



# OFFCUTS



Newsletter of the Bromsgrove Society  
of Model Engineers

Edition 63

June 2010

## Shed a tear!

More shed photos

pg 8

Part 2 of "The Works"

pg 4

A happy Swiss Molly

pg 7



**On Sunday 13th June** the old shed was moved, using the Egyptian slave method, to make way for a new one. We had only a few slaves but combined with our modern engineering skills and superior intelligence we easily achieved the task of moving the shed in one piece. We will not be sad to see it go, will we?

## Committee Matters

**Excerpt from our Insurance document regarding under 16 drivers**

*A member aged under 16 may drive any model owned by him/her and also any model not owned by him/her but being driven by him/her with the owner's consent. Non members under the age of 16 are not permitted to drive.*

*Member drivers under the age of 16 may not carry as passengers, members of the public whether gratuitously or fare paying but may carry as passengers, voluntary/unpaid helpers, employees, fellow members and/or members of their own family providing the member driver under age 16 is supervised by a responsible and competent member driver over the age of 16 and all reasonable precautions are taken.*

*Where the young member is a beginner with little or no experience, the supervisor must ride behind the driver and be able to give instructions and stop the locomotive/train/model road vehicle in an emergency.*

*Where the young member is a person who understands the operation of a train and is able to drive on his/her own, the supervisor must monitor the operation of the locomotive/train/model road vehicle and the driver, and be in a position, not necessarily aboard the locomotive/train/model road vehicle to intercede where necessary to ensure everything is correct.*

**We briefly discussed** a member's suggestion that we should wear uniforms when on duty for public running like some other clubs

do. We decided against this idea but thought it a good idea for members to wear something with the club logo on it so that the public can recognize us as members or failing that to wear a BSME logo sticker - kept in the clubhouse with the visitor stickers.

**Remember to swap locos** to allow batteries time to recharge, especially when running on consecutive days. Certain types of leisure battery can take longer to fully charge than a car battery.

**Plans are in hand** to move the gravel mountain to where it's needed without breaking our backs. When laid it will improve the surface of the present mud bath but the grassed area is still vulnerable to spinning tyres so please park outside when it's really wet.

**The clubhouse roof** is finally finished. Our thanks to everyone who helped with this project.

**The drain for the clubhouse sink** is also complete. Our thanks to Alan Cox and his band of helpers for completing the project so efficiently.

## Club meetings

June 30th Running Trains at the Club for the Bromsgrove Railway Club

July 28th Running Trains at the Club for Droitwich Model Boat Club

August 25th Running Trains at the Club for the Kidderminster Choir

**At the well attended** business meeting April it was agreed to purchase a new club loco when funds permit. An "engine house" with secure storage and charging facilities to be constructed in

the steaming bay to house the club locos and the track cleaner without the need to lift them off the track also received the thumbs up. A shed to replace the old tatty one was seen as a priority project.

**The May meeting** saw a good crowd of members from our club entertain members from the Warley club with displays of working locos on our small gauge tracks and rides on the 5" track.

## Cliff Wensley

**On Sunday 28th March** the Cliff Wensley memorial tree was planted in the centre of the Gauge 1 track by Carol Wensley, watched by members of the family and a few club members.



## "The Works" - Reminiscences from Longbridge

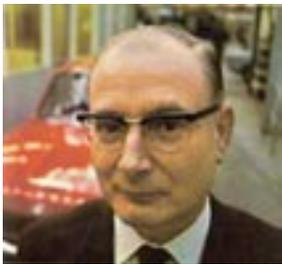
by Steve Benbow

### Chapter 2 "Civil War at Longbridge"

#### The Late 1950's and early 1960's

If you were lucky (or old) enough to own an Austin or other

BMC car in the late 50's or early 60's it would probably have had an in line engine, rear wheel drive and "cart" springs – a good solid job! In 1959, however, the Mini had arrived and in the engineering depths of "The Works", civil war raged between the long established "old guard" and a small group of pioneering innovators. Anybody who worked there, of course, would say the place was a continuous battlefield-particularly between the management and the trade unions! The Mini brought massive changes to the way that things were done and many of its numerous faults were down to the innovators not listening to the "establishment". A typical example is with regard to the Mini gearbox. The Mini cleverly utilised the gear clusters from the Minor/A35 gearbox. Issigonis was told by Harry Gardner, the long established head of gearbox design, that the brass synchromesh cones on the existing gear clusters would not stand up to the extra load imposed by the idler gear train etc. on the Mini design. The observation was brushed away and as we know, the early gearboxes on the Mini were a disaster, leading to major, expensive re-design work and much loss of public confidence. This pattern was repeated, on the Mini and many times, throughout the introduction of the ingenious, pioneering range of cars that was to sweep away the well established models. An exception to this was the 1100/1300 range which was developed



under the expert care of Charles Griffin, the Chief Engineer. It was a reasonably well proven car and fought the Cortina for top UK sales spot for a number of years. We will draw a veil over what happened to the body work on this car and many others in the BMC range at this time! Those of us

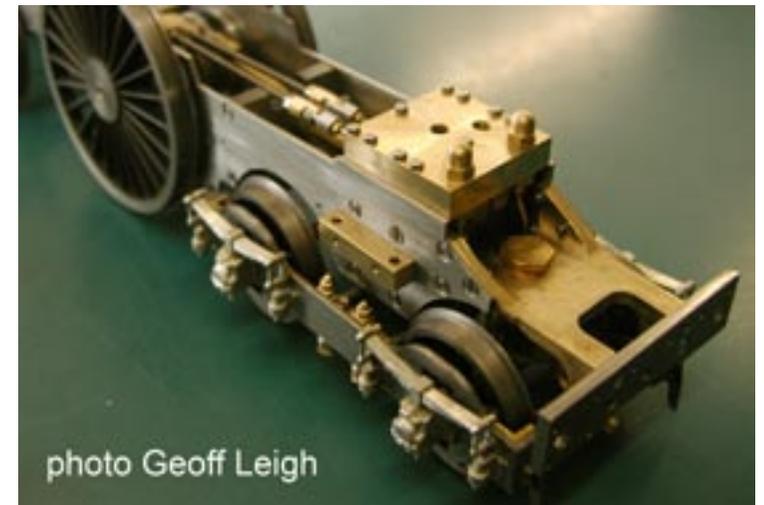
that worked there knew that completed, unpainted, bodies were often stored in the open to gather rust. The paint processes, of course, could not address this problem and we all know what went on under those layers of glossy, new paint!

My apprenticeship at "The Works" ran from 1962 to 1967. Ninety boys were taken on every year and there were up to five hundred there, throughout the 1960's. I had a great time and was well and willingly taught by many a wise old head. It was the unbeatable chance to "learn by doing". Where did it all go? I shall never forget many of those knowledgeable and cheerful men. They still stand at my elbow when I am wrestling with another challenge in the model engineering workshop!

Next time in "The Works" - The Quality Engineering Department and Engine Development.

### Seen in the clubhouse.

A beautifully constructed chassis of a GW Dean Single made by one of our open day visitors Ingo Stein.



**I have a good car.** It gets me from A to B. The only problem is I live in Kew. Michael McKintyre

## Open day Saturday 8th May

**Not for the first time**, the rain visited our open day along with a few brave souls playing trains. The gazebos which were erected over the steaming bays to keep the rain off soon dried out in the beautiful sunshine the next day!



**Ted is chuffed to bits** (sorry Mike) because his Swiss Molly loco "Edelweiss" is now in good working order after a few problems. Ted took it apart to repair a boiler leak but in so doing upset the valve timing. When testing it with a heavy load the loco blew a few gaskets so back to the workshop. These are now fixed and Edelweiss is once again ready for action.



## Website

**Our website** at [bromsgrovesme.co.uk](http://bromsgrovesme.co.uk) now has details of all our projects in the pipeline along with useful information on how you (yes YOU) can help to make them happen. There are also photos of recent events like these which there wasn't room for in Offcuts.



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