
West Midlands' N' Gauge Club



Newsletter



Firstly a TRIBUTE to BARBARA

It is with sadness and deep regret that I have to inform everyone of the death of Barbara Bane, the late wife of our club's electrician Len.

Barbara had been ill for some time with terminal cancer, but this was being kept under control by regular visits to the hospital for treatment.

Unfortunately Barbara contracted Covid 19, which meant her treatment for the cancer had to stop, and the cancer got worse and she sadly died. Her funeral was in May, without any fuss as requested by both her and Len.

Barbara had had a long term relationship with the club since Len joined in the late 1990s. In those days we only met once a month and Barbara always made a home made cake for members to enjoy at their tea break. She continued making cakes for the club for over two decades.

Our thoughts are with Len and his family - *KJ*

West Midlands' N' Gauge Club



Newsletter



FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

We are currently in a very fluid and uncertain position nationally with a 'knock-on' effect on club activities and life in general. The great Robbie Burns once commented about the 'best laid plans of mice and men'; never a truer word was said. Apart from a few minor arrangements to be sorted, we were well on track to start meeting from our scheduled July meetings but this seems not to be. I know that we are all disappointed to be unable to resume activities straight away and we are hoping that circumstances are such that resumption is not too far off.

Having not met up for over 15 months, when we do get to meet up I suspect that there will be a lot to chat about over copious cups of tea etc. We have all enjoyed seeing accounts of members 'lockdown activities' in Vince's regular and interim newsletters and I'm sure there will be lots to explain. From experience with another society, it may well be that little fettling is needed to get our layouts operational.

As we haven't met as a group since March 2019 and we held our AGM remotely and over quite a period of time, there are a number of things that we need to do. Whilst I know that various messages of thanks have been sent to Ken Jones, our outgoing Chairman, we haven't had the chance to thank him for his work over 23 years face to face. In view of the effects of lockdown we may wish to consider how we move the club forward over the next couple of years.

If you are looking for a comment on progress with my home layout, I'm afraid that will have to wait for another time. Progress has stalled since the last newsletter for several reasons. Firstly, I am still building up the stock of points etc. required for track-laying to proceed. You may recall previous comments about a shortage of parts – well although there is a slight improvement the situation isn't anywhere near normal. The second reason is that my current use of spare funds is being used in a non-railway way as I am busy developing my front garden. I'm not going to bore you with pictures or details of my horticultural activities.

I was pleased to see my friend Chris Morris had his latest layout, a model of Dawlish Warren, published in a recent *Railway Modeller*. It's a layout that I have been following both on N Gauge Forum and various Facebook groups. I can say that it looks excellent and hopefully we will see it on the exhibition circuit when that starts up again. My reason for commenting is also that we hear a lot about a lack of N Gauge layouts in the model press. Chris had a long talk with Steve Flint (of RM) who is keen to promote N Gauge and says that he finds some difficulty in getting details of suitable layouts. The moral of the tale is that we need to be a bit proactive and put our layouts out to the editors with basic details and a few pictures.

Enough waffle from me. Hopefully we can all get together in August, government restrictions willing.

*Stay safe.
Jeremy*



NEWSLETTER DATES

Autumn: September 2021
 Winter: December 2021
 Spring: March 2022
 Summer: June 2022



Just a reminder to all Club members:
 to be included in the next Members' Contributions section, your article should be with me by
Thursday 16th September Volume 24 Issue 3 *will* be published that weekend *Ed*.

GREAT NEWS FOR TINGS 2021

TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE

ALL tickets MUST be purchased in advance to guarantee entry to the show in 2021.

Tickets are purchased and valid for a specific day only i.e. Saturday or Sunday.

We will release tickets in line with government guidelines on capacity limits. Tickets will only be available via our website **www.ngaugeshow.co.uk**.

TICKET PRICES

£11.00 Adults

£10.50 Seniors (over 65yrs)

£5.50 Child (5-14 yrs)

Meridienne Exhibitions cannot process any telephone bookings. If you have event specific enquiries please call 01926 614101.

Meridienne Exhibitions Ltd will continue to monitor and act on advice from the Government and respond accordingly to guidance throughout the coming months, to ensure the event can safely be delivered with compliance to any Covid-19 requirements that may be in place at that time. Please make sure you visit our website for the latest information prior to your visit.

CHAIRMAN: Jeremy Edwards on 07720 902490



Treasurer: Edgar Mason
 Assisted by : Philip Hunt

Exhibition Co-ordinator: David Griffin
davejgriffin@outlook.com

Editor: Vince Painter
art1san1957@icloud.com

WMNGC
26th
 YEAR

Editorial

*Around the time of publication, it'll be the first anniversary of the **end** of Lockdown 1 and what a year it's been since! I still like raisins and I **was** being pessimistic at that time thinking we would not meet till Christmas 2020, and share some mince pies. Lockdowns 2 and 3 came and went, nearly, would it be wrong of me to even hope that we can meet again soon (see Chairman's bit)?*

At home we've managed to sort the garden out, in between showers in May, and blistering heat at the start of flaming June, I never thought I'd be laying slabs again at my age! Still, we can now enjoy the outdoors again, whilst we wait to see when we can get closer to family and friends.

Our attic project has stalled (no I'm not preparing the way for a new layout!) It just needs doing, but, unlike during the winter months', it can get very warm up there so, it's on hold till the cooler months.

On the modelling side, I have to admit that I have done nothing since the last Newsletter apart from keeping abreast of Ken's 'travels' around the world and searching for that light at the end of the tunnel.

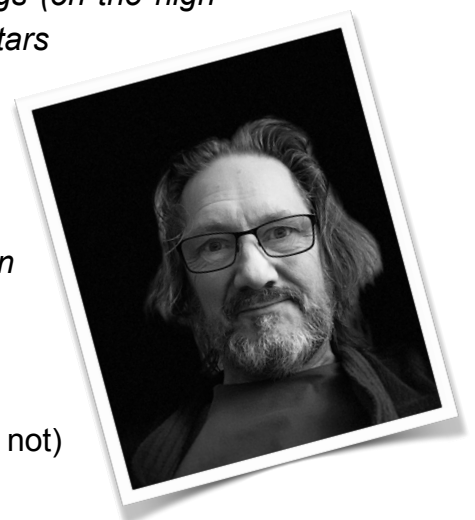
My newer hobby has taken over the mindful part of my life, along with my returning to work after the second period of furlough (in Lockdown 3), the aforementioned gardening and re-learning how not to get under her indoors' feet, as we spent more and more time together.

My guitar practising is still annoying the neighbour's dogs (on the high frets), every day for at least an hour, using my two guitars (alternately of course) and my newly acquired Spark 40W amp from Positive Grid, it can even make steam engine noises, but unfortunately not the tea.

Thanks for reading, and I wish all of you happiness in everything you do.

Ed

*PS if you have any lockdown snaps of **your** haircuts (or not) pleased send by email for publication in the next Issue!*



MEMBERS' SUBMISSIONS

KEN'S Little Bits

Here is the latest news, hot off the KJ Press:

"I'm just toying with the idea of building something else - this time a bigger moving bus system and it may or may not also have a train, To this end I have bought quite a bit of second hand roadway, and in fact I have plenty of curves if you wanted to build a moving bus system.

So the concept is that the coach company "Jones of Taunton" which has currently 2 coaches and one open top bus is due to expand. The layout will include it's new depot and yard, plus two of my Moving Bus bodies are away being painted, one is a single decker bus as the company move into school contracts and the other is a luxury coach as it moves into continental holidays. When they return they will be working buses running on the Moving Bus System road.

So I've laid down a temporary roadway and ran some of the moving buses to see how they look. The picture shows the current layout but that may change.



Built as a bent dog bone buses will run either way between the ends and so they don't crash there will be a passing lay-by where either side can be manually stopped - more fun than just an oval.

In other news - "Le Club 143" not yet seen by the public - should be at TINGS and the Birmingham show if they go ahead, and "Salverton" my original layout with a Moving Bus System should be at Telford exhibition if that goes ahead.

There are currently no plans to exhibit my newest layout "Seen Better Days" with the N gauge miniature railway, unless a small exhibition like Wombourne goes ahead.

So back to playing with this latest idea before committing the roadway to a board. Currently there is no name for this layout only ideas.

Ken

A Military Tale

By Jeremy Edwards (*get the lilo out for this final instalment - Ed*)

The History of the Shoeburyness Military Railway in three parts

Part 3:

A reminder.....

“The remit of this article is to describe the development of and activities on the Shoeburyness Military Railway with particular links to the development of the Barracks, ranges and experimental station. Where appropriate I have also included information about the history of area in general and links with some of the other railway activities around Shoeburyness. Some sources also describe the line as a *Tramway*”.....

Legal Matters

When the first part of the tramway was constructed the whole line was on military land to which the public had no access. As such it did not come under the remit of any part of the Tramways Act at that time. Once the first extension was to be put in place it was required to conform to the 1887 Military Tramways Act. Once extension to the New Ranges was put in place the whole line came under the 1887 Act. The extension to Havengore did not come under this Act apparently and various matters were dealt with by The Shoeburyness Military Tramways Order of 1893. Further extensions were then covered by additional Orders. An agreement was made with the London Tilbury and Southend Railway for the tramway to pass through the southern part of the Shoeburyness Station Goods Yard to allow access to the main railway system and for transfers to take place.

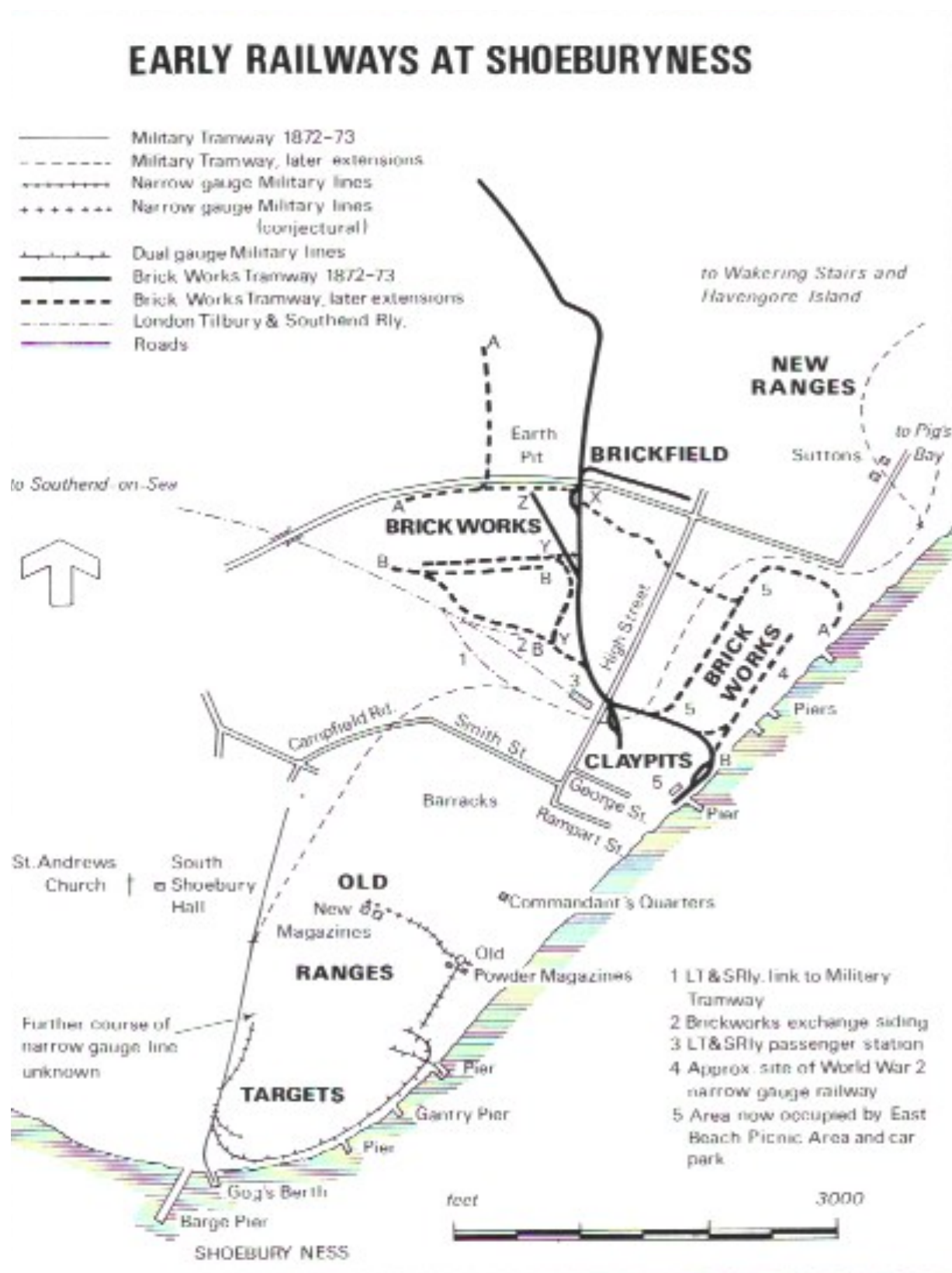
Operation, Rolling Stock etc.

Whilst the railway was a military operation on mainly military land, operation was actually a civilian role. The railway operation was managed by the Royal Engineers who particularly looked after infrastructure but the line was staffed by civilians. The operation of the railway was governed by a series of by-laws.

The main function of the railway system was to transport stores and equipment around the facility. As such, it therefore required substantial trackwork using 98lb per yard rails. This obviously permitted heavy loads to be transported. The only exception to this was Havengore Bridge which had a 20 ton weight limit restricting usage here to battery or diesel locomotives. The line had a speed limit of 12 ½ mph (shown as 15 mph in the 1960 By-Laws) except for a section at Wakering Stairs which had a limit of 35 mph during WW1 to allow pilots to practice targeting trains (no doubt the RNAS pilots from nearby Rochford airfield had good fun doing that). It is to be noted that a speed limit of 3 mph applied on road crossings.

The line also had passenger facilities for WD/MoD officials and troops with 6 stations at Old Ranges, Magazine, Chapel Road, Camp Field, Village Crossing and New Ranges (at Pig's Bay). Platforms were provided for 6 coach trains although it appears that 4 coaches were normal.

The passenger service started when the line was extended towards Pig's Bay, onto the New Ranges and were withdrawn on 1st September 1958.



At peak usage there were eight up and nine down trains starting at 08.20 and finishing at 16.30. The journey time took about 10 minutes. In 1924, school trains were instituted in addition but the number of passenger trains slowly reduced.



Passenger train approaching the eastern platform at Village Crossing

Picture as per caption, British Railways Shoeburyness Station in the background, the train is crossing High Street. Note how the crossing gate opens onto military land therefore road traffic is controlled by flag. Note also western platform on the opposite side of the road. (Source unknown)

Operation of the network was quite simple. Locos had a crew of 2, driver and stoker. All points were hand operated; it was the stoker's job to work the points, specifically to hold down the levers on facing points. At one time signals were erected at six road crossings in the 1890's but were removed after they fell into disuse. Two level crossings were gated where the crossing gates would open across the road were operated as per mainline crossings. At two crossings (High Street and Blackgate Road, the gates did not open across the road but instead onto military land. Here a person with a red flag was required to control road traffic while the train crossed. At Village Crossing Station where the line crossed the High Street there were platforms either side of the road crossing. When the train drew up to wait for the road traffic to stop passengers could disembark; once the train had crossed the road, passengers could embark from the other platform.

'Ordinary traffic was prohibited after dark' and the operation of 'powder wagons' was strictly controlled. Initially there were eight or nine passenger trains each way daily but by the 1950's this had reduced to three. An article in Railway Magazine in 1959 stated that there could be up

to 12 motive power units operating at any one time (based on information from 1957 prior to the closure of the lines from the Old Range).

The 1960 By-laws lay out how the line was operated. To the west of Blackgate Road the railway was worked by a 'staff' system. A single locomotive or a pair coupled would possess the only staff for the section. Beyond that to the east there are no requirements laid down.

During its life the line had a variety of motive power and rolling stock. A lot of the early locomotives were purchased second hand or transferred from other military sites. Locomotives included ex 'main line company' locos plus some Baldwin 0-6-0PTs. Towards the end of WW2 Austerity 0-6-0STs(2) (some were sold to the LNER at the same time and classed J94) replaced many of the older locomotives. Battery electric locos appeared in the 1920s particularly for hauling explosive and ammunition wagons. Ruston and Hornsby diesels began to appear in the 1940s. The last locomotive left in July 1984.

During WW2 three ex main line locos arrived, not for pulling trains but for target practice and train busting experiments (see Appendix for details).

Locomotive livery was initially lined brown but was replaced by unlined Apple Green. As a military establishment it was not surprising that the locomotives were in excellent cosmetic condition.



*Shoebury locomotive No. 9 (WD 011) at Shoeburyness on 23rd August 1955. Hudswell Clarke loco (ex Robert McAlpine). Looks to be in original lined brown livery.
(photo R.M. Casserley, A Lethbridge Stewart, Railway Bylines September 2005)*

A breakdown of wheeled vehicles in site in 1957 (as reported in The Railway Magazine in April 1959) showed an extensive scale of operation. The War Department had 17 locos including 11 steam locos and 12 passenger carriages. The Ministry of Supply had 6 railcars and a varied assortment of wagons including some 28 cranes.



*Ruston and Hornsby diesel No. 4 (WD 806) at Suttons 23rd August 1955
(H.C. Casserley, A. Lethbridge Stewart, Railway Bylines September 2005)*

One particular item of coaching stock, the pride of the railway, was Lord Kitchener's saloon. This was built in 1885 by the Metropolitan Carriage and Wagon Co for the Suakin-Berber Railway in Sudan. The railway was never completed for political reasons (one month after construction started it was halted) and the 'material' was returned to the UK. This carriage was sent to Shoebury and was used in particular for royal visits. A second saloon from the same source was also used for royal visits.



Kitchener's Saloon in use for a royal visit by the Duke of Kent 6th May 1939

(MOD Shoeburyness website timeline)

Passenger carriages were normally old 'mainline company' coaches repainted and modified to suit. Sources describe a two coach train as being made up of old Midland Railway stock overpainted in brown with hessian covering the upholstered seats but still bearing the internal decorations.

Gog, Magog and Katherine

The names of Gog and Magog are Old Testament names for warring nations. However of more local interest was the mythical British (Celtic) giant called Gogmagog and a range of hills further north in East Anglia called the Gogmagog Hills. This has no relevance to the heading apart from an explanation of where the names are derived.

In the Old Ranges there is a narrow pier with a standard gauge track fixed in concrete; this is known as Gog's Berth. It is thought it was constructed in the 1880's for bringing large railway mounted guns ashore.

There was a matching pier constructed on the opposite bank of the Estuary at Yantlet Creek in Kent. Two barges were constructed and they were named Gog and Magog built in 1886 - 7. A steamer called Katherine, built in 1882, was used to tow the barges.



The remains of Gog's Pier taken from the mudflats.

*The rebuilt sea wall obliterates any evidence beyond the concrete visible in the distance
(Source unknown)*

The scenario runs something like this. The rail mounted guns were loaded into the barge at Woolwich and the steamship towed the barge to Shoeburyness. At the end of the pier there was a grillage of beams set in the sea bed. At flood tide the barge was positioned over the grillage and then everyone waited for the tide to go out. By low tide the barge had settled on the grillage and during the ebbing tide the barge was manoeuvred so that its rails aligned with those on the berth. Flood gates were opened and once settled the gun was run off the barge onto the berth through a gap in the sea wall and the flood gates closed again. As the tide came back in the barge would float off the grillage and could be towed away. The gun would then be moved to wherever it was required on the site. This practice happened until the 1950's. Most of the evidence for this practice disappeared when the seawall was rebuilt with no gap for the flood gates.

The Area Now

(Please note, this section requires a field visit and information is taken from maps and photographs of the area as it currently exists).

The area of the Old Ranges has been converted to parkland named Gunners Park. The Horseshoe Barracks site is now a housing estate although several barracks buildings are listed and therefore are still in existence.

The railway line is still linked to the Network Rail system via a siding at Shoeburyness Station and crosses both High Street and Blackgate Road at level crossings. There are signs of the narrow gauge lines at the East Beach car park beyond High Street. According to OS Landranger map 178, lines continue through Suttons and past Pigs Bay but now terminate short of Havengore Creek.

Footnotes

1. SS Richard Montgomery was a US built Liberty Ship that in 1944, as part of the invasion of France, awaiting to join a convoy in the Thames Estuary. In heavy weather it slipped its anchor and ran aground on a sand bank a short distance off Sheerness. Attempts were made to remove the cargo but the ship started to break up in the large tidal swell in the Estuary and it was abandoned. There are some 1,400 tonnes of munitions aboard including 2,000 lb and 1,000 lb bombs and more dangerously 'armed' cluster bombs. The wreck has an exclusion zone around it. Various estimates of the effects of the unstable munitions exploding have been made from minor to catastrophic.

2. Locomotive in preservation. Austerity locomotive WD 200, built in 1953, is under preservation at the Colne Valley Railway. Initially sent to the Longmoor Military railway and then the Bicester Military Railway, it arrived at Shoeburyness in 1966. In 1971 it was purchased by the Kent and East Sussex Railway but in 2014 it was declared redundant and sold on.

Appendix

Former company locomotives brought to the site for 'train-busting' exercises in 1941/2:

Ex-Highland Railway 'Loch' (LMS 14391) *Loch Shin*

Ex-Highland Railway 'Small Ben' (LMS 14405) *Ben Rinnies*

Ex-NER D21 (LNER 12839)

(Railway Bylines September 2005)

References

"The Shoeburyness Military Tramway", 'Sequestrator', The Railway Magazine No. 696 Vol 105 April 1959 pp 239 – 245, Tothill Press Ltd, London, 1959.

"Early Railways at Shoeburyness", Harry Paar, Industrial Railway Record No 128 March 1992 pp 373 – 379, Industrial Railway Society, Guisborough, 1992.

"Get Some In", The Shoeburyness Military Railway", Alastair Lethbridge- Stewart (with acknowledgement to R & H.C. Casserley), Railway Bylines Volume 10 Issue 10 September 2005 pp 500 – 505, Irwell Press, Clophill, 2005.

"The History of Shoebury Garrison", anon, Southend on Sea Borough Council Library Service (online)

Statutory instrument 1960 no 388 Tramways, "The Shoeburyness Military Tramways Bylaws 1960", made 28th January 1960

1888-1915 6 inch to the mile Ordnance Survey map as prepared by Essex Archaeology.

MOD Shoeburyness Website

Various Wikipedia pages were used for initial survey to be confirmed by later sources. No material is quoted from Wikipedia.

Acknowledgement

Ken Jones for providing me with materials from his research including the By-Laws for the operation of the line and also encouragement to complete this document.

COMPETITION answer from Volume 24 Issue 1's challenge.

a reminder:

Can you provide the Name, Classification and location of this beautifully preserved steam locomotive, captured recently, preparing for the coming season?



And the winner, from **Perth in Western Australia**, with the first correct answer is, **Barry Bryant**, well within 24 hours of publication - great stuff!

He says:

"The locomotive is a Stanier Black 5 No 45231. In preservation, it is currently named The Sherwood Forester.

The location of the photograph is the North end of Crewe Station and the locomotive is on the Chester lines".

Barry has also provided some fascinating personal history which some of you may recognise.....

"My railway interest goes back a long way, being brought up near Chester in the 1960's I was an avid train spotter and spent many a happy Saturday at Chester or Crewe stations, or sometimes a bit further afield. Although I was brought up in the North West, I have links to the West Midlands and in particular Tipton.

My Grandad moved to Ellesmere Port in 1902 when the Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Works moved there.

My 3 times granddad was a coal miner and moved from Soundwell in Gloucestershire to Tipton around 1850 and census records show that in 1851 he was living in **Canal Street, Tipton**.

He then moved to New Cross Street by 1861, then Waterloo Street in 1891 and Union Street by 1901. My 2 time grandad in 1891 lived in Hill Street Tipton.

Not sure if any of those streets still exist, if they do I would think the houses they lived in may not have survived though.

In 2014 during our trip to the UK we visited the Black Country Living Museum and it was great to see how they have preserved the area, and to see what it was like for my relations long ago".

LOOK OUT FOR A SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM BARRY in the next Issue of this world famous Newsletter - Ed

LATEST COMPETITION page

Let's see who's quickest on the email!

A little quirky this
time, the question is:
What is this and
where in this
Newsletter would you
find a reference to it?



Answers please to the Editor: art1san1957@icloud.com
Or by your usual methods

Joke of the day

Got a couple of railway buffers going cheap.

It's an *end-of-line* sale.

unknown AUTHOR (probably best)

SUPPLIERS

OXFORD



just out is the N gauge RNLI Land Rover Defender - so Ken's ordered his direct from Oxford Diecast, but he expects it to be with your local supplier soon, or shops like Hattons - Ken - ref NDEF014



<https://www.oxforddiecast.co.uk/collections/1-148>

Oxford Diecast RNLI Land Rover Defender Station Wagon

Thanks to Ken Jones for passing on this extremely useful update.



Here we show you our Social Media Ads which highlight our brands and offer awareness of new products coming through from all the leading manufacturers. The Ads can be found on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Google and if you want to be kept informed of what is happening in our shop then please follow us on the social media channel of your choice.

The more we can spread the word about our wonderful shop the better, as we try to compete with the 'big boys' whilst fully retaining the small personally run business feel of the small shop.

<https://www.tennentstrains.co.uk/gallery>

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GENERAL NOTICES

With the club's reopening POSTPONED again, the layouts will be checked over and the track cleaned before any running, of course - curb your excitement! Meanwhile, isn't about time you cleaned and serviced *your* stock.

We are now seeing organisers preparing for the new normal, keep an eye on the modelling media for the latest on exhibitions' dates.


As ever, always check with UK Model Shops' Directory (*details below*) or the individual organisers before planning your visit.

UK Model Shops' Directory keeps you up to date with all happenings in this wonderful hobby of ours, including alphabetical indexing of Model Shops, Events, Suppliers and much more - for instance here is a sample screenshot from their colourful website - *Help spread the word!*

<https://www.ukmodelshops.co.uk/>

SAMPLE PAGE:

NEWS MODELLING NEWS MODELLING NEWS MODELLING NEWS




The U.K.'s Premier North American Model Railroad Store
 Extensive stock of HO, N & Z scales, including hard to find product
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New Distributor for Tru-Color Paints in the UK

MECH MODELS are pleased to announce that with immediate effect they have become the United Kingdom distributor and stockist for Tru-Color Paints of the USA.


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www.SMART MODELS.co.uk

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RETURN JOURNEY*Otherwise known as any other business**My Raisins to be cheerful:*

1. I am getting used to the latest new arrival in our family courtesy of AirTurn Duo BT200, a foot-operated, wireless pedal for turning the pages in musical notation or sheet music - yes I know - sad.
2. It's our Club's 26th year.
3. On a more serious note it seems that 'The ROAD-MAP' has tempted us into thinking we're getting over the worst and nearer some form of 'normal'.
4. Young adults and others are getting their jab.
5. Please note that any recommended suppliers, ideas or suggestions found in this not-for-profit, and totally free newsletter, are for readers' personal use only, any inaccuracies are regretted and not deemed to be life-threatening.

STAY SAFE all, don't let your guard drop just yet *Ed***EDITORIAL IDEAS BOX**

I'm pretty sure we're all happier now we have a road map, we'll meet again soon!

If all else fails, we still have our friendly Club - dedicated to all things N' Scale, but mostly trains and railway related stuff - not forgetting the cakes of course!

Thank you for all the ideas to mark the change in our Chairmanship in some way, hopefully a presentation is in the offing.

Just a reminder, there's still time if you have any memories, images or anecdotes you would like to share with everyone, then email me to art1san1957@icloud.com

DO IT NOW please

time is racing on and the glorious day when we can all get together is getting nearer - happy days!

CREDITS

All images in this issue are submitted, in the main, by the author of each article, any copying, scanning or pasting etc, etc, blah, blah, are at your own risk - GDPR apply.

PLEASE USE YOUR OWN PHOTOGRAPHIC DEVICE

Special Thanks to the following Club Members for their articles:
Jeremy Edwards, Ken Jones (seems to be a trend here)



Edited Using Pages app
on Apple iPad Pro running iOS for iPad 2019 v14.6
(other devices, apps & operating systems are available)Ed





NOTICEBOARD INFORMATION

Meetings are **suspended**, but will eventually be held at:
Tipton Green Methodist Church Hall
Park Lane West
TIPTON
West Midlands
DY4 8LD



For more N' Scale information and a host of other interesting topics

Visit our Club Website <http://www.wmngaugeclub.co.uk/>

BE HAPPY AND KIND TO OTHERS

**LOCAL LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS MAY AFFECT US
ALWAYS CHECK BEFORE YOU TRAVEL**

Changes will appear in our Newsletters, with emails/post & calls for urgent info.