ESSMEE Newsletter

October 2026

Editors : Michael & Anne Malleson

Chairman's Chatter.

Lovely summer but a bit too hot for some and now the cooler weather is with us, and I hate to say winter around the corner. We need to stock up on gas and we are a bit suspicious of the quality of coal we are getting, I asked around at the 71/4 AGM and people were getting it from all over the place and some even came out of a sack marked HOUSE COAL. Perhaps we may end up with fuel oil.

Socially we have had three very good days at personal tracks with excellent hospitality, thank you very much to all. We are planning a date in October for friends and families down at the track, we are just waiting confirmation of the date. This will be a BBQ and free running, after this we have SANTA special to look forward too.

Big projects to do this winter are the new platform and two new points, plus finish of the fence by the marshalling yard. We also have a coach to finish off. We were planning to relay the track down by the trees using ballast but the treasurer assures me, we would have very low reserves so that will wait until next year. Other thing to think about is the gift of a Garden railway from Hilary Brown. We have to think about where to put this and how big we should make it. It need some serious thought.

Our annual Xmas dinner is going ahead on the 18th of December at the Golf Club, more details to follow.

See you down the Track.

George.

Wasps nest.

During our support of the New Wine event this year, there were concerns for wasps hovering and disappearing into the bottom of the signal box. We thought we should have a look and had concerns about possible issues with a cabling junction box which was located under the signal box floor, However we decided not to investigate and raised the issue with Bath & West management team, they duly attended and gassed the wasps.

Today, Wednesday 26th August, we opened the trap door to the area below the signal box floor and were amazed at what we found.

An enormous wasps nest, as shown in photos attached, secured right on the cabling junction area, a delicate weave of what is almost a paper thin construction.

A delicate clean up of the cables will be taking place, but no damage done thankfully.

Alan Hutfield.





The whole nest !! Photo courtesy Robin Duys.

It's on its way to a local school for the children to see.





These pictures courtesy Alan Hutfield. How was it that the signals were unaffected ? Amazing. M&A Eds.

Union Pacific 4-8-8-4 'Big Boy' in steam.

Here are several links you might like to follow up. It certainly is a mighty loco, and congratulations and thanks to our American cousins for enabling us to see what might have been a sight lost for ever ! M&A Eds.

https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Union%20pacific%204014%20Big%20Boy%20on%20it%27s%20USA%20250%20coast%20to%20coast%20tour

https://www.facebook.com/reel/1612468763154050

https://www.facebook.com/reel/1014171864878182

The ESSMEE Quiz. No. 4.

Who established the Standard Screw Thread, developed the Sharpshooter Rifle, and developed the three plate method for producing high precision flat surfaces using scrapers and engineers blue ?

Holmside.

ESSMEE member Alan Bridger has recently undergone major surgery on his knee. As a result work on Holmside has been temporarily suspended. November's Newsletter should have the next report on progress, on both the knee and the loco. We wish him a speedy recovery.

The Departures Platform.

Due to significant deterioration it has been decided to replace the timber decking with concrete for long term durability and H&S long life. Here are pictures of progress on its removal and dismantling of the Ticket Office, prior to the laying of the new surface. Thanks to all those who sent in photos.








TICKET OFFICE




TICKET OFFICE









Watching this superbly coordinated ESSMEE ‘A’ team at work was a joy to behold !

£5.08 found under the ticket office. £2 of which is the old pound coin. I presume they're no longer legal tender, however all will go in the biscuit fund.
George





Here we are in October and still enjoying the floral displays so diligently provided and cared for us and our visitors throughout the season by the dedicated gardening team.

Many thanks to all of them.

ROWLAND PROCTER F.I.Mar.E. 1900 – 1992

An historical account of a prolific model engineer.

Text and photographs by Roy Procter and Lorna Minton

Part 1.

The authors of this article are brother and sister, and the only children of Rowland Procter. We felt that current model engineers might like to read about this prolific modeller, and hear about some of his methods.
Towards the end of WW1 Rowland was apprenticed at Wallsend Engineering on the Tyne, who were builders of marine steam engines. After this training he crewed on various steam ships, working his way up from eighth engineer to Chief Engineer in the 1920’s
He qualified for his Board of Trade Certificate of Competency as a First Class Engineer of Steamships in December 1929.
In 1930 he left life at sea, married, and in due course fathered Roy and Lorna. He joined Insurance Engineers Ltd., as a Surveyor, and was the technical expert for a

number of insurance companies assessing boilers, lifts, cranes etc for insurance purposes. His annual inspection on behalf of Insurance companies also enabled him to sign certificates of safety required by the Board of Trade. Today such a company would be called a Consultancy.
It was at this time that his model making commenced in earnest, and Roy, as a small boy remembers his first one. This was a steam, coal fired 'O' gauge pacific "Sir Morris de Cowley" designed by LBSC. This ran on an ‘0’ gauge track with rail & chairs pinned to sleepers on a shelf fixed round the walls of the garage / workshop. Sir Morris was difficult to control and either accelerated until derailed due to speed round the curves, Or slowed until it stopped due to lack of steam! A third rail was added to this track to enable young Roy to run a pre-WW1 Basset Lowke 6v electric Atlantic tank in LBSCR colours when a battery could be borrowed. Roy also ran his clockwork mode LNER Director class loco on this track This had a Bond clockwork mechanism . The bodywork and tender and were made up by Rowland from brass sheet. He also made the tender frame and wheels. Various wagons were also made from Leeds Model parts and lithographed sides stuck onto the ply wood bodies.
Next was a 2.5" gauge Mogul by LBSC, "Dyak". This ran on a raised circular track in our small suburban garden in north London. It would pull two or three people on a flat car, and Roy helped to raise steam and drive it when he was big enough to reach over the tender! Then came "Green Arrow", an LNER V2 in 2.5" gauge by LBSC once again. A third rail was added to the 22ft dia circular track to provide ‘0’ gauge This enabled Sir Morris to be run for longer at speeds not possible on the indoor track with 3ft rad. curves.
The second world war then interrupted, and our family moved to Kent along with Rowland’s employer. Many model engineers at that time took to helping the war effort by making things in their workshops, for which they received government contracts. This work was coordinated by none other that the manager of the Sevenoaks Water company! Rowland started by turning up steel three/sixteenth inch snap head rivets on a treadle operated Britannia lathe bought some years earlier for £2.OO! A motor was added and he progressed to 2BA studs. Roy, then aged about 10, got paid 6 pence per hundred for doing the threading. Rowland used his government income to improve the workshop. Roy remembers an early acquisition was a Coventry die holder. This sprang open releasing the dies when the tailstock hit a stop clamped to the lathe bed. Soon he was able to purchase a second hand Southbend lathe. This enabled a wider range of wore work to be made. These included many items made from beryllium copper used for work on or near magnetic mines.
In between war work, Rowland built another ‘0' gauge steamer, a Schools Class by LBSC, the "Bat". This was originally coal fired, but was difficult to operate successfully, so the boiler was replaced with a water tube one and pressure spirit fired. The tender was modified for half water and half spirit. This ran on track round the garage in our rented house in Kent.
There followed a succession of models. A 3.5"gauge 0-6-0 tank engine "P.V.Baker", and a 3.5" gauge Web compound 2-2-2 tender loco "lonic" both by LBSC. Then a 5" gauge 4-4-0 tender loco by LBSC "Maid of Kent", based on a Southern Ll. This was followed by a 3.5" gauge "Evening Star" by LBSC and a 3.5" gauge "Rocket".
The "Rocket" was built to exhibition standard from original drawings in the Science Museum. It was actually intended as a glass case model. Roy was present when it was steamed, once, before being painted, just to prove that it worked! The Rocket was built with scale square head bolts and nuts. They were 10 or 12BA all made by Rowland

himself. This engine is now owned by my Nephew, Roger who is an ESSMEE member.

Rowland's final model was a 5" gauge 4-2-2 "Stirling Single". Like all his models, each performed superbly well, usually out-steaming most of the other models at his model eng. clubs.

To be continued in Part 2.



Roy age 8 with Dyak before WWII

Diary dates.

Oct 31.Halloween. (possible)
Dec. 5th 1st Santa Special.
Dec 12th 2nd Santa Special
Dec 18th Christmas Lunch at Wells Golf Club.
Dec 19th Back up Santa Special (weather)

Reminder.
Text submissions in email please.
Photos as attachments to an email.

newslettereditor@essmee.org.uk

Mike and Anne Malleson Eds.