

# Goodwin Park News

## Spring 2023



# Club Details

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The newsletter of Plymouth Miniature Steam. Published quarterly (normally March, June, September & December) and issued free to members. **Cut-off date for submissions is 24<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month (i.e. Feb, May, Aug & Nov).**

We operate a ground level track of approximately half a mile in length at our site at Pendeen Crescent, Southway, Plymouth, with facilities for 3½, 5 and 7¼ inch gauges. Public running occurs on the first and third Sundays of each month, from April until the end of October. For further details and membership information, please contact Ian Jefferson (01752-788862) or Rob Hitchcock (01822-852479). Current Membership Rates - Adult £28, Junior £10. Workshop facilities available to members at 'Tor Bridge High', Plymouth, £30 per term (10 weeks) or £3.50 per session(eve).

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We also operate an email message service within the membership; if you wish to join, please contact 'the membership secretary' Please note that contributions reflect the views of the writer and are not necessarily endorsed by the Company. Members' advertisements for models and other related items are published free. Non-members and Trade, by arrangement. All items for inclusion to be sent to the Editor. Plymouth Miniature Steam, a Company limited by guarantee, registered in England No. 3360128

## Your committee for 2023

Ian Jefferson	Chairman
Nick Hill	Vice Chairman
Ursula Brown	Secretary
James Atkinson	Treasurer
Selwyn Brown	Track Marshal
Alan Smith	
Bob Sims	
Ti Daley	
Rob Hitchcock	
Phil Chant	

Please make sure that any change of address, email or mailing preference are notified to the membership secretary promptly in order that we can keep you informed. If you do not wish to receive communication by phone or email, please ask the membership secretary to delete that information.

# Club Details

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**Front Cover:** Track renewal on the upper section of track. Bob Sims and Selwyn Brown are about to start work welding on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

## Editor's note:

Welcome to the slightly belated Spring 2023 issue of Goodwin Park News. Work has continued apace to complete the track renewals with the hope of re-opening the entire track as early as possible in the 2023 running season, excellent progress has been made by all those involved. In advance of the running season, we have also seen good progress on locomotive and rolling stock maintenance, grounds maintenance including the new planting of saplings around the site.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

*Phil Chant*

# New Members

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## New Members:

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Abby Staples

Aaron Parry

Duncan Ferguson



***“Fred” pictured in the workshop having completed winter maintenance on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.***

## From the Chair

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### From the Chair

Another year has passed and we now find ourselves with 2023, positively storming through. Whilst it is true that I have been landed with some extra work on the domestic front, the last 3 months have still kept me busy with work for the club. Thankfully we have not suffered extreme cold this winter, so the inevitable track and site maintenance has only really been affected by rain, which has been in fairly good supply. I must therefore thank those who have turned out, in often poor weather to progress the track repairs and especially the 'extras' who came to help with our biggest concrete pour yet, 17 cubic metres! Let's just hope that we do not have to revisit this particular section again for many years. There is however much still to be dealt with.

Whilst the track work is the most visible task at this time of year, there is a lot of other work that has to be done to ensure that the club continues to exist and is ready for the new year. So I have to thank all those who have contributed to ensuring this continuity. One of the most important events that we have during this quarter, is our Annual General Meeting and this is the first year that I can recall our having to defer the meeting purely because of the lack of attendees (previous occasions have been impacted by bad weather). We are required to hold this meeting and it is essential that there is a representative number of members present. This meeting is your opportunity to hear what your committee is doing and is your opportunity to influence the future direction for the club. You should see it as your duty to attend if you possibly can, otherwise you may not like the decisions that are taken on your behalf. The best way for you to influence the future direction of the club is actually for you to join the committee and help plan that future.

So what does our future hold? The first point here, is that we face exactly the same challenges as everyone else in the UK. Prices are rising for us all and we

## From the Chair

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are no exception. We have already been made aware that our insurance premium is rising by 7% or £150 this year. Also, this year is the 5th anniversary of our current lease and as a consequence a rent revision is due and being linked to RPI, it rises by 30% or £200 for this year and the next 4. These are the rises that we are aware of, but inevitably, there will be more that we will face in coming months. We do not wish to, and can not reasonably pass these costs on to members or the public, so we need to find new ways of raising these funds, in order to be able to remain solvent.

On more practical matters, we look forward to our opening for public running at the beginning of April. One of our newer members has offered to organise an 'Easter Egg Hunt', with prizes coming from external sources. We have therefore decided that we will open for the public on the first 3 Sundays in April, including the 'hunt' on Easter Sunday. This means that the members' Sunday will move to the 4th Sunday in April, being the 23rd. Then of course, the beginning of May, will see the coronation so we will decorate the station area on Sunday 7th, but it would be good if someone could organise some additional activities or interests. As these reflect our attempts to move back towards more pre Covid operations, we will also see some other changes including allowing birthday parties on public running Sundays from mid year. We have also received a request to see the return of an annual exhibition; consequently we do plan to hold one this year, on the first Sunday in September (being the 3rd). This however, will only work if it is supported by the membership at large, helping to set up, bringing exhibits of completed or in progress work, being there to steward the display and close down at the end. It is important that each exhibit is accompanied by a clear description or explanation as even those stewarding may not be aware of the details. A volunteer to help coordinate this would be welcomed as this would be an additional activity on this running day which could already be busy. Please help

## From the Chair

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us by telling a member of the committee what you can do to help, as we will need as much as we can muster.

So, as we move towards the end of the year, subject to everything going well, we will try to run on the 5th Sunday of October, with a Halloween special, much as we did successfully in 2021. Then because it has been requested by members of the public we will see if it is practical to run a single Christmas special on either December 10th or 17th; this would be dependent upon several factors and would inevitably not be to our usual timings. All of these will hopefully go to bring in a little more income and thereby offset some of those rising costs! But remember that none of this can be achieved without input from ourselves, so think, 'What can I do for the club?' rather than 'What can the club do for me?' After all, it is only by doing some of the former, that we can achieve some of the latter.

So where are those helpers, organisers, exhibitors, new committee members and future leaders? I hope there are some out there; we need them to keep this club going, to be your club of the future.

Ian.

### Advance Notice – 2023 Exhibition – Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September

We hope some of our members will support the exhibition being planned for Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the first in a number of years. There is much activity in members' workshops and we hope to see models and other projects.

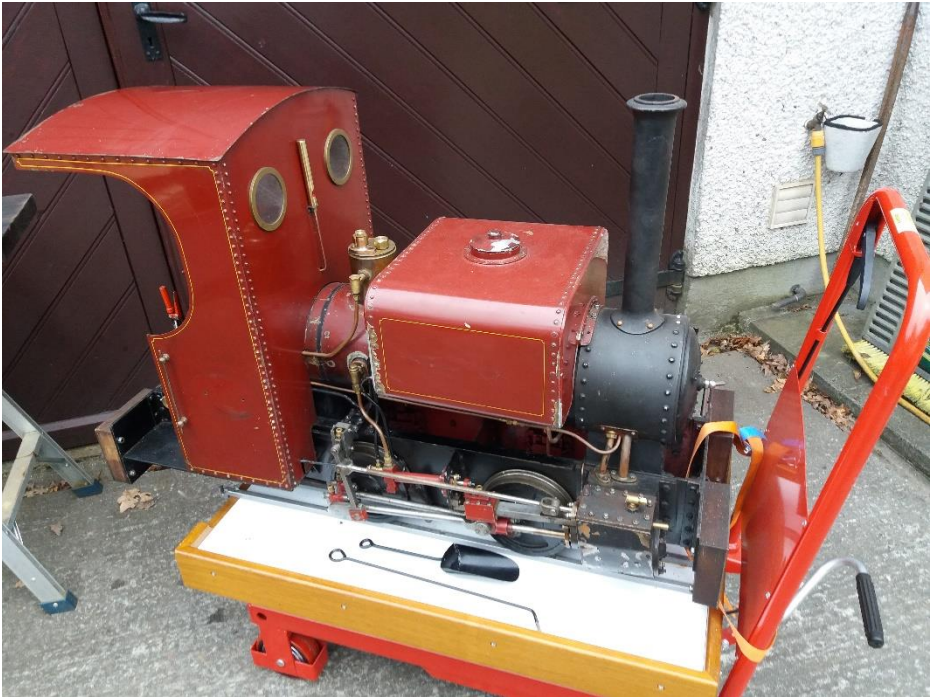
Don't be afraid to bring along unfinished projects which are always very interesting, particularly if there is some written history to go with them. We would like to think there is sufficient interest to make this event a success.

Please contact Rob Hitchcock if you would like to participate.

## **“Mabel” a 7 ¼ “ Wren Engine (Part 1) – By Rob Hitchcock**

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### **“Mabel” a 7 1/4” Wren engine (Part 1) – By Rob Hitchcock**



They say that everyone succumbs to a momentary period of insanity in their life, mine occurred in 2022 when I purchased a dilapidated and elderly 7 ¼” Kerr Stuart “Wren” which obviously needed a lot of work. The engine had originally belonged to a public school and was used on their own railway within the grounds, it had some minor rust associated with the plating and a water tender which is sat upon to drive the locomotive, it appeared to be minus the internal tank. The tender was not the original and had ride height and



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suspension issues. The engine was well used although despite its age, the boiler appeared sound apart from a known water leak from the regulator outlet joint in the smokebox. There was a certificate with the boiler but I would not like to leave myself open to legal action by discussing it. I intend to re-certify the boiler before public running such that this issue becomes redundant, hopefully I will not find any other major issues.



## **“Mabel” a 7 ¼ “ Wren Engine (Part 1) – By Rob Hitchcock**

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There was no superheater on this engine although there were two large flues containing restrictor spirals in the boiler to accommodate one, I think this was an option from Swann’s original design as I seem to remember “Hernias” first boiler having the same arrangement. The wheels were several millimetres under the design diameter which although shows some wear would be serviceable but need some attention in the future. It appeared as though the engine has had a mixture of inexpert maintenance together with some good work which had not been finished, for example the boiler is held up by copper brackets on the boiler and should rest on manufactured metal spacers to level the boiler rather than two pieces of firewood wedged in.

The capable looking boiler hand pump was seized up and much of the pipework needs attention, I also discovered much later that the safety valves were in danger of blowing out due to slackness in the threads, curiously the threaded holes were correct in size but the valve body threads look as though they had been manufactured more than .020” undersize. I have a scheme to remedy this but have not yet done it, more later. I think you can now imagine the type and scope of the repairs to be done and I am aware I took a calculated risk in not tackling the boiler issues first rather than working on the tender, this was because if the boiler would not come up to scratch there was no way in which the engine would be a runner in 2023 anyway and without the tender, I could not run the engine on the track.

The tender also took quite a lot of refurbishment. When examined closely each buffer beam was only held on by four 2BA bolts in shear. I had to reinforce the suspension, buffer beams and frames, also replace and increase all the brass 2BA bolts and nuts with steel, make four new couplings and two new spring buffers, also repaint and provide a new seat. Most of this is now complete apart from the painting of the platerwork and the seat. One of the

## **“Mabel” a 7 ¼ “ Wren Engine (Part 1) – By Rob Hitchcock**

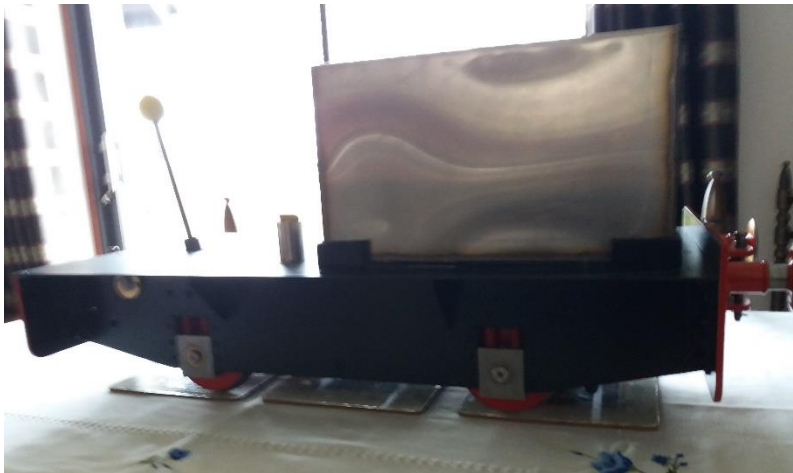
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most interesting tasks was the couplings, I had already decided that as this engine had been commercially built there were several items that did not strictly conform to the original design intent which in this case would have required a fabricated hook and chain restraint, I decided not to be too pedantic and make a non-standard pin type drawbar capable of adapting to varying height stock, this was made from 6mm plate and designed to be interlocking from laser cut parts, it is remarkable how well and precisely laser cut parts fit without much fettling. The parts were all tig welded, and retained by six 6mm bolts providing a very strong attachment. For the buffer heads I used a similar technique and rather than turn down 3” diameter bar, used laser cut discs welded to the buffer piston. I mentioned earlier that the tender did not appear to have an internal tank, I had assumed that at some time it had one but it is possible that it held water without, indicated by an excess of rusty bits. If it was designed to have no internal tank it must have been a very leaky one. I decided to fabricate a new 1.5mm thick stainless internal tank, which will sit on a new 2mm thick laser cut deck, the tank has a bottom outlet and a filler neck under the seat. This has been completed and seems to be about 15 litres capacity. while I was making the bottom outlet, I incorporated a mesh strainer which can be pulled out through the top filler for cleaning.

Having wrestled the engine with assistance onto a trailer to bring it home I began to realise that this is not an engine one can manhandle very easily, and having had a slipped disc last year (not related) decided that I had to design and build a handling system to move “Mabel” from home to track etc. this now consists of a rail bridge from my hydraulic lift onto the trailer which will have a set of rails on a board in the trailer bottom so that the engine can be fixed down for transportation. I will also need to modify the trailer with additional lashing points and legs.

# “Mabel” a 7 ¼ “ Wren Engine (Part 1) - By Rob Hitchcock

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I have just finished testing a new “Steaming up” blower which I made from kind donations of various bits and pieces namely a metal tumble drier fan casing and a 1960’s car heater motor. I also made a coal shovel and poker to suit the firebox hole. (See photos.) I hope to let you have some more detail in part 2. in which I will start to look at the boiler, having already rebuilt the handpump and made new mounting spacers and sourced some stainless plate to make a new ashpan. On purchase I knew there was a water leak around the top steam outlet to the cylinders this may be just a gasket issue caused by a lack of clamping force as the number and size of bolts holding it down appear inadequate, or it could be something more sinister. I have yet to expose and understand the regulator design which is vastly different to the original, consisting it would appear of a screw down conical valve and seat. I am hoping the regulator “bullet” is not seating on the outside part of the steam outlet in the smokebox as this will put the regulator screw down forces in competition with the bolts holding the outlet, it would then be fairly obvious why the leak is occurring. Anyway, more later when I can make time.



## **Book Plug and Concorde Museum – By Martin Elver**

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### **Book Plug and Concorde Museum – By Martin Elver**

How many book recommendations do we see in PMS club news? Not so many as may be. However, I was recently invited to a book launch for 'Bus to Bust' (yes this is actually the title), written to commemorate an ambitious bus trip and released on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Being as it was held in the hangar of the last Concorde; it was too good of an opportunity to pass up.

Although I had heard little bits of this story over the years, this was still a very interesting and entertaining evening.

A group of young (at the time, now in their 80s) people came together with the idea of taking a double decker bus from the UK to Canada, America, Mexico and then further south. I'm sure most people can remember 'Summer holiday' with Cliff Richard and Una Stubbs... It's been repeated, you don't have to be over 60!



## Book Plug and Concorde Museum – By Martin Elver

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Well, it was all the rage back then and inspired this trip, just with less spontaneous dancing. My father-in-law was among the crew who part sponsored the trip jumping on the ‘Back Briton’ political strategy of the day. This was to promote British products abroad in a similar way Flying Scotsman toured the USA back in 1968.



My wife then age 5 (I don't think I'm giving too much away there) can remember the Bristol bus parked at the end of their garden while it was converted into a viable live aboard tour bus. Ironically Bristol busses are green but the perception of a British bus abroad is obviously red, so it was repainted red for the expedition!



## **Book Plug and Concorde Museum – By Martin Elver**

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Several eye-opening accounts including gearbox issues and driving nonstop for 3 days because Canada drops to -40 degrees in the winter and the radiator and fuel lines promptly freeze if you stop!

The book is available on Amazon ...

I won't give any spoilers, let's just say everyone got back alive, just about. A good read by all accounts.

### **Concorde G-BOAF**

The venue for this event was a purpose-built hanger that accommodates the last Concorde constructed at Filton Bristol, affectionately referred to as Alpha Foxtrot.



*The old looking chap in the foreground – yes, it's me!*

## **Book Plug and Concorde Museum – By Martin Elver**

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When I started my working life, the Concorde programme had finished some 5 years previously but the British prototype 002 was stored at Filton and still held at an air-worthy readiness for flight.

She was subsequently found a new home and in 1979, made her last flight to the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovil.



*Last on the line,  
build number 216,  
Stock photo from  
the website:*

<https://aerospacebristol.org/last-concorde>

Following the sad loss of one of the French aircraft the whole fleet was modified in the light of crash investigations and refurbished with a view to flying for a further 10 years. Sadly, public confidence had been dented and passenger numbers never returned. The aircraft G-BOAF was stored, exposed to the element for several years until the timely hanger construction. This is a building I had been aware of for several years as my father John (also now a PMS member) had tirelessly fundraised for its construction, however to say I was suitably impressed is an understatement. It's well worth a visit if you're ever passing Cribbs Causeway (M5 junction 17) - type Filton Concorde into the internet for directions or follow brown signs.

# New Planting, Mulch, Coffee Grinds and Such Like – By Martin Elver

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## New Planting. Mulch, Coffee Grinds and Such Like – Martin Elver

As business returns to the 'Old Normal', it is hoped our visitor numbers will return to us and possibly increase. To this end, we are very slowly taking back our parking area and removing self-seeded trees from the car park. Just like the controversy with trees on Armada Way in Plymouth, this can be a little emotive with our residents so it's only right that we are seen to be putting something back. With this in mind over the winter I have several cuttings taken from Goodwin Park and other hedge rows that have rooted ready for planting.



***Intended to enhance our running track***

As those of us that have ever attempted to put a spade into our grounds know, it's hard and stony. I am looking for mulch in the way of saw dust and coffee grinds etc. I don't think we can handle kitchen or garden waste as this will need some level of processing and may encourage vermin but anything that would improve the soil would be welcome.

# Track Repair Pictorial

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## Track Repair Pictorial

We hope to include a detailed resume of works carried out on the track through Winter 2022 and into 2023 in a future issue, but in the meantime, here are some pictures of work in progress.



***Nick Hill and Rob Hitchcock survey progress as the laying of new track approaches the crossover on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.***

# Track Repair Pictorial

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*Looking back towards the crossover behind Little Rock on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.*



*Looking up towards the bridge, newly laid track awaits top screed on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.*

## Track Repair Pictorial

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*And finally, an excellent picture of two students from UTC Plymouth practicing their welding skills on the new track.*

## Club Diary Dates - 2023

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02/04/2023	Public Running Sunday
09/04/2023	Public Running and Easter Egg Hunt - Easter Sunday
16/04/2023	Public Running Sunday – Easter Sunday
20/04/2023	Start of Summer Term – TorBridge High
23/04/2023	Committee Meeting and members’ Sunday
07/05/2023	Public Running Sunday
14/05/2023	Committee meeting and members’ Sunday
18/05/2023	Torbridge High – last of first half term
21/05/2023	Public Running Sunday
24/05/2023	Summer Magazine press date
04/06/2023	Public Running Sunday
08/06/2023	Torbridge High – start of second half of term
11/06/2023	Committee meeting and members’ Sunday
18/06/2023	Public Running Sunday
02/07/2023	Public Running Sunday
06/07/2023	End of Summer Term – TorBridge High
09/07/2023	Committee meeting and members’ Sunday
09/07/2023*	Summer Barbeque TBC
16/07/2023	Public Running Sunday
06/08/2023	Public Running Sunday
13/08/2023	Members’ Sunday
20/08/2023	Public Running Sunday
24/08/2023	Autumn Magazine press date
03/09/2023	Public Running Sunday and Exhibition
10/09/2023	Committee meeting and members’ Sunday
TBA	Torbridge High –Start of Autumn Term
17/09/2023	Public Running Sunday
01/10/2023	Public Running Sunday
08/10/2023	Members’ Sunday
TBA	Torbridge High – last of first half term
15/10/2023	Public Running Sunday
TBA	Torbridge High – start of second half of term
19/11/2023	Committee meeting

## Club Diary Dates - 2023

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24/11/2023	Winter Magazine press date
TBA	End of Autumn Term – TorBridge High
10/12/2023	Committee meeting
01/01/2024	Members' day

Dates marked \* are TBA / subject to confirmation

### **The "Tuesday Gang"**

Meet weekly at the track from 9:30 to Midday. The jobs tackled include mowing, DIY on the building, maintenance of locos and rolling stock, painting bridges etc.

### **Workshop Evenings**

Workshop facilities available to members at 'Tor Bridge High', Plymouth. £30 per term (10 weeks) or £3.50 per session. Thursday eves (6:30-8:30pm) during term time.