ESSMEE Newsletter

July & August 2026.

Editors : Michael & Anne Malleson

To paraphrase Ronnie Barker, we have (another) packed letter for you this month. A wealth of photographs has made it difficult to incorporate them into their relevant texts so we hope the groupings are clear. Microsoft Word seems to have developed a mind of its own, such that in trying to insert pictures next to their appropriate words, it decides to relocate other pictures onto other pages ! (Bill Gates' new game of Musical Photochairs [Copyrite Microsoft, 1066]) ! Hence the groupings where there are a lot of photos. We have not, as yet, received any answers to the first Quiz question.

Please note that this issue is for July and August. However, please continue to submit contributions for the September issue. (See note below)

Mike and Anne. Eds.

Chairman's Chatter

Well, here we are in June already having gone through loads of rain then brilliant sunshine and back to rain. Early in May we belatedly decided to do some public running at Somer Science 26. We were a little shorthanded as it was bank holiday but it gave us chance to check out the track and engine repairs. We managed 250 passengers and was a good day to train new drivers before the onslaught of Mainshow. Somer Science SMET is coming back next year and is an interesting show to go and look around.

Late May we had the usual Jamboree known as Main Show every year this comes round and hits us like a hammer almost as though we don't prepare before it. However, 5300 passengers plus friends takes a lot of organising and I thought we came through reasonably well. We had derailments, loss of steam, loss of one engine but no losses of temper. The temperature didn't help and I am sure thatsome of our problems were caused by the rail heating up. By the time you read this we will have had a wash up of what went wrong and what to do about it. Some of the problems have already been sorted out. The loss of Centaur was caused by the coupling falling apart. This coupling had given no problem for some 10 years, unfortunately when the separation occurred it broke the wiring as well. It was good to see some new drivers on the rails including our first lady driver Gemma and I believe that Debbie was also going to try it but there was no power left in the battery, I am grateful to all the ladies who helped in galley even if they did complain about the state it was in (need to keep it tidier guys) making a bacon sandwich in 32 degrees is hard work but well appreciated by the recipients and cheaper than across the road. George.

5" Day 20th June

On a perfect day one of the most exciting events original was held at the railway, a flat out speed race! Forget this 5 mph speed rule, let's go like hell!!
There were four serious speedsters who took up the challenge, who could be the fastest along the home straight, one hundred and forty metres, who would be Steam Champion and who the Diesel Champion.

Watched by a mass of eager blood thirsty enthusiasts, on Saturday 20 June at midday, the contest began. Robin D. Was first off with his GWR Diesel Railcar, but the marshals forgot to start the clock! Next came Alan B, with his
LSWR Adams Radial Tank, followed by Roy L. With the Class 66, and then Richard N. With his 0-6-0 Polly Tank, And lastly RD with the GWR Diesel this time correctly timed.

So who were the winners of the Steam and Diesel classes, and just marvel at the speeds attained, timed and verified by Richard A. Roy L. 9.72 mph. Diesel Champion.
Alan B. 7.83 mph. Steam Champion.
Robin D. 5.26 mph.
Richard N. 5.13 mph.

There followed much humour and a lot of excuses as to why they did not go faster, and as you had to rely on the time keepers to not fiddle the results. Bur everyone agreed that the official timekeeper was above suspicion. Good fun was had by all.
Three cheers for these intrepid speed merchants!

RCD.





Toylander Project

Back in February 2025 I bought a manual to build a Toylander 2, a small electric car for children based on a Series 2 Land Rover. Stuart Bond has built a few Toylanders, and has been a wealth of knowledge! It is primarily wooden construction with some metal parts for the axles and steering mechanism. A month later and I had the wood delivered, 2 sheets of 12mm marine ply .

I decided to start by doing outline/rectangle cuts of all the wooden parts. This was with my Ryobi circular saw, and a fine-toothed blade (52 teeth on a 165mm blade). My uncle-in-law was very helpful here, and I used a technique he had used in the past: attaching a straight batten to some thin ply, and cutting the ply with the saw. This gives a ply edge to line up to a cutting line. A poor man's track saw. I found it worked well. By September 2025 I had all the outline cuts done. Next I focussed on the wheel arches and curves on the side panels. This was achieved with a jigsaw for a rough-cut, followed by a pull-saw where needed and then sanding**.**

Then I did the floor base, rear panel, front panel/grille, and seat. The seat has a rounded front which I did with a Ryobi palm router**.** By this point its January 2026!

The next stage was quite motivating, adding battens and doing an initial fit together of some of the parts. First the bulkhead and rear inner wings, then the front inner wings, and finally the side panels There was lots to line up for this, and on the whole its aligned quite well, using spare batten and my spirit level to check alignments**.**

A few weeks ago I bought some parts from Toylander. I decided not to make or source them elsewhere, such as the steering wheel, bonnet, and wheels . I also bought the metal for the axles and steering column**.**

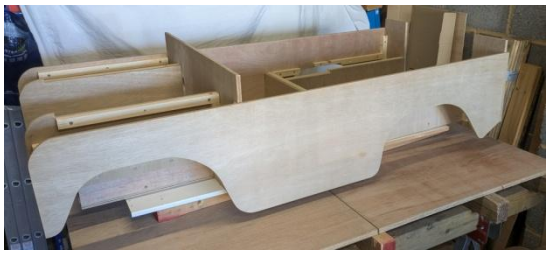
I prepared and welded up the rear axle with help from a local ex Hinkley nuclear engineer. Next steps are to make up the front axle and steering column. I am trying to keep some momentum now so that my children can use it before driving a real car !

















A Somerset Steam Up

On 18th June ESSMEE members gathered at Stephen Wessel's magnificent 5"g. Railway for an afternoon of running in bright sunshine. 4 steam locos and 1 battery diesel were in attendance to brave what must be the smallest 5" tunnel ever, and run round the sweeping curves and along the viaduct overhanging the stream bounding the garden. Then followed up tea and biscuits and a visit by a mighty U.S transporter !

Thank you Stephen for a wonderful afternoon.











Sunday Club and Steam Test

Sunday club only had about half a dozen turn up today it must be because it's Father's Day, nevertheless those did help me get stuck in with cleaning Fiji, Dan and Ed Boniface and Rufus cleaned all the running gear. Gavin was very pleased with the work that they done, Steve got a locomotive out and did some driver training with it. Oscar with George went into the workshop and they continued finishing off a little hot air stationary engine.

On Wednesday, Andy Kiddell and David Hale and myself took the Wren onto the steaming bay to do a preliminary steam up. It went exceptionally well and we were very pleased how it went. Unfortunately there are still a few things to fix on the plumbing, a couple of leaking pipes but nothing too serious, so pleased with the Wren, now it's on its final journey of being back on the rails after extensive refurbishing.

Graham.




Holmside No.11.

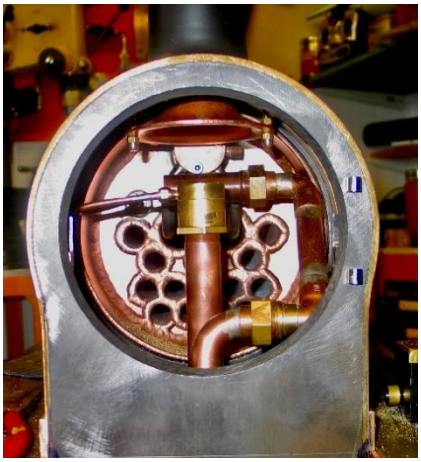
Work on the attachment of the chimney mounting plate on the inside of the smoke box is now complete with the silver soldering of the chimney mounting pipe to the mounting plate and installation in the smoke box. The petticoat has also been fitted and secured by the two support rods silver soldered to the plate. The external chimney has been put in place and the tapered tube slid down inside it. Pipes for the blower to the blast nozzle, and for the snifting valve, completes the plumbing in the smokebox.

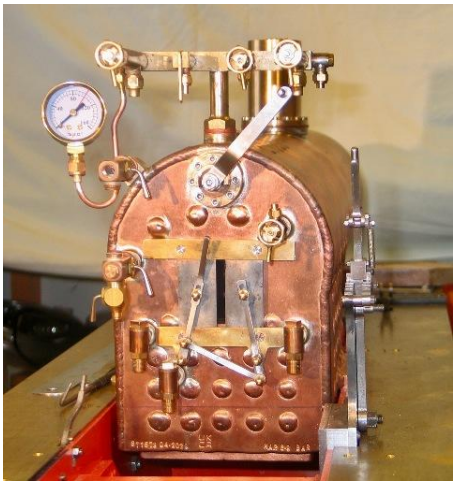
It remains to make and fit the floor in the smoke box. Pieces of brass angle have been screwed inside to support the floor. The floor will be in two overlapping pieces to fit snugly round the steam and exhaust pipes. Card templates have been made to check all dimensions, and feasibility of fitting the brass plates when made. This all seems possible. The intention is to secure the brass floor plates in place with high temperature silicone sealant along with its use in other places to ensure a leakproof smokebox and boiler.

The boiler and smokebox have now been removed. The boiler was stood on its front outside with the fountain and some other details removed, to mask off. This enabled the backhead to be sprayed with high temperature black paint. Alan has taken the smokebox home to cut the floor plates and prepare for priming and painting. When returned, the boiler and smokebox will be replaced with the floor plates and the pipework finally re-fitted. The next job will be to fit the boiler insulation and cleading. We are near to be able to do a first trial steaming!











The ESSMEE Quiz No. 2

Who took six years to build a factory and filled it with 43 hand built high precision machines of his own design and construction, for mass producing 130,000 pulley blocks a year for the Royal Navy, all completed in 1808 and staffed by just 10 men ? The same person made the world's first iron lathe, invented the slide rest; then came the first high precision bench micrometer capable of measuring to the nearest 1/10,000" and worked out how to produce a perfectly plane surface, all in the early 19th century, thereby laying the foundations of our modern high precision world in which every aspect of our lives is founded on such engineering and unimaginably minute tolerances, eg 0.00000001mm !! What an amazing man !!

Answers to the address below. A prize will be presented to the ESSMEE member with the most correct answers at the 2027 A.G.M.

To avoid the Editors having to grapple with 'Musical Photochairs', please adhere to the following procedures.

1. **Submit all text ONLY by email, and NOT alternatively as a Word document as previously directed.**
2. **Submit all photos together as <u>attachments</u> to a SEPARATE email, NOT as individual emails for each photo.**

Sticking to these methods will ensure that your Editors can put the Newsletter together with the minimum amount of time and effort needed to bring you an interesting and readable publication. **Thank you.**

Contributions to ;- newsletter@essmee.org.uk

Michael and Anne Malleson. Eds.

Dates.

5" running. 11th and 22nd July & 15th August.
Steam up at Ditcheat 26th July.
Sunday Club 12th July & 16th August.
New Wine. 29th & 30th July, and 1st & 2nd August.
Railwells 8th & 9th August.
Steam up at Rimpton. 20th August.