

Dear Member,

Just a reminder of a few of the things we have been getting on with this month!

We are making steady progress with the re-laying of the back straight in between the showers! Thanks in no small way to Geoff Broad and his gang who are building the embankment to the correct gradient. The photo below shows Alex Bouchard hard at work levelling the ballast bed ready for track laying – thanks Alex!



Talking of track laying, we had the first loco run over the re-laid section carrying a new track panel to the rail head. Rufus was doing the 'honours' but unfortunately then would not go in reverse and had to be recovered (again!) this time by 'Shooey'. The photo was taken just before this was discovered.

Track panels have been built in our storage container by Fred and his gang of helpers ready for transporting to the rail head. The photo shows track building in progress – thanks Fred!



The photos below show the progress made during the month of the rail replacement on the 'back straight'.



We are now bending rail in situ for the first corner following the main straight. The first three 'outer' rails have been bent and are being connected with fishplates by Tony and Greg.

The view looking back down the main straight on Wednesday 26 February.



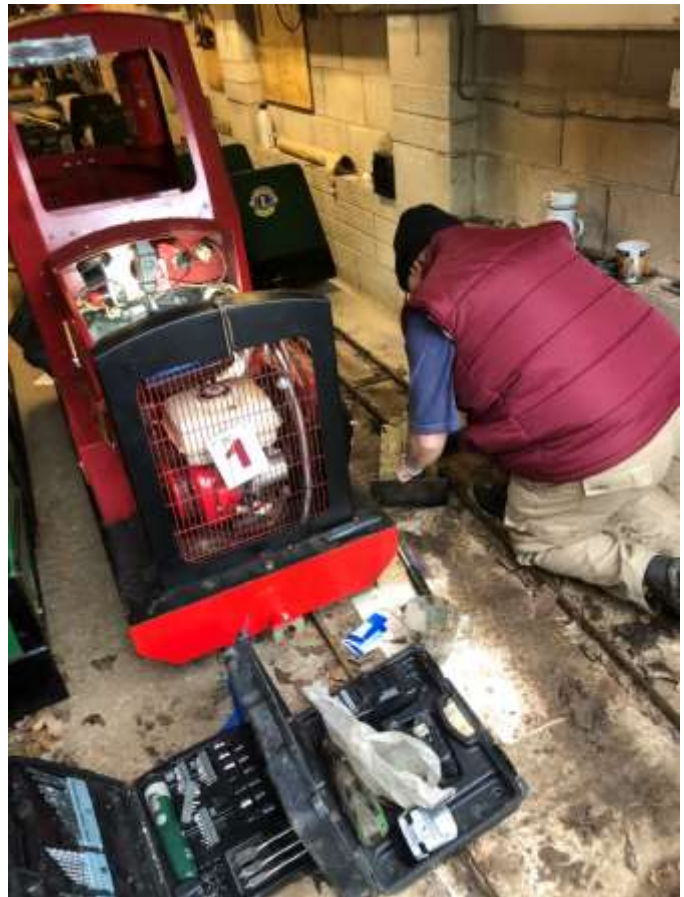
The first three 'outers' fixed we need one more to connect with the next straight track panel.

Photo: Alex Bouchard

As you can see a nice gentle bend was achieved.



More on 'Rufus', having returned the loco to base it was quite a disassembly job to take the gearbox out. It was found that the main drive shaft had too much end float, enough to prevent the gears going into reverse. So a modification was made during a Saturday engineering session to provide a limiting stop. This involved drilling a tapping the end of the shaft so a bolt and spacer could be used to limit lateral movement. The photo shows Tony McGeechan busy re-assembling the transmission.



Unfortunately to get the gearbox fixings back into place the loco had to be tilted over to allow access to the underside. At the next work session we see a whole gang 'on the job'!

But he's now back in service again - thanks chaps!

Work is progressing well on the second crossover in the main station. The track bed is in and Mike Williams and Tony Sear are seen preparing the cable run for operating the motorised points and their indicators.



A week later the track is starting to be laid as can be seen below.

The final point for the cross-over is almost complete and we have to say a big thank you to Bob Smith who has master minded this project from the start! The photo shows him offering up the point motor to the point blade switching mechanism. This will be the 13th point that Bob has made and true to form he told me it had been a problematic one! Asked about the job he commented that "... it was an interesting project – but don't ask me to make any more!"



Wednesday 26 Feb saw the final crossover point installed by Mike Williams and his helpers. The photo shows the point connected into the platform 2 track and final levelling taking place.

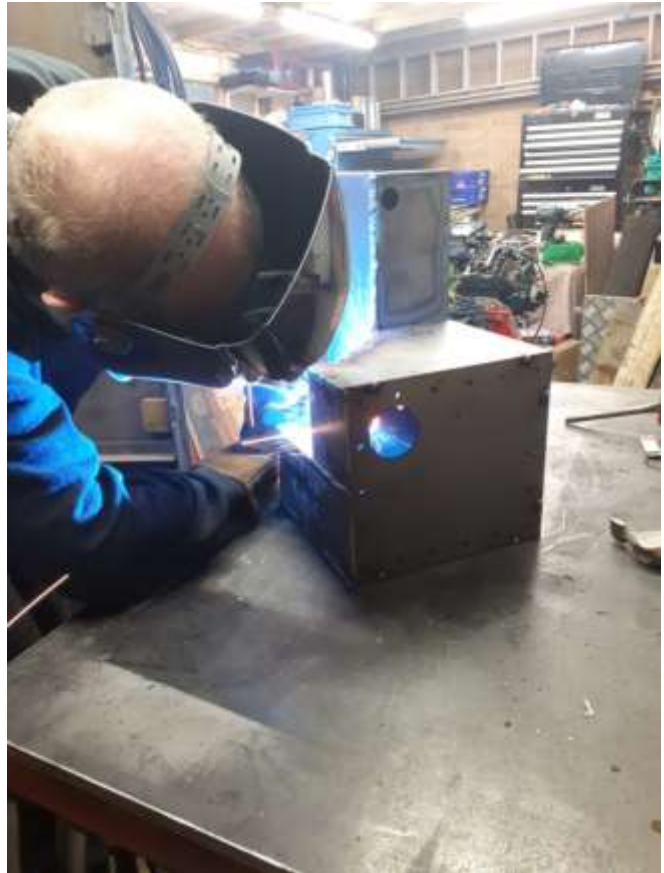
Photo: Alex Bouchard

Point in and ready for motorising!



Our Chairman Aubyn has been busy on a welding job for 'Cric' he is seen below busy welding up the fuel tank for this locomotive.

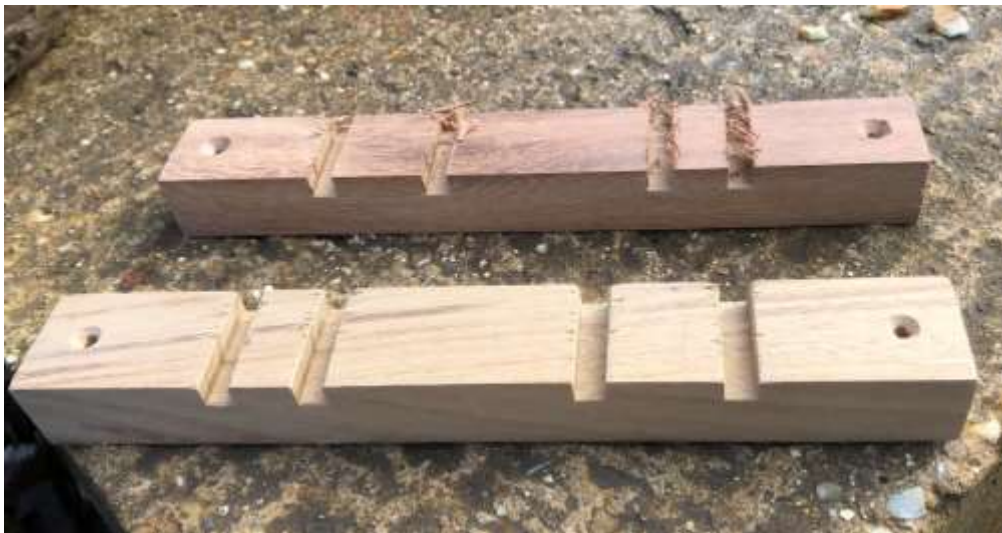
Photo: Edward Parrott



Although we are not busy 'out in the field' cementing in pillars for the raised track extension work is still going on in the background. Steve Bouchard continues the immersion in creosote of the wooden beams as was shown in last month's @RMES and we are indebted to him for all his hard work. He is seen fixing 'dipped' beams back into place.

Photo: Alex Bouchard

A steady 'gang' headed up by Tony Shoobridge are working on the hardwood sleepers required to hold the rails. New this month is the commissioning of the 'gang router' to put the slots in the sleepers ready for rail. The system was evolved by Geoff Broad and he is seen operating the system on the small lathe. Many thanks Geoff!



The sleepers come out with all slots milled in the correct positions. The photo shows how they come off the 'gang router' (rear sleeper) and final cleaned up and ready for use (front sleeper).



A new garden bed has been created in the new station as part of the crossover work. Started by Mike Williams and Tony Sear, it is seen being sorted out and planted up by John Turner with plants supplied by Alex – thanks folks!

Photo: Alex Bouchard



The finished job alongside the crossover.

Photo: Tony Sear

That's all for this month folks, let's hope March brings us less rain and more sunshine!

Note: All photos by the author unless otherwise credited.

Howard Brewer (Secretary)

29 February 2020