

Issue 57

January 2024

Newsletter



Editors Comment

The period that has gone by since our last Newsletter has been a time of unrest and discontent, add to this the cold, grey, short days and I get a feeling of sadness. I can't be bothered to travel anymore or go out for a meal. Strange feelings after a life of self indulgence. Is it just me or do others feel the way I do? Let me know how you feel about what, if it is a thing that matters to a lot of people then perhaps we can start a Forum for 103ers.

From time to time I look at TV programmes which feature our old employer "The Royal Air Force" (I know I am sad), what concerns me is that inevitably the article shows the "RAF Regiment" doing whatever they do. There is even an Air Rank Officer with Regiment flashes. To an outsider it would appear that the RAFR do all the work and are in charge of everything. Their website says that as well as playing soldiers they "Guard Airfields". This does not match my experiences, as an airman I had to guard various airfields with no sign of a "Rock Ape" in sight. Later as a SNCO I would lose well trained airmen from a section to "Stand Guard" over a camp, a mindless chore. After at least 2 years of training and numerous exams was the "Techie" being used to his/her full potential?? We all know what has an IQ of 144, so need not answer my own question. Just saying, does anyone else share this view?

It is with sadness that I have to report that Ernie Fox and Colin (Buff) Frame have gone on their last postings. We don't know much about the circumstances but when we do I will include it in a newsletter.

Chris Wales wrote in with an article and for that I thank him. It needs noting that articles, comments and opinions are also welcome from Non Committee members if you feel moved to contribute. I look forward to them.

Regards Brian Lee (Editor)

Just found this on YouTube, you may have seen it before. It is about Halton House.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WG4vtODb6V4>

This is what Chris sent

THEY CALL US " THE ELDERLY "

We were born in the 40-50-60's.

We grew up in the 50-60-70's.

We studied in the 60-70-80's.

We were dating in the 70-80-90's.

We got married and discovered the world in the 70-80-90's.

We venture into the 80-90's.

We stabilize in the 2000's.

We got wiser in the 2010's.

And we are going firmly through and beyond 2020.

Turns out we've lived through EIGHT different decades...

TWO different centuries...

TWO different millennia...

We have gone from the telephone with an operator for long-distance calls to video calls to anywhere in the world.

We have gone from slides to You Tube, from vinyl records to on-line music, from handwritten letters to email and WhatsApp.

From live matches on the radio, to black and white TV, colour TV and then to 3D HD TV.

We went to the Video store and now we watch Netflix.

We got to know the first computers, punch cards, floppy disks and now we have gigabytes and megabytes on our smartphones.

We wore shorts throughout our childhood and then long trousers, Oxfords, flares, shell suits & blue jeans.

We dodged infantile paralysis, meningitis, polio, tuberculosis, swine flu and now COVID-19.

We rode skates, tricycles, bicycles, mopeds, petrol or diesel cars and now we drive hybrids or electric.

Yes, we've been through a lot but what a great life we've had!

They could describe us as "exennials," people who were born in that world of the fifties, who had an analog childhood and a digital adulthood.

We've kind of "Seen-It-All"!

Our generation has literally lived through and witnessed more than any other in every dimension of life.

It is our generation that has literally adapted to "CHANGE."

A big round of applause to all the members of a very special generation, which will be UNIQUE!

—Author unknown

Keep on keeping on!

This was received from one of my Australian Correspondents

SKILLS FOR SENIORS

The ability to speak several languages is an asset, but the ability to keep your mouth shut in any language is priceless.

Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road is paved with flat possums who couldn't make a decision.

Happiness is not having to set the alarm clock.

When I get a headache, I take two aspirin and keep away from children just like the bottle says.

Just once, I want the prompt for user name and password to say, "Close enough."

Becoming an adult is the dumbest thing I've ever done.

If you see me talking to myself, just move along. I'm self-employed.

We're having a meeting.

"Your call is very important to us. Please enjoy this 40-minute flute solo".

Does anyone else have a plastic bag full of plastic bags, or is it just me?

I hate it when I can't figure out how to operate the iPad and my Tech support guy is asleep. He's 5 and it's past his bedtime.

Today's 3-year-olds can switch on laptops and open their favourite apps. When I was 3, I ate mud.

So, you drive across town to a gym to walk on a treadmill?

I didn't make it to the gym today. That makes five years in a row.

I decided to stop calling the bathroom "John" and renamed it as "Jim". I feel so much better saying I went to the Jim this morning.

Old age is coming at a really bad time.

If God wanted me to touch my toes, He would've put them on my knees.

Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.

Why do I have to press one for English when you're just going to transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

Now, I'm wondering . . . did I send this to you, did you send it to me or have I only seen one copy?

You can also follow us on Facebook

Ton Threes

<https://m.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100003874764371>

Please Note Our new website

<http://www.103rdentry.org.uk/>

Model Engineering

It has been suggested to me that I might like to share with you details of my main hobby after my family commitments. It has for many years involved steam engines and the building of tools and fixtures to enable me to make and repair engines that come into my possession. I can't remember when I didn't have this interest and I started building my first Stationary Engine when I was 12 from a set of castings my parents bought me for my 12th birthday. This task was made easier for me since my father had a reasonably well equipped workshop and my metalwork teacher at school was a patient man with a great skill of hand (Incidentally he was the one that suggested I might consider joining the RAF).

At Halton I joined the Halton Society Model Engineering Club and helped to restore the "Halton Tank" locomotive that had been constructed by Apprentices during the 1930's. When I left Halton the loco had been pretty well abandoned due to lack of interest but I have since learnt that it is alive and well and runs regularly in the St Albans area.

The first engine I started when I was 12 wasn't finished until I was 64 as I don't like to rush these things, the materials went with me throughout my RAF travels and during my winter stays in the USA.

During my mid life adventures I only pecked at my interest but after I left the service and life steadied a bit I started to

reassemble a workshop, visit more Model Engineering Shows and joined the local Model Engineering Clubs. I continued building small stationary engines and improving my workshop facilities.

During a brief spell as a Contracts Manager for a plastic window company I was working at RAF Odiham when the chance came to buy at a very very good price a Myford Super 7 lathe which I restored and still use to this day. This sparked off my interest even more and gradually I began to see the pleasure fellow club members got from building and owning model locomotives that could be driven around a track pulling passengers. It soon became evident that I probably didn't have enough sand left in the top of my life timer to complete a locomotive since some members had taken 30 years to complete their works of art.



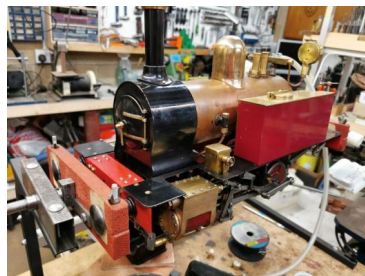
So I started buying locomotives that needed restoring, the first one being a "Rainhill" which was a sort of refined Stephenson's Rocket. Buy in haste and repent at your leisure so this item proved to be just a pretty display model to which I subsequently

fitted an electric motor and gears which replaced the form of fuel from steam to battery. The electrification was only a partial success and so I am considering building a new boiler which may stretch my welding abilities somewhat. Watch this space !!



My experience with the semi failure of the "Rainhill" did not dampen my enthusiasm, if anything it strengthened my ambition of riding around the club track powered by steam so let me roll this story on a few years.

My club in Ipswich (www.imes.org.uk/) was left a small locomotive as a legacy by a deceased member which they decided to sell so by closed bid I submitted my bid and to my surprise I was successful and so "Tich" came home with me. "Tich" is a 5 inch gauge 0-4-0 loco to a design by LBSC a famous model loco designer of the early 20th century.



Following a few months of dismantling, making new and missing parts, reassembling and painting in my colours I was at the stage of having the boiler inspected and tested to twice working pressure (180 psi) another triumph and so I could progress to learning to drive a steam



my colours I
stage of
boiler
and tested
working

locomotive. This may sound easy but there is a lot to remember and functions to attend to, but I have now reached the point that I am confident enough to drive without supervision. Tich has now been renamed Shy-Tot since it is small and doesn't go out much.



As my confidence grew I began to think about a larger locomotive and it just so happened that a much larger locomotive came up for sale and I fell in love with it straight away. It appeared that not many people had shown an interest in it so for a modest sum I bought "Virginia" a 5

inch gauge 4-4-0 locomotive based on a North American wood burner common in the USA at the beginning of the 20th century.

The previous owner had got his pleasure by taking the engine to pieces and then trying to put it back together again but alas he wasn't always successful so once again I had to dismantle, produce parts and reassemble the locomotive. Luckily drawings came with the Loco.



The Loco was renamed "Robert E" mainly because my last name is Lee and I like the Southern States of the USA. Probably not politically correct but that's me. I 3D printed the nameplate but that's another story, with technology and fill in supper. This was no "Tich" to move it around my



I feel that we have to keep up the time between breakfast and so much effort was needed just workshop and track.

I think this is the end of my messing with locomotives and I will go back to Stationary Engines and repairing things for people, although I have been looking at obtaining a small furnace so I can produce my own bronze castings but who knows what lies ahead.

If any entry member has a similar interest it would be good to have a chat, my details are at the end of this newsletter.

Brian Lee (Editor)

Reunion 2025

Mick Woodhouse has been carrying out comprehensive research into our next Reunion venue. At our December Committee meeting we decided that potential dates for the Reunion would be: 9-11 Oct 25 or 16-17 Oct 25. If you look at those dates you will see that they are both Thursdays to Saturdays - trialing these as an alternative to weekends. At the moment Houghton Hall in Shifnall, Shropshire, is the favourite. Mick will be working on pricing and menus, and then we will look at options for the 'morning after'.

Barry Neal

Notes from the Committee Meeting held on 1st December 2023 by Zoom

In addition to our discussion on Reunion dates and location, we discussed our likely finances in late-2025 to make sure we will be healthy for the Reunion. As you can see from elsewhere in the newsletter we were (are) concerned by the lack of articles being submitted for newsletters. Our Editor's head scratching for material can be heard far and wide! The Committee will be meeting next in July.

Barry Neal

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