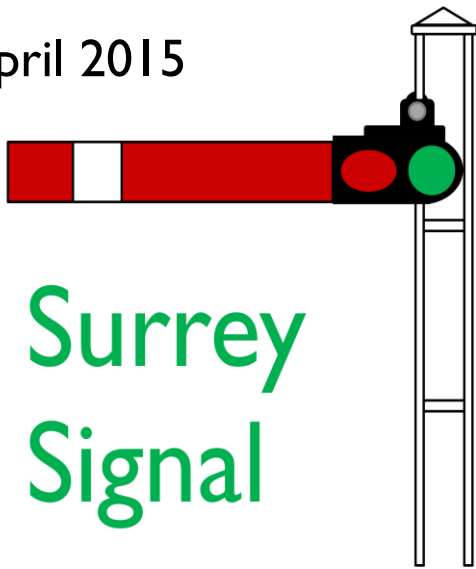


April 2015



An occasional newsletter
for the G1MRA Surrey Group

Association of Larger Scale Railway Modellers

Reading show - Saturday May 9th

We will be flying the flag for G1MRA in Reading this year for the fourteenth edition of the ALSRM southern show. The idea is that three G1MRA portables (I think, Anglia Roads, Invicta and the Oval) will share the duties in rotation over the coming years.

If you haven't been before, I can very strongly recommend the show. There are three interlinked halls: one filled with trade stands, another for layouts and a third for the extensive and excellent Bring&Buy: last year I bought a pristine Class 66 for £250.

Altogether, there will be ten O gauge layouts, one each from Gauge 3, S Scale, G scale, and us. See <http://www.alsrm-events.co.uk/> for more detail.

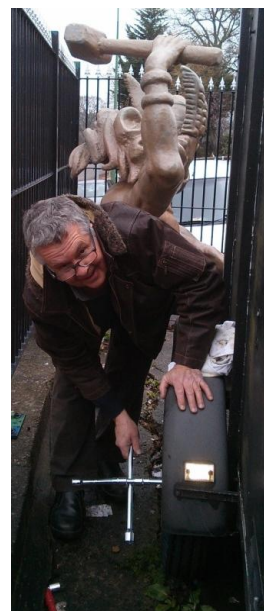
One complication is the General Election. The venue is being used for vote counting, and as a result we are not able to get access on Friday until 15.00. The plan is that Peter will collect the track and anybody wanting to help set up should go straight to Reading: we are at the **Rivermead Centre, RG1 8EQ**.

Important: Peter would like a volunteer to go to Guildford with him and drive behind on the way to Reading, just in case there is a problem with the trailer. If you are available to do this, please email Peter directly and urgently...

The trailer has landed...

Getting our boards up into the loft at Guildford has become a regular ritual, but is perhaps not the most enjoyable part of running the Oval. In addition, hire charges for the van were becoming a significant part of our cash flow. Peter and I have been discussing trailers for some time, and I suggested a budget of £500 or so.

Peter very quickly identified a bargain: a professionally constructed four-wheel trailer that was haulable by conventional cars for only £300. Apparently all it needed was the tyres pumping up (ho, ho; see below). The catch? The trailer was located in Chester-le-Street, between Durham and Newcastle.



So, one day in mid-March Peter and I drove north in his (very comfortable) Jaguar estate to investigate. Peter had managed to identify the wheels and tyres on the trailer, and we had acquired four brand new ones on a 'sale or return' basis.

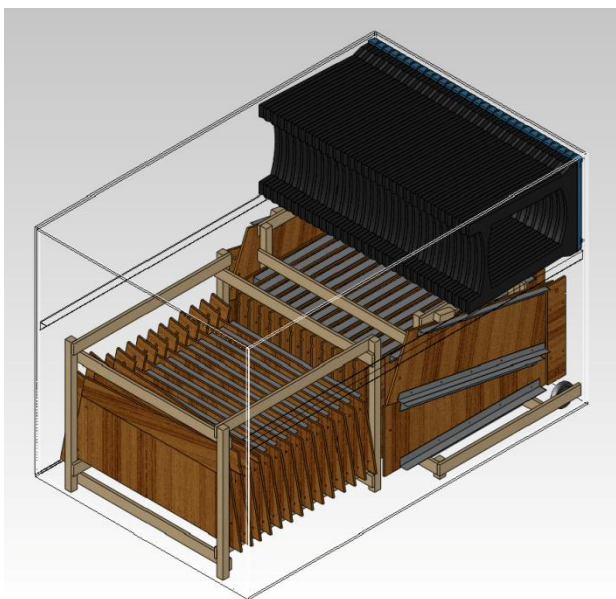
Hmm, just as well. When we tried to attach a pump to one of the valve stems it came away - completely perished. Only one tyre would hold air, and I didn't fancy a blow-out on the M1 so in the end we put all four new wheels on.

That strange object behind Peter, by the way, is a fibreglass Viking. The previous owner is a theatrical set maker...

So off we went down south. The trailer rides very well: it is stable and you can see behind it. Legal stuff: top allowed speed is 60 mph, and since it is unbraked, the maximum all-up load is 750kg. Most cars have an additional limit: my little Ibiza is only good for 570kg. Not many of us have tow hooks, but James and Graham Mander have suitable vehicles and have offered to help.



Back home, Peter started to weave his usual design magic. The final scheme comprises two racks on casters which separately hold the curve boards and the straight boards, with the trestles arranged in a second level rack at the back. The idea is that the weight will be equally distributed over the wheels, and the racks can be rolled into a venue if we cannot get the whole trailer in.



Peter has been slaving away, ably assisted by Ian, and has now completed the racks and painted the outside of the van a nice shade of grey



So, a new era of gentle setup and knock down begins, we hope. The Reading show will be our official trailer launch event.

6,000 visitors

We marked the first year of Oval operations by a return to Royal Holloway for the annual Science Festival. The College welcomed 6,000 visitors. Not all of them came to see us, but there were queues at various times. The College was delighted with our offering, and we should expect ongoing invitations.



The new venue was very welcome after last year's hauling up and down the steps. Although a large space, the Oval only just fitted - it never ceases to amaze me just how much floor a 3m oval of track consumes.



New tracks in abundance

Altogether, we have six new tracks in development within Surrey: the Oval, the new GMES permanent track, Mike Hensor, the Hulses, Adrian's lightweight track and Peter Kalinowski's return to G1. That's a pretty good measure of the group's health. Here are reports on some of them.

Mike's achievement



Mike lent his 10' oval of brass track to enable us to get going with the Oval. Once we started laying the stainless steel track, Mike redeployed the track into a really excellent garden layout. Mike seems to be able to build stuff at a tremendous rate, and apparently likes to reconfigure the track for fun.

He invited me over to run in April and we had a terrific time. The hedge side has a tunnel with lift up lids which makes a very handy parking place for stock if it comes on to rain (as it did). I can recommend Mike's bacon rolls, by the way.



They made 842 Black Fives, but only five were names. However, if you look closely at Mike's electric G1 model, you'll see that it has acquired nameplates:



The Hulses' new track opens

I reported in an earlier newsletter on Martin's rugged construction techniques which yield a track you can sit on. By Easter, the loop with a steamup siding and a long stock siding (both trailing turnouts) was complete, and Martin invited Elizabeth and me over for a trial run. We took over Peter Howland-built engines as that somehow seemed appropriate. Everything went very well, and at one point in the afternoon we had both the Bond's tank and the Martin Evan's coal fired Atlantic circulating together.





The met office has just announced that 2015 had the sunniest April since 1947: certainly our April GTG at Pauline and Martin's was almost too hot to be running steam engines. Martin tried to interest me in a hat with fitted fan, but in the interests of self-respect I settled for a purple baseball cap.



We had a large turnout which presumably our hosts had anticipated since there was a lot of excellent cake to be had.



Steve ran this very nice oscillator engine complete with period coach: all very appropriate for this GWR dominated line.



Huge progress at Guildford

There has been a tremendous amount of progress at Guildford. The framework is up, and the boards fitted.



There has been some concern that the plastic boards might sag under hot sun, but in fact the opposite happened: as the top surface heated it expanded and the boards bowed upwards. This has now been cured by making some strategic stress-relieving grooves.

But Adrian, will it fall over?

After a very long gestation period, my own track is nearing completion. The goal has always been to have a lightly engineered waist level track which won't dominate the garden - I'm a keen gardener and the plants come first.

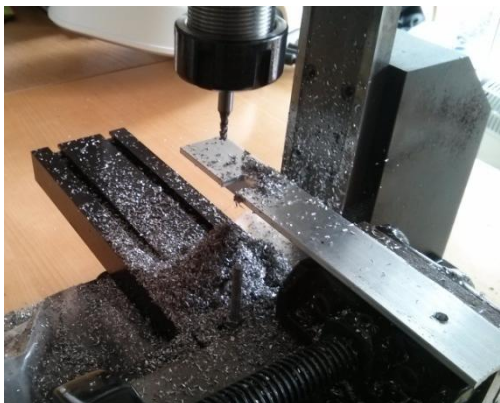


The idea is to use small diameter stainless steel tube rather than the more conventional timber fence posts and good quality decking timber. There is a single track 3m radius oval with a reverse curve on the free standing side, and a fence-mounted 6m long run of sidings for stock and steaming up.

Stainless steel tube is expensive, but I found a cheap IKEA shoe rack which could be cannibalised. A few years ago I described my plans to Alan England, and he designed and made for me a bracket from 3mm

angle aluminium. I have adapted his design a little, and made a batch up, slitting the angle on the bandsaw, and then cutting slots and drilling on my baby Sherline mill.

Alan did caution me that the tubes might not be rigid enough.



3mm aluminium does not really enjoy being bent through a right angle. Peter Jackman gave me a lesson in annealing aluminium using the 'black soap' technique: rub soap over the aluminium and then heat gently (perhaps on the hob) until it blackens. Important not to overdo it, unless you like molten aluminium.



Now soft, it is easy to form the ears and fit.



A stainless steel hose clip holds the bracket and allows vertical adjustment to compensate for ground movement.

The tubes are simply postcreted into a small hole made with a 4" auger.

So: is it strong enough? Yes, if you put a scaffold pole in every five or so sections.

Visit to Graham Colover 2015

A reminder that we are visiting Graham Colover's excellent track on Saturday May 23rd. If you are intending to join us, please let me know as soon as possible.



March GTG at the Blands

On a rather chilly but sunny March day we had our first 2015 visit to the Blands. Great vapour effects shown here as a train awaits a clear road.



Excellent hospitality, as ever, and good running for all.

Really, really big steam

A bunch of us attended the April in-steam day at Kempton Park. The two triple-compound engines in the old engine house there are 62 feet high with 32 ton crank shafts. One of them is restored, and they run it too. The earth moves when those pistons get going.



Time travel

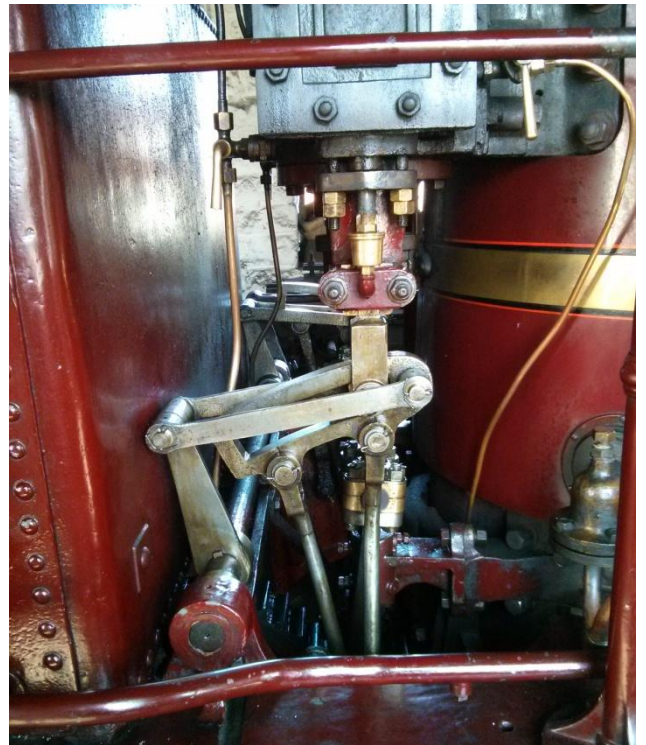
I was up in Newcastle in April on a research trip and took a day out to visit Beamish. I have a soft spot for pioneer engines, and managed to catch this atmospheric moment in the 1825 wagonway shed.



In the mining village engine shed I saw the now-full restored 'coffe pot' engine. Small enough to imagine having a standard gauge line in the garden.



Look at this beautiful vertical Stephenson's link motion. Built 1871, in Canon Street of all places.



Late news: 2015 bid round

We have just heard that our most recent bid to the G1MRA committee has been awarded £800 which will enable us to get going on scenic additions. Many thanks to everybody who made suggestions for bid items.

Frontpiece

Elizabeth Scott's coal firing ambitions take flight in the late afternoon sun at Ropley shed as Bittern cools down.



SURREY G1MRA GROUP

2015 fixture list



Surrey group meets second Tuesday afternoons
Please refer to your membership list for venues

Tue 13 Jan	Sutton MEC	13.00
Fri 16 Jan - Sun 18 Jan	London Model Engineer Show - Invicta Track - Alexandra Palace	
Tue 10 Feb	Ken Lowes	13.00
Sat 21 Feb	Bacon Butty Bash, Durrington; Salisbury and Stonehenge Group	
Sat 7 Mar	Royal Holloway Science Festival	All day; setup Friday evening
Tue 10 Mar	Mike Bland	13.00
Sat 28 Mar - Sun 29 Mar	Festival of Model Railways - Anglia Roads - Alexandra Palace	
Tue 14 Apr	Martin Hulse	13.00
Sat 25 Apr	G1MRA spring meeting, Shepshed near Loughborough	
Sat 9 May	ALSRM show, Reading	All day; setup Friday 15.00
Tue 12 May	Michael Wrottesley	13.00
Tue 9 Jun	Ken Lowes	13.00
Sat 4 Jul - Sun 5 Jul	GMES rally Guildford - running on new permanent track	
Tue 14 Jul	Mike Bland	13.00
Sat 8 Aug	Lionsmeet 2015 at GMES rally - running on new permanent track	
Tue 11 Aug	Bob Boorman	13.00
Tue 8 Sep	Peter Jackman	13.00
Tue 13 Oct	Guildford MES	13.00
Tue 10 Nov	Sutton MEC	13.00
Tue 8 Dec	Bob Boorman	13.00
Dec	Model Engineer Exhibition Esher?	

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