

Dear Member,

Welcome to our September Newsletter

September has been a productive month at RMES, and a sincere thank-you goes to everyone who has contributed their time and effort. With temperatures settling back to something more familiar there has been lots of activity across the site and it has been a real pleasure to see so many members working and catching up.

This month's newsletter brings together updates from around the site **(p3-5)**, engineering **(p6 - 8)** a well-attended 2½-inch gauge event **(p9)**, a successful Public Ride afternoon **(p10)**, and a very enjoyable special accessible event **(p11)**.

We're also pleased to feature the new high track shelter build **(p12 - 13)** and contributions from members across the society including Alain Foote **(p25-26)** and Peter Hill **(14-20)**.

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 Sue Morgan **(p21 - 24)**.

Notices – Please take the time to read through our important notices for this month too **(p27)**.



It was great to have a double header guest train for the Public Ride day this month.

Photo Credit: Millie Culling

Chairman's Line

Photo credits in this section: Rolf Thomas



Whilst not claiming to be George Peppard (who?) I think I am entitled to quote him. This month has seen the practical completion of two large projects that have been in progress for much of the season. The first is the ballast wash plant that is now ready for testing. If you have been out on the ground level track recently you will have noticed the washed ballast delivery chute in the cutting. The rest of the plant situated above the chute and is now ready for a trial run, albeit with a temporary water supply. Once we are happy that the stone is going to go where we want it to go a more permanent water feed will be added, together with the necessary removeable chute extension to facilitate direct loading of train mounted barrows.



The second project is the tandem point outside the new carriage storage container. I was personally very relieved to see that our 300 series carriages comfortably negotiate the point and the following curves leading into the container.

The 'big shunt' to move all carriages and wagons out of what will become LS1 (formerly CS2) will happen very soon now!

Rolf

Track update

The track gang's main achievement this month is the completion of the Tandem LH point to serve CS3. Mostly down to both Rolf and Don for their continued dedicated work on the mechanics of the point!

Photo credits in this section: Howard Brewer



Point completed and tested with the spare '300' Bogie



Level pegs checked and the slope re-graded



Levelling the bed - Tony making a start using our tried and tested method



Bed levelled - thanks to Tony, Don and Rhys



Point lifted out - weight shared between eight of us!



Checking the level and removing the lifting bars



Point maneuverer into alignment



Rolf and Kai working on the bridging rails to the container

Photo credits in this section: Kathryn Derby



Peter and John have started on the long-term project of replacing the central track wire around the track with new copper cable. They will be working around the track in sections and have started with the section near the workshops.



Engineering Update

Photo Credits on this page: Kathryn Derby and John Wildblood

September has been busy with a few specific projects on the go including; Martin Rose working on building his coffee pot loco, ongoing work on the Royal Scot and progress on the garden rail.



John and John working on the boiler lagging to the Royal Scot



The Royal Scot on a rolling road. Fitted with an air compressor to check valve timing is in the right place, amongst other things.



The Royal Scot has been having work done to update parts, 2 new lubricators have been fitted along with new pipework and superheaters in the smokebox.

Martin has been busy progressing with the building of his Star Wars inspired gas fired coffee pot loco "Forest Moon of Endor Lumber Co".



Martin starting to work on the pitched roof for his loco. This section of metal will be cut to be the roof and the corner section of the ridge.



This month the team also started working on putting together the driver's truck.

Work is progressing on the garden rail, there is much preparation to do!



Painting the posts that are the supports for the garden rail



Skye hard at work ensuring everything stays tidy.

2 ½" gauge weekend

The 2 ½" gauge weekend was well attended and enjoyed by all who visited, thanks so much to everyone who came along.

Photo credits in this article Martin Rose.



September Public Ride Day

We were blessed with a lovely day for the September end of summer public ride. It was lovely to see so many families and groups of friends meeting up and having a fun afternoon out with us. We were delighted to receive more 5* reviews as a result too, so huge thanks to everyone who gave up their day to help 😊

Photo credits in this section: Howard Brewer, Millie & Ben Culling



The special guest double header



Special accessible event

On Sunday 27th September, RMES was delighted to once again host a fully accessible and gentle family railway session for 140 visitors. Designed for those who may find a busy Public Running Day a little overwhelming, the event was organised by Gill Nelson and generously supported by Rugby Rokeby Lions Club.

The session was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended, providing a relaxed and welcoming experience for all. The Lions have received very positive feedback from families who said that it was good to be able to relax and chat to other parents knowing that the children were safe. Our sincere thanks go to Gill, the Rugby Rokeby Lions Club, and all the volunteers whose hard work and dedication made the event possible.



Ensuring everything was safely secured



Everyone having a fun time.



A huge thanks go to the fabulous volunteer team who made the event possible.

New high track shelter

Many of you will have noticed the new shelter which has taken shape over the summer next to the high track entrance. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Mike Morgan and Tony Shoobridge, the project has now been completed, despite some challenging warm weather.

Mike has paid particular attention to the details, including recreating period-style advertisements for local businesses to help give the structure an authentic feel. The adverts used are:

Mazda Lamps – sited where the Rugby College now is located.

BTH Works – Similar location and GEC covering what still remains of the site.

Mason Master – By Braunston Locks (later taken over by Rawl Plugs).

Nelsons Portland Cement – Stockton on way to Southam, where Rugby Cement took over in 1945 – 1949.

The Rugby Motor Garage (George Hilton & Co) North St where one end of Great Central shopping area is (Directly on the site where Argos was) 1903 – 1950s.

The shelter has already proved popular during public ride afternoons, providing a useful covered space and a great backdrop for photographs.

Mike commented "design elements were taken from local signal boxes, specifically at "Quorn and Woodhouse" on the great central which would have been 6 or 7 stops further up the line that "Rugby Central" was on (The disused line running past Rainsbrook). Rolf and the committee were quite keen on the shelter reflecting local heritage, so wanted some throwback to the signal boxes that were along that line."



"Specifically, we focused on the characteristic 3 half circles on each fascia board and the finials seen here."



Tony and Ben working in the hot sun to complete the initial structure.



Taking shape



Showing the completed shelter with the 3 half circles on each fascia board and the finials.



Finials as replicated from the Quorn and Woodhouse signal box.



Showing the BTH and Mazda Adverts.

Scribblings for September 2026

By Peter Hill (including all photo credits)

Trux

This month the all-steel 4" scale Quarry waste tipper truck got completed. The laser cut-and-press bent parts from MEL all came together. Some mods were made to the hopper support to get the best action and to fit the chassis. Nothing a grinder and welder could not fix. The rivet holes all aligned, and the 4mm pop rivets pressed in and, using the pneumatic rivet gun, all pulled up firmly. I did spray etch primer along the joints first. When all assembled, I treated it to the rest of the primer, a layer of undercoat and a double sprayed satin grey enamel topcoat. I find enamel paint is very tough and weatherproof

The running gear in ditto black. Pleased it looks very much like the prototypes





...
Full size truck at Dinorwic quarry

I also started another tipping truck but having studied photos and drawings of slate quarry workshop products, I decided on an inside oak timber chassis and also some cast spoke wheels, that I found on eBay. I also found a pressed steel wheelbarrow body. I have arranged it to tip forward as well. I also used the laser cut couplings with an eye bolt and omega shackle so to couple with the other trucks.

It's not finished yet as the exact height and tipping geometry did not finalise.





This month I did finish the plain Three plank truck (well 2 ½), nothing fancy just a truck! I used 2mm box steel tube and some 6mm plate for the chassis all MIG welded up. The planks and floor were recycled pallet boards. Although rough sawn, the timber is well seasoned and with the power sander a pleasing "authentic" finish can be achieved. I used 6mm roofing bolts to assemble the timber to the folded sheet steel corner angles.

The chassis is spray painted enamel primer/undercoat/satin but timber left to weather to a silver grey. The couplings are 3 slot laser cut "kits" welded up at their rear and dressed off smooth. They are 8mm bolted to the buffer beams. I got Model Engineer Laser to cut me some spare Penrhyn pattern slate truck hook and ring couplings which I modified into conversion couplings, to fit when needed.

I purchased a set of four nicely made CNC. NG sprung bearing units from Cambrian Railway Engineering at Llanymynech in mid Wales. These are complete with hidden sprung axleboxes and although the bearings seem quite small, they are rated at 70kg. They simply cap head bolt on the box steel chassis. At least I can just lift this one into the car.



I also started to get together the stuff that Chris had got to build the Brake Van.

This was to be modelled on the one at The Welsh Highland Porthmadog Woodland Railway.



So far, the steel for the chassis and wood for the bodywork.



Fixing Stuff

This month brought some repairs. In order to weld up these trucks I had to take the MIG welder apart. Since extricating it from our container some 3 years after moving, it failed to work on higher settings.



Taking the inner panel off and having a rummage in the wiring (unplugged of course), I noticed a smutty terminal on the power selector switch.

I had a fiddle and the wire came off in my fingers. The crimped Push on Lucar connector had got hot, melted the plastic cover and burnt the conductor wire inside the insulation sleeve. I guess not properly crimped when made. I cleaned up the wire and soldered on a new brass push on receptacle. I checked the others, lubed the switch and turning the mains on tested the welder. Perfect on all power settings. To think it's been sitting here for 6 years largely unused, all for the want of a new push on tab

The second job was preventing the new robot mower crashing into the cast iron rainwater tank manhole cover. The tank is some 6000 litres in the middle of the lawn. The ground around it has sunk some 75mm since backfilling 8 years ago.

Dropping the cover meant cutting off 75mm from the tube access/top of tank.

I hand dug on my knees (off to Screwfix for some decent pads!) around down to the tank inlet collar, disconnected the pump water pipe, then manhandled the cables (thankfully lots of slack) so the collar could be levered up and off, laid on the lawn and 75mm cut off with a grinder. I did not want to lean down and cut off in-situ. It's 3m deep! The cover ring was Put back level on compacted aggregate then filled flush with the soil/turf. The bottom of the adjacent 5" track support beam was the original lawn level.

Job done the mower rides over smoothly. Mowers eye view included



Rainsbrook Track Damage – A request for steam loco drivers!

As a member of the RVR track infrastructure team can we ask steam loco drivers to be more aware of damage being done by allowing ash to fall on the track, or even worse dumping a grate. Dowsing the hot embers might end the melting of plastic wire insulation, ducting, rail chairs and sleepers, but the resulting acidic ash porridge dissolves the galvanising on wires and screws, and of course the cement in concrete. Thank you for your support.

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

This month the tough questions are posed to Sue Morgan

Tell us about your professional background.

I have been a Diagnostic Radiographer since leaving school. I graduated from Liverpool University and worked at Arrowe Park Hospital on the Wirral for several years before moving to Coventry for a promotion. My intention to only stay in the Midlands for a few years before moving back home changed once I met Mike (my husband, now on RMES committee, who you will know for his painting and woodwork!).

After working at the old Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital in Coventry city centre, I



joined what was then the University of Central England (now Birmingham City University) to become a lecturer in Diagnostic Radiography. This year marks my silver anniversary at the university.

During my time there, I have undertaken a variety of roles including developing the first ever foundation degree in radiography and overseeing clinical placements for more than 450 students. Amongst other things, I have taught clinical skills, image interpretation, anatomy and physiology, physics, radiation protection and advancing technology, I am currently the university's Radiation Protection Supervisor and teach physics and radiation protection to our undergraduate students.

When family commitments have allowed, I have continued to work in the NHS. Most recently I returned to practice at University Hospital Coventry in April 2020, working through the Covid pandemic, continuing until 2025.

My first-year students mostly know me as "the teacher with the train" after an ice-breaking session about hobbies. A desk sign that I received as a Secret Santa gift last year makes sure that everyone who visits my office knows about my hobby too!



My sons, Adam and Ben, both like to remind me of the adage "If you can't do, teach, and if you can't teach, then lecture" ... I do try to prove them wrong though!

How did you first get into model railway engineering?

My interest in model engineering is very new and is purely because of Adam and Ben's interest/obsession. We were regular visitors to Rainsbrook when the boys were little, and then had an 00 gauge layout in a shed. This shed is now a workshop, with 00 gauge definitely replaced as a hobby by far bigger engines!

When did you join RMES?

I joined with Adam and Ben in July 2021, while Covid restrictions and social distancing were still affecting everyday life. Break times were taken outside and public running had only just restarted with numbers still very limited.

Both boys were old enough to join, but they needed an adult member to accompany them. As Mike was especially busy with work at the time, that role fell to me. Mike didn't become a member himself until a year or so later.

What do you enjoy most about being part of the society

It was never on my radar that I would end up with this as a hobby, but I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the society since I joined. I have done things I never thought I would and have got muddier than I have been since camping with the Guides as a teenager! I think I have given most things a go, and I am proud to say that I was the first member of our family to drive a loco – a fact strongly disputed by Adam. Howard "kindly" let me drive *Rufus* back from a track-laying session!

However, the things I enjoy most are the people and the location. Everyone has been friendly and welcoming to this non-engineer who initially didn't know one end of a loco from the other (or even when to call it a loco rather than a train!) and who still has plenty to learn.

As for the location, we are incredibly lucky to have access to such a wonderful site, with its peace, spectacular views, and abundance of wildlife. I am fortunate enough to live within walking distance and, even now, I am still in awe of the view across the valley.

What RMES activities are you known for?

These days, it is most definitely painting fences! Somehow, I seem to spend a large proportion of my time at RMES with brush in hand creosoting the many miles of fencing around the site.

This year, I have worked with Mike to get a much needed defib installed on site and have undertaken some CPR training for members.

In what is unquestionably a busman's holiday, I am also a guard trainer and assessor. Apparently, five days a week of teaching and assessing isn't enough, so I spend some weekends doing it as well!

What has been your favourite locomotive experience?

After owing a 5" battery loco for a few years, we recently purchased our first steam locomotive – a 5" Sweet Pea called Victoria. Having only attempted to drive steam locos twice before, with very mixed results, Adam is bravely teaching me how to drive Victoria. With his help, I successfully fired her and completed six laps of the raised track without major incident! There's still plenty to learn, but I am really enjoying the challenge and hope that one day I'll be confident enough to take her round the track on my own.

**What is your preferred gauge?**

Our engines are 5", but I prefer guarding on the 7¼" – it is far easier on my hips!

Do you have any hobbies or clubs outside RMES?

Though I bake and crochet, going to the theatre is my main hobby. Last year I managed to see a record 40 shows.

Tell us about last Heritage Railway that you visited

This year has been a bit quiet on the railway visit front. We went to NSMEE to collect Victoria and were lucky enough to see Tornado sitting in the sidings of the Great Central Railway (Nottingham). The last railway we rode on was Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch for their steam gala in September.

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

When I was in sixth form, I was awarded a scholarship to learn to fly. It came with all sorts of opportunities, so as well as completing 30 hours in a Piper Tomahawk, I also flew gliders, biplanes (including several loop-the-loops), a vintage Dakota and a Westland Wessex helicopter from RAF Valley.

My day at RAF Valley culminated in being dropped into the middle of the Irish Sea (in November – brrrrr!) before being winched back to safety by the RAF search and rescue team.

Sadly, my flying career was brought to an abrupt halt by an enemy I could never defeat: airsickness. As a result, I never quite made it to my first solo flight!



Restoring a Piece of French History: The Old Well at My Brother's Holiday Home by Alain Foote

There's a certain charm to old rural properties in Central France — the kind that comes not just from the landscape, but from the stories held quietly in their stones, timbers, and forgotten corners. My brother's holiday home is one of those places. Tucked away on its land is an old well, a sturdy relic that has served generations before us. For years it stood weathered but proud, its roof sagging and its pump stiff with rust, waiting for someone to give it a little care.

Earlier this year, that someone turned out to be me.

A Request and a Plan

During a visit, my sister-in-law asked whether I might be able to restore the well. The idea immediately appealed — not just as a practical task, but as a chance to preserve a small piece of the property's character. The well had always been a talking point, and it deserved better than slowly crumbling away.

So when I returned in June, I arrived with tools, determination, and a plan.



The original well photographed approx. 10 years ago

Dismantling the Old Structure

The first step was to dismantle the existing roof and remove the pump assembly. It was a careful job: the wood was fragile, the metalwork stubborn, and the whole structure had to be taken apart without damaging the stonework beneath. Piece by piece, the roof came down, followed by the pump, the handle, and the supporting frame.

Everything that could be salvaged was packed up and brought back home with me. The photos from that day show the well stripped back to its bare bones — a reminder of how much work lay ahead, but also of the potential waiting to be uncovered.



The well during dismantling during June this year

The Restoration Work

Back home, the real transformation began. The pump was cleaned, repaired, and repainted, its handle restored so it could move freely again. The roof, once warped and tired, was rebuilt, shaped to match the original style but strong enough to last for many years to come.

The refurbishment became a satisfying project: part carpentry, part metalwork, part detective work as I figured out how best to honour the original design while giving the structure a fresh lease of life.



The new well roof top



The new roof ready for installation



Repaired handle



Well pump and suction pipe

Ready for Its Return

The final photos show the results — the pump renewed, the handle repaired, and the new roof standing proudly, ready to be reinstalled on the well. What was once a fading feature of the garden is now prepared to become a focal point again, restored with care and family effort.



I have been in France completing the project on this last weekend in September. Here is the most recent photo with new well installed, completed and working with Clive tightening the final nut.

Notices and Updates

We're heading into the final stretch of our 2026 season, with just **two Public Ride events left**. If you've never volunteered at one of our public events before, this is the perfect chance to come along, join the team, and give it a try. The afternoons are always full of smiles, chatter, and plenty of wheel-powered fun — it's a lovely way to get involved before we wrap up for the year.

We're also getting excited for our **special Halloween event**, where the railway will transform into a spooky little adventure. Join us for a ghostly ride session between **4–6 pm**, complete with seasonal atmosphere and plenty of family-friendly fun.

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

Dates for your diary

Sunday 4th October - Members running.

Sunday 11th October 1:00-4:00pm – Public running. Email rmes.sec@hotmail.co.uk to help.

Thursday 15th – Sunday 18th October – Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition at the Fosse Way Centre.

Saturday 31st October 4:00-6:00pm – Public running. Email rmes.sec@hotmail.co.uk to help.

That's all for September

Thanks so much for the contributions this month, please can I ask for contributions for Octobers newsletter by 15.10.26 to newsletter@rugbymes.co.uk.

Edited by Dawn Culling and Danny Culling
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Note: All photos by the author unless otherwise credited.