

Lancashire & District Section



May & June 2003 - No. 35



Two Great Steam-Ups - Our Rishton correspondent reports...

Still brill with Phil & Jill

On the Sunday afternoon prior to the main bank holiday weekend a good representative group of the LADS met at Phil and Jill Pacey's in Preston. *Sunday 18 May*

Going through the gate at the side of the house into the garden at the rear is to enter a world of peace and serenity such that even the raised tones of 45millers would be hushed. The railway too basks quietly in the fitful sunshine this afternoon. In true Colonel Stephens fashion it meanders round the garden taking to mini contours wherever possible creating a marvellous scene of rural charm and tranquility.

This afternoon for no other reason than they were there, diesels predominated the running roster with the LADS ably demonstrating their engineering skills with beautifully crafted stock and locos.

A real attraction for the adventurous explorer at Phil's is the long quarry branch which leaves the main line at the end of the causeway and climbs steadily up the embankment alongside the canal. Here nature has really taken over and the line has blended into the banking almost overwhelmed by grass, lichens and the all

pervasive moss. In the flickering sunlight filtering through the branches you'd swear for a moment that the halfway station was Corris in 1957 as the tipper skips trundle through with their wheels lost in the vegetation.

The peace of Phil and Jill's was reflected in the quiet, unassuming chatter of the LADS. Talk was of early days in 16mm; of Pooters; the Middleforth Light Railway; Perkins diesels; first Friogs and much more. Even this gentle murmur of conversation was

stilled by the delightful refreshments received with happy burbles of pleasure from the LADS. The trains ran, the birds sang, leaves rustled, a canal boat pattered past.... the LADS let out a collective sigh of contentment.

"Lovely afternoon....," said one.

"Very peaceful...." came the soft reply, as if seeking an explanation for this unusual phenomena at a LADS meeting.

"Where's Chris and Mike and Cliff?" added someone else.

"Three hundred miles away in Merstham," came the rejoinder.

"AAAHH," said the LADS together, as the reason for tranquility dawned!

A Triumph of engine-newity

Addicts of trivial pursuits and great sages like Alex will instantly recognise the make and model of car when they see the phrase, "turns on a sixpence!" Answer: Triumph Herald c1962 which had a turning circle of 25 feet. Well done Alex and everyone else of a certain age! Dave (The Doc) Wilding's railway is the 16mm equivalent of the Triumph Herald!. He never fails to amaze the LADS with the amount that he can get into such a compact site. *Sunday 1 June*

New on the block this time were heightened bridges, new track layout, a superb goods yard and the Chorley equivalent of the Anderton boat lift except that this was a truck lift. Again, Dave's penchant for pneumatics as power proved to be the driving force for this engineering masterpiece and of course enabled some wag to declare predictably that Dave's always got wind!

A great turn up of LADS ensured another great afternoon's steaming and purring. Dave and Margaret's back garden area was so full it reminded me of a full crowd on Turf Moor. Everyone managed to get a run, nothing was stood on and nobody's tea was knocked over and so long as we treated Mike and Chris as a roundabout everything went very smoothly.

There is however a strange phenomena which overcomes the LADS at Dave Wilding's and it's nothing to do with Margaret's splendid tea. It's now known in LADS' circles as the Wilding Wind-up. The first sign of this mysterious but harmless phenomena is the first movement of a steam loco as it clears condensate from its pistons. The driver (radio or manual) will watch it closely along with several other 16mm roadies. Together, and in perfect unison, the entire clutch of LADS will turn to the right and gather speed in turning as the loco gathers speed round Dave's layout. There will come a moment however, when the loco's gas supply falters and dies bringing the loco and train to a gentle halt. This, unfortunately is not the case with the mesmerised spectators who

have spun gently on their collective axis 197 times within 10 minutes. This is where the "Wilding Wind-up" kicks in. Brains tell bodies to stop turning, bodies do not react and in a dizzy heap the full impact of the "Wind-up" can be observed. The worst case was that of a young Phil Sixsmith who turned round so rapidly at Dave's whilst witnessing the burnished brass of a brand new Pearce, that he wound himself around himself!

But that's the beauty of Dave's layout.... A lot of thought, an equal measure of graft and that Wilding stroke of genius makes the Wilding Wind-up one of our real gems. A cracking afternoon.... many thanks to Dave and Margaret for their tremendous hospitality and long patience with the rest of us middle-aged adolescents.

As for the Triumph Herald did you know that it had 4 cylinders; a cubic capacity of 984cc; a compression ratio of 8:1; BHP 34.5
.....ZZZZZZZZ!

"Diesel Do"

CHRONICLES

An occasional extract
from the diary of Alex Milne

Beginning

When I purchased my first steam loco I would stand and watch it as it got steam up - I'm sure most of us did this.

Eventually I realised that my immediate presence was not necessary and the loco could cope on its own. This of course gave me time on my hands. Some of it could be spent 'walking the track' to clear any

debris that mother nature had seen fit to deposit since the last run. But the track was not very long and except in the Autumn when there were a lot of leaves, maintenance was generally minimal. How nice it would be to have a train running while I waited for pressure to rise. I felt there was a place for another loco - battery powered this time.

Middle

So a Fendyke 0-4-0 battery powered diesel was bought and was soon running, and at scale speed too. Power was supplied by two AA batteries and the motor was connected to the front pair of wheels.

I purchased a few Coopercraft Slate Wagons and re-wheeled them with "Home of '0' Gauge" coarse scale wheels and added 'slate'. I was a little disappointed that the more wagons I put on, the more the loco struggled.

I thought that more weight was needed over the driving wheels, but where to put it? This was not going to be a quick half hour job and required some thought.

At about that time Bill Cook let me have one of the Coopercraft coal wagons and that set me thinking along the line I eventually followed. I removed the batteries and connections from the loco and in their place put two battery sized lengths of brass rod. Extra weight - so far so good.

Two pairs of batteries (for extra running time) went into the coal wagon which would remain permanently coupled. Wires ran from the coal wagon, one to the motor and one to the control switch, also to a headlight, but more of this later.

More weight was added. A length of brass rod was drilled in the centre and a cut down nail put in the hole to represent the filler cap

of a fuel tank which was then glued on the side. A Roundhouse tool box at the front added even more weight. So it ran well and pulled a reasonable length of wagons. Job done!

Well, not quite. The coal wagon was open so you could see the batteries. So I decided to make a coal load.

From somewhere in the 'bit box' I found a Buzzer and thought it might be nice to have "sound". The buzzer and two AAA batteries also went inside the wagon.

Plasticard glued round the insides of the wagon formed a lip for a larger piece of Plasticard to form the base of the coal load. The push button to work the buzzer was fixed through a hole, coal was glued on and a large piece fixed to the push button. Press the right piece of coal and the buzzer sounds!

The wagon was painted dirty colours and of course didn't match the diesel which had been sprayed GWR green. So the diesel was 'weathered' and one or two things added.

A small headlight was put on the top of the bonnet (useful for knowing where your loco is if you run in the dark). A filler cap for the radiator was an '0' gauge coach door handle, a driver, hand rails, and name plates were also fitted.

Job done!

End

Well, not quite. I'm as daft as the next person, so you'll understand my concern for the poor driver, out in any weather and with no protection at all. Something had to be done for him. Make a full cab? Well I'm not that concerned, a windscreen would have to do.

The frame was made first from "L" shaped brass and then some clear Plasticard cut to fit it. The frame was painted GWR green to match the paint on the rest of the loco and it looked - Awful! It looked like an advert for Mr Muscle Window Cleaner. A sparkling windscreen on a dirty-ish loco.

So the windscreen needed weathering down with the same tones as the rest of the loco. But I thought, if that happens the driver won't be able to see where he is going - he needs a windscreen wiper.

A 'motor' was made from some plastic tubing and fixed to the inside and a 'wiper blade' made from very thin Plasticard fitted to the outside. I put some masking tape on the outside to cover the arc the wiper blade would follow and gave it a light spray with dirty browns and greys.

The driver can now see where he's going, day or night, fair weather or foul and he can pull decent loads for a reasonable length of time at a moderate speed.

Alex Milne



The History of the Lancashire Area Group :

Part 2

Phil Pacey continues the story...

As Andrew Armstrong recalled in his first instalment of the present group's 'pre-history' [see issue 33 - February & March '03], responsibility for co-ordinating the Association's Lancashire Area Group, as it was then called, passed to me at the end of 1990. I had joined the Group, with our eldest son, Ben, a year or so earlier; one of the first meetings we attended was at the Middleforth Light Railway at Penwortham, the creation of the Peter Dolan who had died some years before.

The Group, principally through the efforts of Chris Moss, and with the blessing of Peter's widow, Renee, had kept this line in operation since Peter's death in 1987, but now the time had come to lift the track, a sad undertaking carried out by several members in January 1991. Items of track were distributed to various members – a triple point is still in place on our garden railway as I write – and track from Middleforth was used on the group's first portable layout. This comprised a series of connecting baseboards

...and track from Middleforth was used on the group's first portable layout

supported on demountable legs, devised and built for us by Bill Cook; track laying was a social affair which took place in Bill's garden. To accompany the layout, panels were produced with photographs of garden railways and information promoting the Association; a board was also made bearing the name of the layout – 'The Middleforth Light Railway'.

I haven't been able to verify the exact dates of the construction of the layout, but it was certainly complete by 6th June, 1992, when we operated it at a model railway exhibition at Canterbury Hall, Preston. The following month it made an appearance at the Lostock Hall Carnival.

Other highlights in 1992 included a visit to Peter Holland's Admiralty Light Railway on 1st March. This was a joint meeting with the Cheshire Group, several members of which made us envious by operating steam locomotives built by John Turner, a member of their group who was present in person.

On 4th July, several of us paid a visit to Bill Atkin's remarkable Winster Valley Railway at Levens, where we were obliged to submit to the unfamiliar disciplines of following a timetable, obeying signals, and recording train movements.

...reminded me how close we came to setting the Hall on fire...

I have no record of events in 1993, except that, in September, we accepted an invitation to operate the portable layout at a model railway exhibition in the Marine Hall, Fleetwood. Steve Colling has reminded me how close we came to setting the Hall on fire!

In 1994, in addition to our usual visits to members' gardens, we enjoyed a trip to Rochdale to run our trains on Mel Jones' railway, complete with a spectacular bridge. Despite living in Lancashire, Mel chooses to associate with our Yorkshire counterparts; as a Yorkshireman myself, I can hardly blame him!

In July, 1994, we again set up the layout in Canterbury Hall as part of the 'Purely Narrow Gauge' exhibition organised by the 009 Society.

I can remember operating the layout on a number of occasions which I can't put a date to – I'm not even sure of the year. On one time we

set it up beside the miniature railway in Worden Park, Leyland. Another time, also outdoors, we operated it at the summer fete of a special school next to Moor Park in Preston. It made an indoor appearance at the 21st Northern Models Exhibition at Runshaw College, Leyland.

In addition to our modelling activities, Ben and I also played with 'real' trains at the West Lancashire Light Railway, and we were able to bring the two together by persuading the Group to set up the portable layout at special events at Hesketh Bank. In time it came to live there, and is still there, stored in one of the WLLR's metre gauge vans. Members of the Group were given cab rides, and at least one joined the WLLR.

On July 31st 1994, the Group hosted a 16mm Association national event - a 'West Lancs Open Day'; visitors were invited to drop in at three garden railways (Bill Cook's, Dave Rotheram's, and Derek Wells') and at the WLLR. An appreciative account of a visit by Graham Cox, published in the newsletter of the Staffordshire Railway Circle, recalls that during the afternoon there was a 'vicious thunderstorm and torrential rain' which brought operations to a halt; nonetheless Graham and his party enjoyed a 'very interesting and pleasant day out'.

On July 31st 1994 the group hosted a 16mm Association national event

By 1995, thoughts were turning towards construction of a new layout, and in November, John and Lorna Angell hosted a meeting to discuss the possibilities. Various ideas were aired, but nothing actually got done. Since then the original layout has been abandoned; (continued on page 4)

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The History of the Lancashire Area Group

- Continued from page 3

in effect, it has been replaced by Chris's superb 'Open Day at Timpdon Sheds', a great success when it did appear at the WLLR - but that was several years ago. I very much regret that the Group's relationship with the WLLR has been allowed to wither.

Through these years [1990-1995] I organised the Group's annual programme, and sent it to the editor of 16mm Exchange for publication alongside the programmes of the other regional groups. Our regular garden railway gatherings usually took place on the last Sunday of each month; in 1995 we experimented with some extra Sundays and an occasional Wednesday evening during the summer.

On the final Sunday of December each year, Andrew and Carol hosted a 'Mince Pie Special'; hardy souls raised steam, defying the elements, but sooner rather than later we would retreat indoors, watch Andrew and Carol's videos of running sessions we had enjoyed on warmer days, and partake of Carol's excellent mince pies.

But for me the highlight of the year was our annual visit to Roger Woodcock's line near Penrith; a chance to run on a wonderful railway, in a long garden with views of the nearby hills; to enjoy the company of 16mm enthusiasts from the Northumbrian

"... in 1995 we experimented with some extra Sundays..."

tables by Roger's wife Sue.

In addition to Andrew's and Roger's railways, the Group's garden railways included the well established lines belonging to Dave Forshaw, Bill Cook, Mark Smith, and Derek Wells, while new lines were constructed by myself, Cliff Robinson, Steve Colling, Ian Lowcock, and Dave Rotheram. Relatively short-lived railways, whose owners had to move on, were those of Douglas Plank, John Sharpe, and Peter Sheppard.

Others who joined us more or less regularly included Pete Halsall, Brent Higham, Mark Haydock, Neil and Sheila Munro, John Angell, Bob and Paul Millington from the Cheshire Group, John Allen, Graham Cannell, and Paul Frank [a skilled locomotive builder] from Cumbria, Peter Davis, and last but not least [with apologies to anyone I've forgotten to mention]... Andy and Gail, whose enthusiasm made them the obvious victims when I looked around for someone to take over from me.

But that, to borrow Andrew's conclusion, becomes another story....

Phil Pacey

* I'm probably in a minority of one, but I really don't like the LADS acronym, I guess because I detest 'laddishness' and have always wanted us to include lasses as equal partners. I'd rather be regarded as an 'old LAG'.

[Ed's note: -

Does anyone else have an opinion on the title "LADS"? I'd prefer to stay on the right side of the law and not be a "LAG" - but I'm willing to be persuaded otherwise.

The Letters Page awaits!]

"... I very much regret that the Group's relationship with the WLLR has been allowed to wither."

Group; to admire the weird and wonderful steam locos constructed by Peter Angus. All this and the most tremendous teas, laid out for us on groaning

Caption Competition



Well then! I reckon that the pending Caption Competition didn't attract many insults as people were too scared to upset our resident railway doctor, David Wilding! I don't mean that he'd duff them up or anything, it's just that he must have helped everybody in the group at some stage - and still continues to do so!

Mind you, the lure of one years free subscription was too much for

some people.

Phil Sixsmith sacrificed humour for creeping by submitting: 'Is that Professor Wilding, the wise old owl, wearing one of his own creations?'

Steve Colling's contribution was a bit braver (possibly as he's already got a brilliant railway) [Ed: I think he must be very brave - have you read what he's said about Mike & Chris on page 1??] and offered:

"Latest clip from Al-Jazeera television depicts notorious Chorley terrorist, Osama bin Wilding about to blow up scale tram engine using radio controlled killer omelette."

The decision was a hard one, but in the end the judges decided that the to enteries were equal in their brilliance. The were both rubbish! The prize is therefore being carried forward to next month.

At great personal risk, your editor has decided to "publish and be damned" and submit the below photograph for your abuse.

In case you didn't recognise him, the young stud muffin (well, chip butty!) on the right, looking very much like Richard Gere's stand in for "Officer and a Gentleman", is our very own Mike Ousby (the sailor on the left is unknown to the group).

I understand that most answers will be unprintable. However still make them known, as I could do with a laugh!

The best entry now wins **two years free** subscription [Ed: Is this joke now getting tiresome?]



Things I'd wish I'd known years ago...

A cheap source of almost ready made lamps is the single white Lego brick.

Pop a red or clear plastic lens on the front and a handle cut from the top of a white paper clip.... hey presto! Because the brick is hollow you can also put a small bulb in it and have working lamps.

I have raided my sons Lego box on numerous occasions!

*Graham Wilkins
e:group*

You *can* get
the staff!

**Chris MacKenzie discusses
personnel issues**

We've all heard it said many a time... a running loco looks daft without a driver at the controls.

Thing is, how do you fix a driver to your pride and joy? Are you confident enough to drill the floor and put a nut and bolt through?

This very same problem of staff recruitment (more like 'staff retention') was recently discussed on the 16mm e:group.

John Rogers, who is famed for what he refers to as "stating the obvious" (but not obvious enough for it to have dawned on anyone else!) suggests a false wooden floor. The loco crew can be glued to this false floor and lifted in and out as required. As Tag Gorton says, "Another trick is to spray the floor black. This is what I do on my Samson where the driver needs to be removable to take out the battery pack."

Tony Clark raised the question of whether silicone sealant could be used to fix drivers in place. Every type of silicone may not be heat resistant, but a blob on the feet will fix them a treat! This method may not allow for the driver to hop in and out of the cab, but at least he'd be easily removable if necessary.

The method that sounded brilliant to me was supplied by Nigel Newman. He's glued a fridge magnet to the foot his Millie driver and he reports that it works well. At least he hasn't moved yet (the driver - not Nigel).

The only contribution I'd make to these thoughts, is to make sure the driver can't fall out. It may say more about the standard of my track, but my "Sir Morris" loco's driver appeared to have a suicide wish and would jump from the cab at every opportunity. This came to a head (his head!) when he made the loco get stuck in a tunnel. I think it was John Fox who supplied the answer with a small piece of fuse wire wrapped round his waist and looped around one of the copper pipes in the cab. It's almost invisible - but has stopped the driver's death wish!

Does anyone have any other ideas on solving this problem? Your thoughts are welcome.

Odds & Ends :

News from around the Group



Has anyone else noticed the 16mm scale (or thereabouts) fork lift trucks for sale in most toy shops. They've been spotted in Wilkinsons and also Toys-R-Us.

The driver is very under scale, but once removed you're left with a very presentable utility vehicle. All for £3.99 or £4.99 depending where you go.

Chris MacKenzie's vehicle on the left is still untouched from the manufacturers. However John Fox's truck on the right has been "foxified".

He's weathered the body and motion and made it look just like the real thing. The LADS were especially impressed with the way he's used Mekpak liquid plastic glue on the curved wing sections and then lightly scratched it. Over painting with rust colours made it look unbelievable! Get yourself to the toy shops before it's too late.

Phil Sixsmith has been seen with a new homemade railcar (pictured this page). It looks and runs brilliantly. Phil says that it's a converted cheap model car chassis, with a wooden body.

If you're into creating the image of a shoe-string narrow gauge railway, have a look at this. You'll be wanting to copy it straight away!

Mike Ousby is continuing to do a roaring trade selling his replacement gas valves for all types of loco's. Apart from looking far better in the cab, the new valve gives you much greater control - and without burnt fingers! Chris has one fitted to his Roundhouse Bertie and he can't believe the difference. Others agree. It's not unusual for him to sell just one to someone in a group. Very quickly the orders flood in from other members, followed by orders for more for all the other engines on their railway. At £29.50, see Mike for more details (and discount!).



*Things I'd
wish I'd
known
years ago...*

Those of you who eagerly await the arrival of SMT to look at the latest LightLine advert (ie. all of you) will have noticed the low stone walling that forms part of the background in most of the photos. This is made from a 1 Cement / 3 Sand mix, poured onto the back of a Halfords car mat which had a simple 1" square frame made to hold in the said mix. Leave for 24 hours, then carefully scribe a line with a knife along the back, 6 inches from the top (or the bottom), leave for another 24 hours. Loosen the framing, turn it all over carefully, then peel off the rubber car mat and Voila! - One 12" x 18" piece of walling, which splits easily into two 18" by 6" pieces. Buy 3 mats and turn out a load in a day. Peter Dowd's was the first line I saw with this walling. As he proudly said at the time "I've been in 16mil for 20 years and not had an original idea yet"

Geoff Munday

[Ed: we think this is just a crafty way of getting more people to look at Geoff's adverts in SMT!]

Dear LADS...

The safety valve where you can let off some steam

Dear Ed,

Naughty, naughty! Why did you crop off the top line of Sheron's Wordsearch? Did you think we weren't paying enough attention? (*BLUEBELL*W).

As for the photo of Dave Wilding, he looks like an Egyptian Pharaoh with rice bowl and flail - who has just been told what he's to be stuffed with it!

Regards,

John Angell

Dear Ed,

It has been brought to my attention that you are amused by a misspelt word in my word search puzzle, wot wiv me working in the education profession and all.

I would like to raise three points if I may. First of all what on earth makes you think that a sensible female with other things on her mind would know how to spell the names of all these different engines?

Secondly, my other half, you know the one that claims to be knowledgeable on this type of thing and has even built his own Fairlie (note spelling) checked it all out then typed it up failing to spot the missing i.

And thirdly, a certain editor then retyped said puzzle for inclusion and also failed to spot the mistake, then printed it omitting the top line!

So to those of you who think this poor TEACHING ASSISTANT has lost the plot then the far right hand column should actually read Welshpool!

Thank you.

Sheron Sixsmith

[Ed note: I just thought that you would've had more time to look up the spelling - after all, the rest of us have FULL-TIME jobs] [This is a world record attempt - upsetting at least six readers in one go!]

Dear Editor, sir.

May I draw to your attention a small error in your latest issue of the GIRLS (Get It Right LadS) magazine!).

You were presented with the GRAHAM LAMB Trophy, not as stated.

Thank you,

A concerned member (alias David Rhodes)

Dear readers,

A serious and sincere apology for the mistake in the last newsletter. Of course I was presented with the GRAHAM LAMB Trophy (not "Stephen" as printed).

My mistake is not a reflection of my appreciation of receiving the award. It was simply a simple mistake made from writing the newsletter in a rush (Stephen Lamb is actually a colleague at work!).

Thank you for all the readers who pointed out the mistake. And apologies again.

Chris MacKenzie

Dear Sir,

May I be put on record (not a 78) regarding the conversation being held during the photo-shoot (Caption Competition).

My concerns were directed at the length of time that your Volkswagen Type 2 has been under repair!

As I think you will be aware VW Type 2's are most reliable, therefore only running repairs are necessary. Can I ask that you ask someone with air-cooled experience (Cliff perhaps) to your Type 2 in order before the next issues of GIRLS magazine.

Your most Easterly correspondent and one time supporter.

A VW fanatic, (also alias David Rhodes)

Contributions?

"Well, I love reading the newsletter... It's good that other people write things... I would write something but:-

- I might show myself up; or
- I can't write; or
- My English isn't good enough; or
- I'm too busy; or
- I'm going to - I'll do it soon"

Does this sound like you making excuses?

Well, they aren't very good reasons! Ease your conscience & send your text to:-

Chris MacKenzie
2 Curzon Drive, Timperley,
Altrincham, Cheshire, WA157SY
0161 980 7804
or email
narrow.gauge@btinternet.com

Dear Diary...

16mm Association LADS Events - Bring an engine & have a run

Sun 29 June - 1pm - Steve Colling
Rishton - 01254 883200

Sun 27 July - 1pm - Bill Cook
Southport - 01704 535170 (32mm)

Sat 9 Aug - 1pm - Calvin Green
Wakefield - 01924 281169 (32 & 45mm)
(why not make a day out of it and visit the National Mining Museum just up the road)

Sun 17 Aug - 1pm - Peter Harling
Settle - 01729 822581 (32mm)

16mm Exhibitions:-

Sun 13 July - Telford
Garden Rail (Narrow Gauge) Show
The Telford Moat House Hotel, Jnct 5,
M54. Our Timpdon Sheds layout will be there. Come down for a run. Please?

Sat 30 & Sun 31 Aug - Welshpool Garden
Railway Show & Steam Gala
Chris's layout won't be there, but we will!

Other Events & Exhibitions:-

9 & 10 Aug - Gala at West Lancs Rly
This will be especially noteworthy as we expect to be visited by Maid Marian from the Bala Lake Railway, so that Irish Mail and Maid Marian can celebrate their 100th birthdays together.

Things I'd wish I'd known years ago...

Everyone knows the importance of getting everything clean before soldering two metals together, but how many people forget to clean the actual solder?

Of course the solder (especially the larger plumber's solder) attracts a patina just the same and unless cleaned off, makes soldering difficult.

Dave Wilding



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