

Goodwin Park News

Winter 2023



Club Details

The newsletter of Plymouth Miniature Steam. Published quarterly (normally March, June, September & December) and issued free to members. **Cut-off date for submissions is 24th 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, £35 per term (10 weeks) or £4 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: A view of the Winter 2023 track repairs looking from the level crossing to the crossover point. Pictured on Sunday 17th December and things are almost ready for the concrete pour on 21st December 2023.

Editor's note:

Welcome to the slightly belated Winter 2023 issue of Goodwin Park News

The close of the 2023 running season came on Sunday 29th October with a special Halloween event. A huge vote of thanks should be given to those who put much effort into setting up the site with some excellent props and special effects and of course those who operated the trains throughout the event –including the very popular Ghost Train!

Work is underway on track repair and renewal which will set us up for a good start to the 2024 running season, this is pictured on the front cover and you can read more on page 26 of this issue.

Phil Chant

New Members

New Members:

No new members this quarter.



It is Sunday 1st October and spiders are encroaching on "Hernia" ahead of the Plymouth Miniature Steam Halloween Special Running Day on Sunday 29th October 2023.

From the Chair

From the Chair

The clocks have gone back to GMT; the calendar has rolled on to November and the Christmas adverts are being pushed down our throats with ever increasing force. It can only mean that 2023 is approaching its end. Looking back on the year as a whole, we have done fairly well and above all remain solvent. Our public running Sundays have almost returned to 2019 levels but it would have been nice to have seen a few more people at the members' Sundays, in particular the barbeque. In addition to these, we did run a couple of events for local school groups, one of which was so appreciated that they have already placed a booking for next year. Unfortunately another such day, which held the prospect of a bit more income was cancelled by the organiser at the last minute and soon thereafter we lost a public Sunday because of a severe downpour! Fortunately, our planned Halloween event helped to recoup these shortfalls.

At the October half term, the 'vandals', alias the track gang, descended on one of the last portions of the upper circuit and started lifting the track, as part of this years planned maintenance. This was all built into the plans for Halloween and even formed part of the story behind our advertising on Facebook. I have to commend both Ti and Steve for the thought and effort they put in to the preparation and execution of this exercise. Not only did they decorate the site, but the service locomotives were adorned with 'costumes', Fred and Hernia were temporarily renamed, becoming 'Plymwards Castle, and 'Flapping Plymouthian' respectively, and the 'ghost train', which formed a significant part of the story made another appearance on part of the track that had been closed for the maintenance. In addition to all of this work, a raffle and seasonal sales stall yielded an appreciable additional income for the club. Many members and public entered into the spirit of the event, appearing in costume,

From the Chair

there were certainly a number of skeletons wandering around, as well as a gorilla and a 'pink panther', I think I even saw 'Uncle Fester'.



From the Chair



So, now that we are well and truly into the maintenance season and the ground is becoming softer with all the recent rain and storms, the bulk of the track maintenance work has started. At the northeast corner of the site, not only has the track been lifted between the level crossing and the crossover, but the track bed has now been dug out and preparations have already been made to get this ready for a new concrete bed. This area has always suffered from surface water and poor drainage so it is unsurprising that the trench is still holding water. Whilst this is a very visible part of the maintenance there is much more to be done both on and off site. So if you can spare even a part day, please either turn up when the weekly call comes out or ask Selwyn, Nick or myself and we will see if we can match you to some of the jobs. One extra that was done recently whilst a digger was on site was to remove one of the large tree stumps that had been restricting the top car park. This proved quite a challenge, but once the ground has been reinstated and settled we will gain a couple more parking spaces so hopefully relieving pressure from people parking on Pendeen Crescent.

From the Chair



A few weeks ago I was given a postcard, which showed a large number of children waiting for a ride on a miniature railway. This was recorded as having been taken in Central Park and was reported by the Western Morning News in August 1946. The postcard also referenced a web site, www.focpp.org.uk/timeline which yielded further information. It would appear that this venture was created and operated by one G.A. Dingle of Kelly Bray and ran during the summers of 1946 and 47. The intention had been to create a circular track, laid straight on the grass, but the locomotive could not cope with the gradient so they changed to an 'out and back' arrangement, the charge for a ride being one shilling (5p) for adults and 6d (2½ p) for children, this being a significant amount in those days. The locomotive was supposedly

From the Chair

based on an LNER Pacific named Tamar Queen and from the photographs and the claim that it weighed over 1.5 tons looked to be 10¼" inch gauge. A search on the locomotive's name reveals a slightly different history, giving a build date of 1933 by one HCS Bullock, but does record the use in Plymouth by Archie Dingle, later it spent a lot of time at a private line in St Austell and was then stored until 2016. She is now named Western Queen and is based at the Eastleigh Lakeside Railway.

As we begin to look to the future, all too soon we will find ourselves at the turn of the year and once again our subscriptions will fall due. You will receive your renewal notice shortly along with the club accounts and AGM notice. Once again, we have booked the AGM to be held in the workshops at Torbridge High on February 1st 2024. Remember that this is not only your opportunity to check up what the club is doing in your name, but it is your responsibility to try to attend to ensure that it is being done correctly. It is also your opportunity to help direct the direction that the club is taking, by joining the committee, the names of any nominees should be with the secretary by the end of this year, so please think and either volunteer yourself or encourage a fellow member to join; we are always in need of 'new blood'.

As for myself, yes I have been on my travels again, back to the north east and also to a new destination. This provided me with a welcome break from my ongoing task of sorting over 40 years' worth of accumulated detritus. The majority of the finds bring thoughts of 'why keep that!', but some are more interesting or amusing. I came across one such recently, in the form of a cast brass plaque with several holes and some interesting writing. If you are able to identify it, you are most welcome to it; as a clue, it helps if you can read German!

From the Chair



May I take this opportunity to wish you well for the coming 'festive season' and if you need a break to work off some of the excess, just come along to Goodwin Park. I'm sure we can help you.

Ian.

LMS Royal Saloon Carriage No 798 at the SVR

LMS Royal Saloon Carriage No 798 at the Severn Valley Railway – by Ursula Brown

Sophie and I visited the Severn Valley Railway in June 2023 and decided to visit The Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley Station as we had heard that the café is good. Having wandered around the visitor centre and having seen many celebrity locomotives, we were drawn to the splendid LMS Maroon 798 Royal Saloon Carriage. We were fortunate to ask about a tour time and the member of staff raced off to get the key for us to have a private tour inside the carriage.



Three Royal carriages were built in 1941 during the second world war, two were Royal Saloons and the third a sleeping, brake and power carriage for the staff. The carriages were all made with armour plating on the sides and roof and also utilised bullet proof glass. The carriages measured 69 feet long and weighed in 56 tonnes each unlike the standard carriages today of 15 to 17 tonnes. The reason for building these carriages was the safety of the King and

LMS Royal Saloon Carriage No 798 at the SVR

Queen as they toured the United Kingdom visiting many badly bombed cities during the war and to raise morale among the population. The carriages continued in use for decades after the war had ended.

We entered at the rear or staff end of the carriage where there was a small passageway with photographs of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (later the Queen Mother) on display.



Our guide explained about the build and that they used to have a sort of air conditioning which operated by having large plates underneath the carriage upon which huge blocks of ice were placed to cool the carriages as they moved forward, though not so efficient when the train was stationary. He also explained that there were two telephones and how they would be connected to the network at allotted stations by a telephone engineer who would be on standby.

LMS Royal Saloon Carriage No 798 at the SVR

We moved down the corridor on to the Valet's room which was very compact. It had a short bed which was from window to passage, with a luggage rack above. A toilet and sink which would double up as a chair and desk area by dropping a wooden board over them.

Next came the Kings bathroom. Which had a full-size bath in it, along with sink and toilet. There was also a cabinet in here which was quite slim and is assumed to be a secure document box, a train version of a "red box".



LMS Royal Saloon Carriage No 798 at the SVR

Through the bathroom you enter the Kings bedroom.



This was a teak wooden panelled room with soft lighting. There was a single bed, bedside table, dressing table and large wardrobe and a chair. There were also various plug-in electrical devices, these generally being two pin but there was a copper heater which had a four pin plug, I couldn't find a socket for either. From the Kings bedroom you re-enter the corridor and find yourself in a very lovely saloon area.



LMS Royal Saloon Carriage No 798 at the SVR



This room was a very relaxing area with a desk and red telephone for the Kings use. In the above photo note the onyx ashtray as the King was a heavy smoker, also the bottle of Quink ink. There is a side table which houses a radio, a settee and two large fabric comfy chairs and a small coffee table. This was all presented laid out with platter of fruit and flowers in vases, a tea set and decanter and glasses ready for drink. Then finally the last passage way is for the King and Queen to exit from. This is a wooden panelled area, with 2 large doors which weigh 2 tonnes each and open inwards, so there is no obstruction to seeing the Royal party as they alight the train.

LMS Royal Saloon Carriage No 798 at the SVR



It is believed that this saloon carriage was used by Winston Churchill to hold talks to end the war.

After the death of King George VI, the carriages were used by Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip until replacements were built by British Rail for the Silver Jubilee in 1977.

The Queen's carriage LMS 799 is currently on display at NRM York and the brake van was unfortunately scrapped in 1991.

A1 Trust Convention 2023

A1 Trust Convention 2023– By Ian Jefferson

Despite having been to Darlington at the beginning of August to see the newly occupied ‘works’, I headed north again in October to attend the annual convention. This was an opportunity to catch up on developments with ‘Tornado’ and ‘Prince of Wales’ as well as seeing the changes around the site in the past few weeks. I also decided that it would be good to break the return journey, but you will have to wait till next year to hear about that!

This year, the first part of the convention was held at a different location, being the ‘Hall Garth Hotel’ very much on the northern outskirts of town. Inevitably much of the news centred around Tornado’s much delayed overhaul. The issue of the boiler tubes was clarified, as was the reason for the rejection of the replacement set. Thankfully this has all been resolved and additional checks have been carried out to ensure that such issues do not impact the boiler destined for Prince of Wales, nor the following spare. These were however, not the only issues, having run some 130,000 miles, more wear and distortion was found in the frames, which all required rectification. Then there was the issue of the fitment of ETCS (European Train Control System), requiring appreciable work to fit the equipment in the tender and all the additional sensors, displays and cabling on the locomotive. There was also the issue where a recent problem on Britannia, highlighted the risk of failure of a crosshead, so being of similar design, they were checked and early signs of cracking was found, so these were rectified before they became a problem. The good news was that whilst we were sat there other members of the Trust were with Tornado, performing a steam test on the recently reinstalled boiler. The aim being that the reassembly should be completed by the end of November, to be followed by running in and testing of ETCS over the subsequent weeks, before returning to active service by the spring. Some of which will include demonstrating the capabilities of the ETCS installation to prospective users.

With the delays to Tornado’s overhaul and the move to the new works, progress on Prince of Wales has inevitably taken a ‘back seat’. Thus there has

A1 Trust Convention 2023

been relatively little progress to see over the past few months. The one major step forward has been the delivery of the cylinder assembly, weighing in at 5½ tons, now fully pressure tested and hopefully ready for installation. The plan for the next year being very much subject to funding, should include the delivery of the boiler and tender frames, fitting the cylinder assembly, finalising the wheelsets and valve gear along with creation of the first cambox which will then be tested to prove its reliability. Dependent upon the outcome of the testing, it may be fitted or a replacement made for fitment along with the second unit.

Despite having been in the new works for some 6 months now, there is still quite a bit of 'settling in' including finding all those bits that everyone loses when you move house and finding places to store things. However, being a new building it has all the 'mod cons' so much so that the toilet has been entered for the 'loo of the year award'. Meanwhile the old works has been handed back to the council for repurposing as part of the facilities for the S&D 200 celebrations. The evidence of these works being evident around this part of the town, although as I found later they are not to the approval of everyone.

So, after a quick lunch, we boarded the busses to take us to the new works on Bonomi Way. I am always amused by the names given to some roads by the local authorities, but I will clarify this one for you later. The site occupied by the trust is almost half a mile long along the northern side of the Bishop Auckland line. Going back 50 years, this was heavily occupied by railway works, but recent years has seen a lot of it become derelict or used for other purposes. The aerial photograph (kindly supplied by the trust) shows the new works, with the bulk of the site off to the right (west); to the left (east) is North Road station, which is now occupied by the 'Head of Steam' museum although I see that it is in the process of being renamed. The open space on the other side of the line was at one time, part of the Darlington scrap yard! Beyond that is the old, premises used by the Trust, with the class 37 standing outside and beyond that, some of the residential areas of the town can be seen.

A1 Trust Convention 2023



Aerial view of the new works

Inside, the cylinder block was evident, covered in a large blue sheet, apparently borrowed from a local theatre! And once everyone had arrived Steve Davies welcomed us all and gave a further update on progress. Then, reassembled around the cylinder block, the large sheet was removed with some difficulty, revealing the first new 'monobloc' for over 60 years. This gave everyone an opportunity to study it in whatever level of detail they wished. Outside, the evidence of preparation for tracklaying was also very evident, with sleepers, rail and point work piled, awaiting installation. As I write this, the Royal Engineers have already paid one visit to the site and begun laying the first of many panels of track.

A1 Trust Convention 2023



A1 Trust Convention 2023



The Cylinder Block

A1 Trust Convention 2023

On this occasion, a number of us were led, schoolboy style, the couple of hundred yards along Whessoe Road passing more piles of rail and sleepers, to the other building leased by the Trust. Dating from 1861, this building and the ground around it was until a few months ago, occupied by a car breakers. Now, with the building having been restored and reroofed, one half will be occupied by the Trust with the other half, shared by NELPG and DRPS. Currently in storage in the shed was 'JOEM', the LNER J72 locomotive owned by NELPG. Eventually this building will be connected into the track layout as a three-road running shed with access to the Bishop Auckland line and eventually a turntable, capable of turning any British locomotive. The location for which is already being pegged out on land just opposite McDonald's! As for the source of a suitable turntable, apparently there are still a number available in Germany!



A1 Trust Convention 2023



The 1861 Shed

A1 Trust Convention 2023



The site reserved for the turntable

And so ended another visit to see the progress on Prince of Wales, but the day was not done. For once I wanted to visit another location a short distance away; Skerne Bridge. You will have seen images of it, as it is one of the most reproduced woodcuts from the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, it also was included on the Stephenson £5 note that was in circulation until a few years ago. This bridge dates from 1824 and is the oldest railway bridge still in use; it was designed by one 'Ignatius Bonomi' hence the naming of the road 'Bonomi Way'. This bridge over the river Skerne, was clearly widened at some date, but the deck of the addition has now been removed leaving only the abutments (just visible through the main arch), therefore only the downstream side of the bridge shows the original structure, although it would appear that additional abutments were added at some time as the stonework is in a different style. Unfortunately, the bridge is partially hidden by undergrowth and some of the industrial detritus of recent decades.

A1 Trust Convention 2023



Skerne Bridge

In the evening, approximately half of us returned to the 'Hall Garth' for the dinner. The guest speaker this year was the general manager of the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways, Paul Lewin. His talk touched on 2 main topics, the first of which covered the fact that they have through the preservation years completed no less than 5 'new builds', the latest of which is a Double Fairlie named 'James Spooner'. The second topic looked at how the Covid pandemic had given them the time and justification to look critically at some of their trading practices because of poor financial predictions from the preceding few years. This highlighted the need to change many long-standing attitudes and practices, in order to respond to the changing public behaviour. A simple example being that you will no longer find timetables in the glossy brochures, that can be found in information racks. This certainly gave me a bit of food for thought.

And so ended another visit to the 'North East'. My plan as I said was to split the return journey, so instead of turning right near Doncaster to head west, I planned to continue a little further south, on what could be classed as an 'Ultra Secret Mission'. But you will have to wait until the next magazine to hear about that!

Winter Track Repair Work 2023/24

Winter Track Repair Work 2023/24 – Nick Hill

After we had many derailments (I think it was five, but may have been 6) on the stretch of track between the vehicle crossing and the crossover points, it was decided that we would have to do a detailed survey of this stretch of track. The survey covered approximately 50m of track and looked at the elevation (the up and down of the track) and the super elevation (the angle between the inner and outer rails) and this was measured every 0.5m (and it left me crippled for the following week!). However, once the readings had been plotted, it showed up multiple problems, and we could then explain some of the unexplained derailments.

As we were having an extra running day for Halloween, we could close the upper track and run on the lower track only (giving our visitors a double ride round). As the week before the extra running day was half-term holiday, we could lift the old rail and break up the old track bed and do some other prep work prior to really starting the repair work.

Removing the old track base was an interesting experience, we did find some small patches of acceptable concrete base, but the majority were either breaking up (it may have been shown some cement), or far too thin (about 50mm thick). Then there was the bit where the track can flood, as the breaker has put down on the concrete, we could see it going down, then as the breaker was taken off it came back up! So was actually floating.

Winter Track Repair Work 2023/24



Initial removal of the old track pictured on 29th October 2023

Winter Track Repair Work 2023/24



Shuttering is now in place on 26th November 2023

Winter Track Repair Work 2023/24

Having mentioned the Halloween special, I really must thank the members who did so much to make this a special day for all our visitors, the site was dressed up with ghosts floating in the woods, and many other topical props, the ghost train came out again and was really enjoyed by everyone who rode on it, and we even had a stall selling various Halloween bits and pieces, thanks to the daughter of a member. The feedback from social media was very positive, so again many thanks for the hard work, it was really worth it.

So, the following weekend (the 4/5th November), we had a digger (thanks to Nigel for arranging to borrow this from South West water) and a dumper on site, the new trench was dug out and a stump from the car park, after putting up a valiant fight, was removed (only another five or six to go).

Then, the following weekend we put almost all stakes in, and started getting the shuttering in place, after a quick recalculation, the first side was repositioned and is now correct. Then over the weekend of the 18th/19th, we finished the shuttering and dug out the last bit of trench.

So, looking forward, we have the MOT-Sub base to go in (I think we will need about 4 metric tons) and compacted, the cable ducting fitted, then the steel reinforcement and then finally the concrete (again I think about 10³m). It is difficult to give a date for the concrete pour, but I am aiming for a Saturday and hopefully before, dare I say it, Christmas. So, watch out for my weekly post for the actual date, but if we continue at the rate we are currently going, it could be the 16th of December. If we miss this date, then we could look at the end of the following week, as I will be on holiday from Wednesday.

In addition, to the track work, there has been the normal maintenance to the cover plates, painting on the bridges and other jobs that must be done at this time of year. But we have only just started to scratch the list of jobs that need

Winter Track Repair Work 2023/24

to be done. I must thank everyone who has come out to help, especially the younger members, and John for keeping us going with great victuals.

As normal, in addition to the work, there is tea drinking, biscuits to eat and chatting to be done, so if you can spare any time, please feel free to come on down and join us, keeping our railway running.

Club Diary Dates - 2024

Club Diary Dates- 2024

01/01/2024	Members' day
11/01/2024	TorBridge High - Start of Spring Term
01/02/2024	AGM – TorBridge 6:45pm
08/02/2024	TorBridge High – last of first half term
22/02/2024	Torbridge High – start of second half of term
24/02/2024	Press Date for Spring Magazine
28/03/2024	End of Spring Term – TorBridge High
07/04/2024	Public Running Sunday
14/04/2024	Committee meeting and members' Sunday
18/04/2024	Start of Summer Term – TorBridge High
21/04/2024	Public Running Sunday
05/05/2024	Public Running
12/05/2024	Committee meeting and members' Sunday
14/05/2024	Rock-a-Tots special running morning
16/05/2024	Torbridge High – last of first half term
19/05/2024	Public Running Sunday
24/05/2024	Summer Magazine press date
02/06/2024	Public Running Sunday
06/06/2024	Torbridge High – start of second half of term
09/06/2024	Committee meeting and members' Sunday
16/06/2024	Public Running Sunday
04/07/2024	End of Summer Term – TorBridge High
07/07/2024	Public Running Sunday
14/07/2024	Committee meeting and members' Sunday
14/07/2024 *	Summer Barbeque
21/07/2024	Public Running Sunday
04/08/2024	Public Running Sunday
11/08/2024	Members' Sunday
18/08/2024	Public Running Sunday
24/08/2024	Autumn Magazine press date
01/09/2024	Public Running Sunday
08/09/2024	Committee meeting and members' Sunday
15/09/2024	Public Running Sunday

Club Diary Dates - 2023

06/10/2024	Public Running Sunday
13/10/2024	Members' Sunday
20/10/2024	Public Running Sunday
17/11/2024	Committee meeting
24/11/2024	Winter Magazine press date
01/01/2025	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.