



SOUTHERN FEDERATION of MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETIES

Formed from the Federation established in 1970 by Model Engineers for Model Engineers
A Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales No. 9002737
www.sfmes.co.uk

'Just in time' AGM held successfully at Swindon STEAM along with Southern Federation workshop before the coronavirus closed in



The winners: see inside for their story

- ..And inside ..
- Polly Engineering Awards and lots of young engineers
- Apprentices too
- A tram
- A clock
- Workshop progress, you can still join in

STOP PRES!

The Passenger-carrying Miniature Railway Safety Group has worked hard to produce a replacement for HSG216:

"HS2020 - Managing health and safety at passenger-carrying miniature railways

Guidance for operators of passenger-carrying miniature railways"

On April 3, 2020, HSE endorsed HS2020 and approved of it carrying the HSE Logo

Well done for our hobby!



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Views and comments expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies

EDITORIAL

What a difference a couple of months makes? Frostbite over, and some decent days to do the maintenance to get the track ready for the season and now we are locked up or down or in or out, not quite sure which but a frightening prospect for many societies.

The AGM, second Saturday in March as ever, had a strong attendance and good support for the Federation workshop. We are looking into the future, assessing the bigger picture with a strong emphasis on listening to where the membership would like to see the Federation's future support.

The "Workshop for the Future" captured the imagination of the members attending and once the participants were warmed up the ideas flowed fast and furious. These were produced in small groups and many interesting results are being gathered together by the team. But, there were about sixty participants leaving some 140 societies not represented but surely with good ideas. The key headings are shown in *italics* on page 3, you would do yourselves a service in responding to Ivan Hurst or Paul Naylor with your thoughts, please do.

Young engineers were strongly represented for the Polly Engineering awards, it is clear Hereford and Eastleigh are fully committed. As well, we have discovered the Plymouth Miniature Railway apprentice scheme and their story is told in this edition. The message is that dedicated

and committed society members can bring the young people along and in Plymouth's case some of the 'young' people are decidedly not quite so young but have a desire to learn. It requires effort from the club members themselves to make it work.

It is easy to show that that model engineering is a diverse parish and if we wish to attract the younger members perhaps we need to give them freedom to choose their pursuits and avoid their having to look at a 50 year project to build a great big pacific! Plymouth preach diversity!

You will discover a dearth of railway topics this quarter. We have something for the horologist, the mariner, the city and urban transport enthusiast, the treasurer and the teacher. Railways are taking a rest.

But not quite, last Friday April 3, the HSE approved their endorsement of the "Guidance for operators of passenger-carrying miniature railways" and granted permission for it to carry the HSE Logo. Well done to all those volunteers from many groups who spent many hours putting this together and a special thanks to Tony Wood for chairing the group.

The message right now is to stay sensibly safe to ride out this pandemic and get back to our hobby in due course.

David Goyder - Newsletter Editor

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

We as model engineers are used to working on a small scale and sometimes facing problems with very small items. Almost always these problems can be solved by perseverance and possibly working with others.

Currently large parts of the world are dealing with a problem caused by an extremely small item, the Covid 19 virus, and this will take perseverance and working as a community to resolve. As model engineers we can practice social isolation by spending time in our workshops (and possibly completing that model that has been on the back burner for some time). We can keep in touch with our friends, who we would normally meet "down the club", by many means but a phone call may be

the best as in a crisis it's always reassuring to hear another friendly human voice. When life gets back to normal, as it surely will, your club may need extra help, do not leave it to others, volunteer in whatever capacity you can.

At this point can I make a plea to whoever in your club initially receives this newsletter to make sure it is available to all your club members.

Finally keep safe, follow government health advice, and most of all continue to enjoy our wonderful model engineering hobby, now and in the years to come.

Bob Polley - Chairman

**Please keep your email addresses up to date
It is for your benefit after all**

The Workshop for the Future

The AGM was held on the 14th March at STEAM and, as well as the usual business of an AGM, a workshop formed part of the event to help us decide what direction the SFMES should take for the future. We decided on a few key topics that we wanted answers for and a lively discussion took place around these topics. Everyone there had the opportunity to contribute and as well as a facilitated discussion on each table in the room (our thanks to the facilitators asked on the day to do this!), attendees were asked to fill in some notes that we think will provide the key to committee decisions about the strategy we should undertake. Of course, not everyone could make it to the event, not the least as a result of the current health crisis and so, whilst it would be difficult to emulate the discussion, we can at least ask all our affiliated clubs for any additional ideas and comments to be sent to us. The topics that we are particularly interested in are:

The strengths and weaknesses of the current services offered by the SFMES, with a priority for action.

The opportunities for additional services as well as those currently offered that would be of particular interest to affiliated clubs and their members.

The enthusiasm amongst affiliates for a providing enhanced services....or of course 'do nothing'.

Since we are a volunteer led organisation, any future activity, whether enhanced or not, requires people able and willing to contribute. As a result, we would be particularly interested in hearing from anyone who would like to take part in the development and delivery of the future strategy and services in whatever capacity!

With the right decisions and support, SFMES could be an even more fantastic proponent of this great hobby of ours ... your wisdom and experience should be passed on to others!

So if you have any opinions about the above topics, please do not hesitate to let us know. Jot your ideas down and send to Paul Naylor (paul.naylor@sfmes.co.uk) or Ivan Hurst (ivan.hurst@sfmes.co.uk) or indeed to any committee member (contact details can be found on the web site). Your thoughts will contribute to the decisions taken by the committee, and we will feed the results of these back to you all in due course.

Dr Paul Naylor, Workshop Leader

Our Secretary Resigns

It is sad to report Peter Squire's resignation as Hon Secretary of Southern Federation, well recognised as having done a fabulous job.

It all started in a signal box some ten years ago. Brent Hudson, the then Chairman needed a Secretary for the SF and asked Peter, he agreed and ironically Peter set the route to give a great sense of continuity and direction to the Federation. The SF was in transition from old ways to new, Peter and Brent brought this about smoothly and efficiently.

The conversion from the loose Federation to a company limited by guarantee was a formidably complicated and time consuming task that Peter undertook with characteristic thoroughness and competence. And bringing together over 200 different model engineering societies required diplomacy and tact that Henry Kissinger would have envied. Of course his well planned



AGMs were run with equal thoroughness and organisation. Behind the scenes he could be found helping societies with various local issues by explaining the options and logic of a suggested path to resolution.

His joint boiler seminars with NAME were widely regarded and provided for a high level of competence and knowledge in the Boiler testing community. Not only did he organise them but he lectured as well and was a font of knowledge on the subject.

And he was a good chap, lots of fun and a pleasure to share the stand with at the various exhibitions as we stood there in our grey shirts, another of his ideas.

As Chairman Bob Polley declared, we have lost a b-----y good secretary! Peter, now with time to visit his workshop, can reflect on a job well done.

Southern Federation Trophy & Polly Model Engineering Ltd. Prize 2020

Mike Chrisp, Vice Chairman and Awards Officer for the Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies performs a professional and vital role with the presentation of awards so it is appropriate to listen to his words

It gives me very great pleasure to welcome you all to this presentation, particularly our young engineers with their families, friends and sponsors.

It's wonderful that Andy & Jayne Clarke can be with us today. We really appreciate their generous sponsorship of this award and thank you both very much indeed.

I'd like to praise all here who give so freely of their time and expertise to encourage these young engineers to develop their skills and creativity. This year we congratulate and thank Patrick Hendra of Eastleigh Young Engineers and Wally Sykes and John Arrowsmith of Hereford Young Engineers together with all their colleagues involved in training.

Unfortunately, we have no young ladies to commend this year but are pleased to bring four young men to your attention.

Winner of the 2020 Southern Federation Trophy & Polly Model Engineering Ltd. Prize is just fourteen. We were impressed when we first met him two years ago. Since then he has developed his expertise with conventional machine and hand tools as well as with CAD and CNC equipment. His detailed portfolio is succinct, well detailed and well illustrated. His contribution to Society activities is clearly valued and we can confirm he's a personable young man. We thank John Arrowsmith for nominating him for this award.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in congratulating Matthew Kenington who receives a £50 Polly Model Engineering Ltd voucher, a £50 Federation cheque and a handsome engraved glass trophy. Very well done Matthew!

Without his knowing it, Matthew's win was a very close run matter involving the Federation Committee in much discussion resulting in our decision to make a Special Award.

Just fifteen, our next nominee progressed from building and sailing model boats to the construction of a radio controlled model Morgan three-wheeled sports car. His most recent project is a radio controlled model Fordson tractor with a mower and trailer. All his work has been commended at various events and exhibitions with First Awards for his Morgan sports car and his Fordson tractor. Now a senior member of the Eastleigh Young Engineers, we're assured of his involvement in talks and demonstrations given by the group. We're grateful to Patrick Hendra for nominating him for this award.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in congratulating Ryan Philo who receives a £50 Polly Model Engineering Ltd voucher, a £25 Federation cheque and a handsome engraved glass trophy. Very well done Ryan!

Our attention has also been drawn to another member of the Hereford Young Engineers group. Now fourteen,



Andy Clarke of Polly Model Engineering Limited makes the presentations to Matthew (left) and Ryan (right)

Southern Federation Trophy & Polly Model Engineering Ltd. Prize 2020



Brent Hudson, President of the Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies makes the presentations to James (left) and to Tom (right).



during his two years with Hereford Young Engineers, our next nominee has learned the techniques of soft and hard soldering, manual metal arc, metal inert gas and tungsten inert gas welding. He's also demonstrated competence in the safe use of the lathe, milling machine and hand tools. He has the good fortune of parental support with access to a well equipped home workshop and we're assured of his involvement in Society activities. We thank Chairman Wally Sykes for nominating him for this award.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in congratulating James Knight who receives a £50 Polly Model Engineering Ltd. voucher and a framed Special Certificate. Well done James!

Now nineteen, we first met our fourth nominee in 2018. He joined the Hereford Young Engineers group five years ago, has learned the safe use of machine and hand tools and has made tooling that includes punches and a tailstock die-holder. With a passion for railways he has his own OO-gauge layout and we're assured of his contribution to Society activities. Despite work being interrupted by surgery, he continues to make good



*Brunel would have approved!
See page 9 for a group photo of all concerned*

progress with his pedal-powered 7¼ in. gauge 'Pedalino'. We're grateful to Chairman Wally Sykes for nominating him for this award.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in congratulating Tom Williams who receives a £50 Polly Model Engineering Ltd. voucher and a framed Special Certificate. Well done Tom!

Over the years, we've had the pleasure of meeting and supporting a number of young engineers and are proud to know that many are now successfully pursuing engineering careers. How good is that? We very much hope that Matthew, Ryan, James and Tom all enjoy similar success and wish them well for the future.

While appreciating that modern attitudes and legislation haven't made it very easy to work with young people these days, we're also well aware that not all clubs and societies welcome younger members. Thankfully there are many that do and we applaud their efforts. I've heard it said if we're not part of the solution, we must be part of the problem. There's something to think about!

Mike Chrisp, Vice Chairman & Awards Officer

Plymouth Miniature Steam Apprentices by Rob Hitchcock

Sometimes one makes joyful discoveries and indeed after writing up the Polly Engineering awards with Mike Chrisp, we were looking through the newsletter from Plymouth Miniature Steam and discovered their apprentice programme.

At a time when societies bemoan the

Plymouth Miniature Steam has been running a junior Apprentice Scheme for nearly 25 years and started when the Club's evening classes were held at the College of St Mark and St John (teachers training college). The need for the scheme was realised at the same time that many other clubs were finding that the average ages of their members were starting to exceed 60 years of age, so it became a case of "do or die".



lack of younger members, we have

proud to show their family and friends and keep on display. And, more importantly, have learnt patience, diligence and a wide range of engineering knowledge to set them on their way.

Over the years we have taken a pragmatic view on the retention of apprentices in the club, we have probably retained as many as those that have completed all or part of the course and then left for other challenges. The time spent

In review of the last 20+ years of the scheme we have achieved many things with most of the youngsters that have taken part, although we cannot claim to have totally solved the demographic or membership numbers problem. This has other causes such as global changes in technology, the almost total disappearance of steam except in preservation and the nuclear industry and the multitude of other interests that are available to attract the younger generation of today.

We try to provide a club that is open to model engineers of all disciplines and it is pleasing to see the wide range of interests that exists within the membership. At any Thursday night evening class our members can be seen to be building motor cycles from scratch, "O" Gauge railway layouts, high voltage radio transmission aerials, robot wars, clocks, and even an apprentice who is building working models of Blackpool Trams.

Our apprentices vary in age from 12 years up to adults and we also have adults who take the course who in some cases have not had a great deal of this type of experience before. We start the apprentices on the building of a basic steam plant consisting of a reasonably sized oscillating engine and copper boiler. The original plans for this are credited to a Mr S Atkinson from Model Engineer magazine in about 1993 and had been used as a practical project for teachers in training during a summer school. The choice of sizes, design and materials had been cleverly thought out to allow a range of processes to be employed such as hand filing and fitting, riveting, lathe work, milling, soft soldering and silver brazing such that when mastered the Students were well able to work safely on their own initiative and eventually move on to other things.

Due to the ages of some of our apprentices they initially need quite a bit of help during some of the processes but all have hands on use of tools and machines quite early on and soon make progress. As we only have two hours per week to work on these projects they naturally take some time to complete. Those that endure and finish their steam plants have a valuable working model which they are

with the youngsters has given them practical skills and confidence which they will retain as lifetime skills and perhaps a soft spot and interest in model engineering. Some of our students have used the skills attained and in some cases presented their finished engines at interviews for jobs and done extremely well.

We have ex apprentices working with a local gas supplier, Babcock Marine, Vosper's Commercial truck builders, Princess Yachts, The MOD etc. One boy who won the "Monty Ellis" prize through Model Engineer Magazine some years ago then did an engineering apprenticeship with DML / Babcock and is now running his own business restoring vintage cars.

Our club still needs folk who are willing to help with the maintenance of our miniature railway, and keep its Steam and Battery electric engines maintained, so most of our skill training is still relevant. There is room for more in depth knowledge to be gained on electrical control systems, wheel machining, radio control, and many other areas where we have some experts with knowledge who could impart this to a wider audience via master classes or similar.

I would also like to pay tribute to Colin Blunden who is no longer with us who ably assisted me with the training scheme for many years starting with his grandsons Michael and Daniel. Colin was a self-taught Model Engineer who had a lifetime interest in steam models and railways and achieved a high level of competence. He worked tirelessly for the club on the committee using his good organisational and administrative skills, and helped to train many of our guards and drivers.

The Photograph shows some of the work in progress from PMS apprentices with (from left to right) Jared, Reece, and Ben. Reece has been building the working Blackpool Balloon type tram from Scratch, which will run on 'O' gauge track. Just previous to the photo, the boys had been making wrought iron poker for our two club steam locos "Fred" and "Hernia".

Walker Midgley Annual Insurance Review 2020 by Tony Wood

I usually start my report with the claims report but a slight change of plan for this year with the news that we have made the very difficult decision to change the insurer on our scheme policies from Royal Sun Alliance (RSA) to Travelers Insurance Company Ltd. The change was effective from 1st January for new policies and is effective from policy renewal dates for existing policies. RSA have underwritten the covers via ourselves for the last 20 plus years and for some of the covers a much longer period than that direct. During the time we have worked with them they have aligned closely with our own values on service and pricing however corporations change and RSA felt they could no longer support our schemes without significant premium increases.

After an exhaustive exercise we have selected Travelers as the insurer we will work with going forward. They are not a household name in the UK but they are a significant global company formed in 1864 with a strong engineering bias, they are heavily into heritage railways, and can boast the Apollo missions in their historic insurance portfolio. Travelers have one of the highest available financial ratings at S&P "AA", which is higher than RSA at S&P "A", and importantly they share our vision of how the scheme should work, with the emphasis on service and long term sustainable pricing.

Moving on to claims beginning with an update on the seven claims which were outstanding at the AGM last

year and I will follow with details of the claims reported since then. I will give brief anonymous details but if any of the involved clubs are here today and would like to expand or give further background details please feel free. We can all learn by the experiences of others.

During the report you will hear me use the term 'Reserve' so just a quick word on what that means. Insurance companies, like all companies, have to publish their accounts but unlike ordinary trading companies they do not buy stock and then sell, hopefully, at a profit. Insurance companies sell insurance and it is not until later that they know if they have made a profit, that is when the claims paid are less than the premiums received. In order that insurance company accounts show an accurate picture a 'reserve' is set when a claim notification is received and this is basically a worst case payment scenario. Those reserves are then entered in to the accounts which means that the accounts show, at any one moment in time, a more accurate reflection of the financial position. As mentioned reserves are worst case scenario and hence are usually quite large. The majority of claims will be settled at a figure below the initial reserve figure.

There were six claims outstanding at the last meeting, the progress report is:

Date	Details
May 2015	5in raised track derailment. Claims from mother, father and two children. At last year's meeting payments to date were £4,300 damages and £3,400 costs with the claims from the minors outstanding. The reserve was £17,000. The claim has now been settled payments totalling £24,454.39
June 2015	Ground level derailment. Mother and son injured, both taken to hospital by ambulance. Mother's claim settled, awaiting medical evidence for the son's claim. A hearing took place on 6 th March so claim will be concluded soon. Paid to date remains at £11,000 damages and £9,000 costs and reserve remains at £37,166
May 2016	Derailment, father and child fell off. Child injured. Infant approval hearing scheduled for 23 rd March Reserve reduced from £8,650 to £5,570
August 2016	Spark burn to child. Reserve was £5,395 now settled £5,035
July 2018	Break in. Two trimmers and chain saw stolen plus damage to lock Reserve was £1,000 now closed nil payment
October 2018	Derailment – two adults and two children minor injuries Reserve was £12,160 increased to £14,250

Walker Midgley Annual Insurance Review 2020 by Tony Wood

The following nine claims have been reported since the last meeting:

March 2019	Spark burn to child. A formal claim has been received. Reserve £10,130
June 2019	Spark burn to mother and son. No formal claim received Closed nil payment
September 2019	Running a gauge 1 locomotive on a rolling road. Operator did not notice a leaking methylated spirit tank which ignited causing severe damage to the locomotive. Settled £2,900
April 2019	Second coach of a rake of four derailed – possible fault with a bogie. Two adults and four children injured. Adult claims settled total £2,080. Claims from the 4 children outstanding with medical evidence outstanding. Reserve £24,260
July 2019	5in portable track – carriage derailed – possible cause mother moving child. Female passenger injured. Awaiting medical evidence Reserve £10,450
April 2019	Break-in and theft from society buildings Reserve £970
April 2019	Club road trailer stolen from locked compound. Settled £4,309
July 2019	Ground level riding car derailed. Female passenger fell on to ground and suffered a broken wrist Awaiting medical evidence. Reserve £9,570
July 2019	Female passenger tripped when alighting from train and fell on to the platform sustaining injury to femur necessitating a hip replacement No formal claim received to date

Adding the outstanding new claims to the outstanding old claims there are a total of 9 claims outstanding as at today.

I always say this but it is worth repeating - if you have an incident which might, and remember perhaps only might, result in a public liability claim please make sure that it is logged and that statements are taken straight away whilst people can remember accurately what happened, old Chinese proverb weakest ink better than strongest memory, then get in touch with us and report it. Also don't forget RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995)

If an incident happens and correspondence is received please do not try to handle the claim yourself. We must be told of the incident or of the claim as soon as it is practically possible and please send to us, without acknowledgement, any letters received. If someone telephones tell them it is with your insurers and give them our telephone number, let us handle it. Insurers do not want you writing or talking to any person involved, such involvement by you could prejudice settlement. You pay the insurance premium – let the insurers handle the claims – that is what we are here for.

As part of the public liability claim investigation process the insurers, and quite possibly the HSE, are likely to ask for a copy of your up to date risk assessment so please make sure that your risk assessment is updated at least every year or more frequently if any changes to your buildings, track or site etc have been made. They may also need a copy of any RIDDOR report made and also your repair and regular maintenance records (track, club locos, club rolling stock etc). Make sure they are completed and up to date. Don't forget it is not sufficient to just do the maintenance - you need to evidence that it was done, what exactly was done, who did it and when it was done. Golden Rule: If it's not written down it wasn't done.

Insurance of members' locos. Just a reminder that the club and society policy does not provide any cover for members' locos, rolling stock or indeed any other property. If they want cover it is up to them to arrange their own insurance. If members store their locos at your track it is a good idea for you to put up a poster reminding members that you do not provide any cover and that it is up to them to arrange insurance.

*Tony Wood, Walker Midgley Insurance Brokers
Sheffield. Telephone: 0114 250 2770*

HS2020 - Managing health and safety at passenger-carrying miniature railways: Guidance for operators

The Passenger-carrying Miniature Railway Safety Group (PCMRSG) web site (<http://www.pcmrsg.org/>) records that in September 2019 the consultation period had closed and that the comments received would be reviewed. The web site also records the group's thanks to all those that submitted comments. Over 150 were submitted and all were considered. Comments were also received from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), with whom close contact has been maintained throughout. Please note that the web site may be out of date. Hopefully, it will be updated to the final version very soon.

The final draft (formerly Draft 12, now Issue 1) was sent to the Health and Safety Executive for their final comments on 27th February, 2020. Earlier comments from the HSE had already been incorporated, where appropriate. A reply was received on 3rd April 2020 to the effect that the HSE Publications Governance Group has agreed to the inclusion of an HSE endorsement. The wording of the endorsement is *"The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was involved with the Passenger-carrying*

Miniature Railway Safety Group in producing this guidance. HSE endorses the guidance, as it follows a sensible and proportionate approach to managing health and safety."

Permission has also been granted for inclusion of the HSE logo on the document. This is substantially more than the basic expression of support that was previously expected.

Apart from the addition of the HSE statement, the document is now completed. Printing and distribution should be soon. It is a condition of the HSE support that the document will be made generally available in common formats, including printed paper and online download.

The HSE has also confirmed that whilst HSG216 has been withdrawn they will still be referring to it until the new document is published and the operators of passenger-carrying miniature railways are advised that they should do likewise

Bob Walker, Safety Officer

Boiler Inspectors' Seminars 2020

The Joint Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies and Northern Association Boiler Inspectors' Seminars have been disrupted by the social distancing required as a result of Coronavirus. Additionally the Southern Federation leader in this respect has resigned as Honorary Secretary which may have caused an element of doubt about the future.

Peter has indicated to us that he is willing to continue with his contribution to the seminars if he has the

support of the Southern Federation and NAME. We are sure there is no doubt that Peter's most valuable contribution in the field will be enthusiastically encouraged.

Indeed it is hoped that we may be able to resurrect the Nottingham seminar in late September. It might be wise to indicate your interest now to Peter Squire at petersquire@sfmes.co.uk



*Left to right:
Ryan Philo's Granddad, Ryan Philo,
Keith Bell (Daniel's father),
Daniel Bell,
Andy Knight (James' father),
James Knight, Wally Sykes,
Mike Chrisp, John Arrowsmith,
Matthew Kennington,
Peter Kennington (Matthew's father)
Tom Williams, Peter Dodd*

Tram Cars



There is a following in the model engineering fraternity for these delightful little vehicles. When one discovers them in full and flourishing operation, how can you resist taking a picture.

Then we thought of Newsletter readers and this writeup developed. These trams are in Lisbon. The conversation between your editor and the Portuguese driver may provide some odd results but here goes.

It appears that trams are alive and well in Lisbon as evidenced by these ugly great brutes, but there are the smaller brothers operating on the same tracks and doing the same jobs for both locals and tourists (**photo 1**). The star of the day is on the front of this letter so we thought a few details might be of interest.

First the cab. A comfortable seat is essential (**photo 2**). The big wheel would appear to be a handbrake or parking brake although I did not see it used. The controls for motion appear to be on the left with an array of buttons in the middle for all those things that tram car lovers will know all about. **Photo 3** gives a better view.

On the right are three orange buttons and the right hand unlabelled one is of special interest. Apparently sand was put under the wheels by gravity but then some bright tram car expert came up with the idea to connect the



orange button to air and now a push and a whoosh puts the aforementioned sand under the wheels. And where is the sand kept? Under a seat in the main cabin (**photo 4**). Other modern and convenient devices are used to control and manage these trams. **Photo 5** shows the 'cord and bell' approach, very reliable we were told.

The next item we were interested in was the way in which trams can set their points. This has always been a mysterious topic for the novice for if it was done by the driver and he conflicted with another driver who was right? Or if this was done by a signal box operator, why have we never seen these tram car signal boxes. All was revealed thanks to Lonela Andrei, Condutora from Romania (**photo 6**). A very heavy iron bar seemed to be a most eloquent solution. One does not mess with a Condutora!

Inside a spacious saloon with modern comfortable seating (**photo 7**) is equipped with all mod cons such as air-conditioning and direct communication with the driver to make your opinions or need to stop well known. Again using the 'cord and bell' system (**photo 8**).

At one point we asked if they went backwards - NON! But we then shown the back department that actually goes forwards from the driver's point of view so we supposed he had a point. **Photo 9** shows the control panel for going backwards forwards.



Tram Cars



We are sure the Portuguese driver could have explained this more clearly, in Portuguese of course. We suppose he has a special handle somewhere.

Power collection would be a matter of interest. There appeared to be two ways, a pantograph and a pole with a wheel on the end. Rather like changing the switches, the driver jumps out and changes over, one presumes (**photo 10**).

And just to catch the unwary, the question was asked: "What's that cow catcher on the front for?" (**photo 11**). It's for bicycles!

What an incongruity, an ancient tram from 1873 with WIFI but absolutely delightful to hear rumbling along.



The Ascot Racecourse turret clock at the Bell Tower, Perth, Western Australia

Your editor, through no fault of his own, ended up in Fremantle, the port city for Perth in Western Australia. This was all to do with being chased around the Far East by the coronavirus as our cruise ship was diverted away from the countries with the virus. Australia was the only one left by mid February. Once there, Perth's Bell Tower seemed to provide a perfect subject for the horologists in our hobby.

The Perth bell tower houses a marvellous collection of bells as one would expect from the name and includes a set of 'ringing' bells from the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields donated when those in London were replaced, several other bells from Australian sources, the ANZAC bell to commemorate 100 years of Australian and New Zealand service men and the bells and clock mechanism from the clock tower at Ascot Racecourse.

I was standing at level 6 in the bell tower and fell into conversation with Terry Walton who explained it all.

"The clock is a turret clock, it was specially built by Joyce of Whitchurch in 1896 and it was installed on the main grandstand at Royal Ascot racecourse outside London and it has a series of bells which are called a Westminster chime and it chimes every 15 minutes, every quarter of an hour. It has four bells for the Westminster quarters and one single bell for the hour bell. There are three drive trains on the clock, if you look very carefully at the front of the clock the drive train on the left is for the hour bell, the drive train in the centre is for the minute and seconds and the one on the right is for the quarters, the Westminster quarters.

Each of those three drivetrains is driven by a large weight so the whole clock is driven by gravity and what we have to do is to wind up those weights every day, the three large weights, each one weighs about 100 kg so we wind those weights up every day to the top and that is what actually drives the clock. The bells were actually cast in England they came with the clock when we bought it.

The management of Royal Ascot decided for a major rebuild in the early to thousands and they pulled down, they demolished the main grandstand and they preserved or saved a lot of the original artefacts that were on the grandstand and they spent £25 million building a new grandstand. The artefacts were put into auction and we got the clock and we paid £10,000 for the clock at Sotheby's in 2005. The clock was brought here and installed in 2007 and has been ticking ever since. It is now 124 years old."



The Ascot Racecourse turret clock at the Bell Tower, Perth, Western Australia

The bells of the Royal Ascot Clock

Included in the 2005 acquisition of the large turret clock from Royal Ascot racecourse are five bells. The four smallest bells sound the Westminster quarters and the largest strikes the hour.

Originally cast in 1895 by Birmingham Bellfounder James Barwell they were re-cast for Royal Ascot's new clocktower in 1960. The present bells are the work of

Mears & Stainbank of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London.

The clock and bells were purchased for the bell tower with the help of Western Australia businessmen and mining prospector Mark Creasey who financed the purchase, transportation and refurbishment of set.

Here now are some photos of the mechanism itself and we will let the horologists explain how it works.



*Horologists will understand
what all those wheels do.
A very bright day meant
photos were dominated
by the Australian sun.*

A useful message from Leo Whisstock

Hello David, I have just read the latest copy of the Southern Fed Newsletter C/O the Malden DSME. As usual it is an interesting read.

I feel I must raise a point on the very good article regarding "using the reverser", it is not good practice to have a stationary locomotive in anything other than mid gear especially when not with the locomotive as the first paragraph of the article would suggest. Many years ago on a full size military railway an 0-6-0 tank engine was dragged out of the shed and the steam raisers set about

getting the fire lit and the engine prepared, after quite some time they decided to go off to get some breakfast but when they returned the loco was not there!! After a search they found it off the end of the track in a field steaming away to itself. The result of leaving it in forward gear and a slight let by on the regulator.

Having been on the footplate it is something that I automatically do on miniature locomotives - brake on, mid gear.

Kind regards, Leo Whisstock



More from your favourite Washington DC ticket agent

During a visit to my doctor, I asked him, "How do you determine whether or not an older person should be put in an old people's home?"

"Well," he said, "we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the person to empty the bathtub."

"Oh, I understand," I said. "A normal person would use the bucket because it is bigger than the spoon or the teacup."

"No" he said. "A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?"

With thanks to Aylesbury Link

A New York lawmaker, (Jerrold Nadler) called and asked, "Do airlines put your physical description on your bag so they know whose luggage belongs to whom?" I said, 'No, why do you ask?'

He replied, "Well, when I checked in with the airline, they put a tag on my luggage that said (FAT), and I'm overweight. I think that's very rude!"

After putting him on hold for a minute, while I looked into it. (I was dying laughing). I came back and explained the city code for Fresno, Ca. is (FAT - Fresno Air Terminal), and the airline was just putting a destination tag on his luggage.

An Illinois Congresswoman (Jan Schakowsky) called last week. She needed to know how it was possible that her flight from Detroit left at 8:30 a.m., and got to Chicago at 8:33 a.m.

I explained that Michigan was an hour ahead of Illinois, but she couldn't understand the concept of time zones. Finally, I told her the plane went fast, and she bought that.

A senior Vermont Congressman (Bernie Sanders) called, furious about a Florida package we did. I asked what was wrong with the vacation in Orlando. He said he was expecting an ocean-view room. I tried to explain that's not possible, since Orlando is in the middle of the state.

He replied, 'don't lie to me, I looked on the map and Florida is a very thin state!' (OMG)

I got a call from a lawmaker's wife (Landra Reid) who asked, "Is it possible to see England from Canada?"

I said, "No."

She said, "But they look so close on the map" (OMG, again!)

The Marine Challenge

One could try one of these on your pond, if anything, a little different!
*AL RAYYAN is a **LNG Tanker** that was built in 1997 (23 years ago) and is sailing under the flag of **Japan**.*



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