed a reduction link that fits between the drive crank and lubricator pump. This link gave me approx. a 10-1 reduction depending on the length of the Eccentric Lever to the pump. Now with this reduction unit one revolution of the pump is 60 revolutions of a drive wheel or every 33m of travel, remembering there are two pumps so it's two drops per 33m.

Note the attached pictures; this is before I added the reduction link;

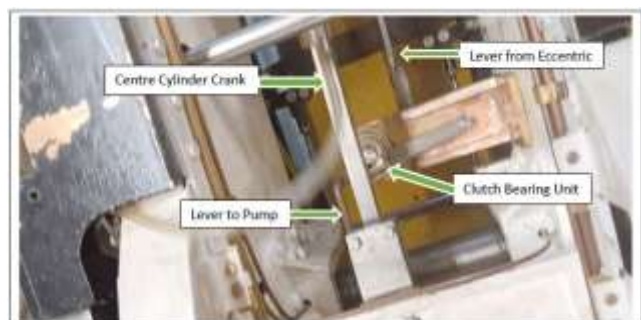
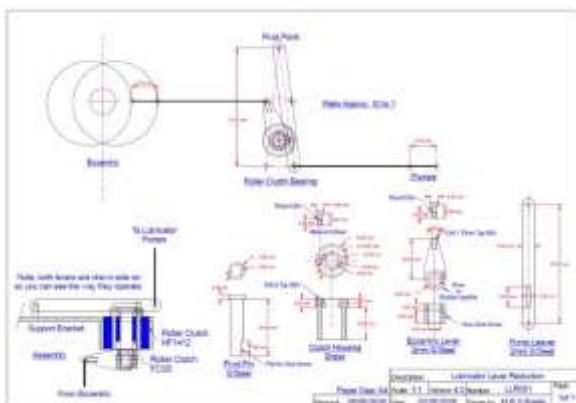


This picture is after 20min running, also, note the tank was 1/2 full to start.



This after about 2-3 hours running>

This is the reduction unit design.



The installation.

I will now run the engine for a set period of me and monitor the oil level of the oil tank and keep my eye on the cylinder drain cocks.

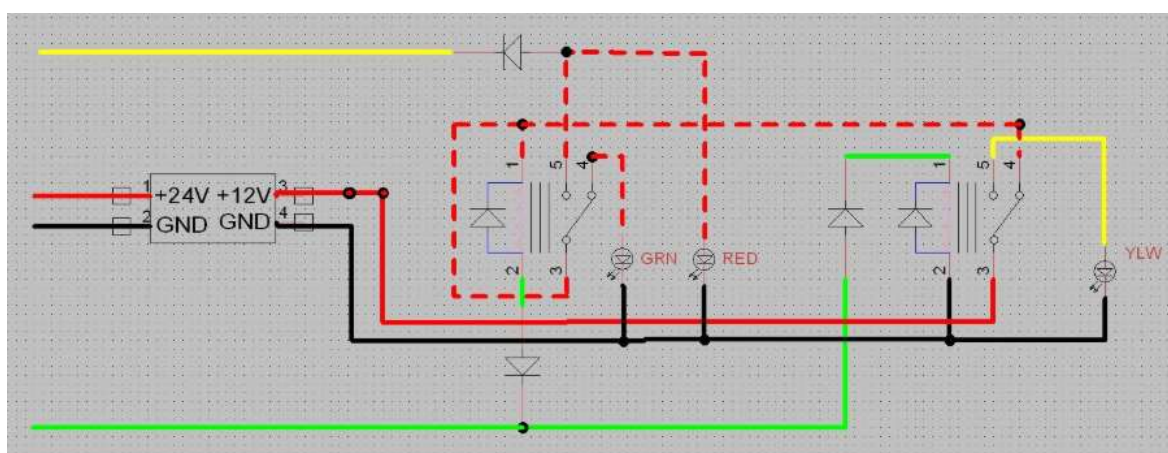
RMES Signal Head – a new version, by John Thomas

I joined Peter Hill in March 2025 with a view to understanding the signalling system and to help with the maintenance thereof. To date we have carried out many varied maintenance tasks on the system. Like painting the Forth bridge this will never end!

In summer 2025 I designed and built a signal head tester. Details of this were included in the September 2025 newsletter.

We have recently completed the installation and commissioning of signals on the raised track.

The 'current' signal head uses 3 relays and lots of interconnecting wires. I have since designed a new version using only 2 relays and replaced the interconnecting wires with a small printed circuit board. The first new version signal head went into service as signal 16 for Public running on Wednesday 27th May 2026.

Circuit Diagram of new version

On power-up, provided the track is clear, both relays will be de-energised and the signal will display a Green aspect.

When the next block is occupied this signal will display a Red aspect.

When the next signal is displaying a Red aspect (because the block ahead of it is occupied) this signal will display a Yellow aspect.

When the next signal changes to a Yellow aspect this signal will revert to Green.

The above is a simplified explanation of how the circuit works.

Anyone wishing a more detailed explanation please contact either myself or Peter Hill.

Photos of a signal head at various stages of assembly

Front View



Rear View

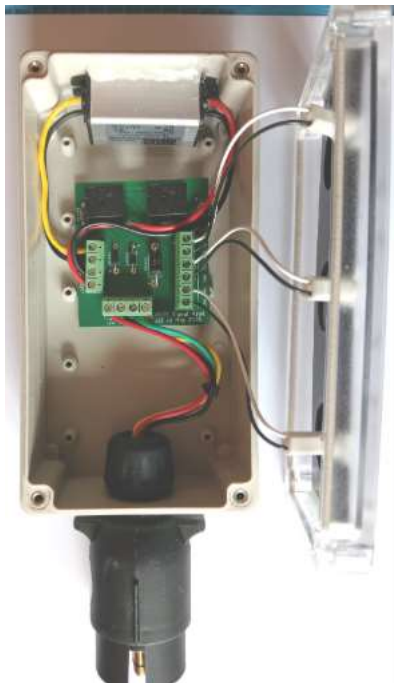
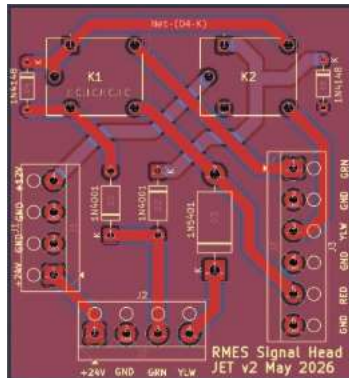
**Photos showing mounting of Type 1 LEDs with 3D printed holder**

Photo of a built signal head showing the 24V to 12V converter and the PCB with it's connections to the LEDs



Photo showing a signal head complete with coloured filters and vacuum formed facia

Photos showing the PCB

An initial batch of 4 new version signal heads have been built. A further PCB has been assembled and kept as a spare. Once proved reliable, it is intended that any signal head built in the future will be version 2.

Type 1 : G4 Cool White LED



Type 2 : T10 Coloured LED



The Type 1 LEDs are somewhat fragile and easily damaged. The more robust Type 2 LEDs will be used in later builds once supplies of the type 1s are exhausted.

Using type 2 LEDs means that coloured filters are not required. This results in quicker assembly times and less maintenance in the future. Another benefit is that we do not need enclosures with transparent lids enabling us to use less expensive black enclosures.

Note: All photos and sketches by John Thomas

Scribblings for June 2026

By Peter Hill (including all photo credits)

Following on from John's article...

The Ground level 7.25" track at Rainsbrook now has 3x Mk2 signal heads out on test. These are the result of John Thomas's hard work. The presently deployed heads follow the architecture of the three prototypes Chris and I developed some 7 years ago. The MK2 heads have a printed circuit designed by John, that finally does away with all the wire components and push on connectors. The circuit now has only two relays instead of three. The 24/12v inverters and LED lamps are retained as is the plastic case and trailer plug



Should any of the MK1 heads prove troublesome in the future we can simply throw out the existing contents and connect in in a pcb.

Outwardly the heads remain the same and are interchangeable with a MK1 head but are being fitted with the vacuum moulded fronts as used on the raised track.



We are continuing to experiment with the cap-less coloured COB LED bulbs. These are brighter and more intense so can be easier to see in bright sunshine. They do not need a coloured gel acetate either so more light is emitted.

The prices have dropped since being introduced, while the cheaper LED disc bulbs are getting more expensive!

In the Workshop (in reality an outside steel welding bench) another 4" to 1ft scale 7.25" gauge model of a Penrhyn slate quarry finished slate truck has been completed and a quarry waste end tipper started. The tipper utilises the same Model Engineers Laser chassis as the slate boulder bolster truck made last year. The chassis is 3mm laser cut steel, with slots and tongues to aid an accurate build, clamped up then stick/mig welded. Superstructures are built up using 3mm pop rivets. The angle grinder removes any mistakes and leaves a clean job for spray etch primer. A spray undercoat then satin top coat of grey truck enamel when complete. Wheels and couplings in black.

The slate truck decks are well weathered recovered boards from pallets, lightly sanded to remove whiskers and soften edges, and then a coat of sealer.

The result is a quite pleasing robust replica with plenty of low down weight to keep it stable on the track. More to come next month with tipper bodies.



This last weekend Rainsbrook hosted the Sweet Pea rally, here are a few action shots.





This lovely 7.25" Sweet Pea was chosen by John Startin and Peter Hill to be awarded the Sweet Pea club tankard. Peter says, "I understand this was made by the owner and I saw it run sweetly pulling carriages all Sunday long."

Celebrations for Sir Nigel Gresley

By Peter Featherstone

June 19th was the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sir Nigel Gresley.

Peter writes "The Gresley Society challenged its members to run a commemorative train on whatever model railway they have. We ran a couple of trains in the evening on our 7mm 0 Gauge outdoor layout to mark the occasion."

(Headboards from the Gresley Society.)



Photos in this article by Peter Featherstone

From the Archives: A Lookback to Summer 2016

Another busy time with many developments taking place...



We experienced our first flooding of the new traverser pit following a heavy downpour.



Aubyn busy attaching chequer plate to the traverser



Chequer plate fixed and rails in place



The track gang get busy sorting out the point to feed the traverser and workshop.



Work progressing on the point ant two lines.



Work progressing continued...



Work progressing continued...



Work completed, note the traverser now has a coat of oxide paint!



Dr John's new boiler arrives and is trial fitted into the chassis.



Many trees were planted on site (200+).



Work continues to dampproof CS3.



The first consignment of pillars for the raised track extension arrive.

All photo credits in this article: Howard Brewer

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

**This month the tough questions are posed to club
Vice Chairman, Tony McGeechan**

Tell us about your professional background.

Throughout my working life I have been working in the support industries surrounding the car, trian and aerospace industries. Whilst still at school, I trained as a car mechanic during the weekends and holidays. When I left school I started a five year apprenticeship with Smiths Industries working in various factories around the country in between university sessions.

Upon completion, I came to Lodge Plugs in Rugby. Specialising in materials and production management I was heavily involved in the introduction of computers and computer systems.



Tony at Rainsbrook with special guests – can you guess who they are?

This was followed by Pilkington Aerospace, helping to turn it from losing money to it making a healthy regular profit. Unfortunately, we did so well that Pilkington bought a complimentary business in California. The Americans took exception to a British company being in charge of their 'black projects' and so an American CEO was appointed whose agenda was to move our factory to the USA. We decided to make this unattractive by making so much money that transferring the work to a site not making so much money was difficult. This worked for several years, but eventually the Americans got their way.

Some consultancy work followed.

Next I joined Woodway Engineering, as Works Manager. Once again designing and revising their systems, they make and fit warning equipment to vehicles, for the police, fire and ambulance services around the world.

How did you first get into model railway engineering?

Manufacture of front windows for locomotives.

When did you join RMES?

Just after I retired in 2013.

What do you enjoy most about being part of the society

Primarily joined to keep myself active post-retirement. Have since used the position to help give my Grandsons an interest and understanding of engineering. Conor has gone on to have a toolmaker apprenticeship and is a fireman on a larger railway, Kai will be studying engineering at university, we are still working on Rhys!

What RMES activities are you known for?

Vice Chairman. Part of the track gang. I own the Class 37 loco that I commissioned for passenger haulage duties at Rainsbrook and is the standby 5" loco on site.

What has been your favourite locomotive experience?

Giving passengers an enjoyable time.

What is your preferred gauge?

Either, but I am the go too driver for Rufus (7 1/4") as others are too big to get in it.

Do you have any hobbies or clubs outside RMES?

Helping my wife tend her allotment

Tell us about last Heritage Railway that you visited

Statfold Barn.

Last trip was to Llandudno with Vintage Trains, pulled by "The Earl of Mount Edgecombe" Disastrous trip as it rained and the company at the shared table was poor.

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

One consultancy position involved most of an autumn and winter working in Northern Ireland. One morning the plane landed away from the terminal building requiring a walk across the apron. Unlike my fellow passengers I did not rush off the plane and instead took time to put my coat on. I could see my fellow passengers and flight crew about 100 yards ahead entering the terminal building.

I got to the door, and it was locked! I was left stranded airside in one of Britain's most security conscious airports.

Presentation of the British Empire Medal to David Eadon

Alain Foote was delighted to be invited to the presentation to RMES Life Member David Eadon on Monday 29th June.

There was a very special ceremony led by the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire on behalf of His Majesty the King.

David received the British Empire Medal for services to the community in Rugby. Many congratulations David from everyone at RMES on this special achievement!



David with his British Empire Medal



All photo credits in this article: Alain Foote

Notices and Updates

We are now into the second half of the year for our Public Ride days. The dates for the rest of the year can be found on the poster below. Sessions start at 1pm and 2.30pm. We always need volunteers to help on these days, the more people that can lend a hand, the lighter the load for everyone, they are lots of fun too! So please do let Howard know if you can join us at all.

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 4th July – 12:30-2:30pm children's party. Contact Sandra if you can help.

Sunday 5th July - Members running.

Sat 11th Sun 12th July – Narrow gauge weekend.

Wed 15th July – 1:00-3:00pm Children's party. Contact Sandra if you can help.

Sunday 19th July 1:00-4:00pm – Public running. Email rmes.sec@hotmail.co.uk to help.

Saturday 25th July – 2:00-4:00pm Children's party. Contact Sandra if you can help.

That's all for June

Thanks so much for all the contributions this month, it is great to have articles from so many members about different subjects within RMES. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have something to share, it is always lovely to hear from you. Also if you take any pictures at events, please send those over too, you may well have captured something we have missed!

As the holidays are approaching, please can I ask for contributions for next month's newsletter by 15.07.26 to newsletter@rugbymes.co.uk.

Edited by Dawn Culling and Danny Culling
(30.06.2026)

Note: All photos by the author unless otherwise credited.