

Dear Member,

The first day of the month saw a lot of on-site activity - I will let Edward take up the story ...



"On March 1st we finally got a break in the weather which enabled Phil to reassemble the last of the brake gear and rods on Mount Kilimanjaro. This marks the completion of the work to re-profile the wheel treads on all the locomotives wheels on both power bogies. There is some

plumbing to redo in the steam circuit which we were unhappy with following its steam test and first unofficial run, and the vacuum and air brake equipment to reassemble, but then we should be able to begin running trials. Many thanks for the work that was carried out by the two Phil's which has helped me immensely." Photo: Edward Parrott

"March 1st and a boiler testing session. Members will recognise the Romulus "Myglyd" which was built by John Groom and is now owned by Edward Parrott, which has had its new boiler fitted and passed its steam test. There's a few finishing jobs to do but she will then be ready to re-join the public running roster in April.

New to the club is the second Romulus which belongs to Chris B. This has been bought as a complete unknown as a project from a garden railway. Having



Photo: Edward Parrott

had a thorough internal and external inspection by boiler inspectors Phil and Ed, it has passed a full hydraulic test, much to Chris' relieve! The loco requires quite a bit of work, but will hopefully join us for the 2021 season.

Also up for test was the second Darjeeling A Class "No.10" which was part-built by former member Brian Gittins and is being finished for the family by Ed Parrott. Most of the fittings have been assembled and so as there was a testing session planned it was added to the list. Unfortunately a couple of gaskets which didn't take up properly and a pair of globe valves which were brand new were all leaking and prevented a successful test. Two out of three ain't bad!"

Work continues on the back straight to get our 'main line' back together! The photo below (taken on 1 March) shows the outer of the bend in final position with track gang members Tony and Rolf getting ready to bend the inner rails.



Next work session saw the inner rails bent and fitted in place on the sleepers as the photo shows.





Fred Moon did a grand job producing more straight track panels for us and delivering them behind 'Rufus' and before long we had filled the remaining gap and were able to start on the final connection. The photo shows the gang at work making connection with the outer rail first, made even easier by the sunny weather!

Next work session saw the inner rail bent and the final connection made. Well done Tony McGeechan and his helpers!





The track that we connected into was in a poor state and had to be corrected for level and gradient to match up with the re-laid track. This was lifted and packed temporarily as we did so many of the sleepers were seen to be in a poor state. So a session of re-sleeping of this section got underway. The gang members keeping their distance due to the Covid-19 precautions – see photo.



We still have all the top ballasting to do on the whole of the re-laid section, but a lot will depend on the governments' restrictions.

We had a request from a 00 gauge modeller who needed a very small gear cutting for an operating model of a container crane. Unfortunately this was a commercially made model and there are no spares for the plastic gear that was prone to splitting – you may remember the request a few weeks back. Both Geoff Broad and Fred Moon were up for the challenge, so Geoff was in contact with the modeller and after a sample was made in brass and tested OK, a batch of 10 were made.



Photo: Geoff Broad

Geoff did the turning and Fred the gear cutting (see photo). The gentleman was more than pleased with the result and has made a £100 donation to the club funds. Well done chaps!





The work to complete the second crossover in the new station was well under way at the beginning of the month. The photo shows the point motor in place and final wiring and testing will need doing.

Another work session later and job done! The photo shows the completed crossover between platforms 3 and 2 with track ballasted and system tested. Well done to Mike Williams and his helpers!



Also around the same time work was being done to create some more garden area around the new crossovers. These have been masterminded by Alex Bouchard who is seen in the photo piling the soil into the new bed – thanks Alex!





Edward informs me that Dr John is in the workshop to have worn out bushes on the side rods replaced. The driving crank pins were found to be very badly worn so the axle was removed and set up on our Bridgeport mill and the pins re-machined in situ. He hopes to have the loco back in service soon.

Photo: Edward Parrott

Work was also started on concreting the pedestrian crossing at the exit to the new station. Geoff Broad and his 'gang' started by excavating the area having first removed a rail section (see photo).



The 'spoil' was then used to back fill the boarding and edging of the re-built embankment on the back straight. 'Rufus' and the gang are seen putting the final load in position.



Meanwhile the removed section of track went into the capable hands of Fred Moon to weld steel 'straps' across the portion of rail that was to be encased in concrete. This was then re-installed as can be seen in the photo. Note the neat support legs underneath – thanks Fred!

Photo: Geoff Broad



The next work session saw the concreting well underway with Geoff seen doing the laying and final finishing – well done all!

Photo: Alain Foote



The completed crossing – the photo was taken at the next work session.



Edward has sent me a photo of the hydraulic oil tank for Criccieth Castle which is now completed with its fittings and painted ready to be installed in the loco.

Photo: Edward Parrott





The garden at the new station is beginning to stir as can be seen in the photo.



Photo: Alex Bouchard

We will finish with a nice photo of the miniature Daffodils which are in full bloom on the new station – a reminder that spring is upon us!



A very different end to this month to what we expected and uncertainty of what next month will bring given the present climate. Now that we have very limited access to the site and working parties have had to be abandoned - how about letting me know what projects you are working on in your home workshop?

If you would like to send me some photos and a few lines explaining what you are doing, it can be shared with the rest of the membership. We are all missing the social interaction and particularly at the club where we would normally be busy getting ready for the running season. This may be a way of keeping us all in touch and cheering each other up. I would be very pleased to hear from you!

I wish you and your family the very best in these uncertain times. Keep well, and I hope we will all be back to normal in the not too distant future.

Note: All photos by the author unless otherwise credited.

Howard Brewer (Secretary)  
31 March 2020