

ESSMEE Newsletter

December 2021



Chairman's Chatter

Dear Members,

Where has the time gone? At various moments in the present, I've certainly felt time to be dragging, only to be exchanged for a sudden flurry of the weeks until we now find ourselves approaching Christmas; perhaps an indicator of the uncertain times we're all still experiencing, sadly, or perhaps inevitable when our organised Editor reminds me I need to provide copy again!

For what has been our twentieth anniversary year as a society (13th March, to be exact!), it's perhaps not been as exciting or as prosperous as hoped – I know of other societies with significant anniversaries in a similar position to us – yet it's better to look back on what we all still managed to achieve together, in spite of everything. The last few months have been no exception: two excellent afternoon talks from Bernard North and Simon Bowditch, projects, maintenance progress and site tidying at several working days, a more successful 'Santa Specials' season, and even fitting in a Christmas lunch in a restaurant all to ourselves!

The 2022 Showground programme is already being studied, with enquiries being made on what the new events entail, whilst beavering away on our own society calendar – more on that in our next issue. However, as you wait with anticipation for next year's calendar - and while you've got a spare, few minutes of peace over the festive season - why not consider being a part of it?

Would you be willing to provide a talk to your fellow members at our clubhouse, or know someone who is? There's plenty of scope from the different areas of engineering and resulting interests we cover, or your life experiences, projects or wider interests, that all come back to one of our key aims: to share members' skills, knowledge and experiences within the society. How you prefer to present, the duration, etc. are all within your gift, and support can always be provided to make the most of the installed projection equipment – all interest, even initial thoughts for developing further, to me at: chair@essmee.org.uk – thank you!

With best wishes for a peaceful and restful Christmas, and a happy and healthier New Year,

Tom Yardley

Boxing Day Steam-up Invitation

Joan and Richard Ashdown plan to host the Boxing Day steam-up on the 5-inch track at The...

All are welcome, with or without... each of soup and rolls will be available.



"Tell me again about how I can shop online and have gifts delivered without leaving my office."

Postponed



Your committee this year:

Chair	Tom Yardley	Treasurer	Simon Neath
Secretary	Chris Kelly	Membership Sec.	Stuart Bond

Committee members: Brian Wilson, Alan Bridger, David Hale and George White

Please feel free to discuss ideas and projects with any of our committee.



Christmas Dinner 2021

Thanks to Robin Duijs for organising a jolly dinner at Thatcher's Restaurant on the showground.



Notice of Meeting for an Extraordinary General Meeting, to take place at the Lecture Theatre (adjacent to the Thatcher's Bar and Restaurant) at the Showground on 8th January 2021 at 1:30pm. Information on the agenda and proxy voting forms have been circulated.

What's the best Christmas present? A broken drum – you just can't beat it.

Royal Bath & West Update October 2021

ESSMEE Lease

During the Dairy Show Dave Sedgman made an approach to RB&W on behalf of ESSMEE to enquire about the feasibility of lease renewal when our current one expires. David has now reported back and has advised that we should approach the RB&W chairman Mr. Robbie Drewett via email to request such an extension. Your committee discussed this subject in some detail, and decided to wait for 2 years before making an approach. It was felt that we needed to see how the 3 day main show and other events impacted our income before deciding how to approach RB&W.

Our current lease expires on 20th November 2029, and now has 8 years run, but if the lease is not renewed, it would present considerable challenges for our club, not least of which would be finding an alternative site with the potential for significant numbers of passenger numbers. Additionally, there would be the logistic issues related to such a move, as well as a large unknown costs. In recognition of this issue, a previous committee set up a contingency fund specifically to help cover the cost of any move. With the remaining uncertainty of tenure, it is difficult to make long term plans for the club and how to improve what we have. With this in mind your committee has decided not to approve any new infrastructure projects until after our tenure at Bath & West is clear.

We had previously been offered a lease extension by the then CEO Rupert Cox of 10 years, based upon a commercial contract that amongst other concerns reduced our security of tenure. This offer was noted but not accepted. It was unclear at the time if the trustees of RB&W had been made aware of the discussions we had with Rupert.

Site water management and lake maintenance.

Separately, a meeting was held between Matt Johnson and 5 committee members. Matt is now in charge of all works at the show ground and reports to the trustees. This meeting was held on Wednesday 20th October 2021 at the lake side. The meeting was called by Matt to explain to the club the work that is taking place at the lake and his plans for its future maintenance. His wider plan involves improving the site drainage, and to use the lake to even out excess flows of water on site and to lower reaches of the stream.

Progress to date has involved cutting back the reeds on the East side of the lake, dredging a relief channel and using a high-pressure pump to disturb accumulated silt and allow it to be washed away downstream. They have also hired a mini digger to support the work of contractors brought in for the task. The detail intentions are as follows:

1. remove as much silt as possible and to spread on grass in the green and blue areas (of the show ground) as a fertiliser
2. encourage a much larger amount of silt to be carried away from the lake using the high-pressure pump
3. cut down and kill off reeds on the west side of the lake in order that it can be viewed from that side
4. undertake clean-up work in the copse to the south of the lake including cutting back many trees
5. remove a willow tree and tidy up the island towards the north shore of the lake
6. Construct reinforced concrete pads each side of the railway line adjacent to the existing landing stage to provide easy future access to the lake for maintenance. They will also install a gate to control access and re-instate fencing.
7. Complete work on recently constructed ramp alongside the existing landing stage to provide launching point for small boat to give access to the island at north side of the lake.
8. Repair the landing stage

Matt also reported that due to objections, one of the 2 streams flowing through the site will not now be diverted alongside the road to join the stream lower down.

The overall aim is to return the lake to its former glory of 20 years ago (they have photographs as a guide) and to ensure that it can be easily maintained in the future. Additionally, with work already having deepened one point in the lake to about 15 feet, the drive will be to return the lake to a feature and asset that can be used for different activities including canoeing and fishing. Brian Wilson

Guards and Whistles

Many members who are passed out as guards have their own whistles. Your committee regards this as a splendid idea which should be adopted by all guards. Hygiene in these strange times is the primary reason. A number of the club whistles have gone missing over the last few years so if you have one of these at home, please regard it as your own and mark it accordingly. If you are rostered to guard and come without your whistle the Club will happily sell you one for a fiver! Acme Thunderer type whistles are readily available on eBay more cheaply. Grab a bargain. Alan Bridger.



An exciting opportunity...

We are looking for a person to become editor of our newsletter. It's an interesting occupation, collating the articles sent in by members perhaps five or six times a year – so not too onerous. If you feel you would like to volunteer for this important role (no remuneration though) please come forward and talk to any of the committee members or meet Janice White, who will be happy to show how she has approached it over the years. Don't be shy – give it a try.



Santa Special Trains, December 11th and 18th.

What a splendid effort by so many members to make these two public running days such a success.

The organising group consisted of Chris Kelly, Hugh Cullimore, Robin Duijs, Brian Wilson, Tom Yardley and Janice White. This was the first time online booking was introduced on the website, using PayPal.



Some lovely comments have been received:

I just wanted to email to say thank you for today. My children have never met Father Christmas, partly because of lockdown last year and partly because my eldest can find unknown situations quite hard and scary. Meeting him whilst on the train, in a place they are familiar with was absolutely perfect and both my boys thoroughly enjoyed themselves. When we got home, they asked if they could open their presents and we let them. My youngest loves cuddly toys and dinosaurs, so was

delighted and my eldest has wanted a watch for a long time... he was so wide eyed when he opened it, he couldn't believe it! Please pass on my thanks to everyone involved for creating such a special experience. It will stay with my boys for a long time.

What an absolutely lovely experience we had yesterday on the Santa Special Train. From start to finish the folks guiding us through the experience were delightful -helpful, humorous and always with a smile on their faces. Our 20-month-old granddaughter loved it - and Santa and his helpers were the icing on the cake. We ended with a delightful 20 minutes having a hot drink and great chat with more folks in the 'cafe' area -brilliant. Thank you to all concerned -we will definitely be back next year - and Layla loves her cuddly elephant gift!



Thanks to our Santas Robin Duijs and Malcolm Mogford and to the elves, Joe Widdall and Ethan

Osmond, not to mention chief photographer, John Widdall who all managed to keep warm down at the tunnel! Well done to Lin Wilson and Janice White for the refreshments and to Brian Wilson for providing hot dogs to finish 2022 off with a flourish!



Advice to Members relating to the testing of boilers.

1. Members of the Society are reminded that like themselves, boiler inspectors give their time voluntarily. Expecting inspectors to carry out tests to suit their own particular situation may not always be convenient since the inspectors may wish to focus on other activities, either related to the Society or their own personal interest.
2. Members should “book” tests through the Senior Boiler Inspector - currently John Canning - and he may decide either to lead the test himself or may ask one of the other inspectors to do so. Ideally this should be on a rotational basis so that all inspectors are involved on a regular basis.
3. For the year 2022, the majority of testing will be carried out on the following dates in March and April.

March	Wednesdays 2,9,16,23,30 Saturdays 5,12,19,26
April	Wednesday 6,13,20,27 Saturday 2,9,16,23,30
4. Other dates may be made available at the discretion of the Senior Boiler Inspector, and a member may request a test at his/her home.
5. The lead inspector will be accompanied by a fellow inspector who will act as the witness to the test. The witness **should not** be an ordinary member of the Society.
6. Any member wishing to become a boiler inspector will be encouraged to attend a number of tests before attending a Boiler Inspector Course organised jointly by the Northern Association of Model Engineers and the Federation of Model Engineering Societies.
7. Members are reminded that in advance of the test, it is his/her responsibility to ensure that the locomotive has:
 - i. been prepared.
 - ii. that any necessary special tools particular to the locomotive are available.
 - iii. that plugs with the appropriate threads (for safety valves or pressure gauge) are available.
 - iv. that they must provide an adaptor to enable the Society pressure gauge which has a ¼ BSP male thread to be connected to the locomotive.
 - v. that they must provide where appropriate an adaptor to enable the locomotive pressure gauge to be connected to the Society test rig which has a ¼” x 40 M.E. male thread. (ie. The adaptor should have a ¼” x 40 M.E. female thread at one end, and a female thread to suit their pressure gauge at the other).



The test that follows – hydraulic, steam or both will be carried out in accordance with the current accepted Test Code.

Please see also Appendix 5 on page 14 of the ESSMEE Operating Rules and Procedures as revised March 2021.

Visitors to the Society with their own steam locomotive must present their test documents to one of the Society boiler inspectors before unloading, and certainly before raising steam. David Hale

Two snowmen in a field, one turned to the other and said, "I don't know about you but I can smell carrots!"

Black 5 progress

The cylinders are ready to receive the piston rods and to be permanently fitted to the frames.

A pile of stainless steel sheets arrived before Santa came, but when unwrapped they were found to be the plating for the tender. Roger HC has taken these home for his Christmas present as it's a sort of jigsaw puzzle.

Driving wheels are almost ready to have the tyres shrunk on and this will be done soon after we get back to work.

Tender frames are almost ready to finish. Springs have been made by cutting up large hacksaw blades and drilling holes in them using a cobalt coated drill.

We are still waiting for a decision on the boiler; whether to get a professionally made boiler or use an unknown boiler maker.



There seems to be a tale going round that standard class engines are not suitable for public running. All I can say is that a Black 5 worked well for 3 years at main show, likewise a King Arthur for two years. All they need is easy-pulling carriages of which we have two sets. One set look alike and one set made by David Hale.

With a bit of effort our engine could be running in 2024 - just two years to go! Huge thanks go to Dave Ashworth, Tim Marshall, David Abels, Brian Wilson, Roger Hill Cottingham and Dave Tompkins. George White

Upcoming Events

December 19th to January 4th

December 26th

Wednesday January 5th

Saturday January 8th

Christmas break

Steam up and lunch with The Ashdowns **POSTPONED**

Back to working parties!

EGM 1.30pm

Please send in your interesting articles and photos to share with everyone in the next newsletter.

Remember our website! essmee.org.uk

Thanks to our contributors:

Tom Yardley, David Hale, George White, John Widdall, Brian Wilson and Alan Bridger

I asked my wife what she wanted for Christmas. She told me
"Nothing would make her happier than a diamond necklace"
So, I bought her nothing.

