# ESSMEE Newsletter

May 2024



## Chairman's Chatter

Hello all,

I'm pleased to be back in the chair again - it seems like old times.

Good to welcome two new members to the team, David Abels and Alan Hutfield, who are both building model steam engines and have an industrial background.



The clubhouse is in a bit of a state due to the expansion of the workshop area taking a little longer than planned. It is almost finished; just the electrics and hoist to finish before we can move things in. This means, I am afraid, searching for various tools before you can use them. They are in there somewhere!

We have had to stop non-essential work to get the place ready for the Main Show 30th May to 1st June. We are now down to the tidying up and grass cutting level and, of course, the rota. Is your name on the rota? We are also planning for the rest of the season as the New Wine event is coming back and various other organisations. Two of these shows want us to run on three consecutive days - hard work, but tests our abilities and equipment to the limit. One thing we must continue is driving locos for fun every Saturday we can, except for various dates. We shall have a BBQ in August, date to be announced by email. If you have any suggestions/ideas etc. please see me or a committee member to discuss - don't keep them to yourself! Happy model making, George White



Busy working party days have resulted in a newly painted canopy, sparkling decking with new lines painted, carriages overhauled and their braking systems too, crossing gates cleaned, points oiled, doors painted, locos serviced and a load of grass cut!

### Our ~~rogues gallery~~ hard working committee



**Clive Coe**
**H&S**



**Simon Neath**
**Treasurer**



**Alan Hutfield**
**Secretary**



**David Abels**



**Graham Hayman**

## WhatsApp

A few of us at the club have been discussing how we could improve communication between members particularly those who aren't able to attend the club on a regular basis, and a suggestion has been that we could form a WhatsApp group which would be restricted to members of ESSMEE only and would enable general discussion and catching up between members of the club. Typically, this could be discussion around who's going to the club when, what jobs are currently being planned for which help is sought, and any questions people may have for other members where they're seeking help or information about anything to do with the club or Model Engineering.

I have set up a WhatsApp group called "ESSMEE General Discussion Group" for which I am the admin and only I can add members to this group. Because this is a private group no one can join without being invited by me as the admin, so it is secure and no one outside the group can contact group members or view content.

If any club members would like to be added to this WhatsApp group then please either message me on 07879 437338 or email me your mobile number at gavin.lang207@btinternet.com and I will add you, or search for it on WhatsApp and request to join. Gavin Lang



## Boiler production in the Mendip hills.

So, you want to fabricate an engine so you save lots of cash on expensive castings!

Silly boy, 'cos you then need heroic chunks of brass bar for steam domes, saddles, and sandboxes,

That why's we should have at least a non-ferrous foundry in our future plans! David Abels

## A visitors video.

Dennis and Sandra Holmes from Worthing Model Engineering Society, were thrilled to visit and made this wonderful video of our track. It's also available to view on our website.

*Last month my wife and I visited your wonderful railway on a members day. Your colleagues kindly let us participate and we had a lovely time. I have put a video of the day on my YouTube site WooWooMad.*

*The 7¼" Black 5 they are building is something to marvel at! They were all so friendly, it's the sort of club that I like to belong to.*




Bath and West Steam Railway. Miniature Railway U.K. Somerset Tourism.

WooWooMad 4.01K subscribers Subscribe

*Great little railway to visit and very friendly and knowledgeable folk running it.*

https://youtu.be/sqxR4Ic7kpU (Either press Ctrl key and click your mouse on the link, or copy this into your search engine.)





Stuart Bond admiring the work of a junior member, who has been constructing the tipper trucks.



**Restoring a Sweet Pea**

As some members may know, Alan Bridger comes on Tuesdays and we work together on whatever project is in hand. As our current "Tuesday Project" was nearing completion, I was considering what the next project might be. Seeing John Canning's Sweet Pea looking rather neglected, I suggested to John that Alan and I might put it into running order for him. This he welcomed, so I took it home and made sure it was empty of all water to be ready for any winter freezing.




We knew that it was seized, so the first thing to do was to un-seize it before we could decide what was required overall, then to steam it on a rolling road to establish what work would be required. Un-seizing it turned out to be a major task taking several days! A number of other items needed attention before it would be possible to have a test steaming. These took some days, before the loco was set up on the rolling road and steam raised. The injector was tried and worked, so we were not in danger of running the boiler dry if the pumps did not perform.

As the safety valve blew, the regulator was slowly opened and we expected the wheels to start turning. Nothing happened. No amount of working the reverse lever and the cylinder drains would produce any result, except clouds of steam!

Eventually, Richard Needle, who was watching our efforts, pointed out the problem. The wheels were jammed hard against the outer side plates of the rolling road! The driving wheels had been machined to a narrow-gauge profile with wider treads. Thus, they were wider than the usual 5" scale wheels.

We removed the rolling road, lowered the loco on to the short piece of rail, whereupon, keeping a firm grip on the loco, opening the regulator resulted in motion! By this time the fire had virtually died and it would not be possible to check the pumps etc. But we had found enough to be able to write a lengthy work list. Another test will wait until these matters have received attention.






Meanwhile the photos show what happened when lowering the hydraulic table as things were being put away! Roy Procter

*A peanut sat on the railroad tracks, his heart was all a flutter*
*Along came the 505, toot toot! Peanut butter!*

## 4” Foster Traction Engine



More beautifully made work from Craig Fowler for his engine, using a CNC machine.







## How to miss an AGM

How many of you have a wife who six months ago said, ”Why don’t we go on a Great Rail Journey holiday?” And being the caring husband who wants an easy life said, “Yes of course, Darling!”



Well once the wheels start to turn, dates are flashed about, who is coming to stay this summer, when are we going to see Uncle Fred, etc. it becomes more and more impossible to find a date when we can go on a Great Rail Journey, and low and behold there is a date that will work for all the family, until… guess what’s published, the Essmee date for an AGM, and we have just paid all the holiday monies for the trip. So, it’s that easy!



On the very day of the AGM we set off for London by train, to be at St Pancras for some stupid time to get the Eurostar to Paris, and be there for midday! (All to do with before sparrows awake to make a bodily noise.)

We meet up with others who are also keen to get to Spain to ride on narrow gauge trains in the mountains. Our TGV rockets out of Gare du Lyon and before you can say, “I wonder just how fast are we going?” (especially when you look at your cup of coffee’s surface, and there is not the slightest movement, and the notice board in the double deck carriage shows that we are travelling at 178 mph!) Six hours later, having visited Perpignan and the Camargue and shot through the Pyrenees, we burst into Spain and the brakes are applied. Out we all jump and a bus takes us to our posh hotel in Roses, (Spain) at the very bottom of the mountains, with the sea as beautiful a blue as the Med. can be, (except it’s raining).



Our holiday is a mix of visits to pretty, medieval towns high in the Pyrenees, a viewing of that dreadful “artist” Dali Theatre Museum, (call that art?) and a visit to the area city of Girona which has two superb churches both with early Romanesque features. AND visits to a rack railway and to a popular narrow-gauge line.

The best by a very long way was the Nuria Valley Rack Railway, a centre at just under 7000 feet high, with precipitous gorges, worryingly narrow gaps between sheer vertical walls and instant 1000 ft drops, into various tunnels bursting out finally into a snowy world. Many of the gradients were 1:10 to 1:15, maximum speed 15 mph flat out! And that seemed far too fast! And curve radii of 20 feet.



Due to a personal cock up with passports and wives, I missed the trip in the ‘Le Train Rouge’ (Red Train, for those with no French). But all who went said it was boring, slow, lacking in drama, just chugging along this almost flat route, from nowhere to nowhere, in the rain! I went on a road train up into the mountains and had a wonderful ride between the sea and the mountain valleys and bays; this area is truly beautiful, (In sunshine).

And so home via TGV, Eurostar, and First Great Western, total journey time nearly 14 hours, and there were no trains from Temple Meads after 1030 hrs on a Saturday, would you believe it?

It was a good holiday, with interesting folk and we both enjoyed it. (The better way to miss an AGM?)
Robin Duijs

**First track trial of my latest loco build. Saturday 6 April.**



No 9 "ERIC” is a SIMPLEX 0-6-0 5” gauge loco designed by Martin Evans. At the end of 2022 I was looking for the next project. I bought this, a part-built project from Station Road Steam. It consisted of a built chassis complete, a new, unused copper boiler from Western Steam with all paperwork. The side tanks were complete in brass together with tins and boxes of other parts and materials. Drawings (tatty) were also included. When the crate was opened everything had been very well packed by SRS. On inspection virtually everything to complete seemed to be present, as good as a full kit for a new build!



Alan Bridger visits me on a weekly basis and we work on whatever project is in hand together. First job was to see if the chassis would run on air. This it did with good even beats in either direction, so we felt confident to proceed with the build. By the middle of 2023 we were able to try steaming on the rolling road. Various details were identified and modified as required until we were sure that everything was OK. Build was continued to completion including painting. This was finished by the end of 2023. There was then a long wait until the track, suitable weather, and us, felt it was warm enough in April.

Steam was raised. This exposed a problem. Although both safety valves had been checked and set earlier on the

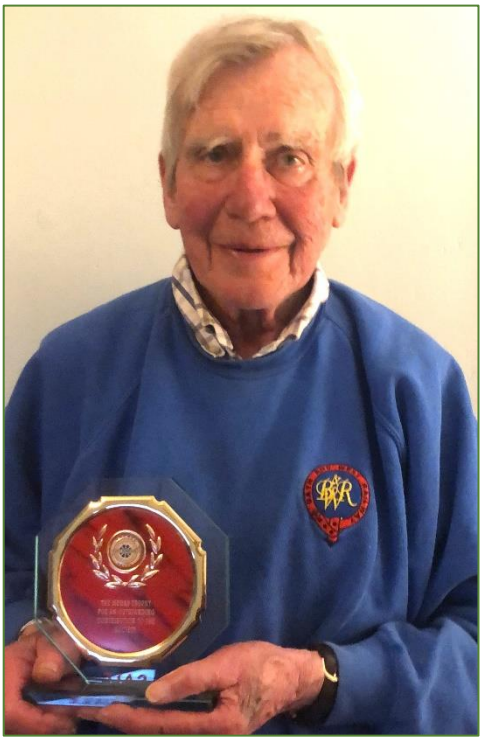
rolling road, one of them refused to close properly despite trying to reset it. However, the blower was very effective in controlling the fire and the two injectors worked at the first attempt. So despite the one valve losing a lot of steam, we were able to ensure that we could maintain enough water in the boiler and the remaining valve would blow off at 90 psi and shut off as pressure fell. It was decided that we would try a run round the clubhouse. With two of us behind, several runs were made, interspersed with refilling the water tanks. The engine pulled strongly with good sharp beats and would notch-up very well, retaining sharp beats. This showed that the engine showed every promise of being a successful performer. When we have sorted out the safety valves, we should be able to offer it for boiler test and certification. It will be offered for sale. Roy Proctor



**What do you expect to see** in … a driving truck? Bits and pieces from the robin's nest above!



**Malcolm Mogford** was awarded the Mehab Trophy for his contribution to our society last year. Congratulations






## Dates for your diary.

Every Wednesday and Saturday the club is open to members. Help with projects to get ready for the summer season is appreciated, but don't forget to run your loco for fun on Saturdays.

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| May 30th – June 1st | Bath and West Main Show with public running (our biggest event of the year) |
| June 9th | Sunday Club **(moved from June 2nd)** |
| July 13th | Wessex Water Family day – locos running for four hours |
| July 25th-30th | New Wine – locos running, dates to be confirmed |
| August 23rd, 24th,25th | The Commission – locos running |

Any contributions for the newsletter are welcome – Janice White, Newsletter Editor
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