



# OFFCUTS



Newsletter of the Bromsgrove Society  
of Model Engineers

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## Draw the Line

Photo coming when the paint is dry!

Where do you draw the line? At the edge of the platform of course. The team have been working hard to tidy up the station.

**Tool tips pg 4**

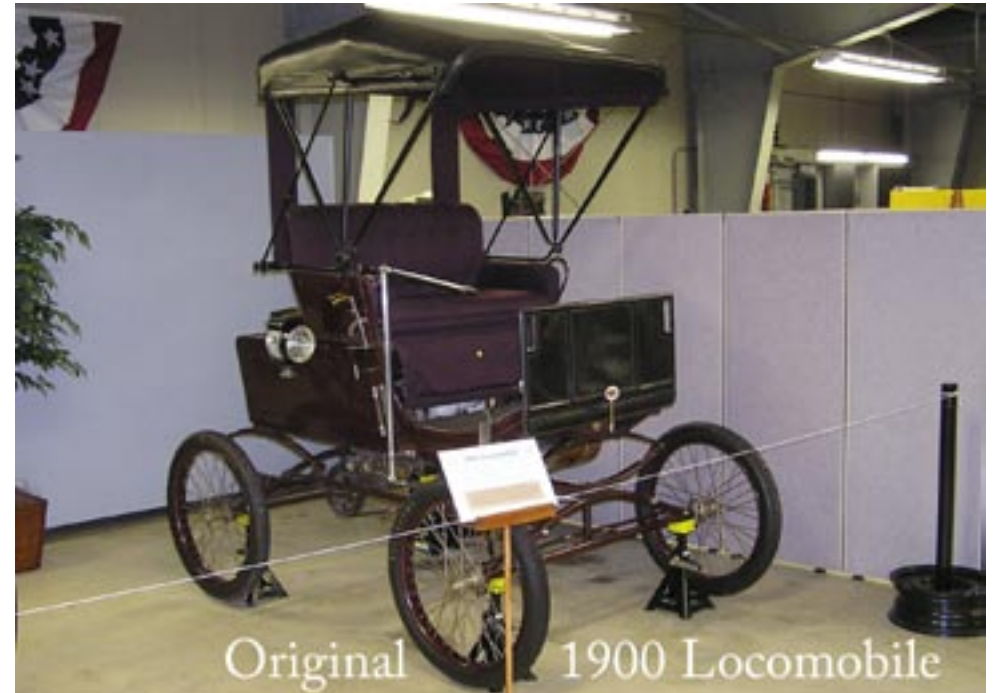
**A modern steam car part 1 pg 2**

### Graham Harding's Steam Car

In 2004 Modelworks announced the arrival of their "Likamobile" kit of parts to build a 1900 Locomobile replica. Graham Coleman and I saw the prototype at the Harrogate show and I immediately fell for it. I collected a brochure, which I still have, and so began my dream of a steam car. My lack of availability of a large covered space in which to build it prevented me from purchasing the kit.

Modelworks produced and sold 50 kits which went all over the world but as we know Modelworks folded and left some buyers without kit parts. In addition some problems occurred involving modifications. At this point the brochure was put away and I got on with my own gauge 1 and 5" railways in the wood at the back of our house.

There things may have remained except that having recently managed to retire properly, some seven years after retirement age, I began to have a hankering for what people call a "Sunday car". Graham C and I looked



at various cars and I was quite attracted to the model T Fords with their peculiar foot-pedal arrangements and no clutch. But then, trawling the Internet sites one evening, there was my “Lykamobile” for sale from Steam Traction World who had bought up the traction engine and car side of the Modelworks business. This was no ordinary Lykamobile!

The original Locomobiles were manufactured in the States but they had an English agent and the cars were modified with the addition of mudguards and a Clarkson condenser to prevent the “illegal display of vapour”. They were extremely popular as the internal combustion cars of the period were basic and difficult to drive. Having no gears, just a two cylinder steam engine driving the back axle via a chain, the Locomobile was simplicity itself.

That was the driving bit. This was not true of the boiler and burner. The boiler was a fire tube boiler with 298 (yes you read it right 298!) tubes. The burner was fired with petrol. As we know, it is the petrol vapours that burn well. To vaporise the petrol on start up a looped poker was provided. This was heated in the fire or stove in your house till red hot then you ran out of the house with the glowing poker and inserted it in a small hole in the burner assembly, screwed it in place and hoped it was still hot enough to vaporise the petrol. Needless to say owners got bored with this procedure and in came the first of the after sales accessories consisting of a small blowtorch! The concept of heating liquid petrol with a blow torch would not, I think, meet HSE guidelines! Anyone who wishes to view this procedure should go on Youtube - London to Brighton 2009 - Locomobile 1899.

In spite of these problems the Locomobile sold well, the English agent W. M. Letts selling 400 of them in 1900 and 1901. Some of this success was attributable to an epic journey undertaken by Hubert Egerton. He had only owned a Locomobile for two months and was so enthused by it that in a rash moment at the National Show he said it was so good he would be happy to drive it from John o’ Groats to Land’s End. This suggestion was taken up by all around - including the English agent - and before he knew it, it was a wager from which in those Edwardian times he could not withdraw. To prove the reliability in all conditions he decided to do the journey in midwinter!

He had to arrange petrol supplies every 100 miles, (water was no problem

as there were plenty of horse troughs). The car was fitted with mudguards and Dunlop tyres, modified lubricators (the original were displacement types) and a basket on the back for spares. The car was taken by train to Wick and then driven to John o’ Groats and the following morning he set off on the journey. The first and persistent problem he and his passenger suffered was “firing back” when crosswinds going down the T-shaped burner flue at the rear forced the flames away from the boiler tubes. This was not helped by the terrible weather conditions in Scotland and battling into continuous headwinds vastly increased petrol consumption. In spite of these problems they made Edinburgh where they were met by a large crowd who had heard of their journey. The next day they continued towards Penrith and succeeded in climbing Shap but the headwinds were so strong that they had to keep power on to drive the car downhill on the far side! They then proceeded through Preston to Bridgnorth where they stayed at the Crown and Anchor. They then continued in better conditions through Kidderminster, Worcester and Gloucester and on to Bristol. Bristol to Exeter occupied the following day and then they set out over the moors in appalling rain-laden squally conditions. In spite of this they made Launceston in the daylight hours and then set off across Bodmin Moor by night illuminated by their paraffin lamps and Bleriot headlights! Shades of “When the wind whistles cold on the moor of a night”! The following morning at 5 a.m. they made the Western hotel in Penzance and then reached Land’s End the following day.

Now move forward 109 years..... In part 2 next time Graham will describe his very own “Lykamobile”

### A Couple of Tool Tips by John Hurdley

**How often have you** had to shorten BA screws to fit your model? This is becoming more of a problem as suppliers stock smaller ranges. The device shown is one I picked up in an ancient Model Engineer. It consists of a piece of 0.375” square mild steel 3” long with a series of steps cut in it to leave 0.250, 0.187 and 0.125 or whatever lengths you want your screws to be. Each set of steps is then drilled and tapped, in this case 6, 7 and 8BA.



The tool is then case hardened. The screw to be shortened is screwed in from the stepped side, snipped off and filed smooth. As it is unscrewed the case hardened tool restores the thread. Job done!



**I am currently making** a 2" Burrell Gold medal Tractor. The key component

in a traction engine is the cylinder block and as this is a compound engine the block has a number of steam passages to be drilled at very awkward angles. I made a complete mess of the block at a first attempt and had to get a new casting (not cheap!). It was clear that a tilting drill table was essential but I did not have one. What I did have was a swivelling vertical slide for my Myford. I made a long bolt by means of which I could fix the slide to a large angle plate on the drill table and using the ruined block as a template could secure the new block at the correct angle for drilling the steam passages.



## Noticeboard

### Eric Skinner - Legacy

**A couple of months ago** we received a cheque for over £600 from the 16mm Association. Eric used to be a member of the 16mm Bromsgrove Group and when he died his models were sold. The proceeds were to be divided between us and the National 16mm Association. Two of the models - a tram and a Shay - went to a member in Canada no less!

**Members are reminded** that all visitors must be signed in when they arrive at the Club. Our insurance then covers them when they are on our premises and we like to have a record of who has visited us. There will be a page explaining all this at the front of the visitors' book.

**Do you think** it is more beautiful at the Club in Summer or Winter? In Summer, of course! Well think again. This photo taken by our new Chairman might prove otherwise. Just for the record, however, it was about minus 4°C at the time and had been for many days!



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