

Dear Member,

## **Welcome to our May Newsletter**

It's been a wonderfully busy month at RMES, with members out running locos, hosting two lively Public Ride Days, and welcoming a whole string of parties and special events.

Behind the scenes, our volunteers have been just as hard at work. From major progress on the **traverser** and the build of our **new carriages**, to **Mike's impressive new structure** taking shape, there's been no shortage of activity. Add in all the ongoing **site upkeep** that keeps the railway looking its best, and it's clear the team has been pulling out all the stops.

In addition this month, we have started a naming initiative for key locations around the site. Beginning with our stations, it will help us bring the site to life for all of us and our visitors. See **page 3** for how you can provide your suggestions to the committee.

We also have an update from Alain Foote (**P11 – 13**) along with updates from around the site (**p5 – 10**) and our regular contribution from Peter Hill (**p16 - 21**).

Regular features can also be found:

**Chairman's Line** – an update from Rolf on club plans for Gauge 1 (**p2**).

**Whistle Stop** – this month our quick-fire Q&A is with club secretary Howard Brewer (**p23 - 25**).

**Notices** – Please take the time to read through our important notices for this month too (**p26 & 27**).



It has been a lovely month full of action at RMES!

*Photo Credit: Millie Culling*

**Chairman's Line**

*'Third time lucky', so the saying goes! Having been overtaken by other site developments on two previous occasions the new Gauge 1 track has now found a location on our site that everyone is happy with and that other than the growing of grass, has no past, present or future claims as to its use.*

*The project team, which is being led by Bob Whitfield, is currently developing the layout plan and once agreed we can look forward to the construction phase getting under way. The Gauge 1 group within RMES is relatively small but I am sure that the creation of a track will bring out the Gauge 1 in a number of us and will certainly encourage new members to join the Society.*

*The track will be located in the area bordered by the Avenue, the drive leading to the workshop containers and the ground level track.*



*Members of the project team working on the site expansion plans outlined at the EGM last November have been meeting with departmental leaders in Rugby Borough Council to request modifications to our leases and also to develop potential areas of common interest. Our reception has been extremely positive and our profile within RBC is high with many expressions of support. We await their decision on the leases.*

*The Sweet Pea rally is fast approaching (12-15 June). Aubyn is hard at work getting the new raised track steaming bays sufficiently completed to accommodate this large event and there have been plenty of volunteers to help at the concrete pours. I know he will be grateful if members can also support the event itself. Please let him know if you can assist with stewarding.*

**Rolf**

## The RVR Naming Initiative

We want to begin an exciting project at Rainsbrook Valley Railway: giving clear, consistent names to the key areas and stations around our line.

Many members already know these spots well — and some locations even have historic or informal names that deserve to be recognised — so we want this to be a genuinely collaborative effort. By agreeing names together, we can start creating signs, maps, and visitor-friendly information that reflect the character of the railway we all care about.

The first step is our stations and halts. Once the main stations are agreed, there are other elements to discuss – eventually we may even open-up some of the wider naming process to the public for ideas.

For now, the first step is simple: let's work together to refine and confirm the names of our stations. Below you'll find an initial proposal for two changes, followed by a request for suggestions and discussion.

All feedback on the below is welcomed. If there are any historic agreements or names that we've missed, please do flag too! **If you wish to email in your thoughts on the below, then please do at via [rainsbrookvr@outlook.com](mailto:rainsbrookvr@outlook.com) by Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June.** We hope to confirm the below shortly after that date and will use the newsletter to communicate each of the next phases as and when.



**1. Rainsbrook Central Station**

**3. Franklin Halt**

**2. Walton Junction**

**5. Franklin Halt**

**6. Ingram Grove**

### A) Two proposed changes:

1. Proposed move of Franklin Halt to old raised track station as no longer a "Halt"
2. Proposed naming of the Wood Creatures Display Area in memory of Liz Ingram

**1. Rainsbrook Central Station**

**3**

**2. Walton Junction**

**4**

**5. Franklin Halt**

**6. Ingram Grove**

### B) Naming of two stations for discussion:

Suggestions/ideas include...

<b>3</b>	Birchwood Station Rainsbrook Midland Station Rainsbrook High-Level Station Swiftrun Station ...	<b>4</b>	Ashlawn Ridge Station Barby Hill Station Old Station Onley Pass Station Hillmorton Gate Station ...
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**Track update summary**

*Photo credits in this section: Howard Brewer*



*The track gang have made a start on the tandem point for CS3. The sleepers have been cut and the majority of the 50ft radius rails have been bent. Howard says "now we have to fit it all together!"*

**Ballast washing update**

*Geoff Broad and his gang have made progress with the Ballast Washing Facility – in the two pictures below you can see the walls are built and ready for concrete.*

*Photo credits in this section: Howard Brewer*



*These three photos show that with the latest delivery of concrete Geoff managed to use the excess to fill the top hard standing area where the dirty ballast will be offloaded ready for washing.*

**High track traverser update in more detail**

Aubyn and the team have been working furiously on the raised track traverser during May. There has been another large concrete pour, and now the metalwork is being constructed – ultimately taking us from our current 9 smaller bays to 12 double-sized bays – plus dedicated unloading area! Great work!

*All photos in this section credited to Howard Brewer, Martin Rose and Ben Culling*





**Engineering Update**

*Photo Credits on this page: Kathryn Derby and Ed Parrott*

May has seen the team working hard on the Shay



*The pipework being reconnected on the Shay*



*The cab being refitted at the start of May*



*Prepping for the first firing.*



*Logan tightening things up!*



*Logan hard at work!*

Photo Credits on this page: Howard Brewer



*The club's re-built Shay was under test with Phil Hanckock and Martin Rose, getting ready for the first May public running.*



*On the first May Public Running we were treated to both Shay's in attendance!*

## **New driving tender for "Hampton"**

*All photos in this section credited to Alain Foote*

Alain Foote has been busy completing his new driving tender for "Hampton". These are a few notes that Alain has made along the way describing its construction journey.

Alain says:

Back in the late 1980s I made a scale slate truck to use for driving my newly completed Kerr Stuart Wren "Rosemary", (now owned by Chris Birkett who lives in New Zealand) see Fig. 1.



**Fig 1.**

*When "Hampton" was finished in 2012 we continued to use the slate truck, see fig. 2*



**Fig 2.**

I then built "Fiji" which was completed in 2022 but sold last year, see fig. 3



**Fig 3.**

As can be seen in the photo this had a tender, which made for much more comfortable driving. We therefore decided to make a sit in driving truck for "Hampton".

The frames were made from 12mm steel plate in a similar way to the club coach bogies and fitted with take up bearings etc. Room was made at the rear for a water tank which has not been fitted at the moment as we are using that space for storing oil cans etc. There is also storage under the seat for tools etc. Fig. 4 shows the new driving truck which is also fitted with a handbrake and speedo.



**Fig 4.**

Fig. 5 shows the completed driving truck in use at the Children's Birthday Party on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. The lining and lettering was done by Matt Acton of Berry Hill Works.

**Fig 5.**

And Alain already has his next project lined up! He says

"I thought members might be interested to read that I have agreed to buy RMES member Ray Jones's part complete 7 1/4" gauge 1/3rd scale model of one of the unique designs of Guinness Brewery Tramway locos. The full size loco pictured is in the museum at Tywyn."



## New pipework for the station

The station pipework has had an upgrade this month! As can be seen in the photos below, Phil Hart who has been busy repairing the worn-out pipework and increasing the pipe lengths for MK and the class 15 so they can fit in the platform and be able to take on water, thanks Phil!

*Photo credits in this section: Phil Hart*



**May Public Ride Days**

The public have been having a great time on sunny days at Rainsbrook during May, at our two public ride days. Everyone had a "Jurassic" time on our dinosaur day!

*Photo credits in this section: Millie Culling and Mike Morgan*



*The café team are loving their new, smart aprons too!*

**Scribblings for May 2026**

*By Peter Hill (including all photo credits)*

This month's sunny days tempted me outside and get on with the 7.25" four inch scale quarry train. This project was triggered when Chris and I spent a week in North Wales at the Welsh Highland Heritage railway centre just outside Porthmadog.

Here we trundled round their " Woodlands" 7.25" railway giving public rides using our " Margwen " O-4-0 Hunslet Alice class saddle tank and " Florence" 0-4-0 Hudson-Hunslet quarry diesel locomotives.

During quieter periods we assembled a variety of their trucks and spent some very satisfying time shunting round the triangular track.



When we returned home we set out to create a similar train of trucks that could be pulled round Rainsbrook by anyone with a suitable locomotive.

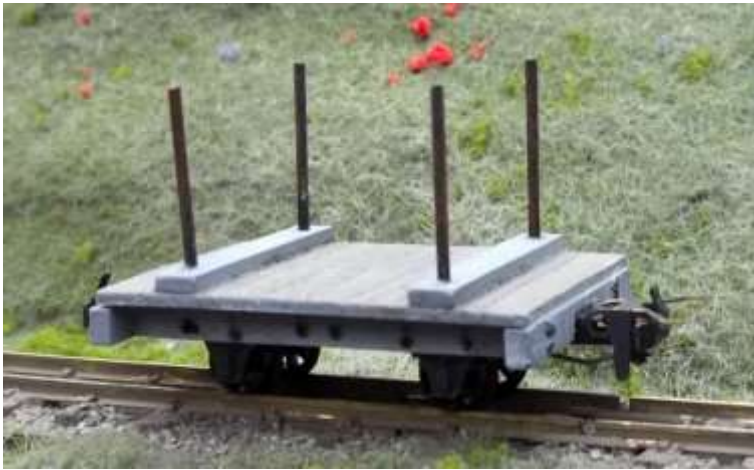
The scale roughly equates to 4" to the foot with a quarry gauge of 1ft10 in's, running on 7.25" track.

Model engineering Laser had a design of a Penrhyn Quarries finished slate truck that we had redimensioned to 4" scale. Three of these were quickly riveted up and fitted with

pillow block and resin moulded axle boxes, CNC wheels and axles. The couplings are also scale quarry types of hook and ring.

A variation was penned, a bolster wagon for transporting single slate slabs from the quarry face to the splitting sheds. We made a loco coal truck while were at it.





Loads of wheels, all pressed on to their axles approx 0.002" interference fit, after axles



spent a morning in the freezer they just slid on with a smear of Loctite.

The next in the construction series will be a couple of end tipping quarry slate waste trucks. Designs are at MEL for laser cutting.

And then complete the brake van Chris started. Only Wheels axles suspension and chassis steel and a sketch at the moment.

This is proving urgent, as use so far, the running round Rainsbrook has shown that loose coupled trucks provide serious whiplash for anyone having a ride. The brake is needed to take up the coupling slack as you steam off.

The Welsh Highland brake van is also fitted with a solid fuel stove, great for a breakfast and substantial mass for brake action. Also, for the truck staying upright as you squeeze in and clamber out.

Once lit it is also quite cozy for an afternoon nap.



Outing at Rainsbrook with John Thomas to service and test the ground level signals this last public running weekend



## Parties

*Photo credits: Gill Nelson and Millie Culling*

We are delighted to have hosted a number of parties and events this year, with a number in May. There were birthday celebrations, whilst a local nursery visited us on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> for a morning of fun with 75 children and 50 adults!

The children (and adults!) had a thoroughly enjoyable time riding our trains and celebrating.



*A beautiful day for a party, thanks to Sandra and the volunteer team who made it possible.*

We received these lovely comments:

*Rainsbrook Valley Railway "...was booked for a party of 6 years olds, we had exclusive use of the whole site from 1pm, to 3pm, and we catered ourselves, using the excellent club house facilities. The staff were wonderful, giving train rides all the time and couldn't have been more helpful. It's very child safe, secure and set in beautifully wooded parkland."*

If you know of anyone who would like to book a party please get in touch with Sandra or complete the booking enquiry on the RVR website.

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

**This month the tough questions are posed to club secretary, Howard Brewer.**

### **Tell us about your professional background.**

*I started life in the railway industry as a technical apprentice, then having qualified in electrical and control engineering moved into private industry. There I started designing studio audio equipment for people like the BBC and ITN. The company was eventually taken over by Plessey where I ended up as a design engineer working mainly on government contracts for the Royal Navy and RAF.*

*When Plessey was taken over and split up in the late 80's I decided it was time for a change. So I was successful in obtaining a position with BSI Quality Assurance at their Milton Keynes site. At that time, they were heavily into BS 5750 (which later became ISO 9000) so qualified as an assessor but worked on their electronic component schemes. This linked with IEC in Geneva who I visited; later becoming involved in their electronic components schemes for avionics which took me to Europe, India and many places in the USA as well as in this country. A brief diversion saw me also running their Notified Body scheme for gas appliances and testing for about two years. I was helped in this by a testing laboratory in Loughborough that BSI eventually acquired.*

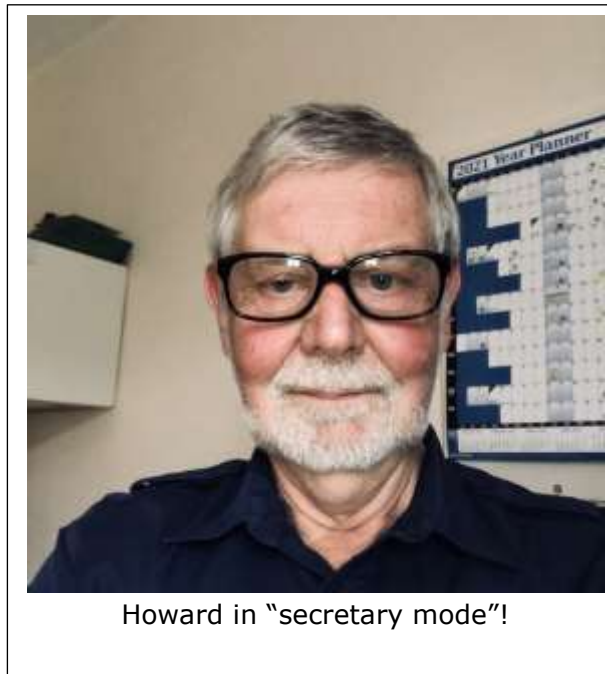
*I retired in 2016 from the British Standards Institution (BSI) at the age of 70 having worked beyond my normal retirement date part time for 5 years at their request.*

### **How did you first get into model railway engineering?**

*Both my parents worked for the railways, so I followed in the family tradition. Once in private industry I lost interest in railways to a degree, but this was re-kindled later in my time at Plessey by a colleague and friend who was a fireman on the Severn Valley Railway. We visited there in the 70's as a family and became members. But family commitments and distance prevented me from being an active member though we tried to visit a few times every year.*

### **When did you join RMES?**

*I joined in 2010 with the idea of having a local railway interest when I retired. In the event I did not retire in 2011 as planned but I made sure my working days did not include a Wednesday! I volunteered to take over as secretary in 2011 when the incumbent suddenly resigned.*



Howard in "secretary mode"!

**What do you enjoy most about being part of the society**

*I enjoy the social side of the society, working together with like-minded people, many of which are very talented. Also, the fact that the society is progressive, one of the reasons for joining was the fact that they were about to expand, and I felt I could get involved with this. chance to give something back for free and a chance to meet up with people who have similar interests.*

**What RMES activities are you known for?**

*Apart from being secretary, I am very much involved with the Track Gang. In fact, I did project lead the laying of the ground level extension from 2013 onward, assisted by a great gang of helpers! I think I can safely say I was involved in laying every metre of the new extension!*

**What has been your favourite locomotive experience?**

*Running my locomotive 'Romburg' since 2015. Although it was built by another, very talented member, I enjoy the experience of owning, driving and firing a steam locomotive.*

**What is your preferred gauge?**

*Currently 7¼" but as I get older, I may need to look for something smaller!*

**Do you have any hobbies or clubs outside RMES?**

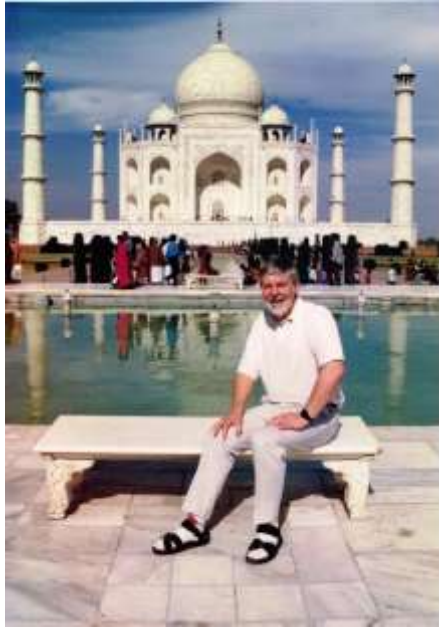
*Yes, several and I'm still involved with a local amateur dramatic group. Though these days I tend to do set design rather than treading the boards. I first joined them in 1982 and appeared in many of their productions sometimes in the lead role. Otherwise, it's mainly gardening and DIY!*

**Tell us about last Heritage Railway that you visited**

*I think that was the Talylyn last year, but we often visit the SVR and Great Central on our days out.*

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

*I designed and built the house we live in*



Howard on a visit to India for the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) in November 1999



“Some of the great gang of helpers as we completed the first part of the ground track extension in 2015!”

*Photo credits in this article: Howard Brewer*

## Notices and Updates

### Help needed to support our online activities

Please don't forget to share the QR codes below to get friends and family to review us.



### Public Ride Day Tickets

Tell your family and friends, tickets are available for the Public Ride days in June and July.

Sessions can be booked quickly and easily by following the QR code below, which will take you straight to our ticket page.



## **Dates for your diary**

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June – Members running and club BBQ from 12.30, please book via Club secretary

Fri 12<sup>th</sup> – Mon 15<sup>th</sup> June – Sweet Pea Rally (overnight camping available), please let Aubyn know if you can help out.

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June – Father's Day Public Ride Day (pm) sessions at 1pm and 2.30pm

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June – 2 ½" Association Rally

### **That's all for May**

It's great to be able to share everyone's stories and anecdotes, so if you have something to share from a holiday, visit or from your own projects please get in touch. We are very happy to help with writing up to a final article. Please send contributions over by 20.06.26 to [newsletter@rugbymes.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@rugbymes.co.uk).

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to create this month's newsletter, we hope you enjoy the read!

Edited by Dawn Culling  
(31.05.2026)

Note: All photos by the author unless otherwise credited.