

MARCH 2023 NWMES NEWSLETTER.

SUNDAY 19th FEBRUARY, RHYL MINIATURE RAILWAY.

I happened to be driving past Marine Lake expecting to see everywhere locked up but was pleasantly surprised to see the large roller door open with one of the locomotives in steam. Having parked my car and walked over I had a nice chat with one of the staff.

The locomotive was one of the Barnes Atlantics called MICHAEL. Following its ten-year strip down, this was its first steaming after replacing the boiler tubes then lifting the boiler back between the frames.





The steam pipework on the backhead looked as if it was made from steel electrical conduit. If it was, it's lasted very well over the years. I was asking how many times they would have to add coal to the fire on one circuit of the track and was surprised to be told the only time they add coal to the fire is at the station before starting the journey.

As regards the coal, they've tried all types of different fuel including enviro coal but are hoping to get some from the new seam at Ffos y Fran, Merthyr soon.

GET WELL SOON.

My good friend!!! Owen Francis has told me that one of our members – Trevor Butterworth has been a patient at Ysbyty Gwynedd recently. I'm sure we all wish him a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him at West Shore very soon.

As a fifteen-year-old, I left school to attend Bangor Technical College on a twelve-month Pre-Apprentice Course studying General Engineering.

Our Mechanical Engineering lecturer was called Mr. Butterworth. Although I loved every minute of school, my twelve months at the Tech College were brilliant and this young lecturer - Mr. Butterworth, helped to make this experience a good one. We were treated almost like adults even though we were still closely supervised.

Thanks Trevor.

WEST SHORE MATTERS.

The permanent way gang has been at it repairing the track on the bend at the top corner adjacent to the steel storage container.

I mentioned in my last newsletter that the aluminium track had been wearing on the inside surface. Although we have spare lengths, I suggested if it was possible to straighten the existing offending track then bend it in the opposite direction to the same radius. Thus, saving using the new lengths.

I'm glad to say there wasn't a need to straighten the track. Purely insert the track into the bending rolls and the rest is history. The damaged area is now on the outside of the track.

We haven't started on the superelevation now, as we are waiting for warmer weather to use the adhesive we have purchased.

The new turntable project has gathered momentum, mainly thanks to our chairman – Gary.



This photo shows Martin and Keith measuring up to ascertain Gary's calculations were correct.

The welding has only been tacked now; Phil has arranged for a Lloyd's Coded Welder to complete the work prior to having the structure galvanized.

As regards our meeting with one of the council's officers to negotiate a new lease, I can confirm this has happened. Our future looks brighter, although no positive offer has been given yet. When this happens, you'll all receive an official notification.

TITANIC. (For all you marine model enthusiasts)

I can't believe how time flies as you get older. Listening to Radio 2 recently I couldn't believe it was 25 years since the film "TITANIC" was released. Believe it or not I've never seen it.

Reading some past copies of ME about ten years ago, I put one copy to one side as this ship called Titanic has always appealed to me. (December 1957).

1958 ish another film was released about this disaster called, "A Night to Remember". As I was only seven, I can remember this film vividly watching it at the Luxor Cinema in Llanfairfechan (long gone!). The other thing I remember was the number of women crying, as the ship went down.

Here are some details of the ship in that film.



Can any of our members build a larger model?

Traction Engines. (For our Traction Engine Enthusiasts)

For our members that have attended the winter lectures and West Shore recently you will have seen Gwyn in attendance. I hope Gwyn won't mind me saying that he is a rather quiet person, in fact a bit shy!

I don't know how many of you know of his success at The Model Engineering Exhibition at Olympia.

This is what the local paper had to say about Gwyn's model.

Model-maker puts years of work into steam engine

Gwyn's hard work secures best prize

A Welsh mechanic took his ten-year project to a prestigious London show earlier this month and triumphed over some of the best model engineers in the UK. For the second time in three years, HEFIN HUGHES investigated.

HAVE you fumbled with a plastic Airtix kit of a Spitfire and got glue all over your fingers? Did you spend a week or two getting it just right? Does this make you a real model maker?

Sorry, real model makers think in months and years rather than weeks, and the thought of using ready-made components is anathema to them.

When I first started work with the *Weekly News* I approached an old friend working on a hugely ambitious project – the construction of a meticulously engineered, one quarter scale, steam traction engine.

At the time, Gwyn Jones, 45, a motor mechanic who lives in Llanrhon, near Llandudno, had already spent seven years on the exact replica of 'Royal Chester', an Allchin steam traction engine of 1925, and I realised it had the makings of a first class feature.

But my requests to take a few shots of the already impressive machine

were met with a polite request to come back in two or three years when it was finished!

I did, and it was worth it too.

For the finished article is truly superb, and I wasn't alone in my judgement; at the International Model Engineering Exhibition's centenary show at Olympia earlier this month, judges awarded it the gold medal for best in its class and, furthermore, the challenge cup for 'best in show'.

You don't have to be an engineer to appreciate the attention to detail involved in turning out such a gem – but it helps. Every plate and tube, cog and shaft have been faithfully reproduced, and the finish on the machined surfaces is glass-like.

"You can buy quite a lot of the components ready-made, but often they are not absolutely to the right scale and the standard of finish is not up to scratch," said Gwyn, whose idea of 'up to scratch' would have many of today's so-called engineers weeping in envy.

He once spent weeks drilling and machining a boiler plate before realising that each hole was about two thousandths of an inch too large.

"I could easily have enlarged the end of each pipe to match, but the thought of part of the engine not being absolutely right irritated me, so I scrapped the plate and started again," he said.

Everything that should work, does – including the wick and locking differential, and even the tools are exact

scale replicas of the originals, all made by Gwyn, as were the bucket, oil can and even the suction pipe, by which the real Allchin would have sucked up water from any convenient river or pond.

As I left, Gwyn and Neil, 17 (his chief engineer and fireman), were preparing to raise steam on the quarter ton, coal fired machine which is

capable of pulling 5 tonnes on a level surface.

Frank, his wife, and Nerys, Neil's sister, looked on with what I took to be loving indulgence – they mean't that keen on Gwyn's hobby to start with, but now they've seen the road they're on, they're sure they'll be with the best engine model in Britain – if not the world.

Best engine: Gwyn and son Neil, with the model Allchin and 'best in show' challenge cup won at Olympia. Below, the tools, all made to scale – the size of the matchbox gives an idea of the scale and the tiny padlock was also made by Gwyn.

PH. HEFIN HUGHES



Best engine:

Gwyn and son Neil, with the model Allchin and 'best in show' challenge cup won at Olympia. Below, the tools, all made to scale – the size of the matchbox gives an idea of the scale and the tiny padlock was also made by Gwyn.

Pic: HEFIN HUGHES

Looking at his father's skill, I'm wondering if his son, Neil has carried on the tradition of model engineering in the family. A potential new member maybe.

Our last Winter Lecture was again by Martin giving us a very interesting talk on the North Wales Quarry Hunslets. Having mentioned him earlier, nice to see you back Trevor (Butterworth).

As you can see, I'm doing my best to cover all aspects of our hobby so I'm still pleading with you all to take a while and let me know what kind of projects are keeping you busy.

Easter isn't too far away; the committee will require you to help with public running at West Shore. I can't wait to give you all a warm welcome. Regards, Harold.