



NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2025

How sad to hear about the tram accident over in Portugal.

With many people having lost their lives, it was worse to hear that a railway enthusiast from Holyhead was one of the casualties. Our sympathies go out to his family and friends.

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Llandudno's tramway is very steep, but Bergen's seems steeper. Maybe Brian Haseler and his wife Eira can vouch for this as they were over there recently. I'm sure someone will research this to prove me wrong.

Eira contacted me via Brian regarding an article she'd read about the Llandudno tram disaster and was wondering if I'd be interested to include it in my newsletter. I accepted because as you all know most of the time, I'm desperate for articles to print.

Diolch yn fawr Eira.

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The only fatal accident on the Great Orme tramway occurred 93 years ago today when Car No.4 was descending the track. Around Black Gate the drawbar suddenly broke and the car became detached from the cable and careered 75 yards down Old Road coming to a halt near Idwal's Folly. The two fatalities were the driver, Ted Harris aged 30 of Llican Terrace and 12-year-old Margaret Worthington. Margaret of Chapel Street had just been to the half way tram station to deliver lunch to her father who worked on the tramway as a winchman. She was in the front of the car with the driver and realising the danger, Ted grabbed the little girl and jumped clear only for them to end up crushed between the front of the tram and the wall. Immediately, people from local houses came out to help and tend to the wounded. The police were soon on the scene and under their instruction fifty men took up ropes to haul the six-tonne tramcar backwards a few feet to release the casualties. Ted Harris had suffered a fractured skull and broken back and died at the scene while Margaret, still in his grasp, had a severed leg and had lost a lot of blood. She was rushed to hospital but died of her injuries a few hours later. There were 37 holidaymakers on board the tram and sixteen were injured. Many were hit by falling masonry as the tram car impacted with the wall, ripping off the coping stones. The police commandeered every available motor car in the vicinity to ferry the injured to hospital. An immediate investigation was launched and serious problems were uncovered not least that the emergency braking system was not in operation having been disconnected 26 years earlier! Also, it was found that the drawbar was substandard and even though one had failed on tramcar No.5 days earlier, the management took no action. Claims lodged by injured passengers totalled £14,000 and consequently the tramway's insurance company repudiated liability. With thanks to Victoria Currie of CCBC for her help locating Margaret's grave.

RAILWAY ART

In the 1950's and sixties British Railways produced some fantastic works of art advertising various areas on the railway system. These days if I see any originals or copies in various establishments, I get my phone out and start clicking.

A few weeks ago, whilst on a visit to Liverpool we visited Weatherspoon's in Lime Street station for tea and toast for breakfast. The artwork in their lounge was truly magnificent; one was showing the Liverpool overhead railway naming all its stations and another showing the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railways map.

Nearer to home, I can't believe how accurate an aerial painting was. The only fault I can find is Puffin Island is missing.

LIVERPOOL & NORTH WALES

Daily Sailings

"ST. TUDNO" or "ST. SEIRIOL"
May to September
for Llandudno and Menai Bridge
Leaving LIVERPOOL 10.45 a.m. due back about 7.30 p.m.
LIVERPOOL and LLANDUDNO in 2 hours.
For particulars apply The Liverpool & North Wales Steamship Co., 114, 46, Chapel Street, Liverpool

CONVENIENT L.M.S. TRAINS LEAVE THIS STATION
IN CONNECTION WITH THESE SAILINGS

LMS

I've also noticed our society's track at Ysgol Gogarth and John's 7 ¼" track at Llanfachraeth, Anglesey is also missing!

CASUALTIES.

Three of our ever-present members at West Shore have received different ailments recently. Idris, Colin and Jim, can I on behalf of our society wish you all a speedy recovery.

OWEN FRANCIS.

Our late friend Owen has been remembered at West Shore with a stainless steel plaque fixed onto the turntable that is associated with the headshunts adjacent to the station area.

This item of trackwork has become very useful, the whole project financed by items sold from Owen's workshop.

STOCKPORT MEMBERS VISIT.

Members of the Stockport Society visited our track a few weeks ago. Not sure how many would arrive, two gentlemen turned up. Another gentleman to arrive with his new build battery locomotive was our good member and friend from Oswestry, Richard Powell. It was an ideal time to give his loco a good shakedown and smooth out any niggling faults. What I saw of it, it was clocking up the laps lovely.

The first photo shows one of the Stockport members driving a 5 inch gauge AJAX locomotive. Unusually this locomotive had a saddle tank in place of the usual side tanks.



The next photo shows the other Stockport member driving a Kingscale prairie tank. A lovely loco that performed very smoothly, like the proverbial Singer Sewing Machine. The passenger is our Secretary Tony Graham making sure the driver didn't get lost on the track.



Finally, a nice photo of our good friend Richard Powell driving his battery locomotive. The weather was glorious, slightly different to our present weather conditions.



ANNUAL DINNER.

Just a gentle reminder that our annual dinner will be held at our usual venue Conwy Golf Club on the evening of Friday 21st November 2025. 7pm for 7:30pm.

Menu can be seen on a member's email dated 06/10/2025. I'm hoping we can have better weather this year.

EVENING LECTURES.

Our evening lectures have started at Craig y Don leisure centre. These are held on the first Tuesday of the month. The next one will be on 4th November 2025.

Our first meeting was by Keith Jones; he gave us an insight to his lifetime hobby in model engineering. An excellent evening, quite a few of us had to scratch our heads trying to remember past members names. Diolch Keith.

Our next meeting will be given by Martin, and it will be on the American two foot gauge Maine Railway System. I can't wait for this.

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING A NEW CAR?

Does a person think about style, consumption, engine performance when choosing a new car? Richard Stoddart has recently purchased a very nice Volvo car.

I had to ask him what was the reason for this model? As I'd guessed, the main reason was on his workbench in his workshop and I was right.

Richard is constructing a 5 inch gauge Merchant Navy class loco, so this would have to fit inside his new car.

Seeing photos of this beast at our meetings at the track shows Richard's high standard of workmanship, we all can't wait to see this loco in action. If it goes as well as Richard's Gresley designed tank loco, it should be a cracker.

TURNING SMALL DIAMETER TAPERS.

In September's issue of ME, a reader was constructing a Don Young designed 02 Tank loco, similar to Paul Gennoe's locomotive. He was manufacturing vertical hand posts which are positioned each side of the entrance to the cab, and on the front of the water tanks.

These were 1/8" dia. Tapering down to 1/16" dia. over a distance of 3 3/4". He used a JACOT tool for this operation.

This created an interesting discussion at the clubhouse as no member had heard or used one of these tools. Being so small, how does the work not flex whilst being machined? It would be interesting to see how Paul managed on his locomotive.

COLLECTION X

Just seen an article regarding collection x from somewhere in Surrey on breakfast tv this morning. A collection of locos having been locked away for fifty years, all requiring full restoration. The owner used to own the Vale of Rheidol Railway, with the workshops at Aberystwyth these days likely to work on a few of these locomotives.

No doubt we'll hear more about these in the near future.

MINOR WORKS OF ART

We all know what Gary and Complete Tooling Solutions can produce over the years. CNC technology has changed toolmaking over the years. I've asked Gary "Are the staff still classed as toolmakers?" knowing how much computer programming is involved.

Since David High gave us that interesting talk on Kerr Stuart 4415 restoration, we all heard how difficult it was locating parts for the governor. I'm not sure how Gary was introduced to David, all I can say is "Wheels were set in motion".

My good friend from Beaumaris??. Brian Haseler is a member of the FR Society, and whilst reading the Autumn 2025 Magazine, he noticed this:

While all of that big stuff is exciting, those members who attended the AGM will know that a lot of the project focus is on the small and very intricate components within the governor casing. Some particularly complicated examples of these were hand delivered by Gary Lewis from Complete Tooling Solutions (CTS) in Rhyl, in May. These are the cam followers which CTS has machined up from the solid and are minor works of art, lovingly displayed behind glass with an original McLaren Diesel ashtray on the jubilee weekend. Ashtrays may be a bit of a niche market in the 21st Century, however if you are after a coaster, fridge magnet or one of our exciting new T-shirts then please see the sales page of the Heritage Group website for the new, extensive range of souvenirs. Taking advice from Henry Ford and diluting it somewhat, you can have any colour you like, as long as it is grey. **David High**

I'm so glad David appreciates good engineering.

Gary tells me these will require to be nitrided, a form of hardening. Once again, thanks to Eira and Brian for their contributions.

That's all for this month

Kind Regards,

Harold Jones