

The Oily Rag!



The 'big dig' in Yonder Field.

The Taunton Model Engineers'
Magazine
September 2026

Issue No 161

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Chairman's Report - by David Hartland

Our lives this summer have been dominated by the weather but progress there has been.

West Buckland first of all. Big steps achieved on site – the container building, the Phase 2 Yonder Field dig, also we have most of the material to construct the footbridge over the station area, led by Paul Orrells. Fencing continues and in a generous act by our member David Chappell we have the use of the adjacent field for car parking on open days. This will ease our operations. We have installed a pedestrian gate, and helped with the installation of new security gates. Thank you David.

The Phase 2 (Yonder Field) development is well underway. The contractor has almost finished digging the excavations. This has only been possible with some much appreciated donations and I thank all for their contributions. The next stage which is vital is to get the base slab concreted before the winter sets in. Since the operation will require having concrete pumped there are some heavy lorries to get into the site and we can only do this when the field is dry. Concrete pouring is not new to us – so far on site we have dealt with the level crossing (5 cubic metres) the steaming bays (11 cubic metres) and the retaining wall (5 cubic metres). The amount of concrete needed for the tunnel is about 30 cubic metres – a much bigger operation. The concrete is all reinforced and we have to make up the steel cages in-situ.

All this will require some movement of materials on site and essential is the use of a reliable dumper truck and effort is underway to bring our venerable machine up to a good standard of maintenance ready for action.

We have had a good response to our appeal for funds and to everyone who has donated or loaned money, thank you very much. However **we do need more to see us through the next few weeks**. If every member gave an average of £100 we would be home and dry. Could **YOU** afford this? Please look into your bank account and see. You can all see what we have taken on and it is a huge step forward, of benefit to all members as a long-term asset. **Please we do need this extra money now**.

Vivary track continues although this this year we have cut down the days running. Santa Steamings may or may not take place at Vivary this year as the council have finally decided about Sunday car park charges and time limits, which is stated will be levied in December - beginning or end we do not know.

The workshop at Werst Buckland has been assembled with lots of donated items and there are materials as well in a relatively small space. Graham Swales has kindly volunteered to take on the organisation of the workshop and steer it to the point where we can safely and efficiently allow younger and inexperienced members to work the machines under supervision. This will be what we have wanted for so long in this club - a teaching facility.

This year is our 80th birthday. Let us celebrate this and remember we are only passing custodians of the club and we need to pass it on to future generations.

Trophy Night 2026

The club has been running the Trophy Night competition since 1953 and there have been many memorable evenings. The competition is open to any member and the content is not necessarily model engineering but does need to be a practical and physical item to be displayed, worked on in the last year.

Bob Herriot entered his 5in gauge North British Atlantic, which is making good progress and drew lots of attention at the show in Newton Abbot. He walked away with the Jack Gardner Trophy. Bits and Pieces went to Del Warren for his smokebox door handles, while Andy Cooke took the Stationary Engine Prize for his twice full size model of the Stuart Beam Engine. The weight of this item was impressive and only with the assistance of his son was an entry to the clubhouse possible. Rachel Hartland entered a bronze casting which she had made from a lost wax pattern and Eddie Handysides entered a collection of door knockers made of old spanners which are on sale for club funds.

An unusual entry was by Katie Herriot who entered a dragon made of steel wire in a display case. This was much commented upon and won the Foden Tankard "Pour Encourager les Autres".

Overall winner, and the current holder of the Logan Trowel for Best Model of the Year, went to Andy Cooke for that huge beam engine.

Thanks to all the members who brought something along and looking forward to the next competition in 2027.



South West Miniature Engineering Show 2026

by Phil Mortimer

The South West Miniature Engineering Show was held at the Newton Abbot racecourse on Friday the 15th and Saturday the 16th May 2026 and Taunton Model Engineers was invited to attend and have a display stand.

The stand was in a similar layout to the one that was used at the Bristol Society Exhibitions but with an extra table at the side for selling our surplus items.

Many members arrived at the venue to help set up the stand on the Thursday and lay out the models. The models on display were:

A Malaysian Motor Torpedo Boat loaned by Fred Pepper.

3½" Duchess loaned by Paul Tomlinson.

5" Iron Ore Wagon and a 5" Guards Van loaned by Niel Evans.

5" *Speedy*, a Silvercrest model and a part built 3½" Speedy loaned by Mike Pavie.

A Gas Turbine engine loaned by Andy Webb.

1½" Allchin Traction engine loaned by Roy Fathers.

5" part built *Waverly* locomotive loaned by Bob Herriott.

A Stuart 10V stationary engine and a Southworth Steam Pump loaned by Andy Cooke.

3½" *Heiland Lassie* loaned by Andrew Prentice.

Two spotlights were supplied by Robert Oldfield who also manned the sales table on the Friday. David Hartland manned it on the Saturday. A lot of the items were sold to the tune of £491.50

Also on the stand was a monitor that had a CD on a continuous loop showing some of our old visits to different locations.

The venue had a café upstairs that sold a variety of food and drinks, all at a reasonable price.

Across the aisle from our stand was our secretary, Mary Le Coyte, doing her magic on her jewellery stand.

I would like to thank all the members who helped at the exhibition to make it a success. Thank you.



The TME stand at the show.



The sales stand.



Mary at her jewellery stand.

Falling into a new hobby - Blame it on the Husband!

By Fiona Cornwell

I've always had an interest in trains, steam engines and all things engineering but had never really had the opportunity to be involved with those spaces. Sure, I'd been to preserved railways and ridden behind steam trains, even had a sneaky trip on the footplate of an engine but that was as far as it had gone. Lots of collections of photographs of engines which for the most part I couldn't tell you a single thing about.

In 2017 I met Myles and so railways became a weekend pastime and excuse to meet up together despite our 300-mile distance at the time. It was during the early days of our relationship I was told about this 'large scale model steam engine' that he had, named *Baloo*, there were photographs and stories and I must have initially looked like a deer in headlights to find out that miniature steam engines were a thing and that they can pull people along?

On a visit to see Myles, I got to see *Baloo*, a 7 ¼" 2-6-0 locomotive, hiding under a sheet in the office at home, a partially finished restoration of what was a very rusty recovered locomotive. The detail was incredible, I never imagined it was possible to replicate such intricate details in such a tiny size, let alone the surprise that 5" and 3 ½" were also scales that existed!

During that visit, we went to Weeting Rally, a popular steam rally in the Norfolk area, it was there I met Myles' engineering friends (Brandon & District Society of Model Engineers). Train rides were on offer as part of the rally day and of course, I had to have a go. It was great, I couldn't believe these tiny engines were so powerful on rails or could pull so many people in one go. There were battery-electrics, tank engines and locomotives with tenders ranging from the tiniest 3½ right up to 7¼ narrow gauge scale. I was hooked, it was such a fun experience I wanted to do more, though sadly B&DSME was far too far from my Somerset home for me to go regularly.

In 2020, COVID hit ... Lockdown began ... travelling ceased to be a thing we could do. As an essential worker (NHS) there was no such thing as furlough, or days off for me ... but for Myles there was, so he moved down to be with me so that we could form a bubble and not put either of our sets of parents at risk from me having to go to work daily. This sadly meant no progress could be made with *Baloo* to get her anywhere near working order but it did give us a chance to sort our lives out a little better and for Myles to find himself a work-from-home job enabling him to finally move down to Taunton.

During a visit and a wander around Vivary Park, we found the raised tracks ... signs of life of an engineering society somewhere nearby! A quick Google search led us to find out about Taunton Model Engineers and after sitting on that information for a while, we decided we would go and see what was happening at a public running event at West Buckland. We were (unsurprisingly) signed up straight away, issued our green (as it was then) membership card, and enlisted into the club mailing list.

Busy lives meant we couldn't attend very frequently but a visit in June 2025 changed everything for me. What I believe was a normal Tuesday members' running evening changed my life for the better. Watching people steam up their engines on the engine bays, or to my surprise fit manageable-sized parts together on the ground track and connect some batteries opened up my eyes to the side of model engineering that I might be able to be involved with ... battery-electric locomotives. A member took me round the ground track behind his class 35 Hymek then on return to the platform offered me the controller to drive it myself. Hesitant at first I declined but was informed his grandchildren can drive this locomotive so I should be able to as well, I gave in, decided I'd have a go. It was so much fun, I was hooked, I wanted one I could play with at the club, I was sold.

I spent the short car journey home nattering away to Myles how cool these battery-electric locomotives were, that it was awesome to have one that you could plug together and just go vs the complexities of a steam engine. I don't even think I waited the night, I emailed the company that had made the Hymek that evening to enquire about getting my own 5" locomotive. I had the

full support of Myles to get my own engine, with one caveat ... It had to fit in the boot of the car lengthwise so that his engine could also fit alongside. That was a fair thing I was more than happy to keep to, that was until I found out all my favourite diesels are much longer even in 5" than I anticipated. Class 37, too long, Class 66, far too long, even the lesser favoured 47 and 57 still far too long for where we had space. I was a little deflated and left to ponder what sort of engine I wanted of ones that would fit in the car. Until an email from AP Model engineering appeared in my inbox, "I could make you a class 23 Baby Deltic".

Baby Deltic? Never heard of them, so I Googled, I read some things and I researched this rather unusual class of 10 total locomotives. A scale 5" Baby Deltic would fit the criteria of fitting in the car, it had the 'nose' at the front and rear (something I prefer in diesel locomotives), and finally and most importantly, a single Baby Deltic, D5909, made it into BR Blue livery, sadly not BR large logo, but can't be too picky! All the boxes were ticked and so the 'Baby Deltic Project' began. I emailed AP Model engineering back, confirmed I would go ahead and sent over my deposit. Then it was a very tough waiting game, especially to someone with very little patience, as I awaited the arrival of the newly nicknamed '*Baby Dee*'

October arrives, and so does *Baby Dee*, batteries were ordered and very excitedly I pestered Myles to take us to the TME running day on the 25th of October. Into the back of the car the locomotive was loose loaded with blankets and padding to prevent movement, looking back now, absolutely not how you transport a locomotive, but there was no time to make a proper transport system before the last running day of the year, (we have since resolved this terrible transport situation). With help we put her on the tracks, connected all the batteries up and the sound and away she went. Or didn't ... The current limit was set far too low and while she worked on the rolling road at home, she had no pulling power on rails. A quick adjustment later and off we went ... or not ... we immediately derailed crossing the points at the station ... This was going so well for a first run! Engine re-railed and teething problems sorted we were on the track and pulling a wagon with myself and Myles round the track, a truly magical evening to have my own locomotive and drive it around the track, I definitely think I was grinning from ear to ear that night.

Over the winter/spring there were some things to fix on *Dee*, a new set of wires needed soldering to fix a dodgy dead man's handle on the controller, a change in how the sound card is powered by the addition of a buck boost converter rather than having to have a separate third battery in the unit, a fix on the 4th traction motor where the grub screws were missing, and a properly secure set of rails and stocks for safe travel in the car were built. All mundane

things to most of you I'm sure, but all new and exciting parts full of lots of learning for me who is just starting out in this adventure.

This summer finally meant we had some time spare (who knew weddings took up a lot of planning eh?) and we have been able to make quite a few of the Tuesday evening members running nights or social events. It's been great to be back out on the tracks with *Dee* and it has been even better to socialise with, and get to know some of you a little better and hear stories of your engines or projects you have going on.

Next came the first public running event I have been able to attend since being a member of TME and in the immense ongoing heat wave, the ban on steam engines came as no surprise. Sunday morning we packed *Dee* in the car (just in case someone could drive her), grabbed sun-hats and sun cream and headed off to the club to find out what jobs we could help with that day. It turns out my job for the day was to drive passengers!

I had never been on the raised track prior to that day, but with brakes being a necessity, I was not able to run on the ground-level track as I needed a braked driving wagon. A read through the red book, some questions asked, and a few laps done to show I was competent and then off we went, I was able to take passengers. It was such a buzz, hearing everyone so happy to be taken for rides really did make me glow. Also many thanks again to Gerry here for being a raised track buddy that day!

So where now? Now that I have *Dee*, the bug has well and truly hit to tinker with and build more. I have other improvements I want to do with *Dee*, level up her buffers, fit a more aesthetic hook and screw coupler to the front, add more detailing to wheels and the fibreglass body, replace the inner speaker so it doesn't rattle/buzz, all things I'm sure I'll get to in time.

That said, I do have my brain distracted by wanting to try building something from a kit build (not brave enough to scratch build yet) so I'm currently debating what I want to go with for this. Current interest is a model of a prototype battery-electric 08 (08 308). I thought it'd be nice to have a battery-electric model of something that is battery-electric not diesel. This prototype has a different bodysell to the regular 08 engines so would have to involve some element of scratch building but I am on the search for a 7¼ kit/box of parts to make a start with the frame/running side of this. This may be a pipe dream and never become a reality but it certainly would be nice to own a locomotive and be able to in some way say 'I built that'.

So that's how this went from an interest as a child, to pulling passengers for the first time, and it's mostly down to my husband Myles and his terrible influence. I hope we have many more years at TME together and that we find many projects we can work on together.



First drive..



Wedding train.



Baby Deltic.

What is it?

This structure has recently been seen alongside the track at West Buckland. What is it? Answers please to the Editor for the next issue...



Visit of the Heywood Society to West Buckland

Sunday 4th October 2026

We have a private visit to West Buckland on Sunday 4th October from the Heywood Society. This is a private members' group, comprised mainly of people who are in the miniature railway business – suppliers, operators, builders – as well as model engineers as individuals. It is an honour to be welcoming the group to our track.

The number coming means that they are attending in two groups, half in the morning and half in the afternoon. We will know details soon. TME will have trains running all day and we will be providing drinks and a place for the visitors to eat their own lunches.

All members are welcome to come with locomotives to show off what we in Taunton are doing. It should be an interesting day!

The Container Building.

Last year we moved the two containers from beside the entrance gates to the far end of the car park. Large concrete foundations had been made and they were set parallel to each other, 8ft apart, the idea being to roof over the whole area and provide in effect a third container between the other two. As you can see in the photograph, we have now achieved the objective, with a very good quality roof conceived and built by Dave Wood and his team and finished with a ceiling underneath and a hoist between the containers to provide a lifting facility on site up to one ton. The next stage is to fit each end of the opening with steel security doors and provide electric power to the three 'rooms' which will allow us to charge batteries in the containers as well as using power tools.



Showing the lifting beam between the two containers..

Note: second picture on back cover.

The Yonder Field Development

Twenty-eight degrees, no rain for almost two months, dust flying everywhere on the hot breeze, vicious roar of diesel engines, shouts of commands, hi-vis jackets peering at laser levels, wading through long grass, vast holes appearing, heaps of spoil emerging, lines of carefully placed stakes being measured and remeasured; disturbed deer running free, wasps swarming, sweat pouring – and still not a drop of water in sight.

3rd August was a momentous day for the club as we started the main earthworks for the Yonder Field development. This had been planned as far back as 2019 when we agreed the layout of track for the West Buckland Railway and in a different world we would have spent a few years digging out the cuttings and forming the embankments. But in Taunton we do things differently and with the help of some magnificent donations from club members we were able to employ a contractor to come and do the major work all in one go – or at least over a period of days rather than years.

The digger and dumper had arrived previously on a huge low loader and work started in earnest on the pond (Photo 1). While this is not the most urgent of the features on site, it is the furthest from the access point and we would not be able to reach this area once the other cuttings and embankments were in place. We had discussed the pond size at length and in the end the excavation took three whole days, the spoil removed being dumped to form the new embankment along France Lane. The water from the pond will come partly from run-off from the field and partly from the pumps in the tunnel - the outflow pipe had been installed previously. There is also an overflow pipe, installed three years ago, which will ensure that the area cannot flood as it used to before we came onto the site. Photo 2 shows the pond almost complete.

Next was the extension of the main line beyond the ground level platform. Photo 3 shows the digger starting at the point where the 1:80 gradient begins and photo 4 the view with the cutting complete up as far as the tunnel. Note how deep this is and the tunnel portal will be just under the digger location. On the right is the single track cutting which takes the track alongside the pond. Both these cuttings are on a 1:80 gradient.

The main tunnel was always going to be the hardest and largest dig. Photo 5 shows the main tunnel underway. The larger section in the foreground is for the heavier section where road vehicles will be allowed to cross; the smaller section beyond will be covered over in spoil when complete. Photo 6 is the tunnel advancing with Jack in the hole for scale.

By the time you read this the heavy excavation work will be complete and we will move into the next stage – OPERATION BEDROCK – which is the job to put the concrete tunnel base into the hole we have dug. Briefly this consists of

installing the drains, placing hard core into the base, damp membrane, making up formwork (lots of timberwork!) and setting the steel reinforcement into place. Lots more detail will be published soon. This is a huge job and larger than we have ever tackled by far, but we can do it, step by step. We need to pour the concrete before the winter rain – if we have any this year!



Photo 1..



Photo 2. NOTE: Photo 3 on back cover.



Photo 4..



Photo 5..



Photo 6..

For Sale - Milling Machine

The club has a Viceroy three-phase vertical milling machine for sale at West Buckland. This is a very useful machine with power cross feed to the table. The machine has an ISO 30 taper in the quill. A suitable ER32 collet chuck is included in the sale. The club is asking for offers of around £700.

Dates for your Diary

1 Sep (Tues)	Meeting West Buckland 7.30pm – Bits and Pieces.
6 Sep (Sun)	Public Running at Vivary Track from 2.00pm.
8 Sep (Tues)	Members running at West Buckland from 2.00pm.
10 Sep (Thurs)	Brean Steamers visit to West Buckland (Members welcome but no working party that day).
15 Sep (Tues)	Meeting at West Buckland 7.30pm.
4 Oct (Sun)	Members Running Day at West Buckland with Heywood society visit.
6 Oct (Tues)	Meeting at West Buckland 7.30pm.
11 Oct (Sun)	Public Running at Vivary from 2.00pm.
20 Oct (Tues)	Meeting at West Buckland 7.30pm.
24 Oct (Sat)	Members running at West Buckland all day.
3 Nov (Tues)	Meeting at West Buckland 7.30pm.
17 Nov (Tues)	Meeting at West Buckland 7.30pm.
1 Dec (Tues)	Meeting at West Buckland 7.30pm.
6 Dec (Sun)	Santa Running - venue to be decided.
11 Dec (Fri)	Christmas Lunch at Oak Manor Golf Club.
13 Dec (Sun)	Santa Running - venue to be decided.
15 Dec (Tues)	Mince Pies and Natter at West Buckland 7.30pm.

NOTE - All meetings at West Buckland start at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise.



Photo 3 - more of 'the Big Dig' in Yonder Field.



The modifications to the containers.