

OLDE WHEELS

The Quarterly Magazine of the Rushden Historical Transport Society

SPRING 2025

ISSUE 270



Free to Members



RHTS.CO.UK



Non-Members £1

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All submissions for the next issue should reach the editor (editor@rhts.co.uk) by 18th of July 2025. Whilst every effort will be made to include all articles received in Olde Wheels they may not appear straight away or, if space is limited, We are always pleased to accept members' photographs for publication.

*** CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER NOT NECESSARILY THE VIEWS OF TRUSTEES OR THE EDITOR****

Editors Notes

I've now been part-time living up North for 6 months. It's been an interesting time with some stark contrasts between Northamptonshire and Northumberland. One is the darkness; opening the front door and seeing nothing was hard to get used to. The lack of potholes is a pleasant surprise, as is the significant reduction in traffic levels.

At the end of 2024, I took a trip to Alnwick to the Aln Valley Railway for their "Mince Pie Specials." The railway as an entity is a similar size to our heritage railway. The events offered are similar to our own events programme with Santa Specials, the Easter Bunny, and the Teddy Bear's Picnic. The railway has 2 miles of track running towards the coast with the ultimate aim of running to the coast at Alnmouth.

I had an enjoyable trip of 10 mins in each direction. I have to say the scenery was much improved on John Clarke Way. I have joined the Aln Valley Railway Trust as an ordinary member. I'm interested to see how other organisations function and any useful ideas we could learn from.

Having received the first copy of their in-house magazine "The Link," one idea which I've adopted is using software to enhance the online version of "Olde Wheels." This enables the magazine to be presented as reading a magazine.

The Transport scene from "Up North!"

As many members will know I have moved up North, not a permanent move but I will be spending a considerable amount of time in Northumberland. I'm living in a small town called Wooler located at the foot of the Cheviot Hills. First impressions are of a place that time left behind. The nearest Chinese is over 15 miles away in Berwick on Tweed, no McDonalds or KFC within 1 hour's drive. But the place has a certain charm and a wide range of traditional essential shops such as a butcher, bakers, newsagents, a book shop, hairdresser, and pubs.

The historic transport scene in the area is not as buoyant as the Northamptonshire scene at first glance, partly because the population is a lot less and spread over a large rural area. But there are one or two similarities, one is the Wooler the town was once served by a branch line and some of the infrastructure such as the Station building and Goods Shed still exist.

I have discovered 2 heritage railways within 30 minutes drive of Wooler. The 15" Heatherslaw Light Railway (also known as the Ford and Etal railway) is located in the village of Ford near the Scottish Border. Set up by Neville Smith and Sid Ford in 1989. It operates a route from the village of Heatherslaw to Etal 2 miles away.

The other railway is a heritage line operating standard guauge is the Aln Valley Railway. This operates from just outside Alnwick and has 2 mile of track running towards the coastal village of Alnmouth. This railway reminds me very much of the set up at Rushden.

Events such as Steam rallies / classic car are not so prevalent as Northamptonshire, but I have come across a large steam rally at Corbridge in June and a vintage rally in the south of the county in August. But then just a mile from where I am living I find the Chillingham Castle Vintage Rally in July, perfect! So expect a report later in the year.

Going forward I will continue to produce an "Olde Wheels" every quarter, but if any member wishes to take over the position of editor please let Richard Lewis or myself know and I can discuss what the position entails. I'm always available for help and advice.

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If you would like to take the electronic version of "Olde Wheels" rather than the printed version, please contact [secretary@rhts.co.uk].

Thank you to all the contributors to this edition of Olde Wheels, and I hope you enjoy this edition.

Catharine Young

Report of 2025 AGM

The 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Rushden Historical Transport Society took place on April 16, 2025, at Rushden Goods Shed, with over 50 members in attendance. The meeting included a minutes silence in remembrance for deceased members, acceptance of previous minutes, and reports from the chairman, treasurer, and bar chairman. Notably, the Society achieved a small profit despite rising costs, paid off its loan, and invested in a new accounting system. Elections for the bar and main committee were held, and legal advice was sought for the new CIO structure. The Goods Shed bar has been rebuilt, and the museum plans to host more visitor experiences

The Chairman's report, a summary of the accounts and details of the new bar and main committees are included in the next pages

ELECTION OF A NEW BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND BAR COMMITTEE

Main Board of Trustees – 2025

President : John Sugars

Chairman : Richard Lewis

Treasurer : Robert Smith

Vice Chairman : David Floyd

Ordinary members : David Chambers, Mark Lawman

Bar Committee – 2025

Chairman : Richard Fereday

Treasurer : Richard Cole

Members : Nigel Lilley , Beverley Westwood ,

Jo Greenaway , Marisa Fereday



April 16th 2025

In many ways this report is somewhat similar to last years and some things have not moved as fast as expected. I am also still here as chairman which I had hoped to be able to hand over this year! However, I will always be pleased to work with and assist new incumbents, before old age fully takes over.

The society, and that means primarily you our members, with key support from our staff, have been able to organize a really amazing range of events during the year in order to raise funds and keep the society going. Many thanks to all involved. I would also like to thank also the trustees, staff, regular site volunteers and other members co opted to help at trustee meetings for their support during the year.

We have sadly lost some good generally older members during the year and also some time served members are suffering from health problems and our thanks are due to them particularly.

Although we are a society, we are actually a business which needs to make a profit. However, in the last few years the overheads have increased by more than 50% and this means it is much more difficult to make a reasonable profit. The costs of insurance, wages and fuel have risen dramatically, but we must have these in order to operate. Sadly a peddling harder situation in order to stand still! Fund raising is the key to developing the society.

A positive point is that we have now completed the final payments for the goods shed and it is now fully owned by the society.

For the coming year we once again have a large calendar of events plus additional events for hiring the goods shed. The range of events we offer is a strength of the society but also a weakness insofar as we then need a lot of different volunteers to run them. The classic car show was run successfully by the society this year with in excess of 100 helpers and is now the largest single fund raiser of the year. Volunteer names for this year are now being taken!

We had hoped that the AGM would be moving back to December, but the final setting of the finances has taken longer than expected. Since most of the work is done by a small number of volunteers and the original computer systems needed updating, then necessarily delays have occurred. New computer software and hardware are planned to be installed by the time of this AGM

It is probable that when the CIO is up and running then the AGM will be moved to around this time of year and thus can be held in the warmer weather.

A major disappointment occurred during the year when we successfully applied for a Government Levelling Up Grant of £605k for some major enhancements of the railway. Unfortunately, when the new government came in, none of these Levelling Up grants were honoured. At least we have a plan for future railway developments if we can find another source of funds!

The CIO has been briefly mentioned, and following the taking of some legal advice as agreed in the last AGM, the changes necessary were confirmed as essentially across the patch and starting with new bank accounts.

Due to the volunteer effort to progress the CIO being very limited, this work is now only slowly progressing and there will be a progressive running down of the existing society as the CIO is similarly built up. The legal advisors and accountants are in agreement with this arrangement.

Regarding the Goods Shed, the requirement for a heating system was raised previously and an HLF grant application was subsequently made. Unfortunately this was not successful and we are looking at how this can be achieved by other funding methods during the summer this year.

The shed floor condition was also mentioned last year and similarly a grant application was proposed. Although actually after the period of this report, a Mick George grant application was successful and a new floor has been installed.

The shed indoor toilets are very near to completion with the materials supplied by a local house building company and all of our own volunteer labour. They will be in operation early in the forthcoming season.

The society has created in Rushden a significant community asset which is accessible from a large area, and we have very good support from the local councils. In order to continue to grow then we need volunteers from our membership. The membership is around 500 and is fairly constant so we do have a good pool to draw on but we need to be more active in welcoming and contacting members since there are lots of things to enjoy by getting involved!

As last year, please accept the lack of individual thanks, so my thanks again to both staff and members who have contributed in any way during the last year.

Richard Lewis
Chairman



Summary of 2024 RHTS Accounts

INCOME & ENDOWMENTS	2024	2023
Donations and legacies	18189	19572
TRADING ACTIVITIES	2024	2023
Subscriptions	9090	8970
Bar Income	235101	216588
Catering income	4734	13407
Transport Income	58179	48592
Retail Income	1865	3025
Bank interest	581	581
TOTAL INCOME	309550	291163
Cost of Trading Activities (ie. Bar)	2024	2023
Purchases	111590	112977
Wages and salaries	85654	75573
Employer's NIC	90	2869
Pension costs	1087	884
Other post-retirement benefits	1987	4558
Operating Leases	8859	11566
Rent	0	200
Expenditure on charitable activities		
Rent	1950	1502
Rates & Water	6919	-2885
Light and Heat	16808	10887
Repairs and maintenance	15691	4774
Insurance	15760	14335
Other Establishment	15203	42560
OTHER Motor/Travel costs	611	852
Legal and Professional fees	7584	11600
Telephone	968	1364
Other office costs	11278	1945
Laundry and cleaning	10729	7856
Equipment Hire	1870	1604
Advertising	1790	2393
Other Expenditure		
Bank and credit card charges	7660	7872
Sundry costs	2198	783
Taxation	110	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	326396	316069
Profit	1343	-5380

RAF CARDINGTON

RAF Cardington, is a former Royal Air Force station in Bedfordshire, England, with a long and varied history, particularly in relation to airships and balloons. In 1915 the government appointed Short Bros to build airships for use in WW1. The brothers chose land by Cardington village near Bedford to base their factory. It is situated about two and a half miles south of Bedford close to the village of Cardington. The site would initially include one shed for the airships, a gas plant to produce hydrogen gas for the ships, numerous workshops, a large building for the design team and a small village named Shortstown consisting of 150 houses opposite the site to house some of their key workers.

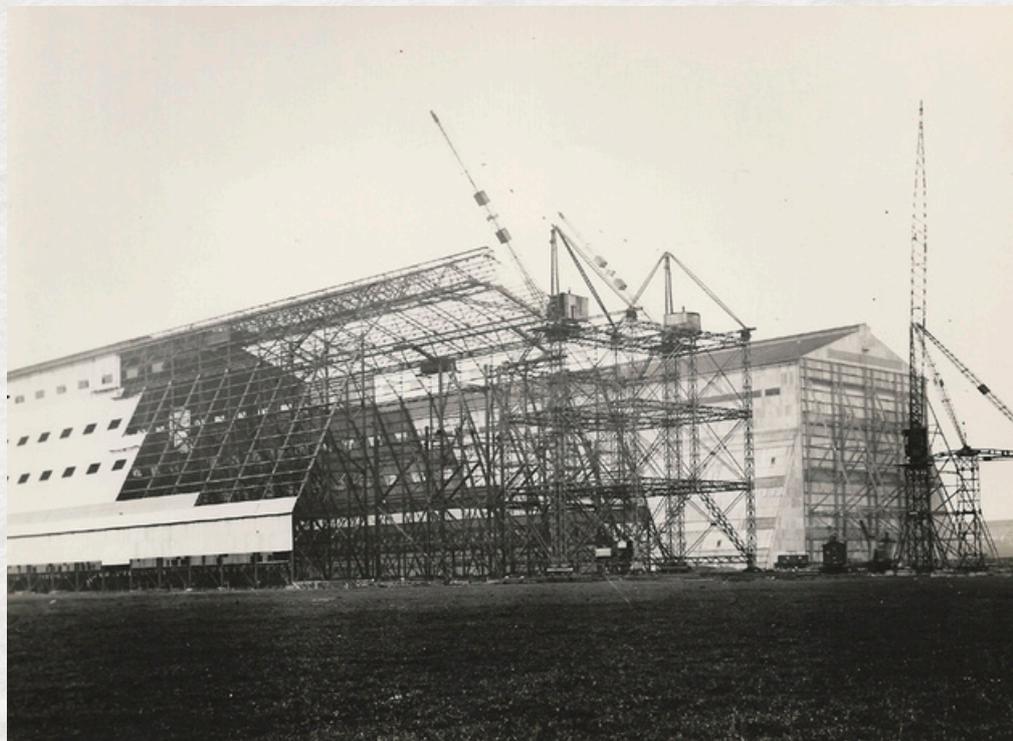


IMAGE: R31 AIRSHIP EMERGING FROM NO.1 SHED CARDINGTON 1918, COURTESY: WWW.RAFCARDINGTON.ORG.UK

NO.1 shed was built by A.J. Main and Co. of Glasgow for the Admiralty in 1916. The first two airships built in the shed were the R31 and R32. It was enlarged in 1926-27 by the Cleveland Bridge Company with the purpose of housing the R101. Its roof was raised by 35 feet and its length increased to 812 feet.

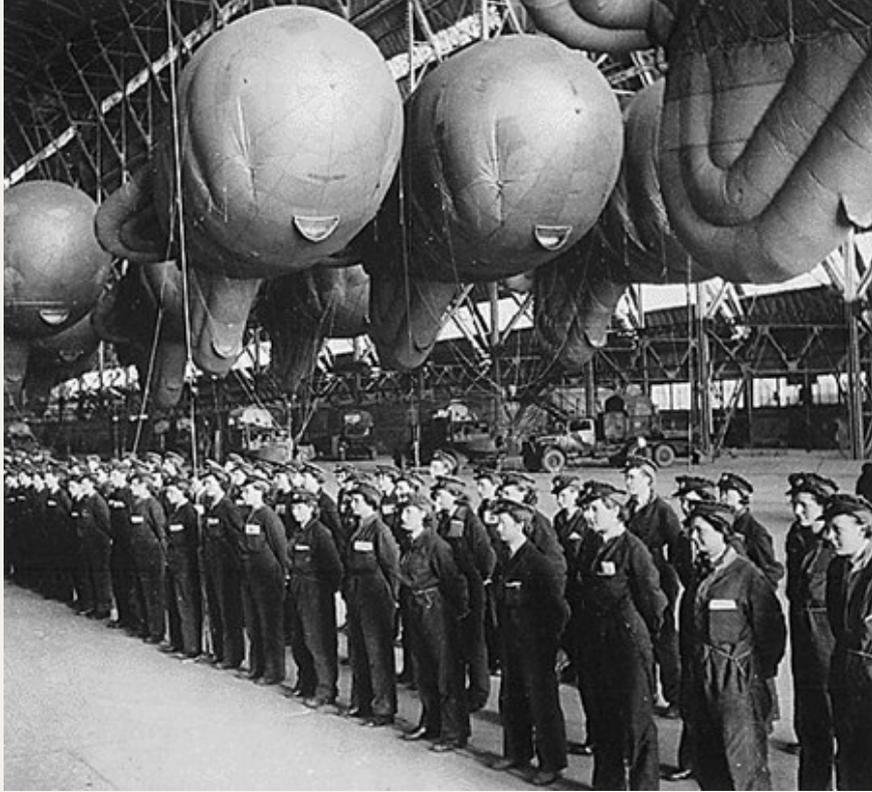
NO.2 Shed was built by the Cleveland Bridge Company in 1928 to house the R100. It was in fact the shed was from RNAS Pulham, Norfolk and re-erected at Cardington

The R100 arrived in December 1929 from Howden, Yorkshire, where it had been built, and in 1930 successfully flew the Atlantic both ways. The R101 was not ready until October 1930 when it left on its tragic voyage to India, only to crash near Beauvais to the north west of Paris just a few hours later. The sheds were built to house the development of British airships but this project was abandoned following the R101 disaster. This loss of confidence in airships meant that the sheds became redundant almost as soon as they were completed. After the R101 crash all work stopped on airships and it became a storage station



SHED NO.2 UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN 1928 - IMAGE COURTESY OF WWW.AIRSHIPSONLINE.COM

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In WW2 nearly 300,000 recruits passed through the gates and post war a similar number of combined regular and National Service recruits were assessed here. On a personnel basis my mother was a parachute packer at Cardington during the war with the joke always being “if it doesn’t work then bring it back”, whether this packing was just for Cardington units or other stations I never asked.

During WW2 as many as 8,000 people worked at the station. There were regular dances, drama productions, concerts and a whole range of sporting activities and competitions along with a gym, a church and a cinema.

From 1943 to 1967 it was home to the RAF meteorological research balloons training unit, undertaking development and storage (after 1967 this was undertaken by the Royal Aircraft Establishment). The two airship sheds ceased being part of the RAF Cardington site in the late 1940s and they were put to other uses. The perimeter fence was moved, so that they were outside the main RAF Cardington site.

During the 1950s, RAF Cardington was the reception unit for National Service and saw thousands of recruits issued with their kit. The Parachute Regiment was stationed there as one of the hangars housed the balloons from which trainees made their first drops. In 1954 RAF Maintenance Command used Shed No.1 for its rehearsals for the Royal Tournament. The Royal Marine Commandos also used Shed No.1 for its rehearsals for the 1987 Royal Tournament.

No. 1 shed was used by the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) to operate balloons on behalf of the Met Office carrying instruments to measure conditions in the atmosphere. The balloons were also used in parachute development (although they were unmanned – using a heavy dead weight); much of this work was carried out in secret.

A gas factory had been built at Cardington in the early days of the Royal Airship Works to produce hydrogen gas. This factory continued as 217 Maintenance Unit, producing all the gases used by the Royal Air Force including gas cylinders filling and maintenance, until its closure in April 2000.

I used to live near London Road, Bedford and our house backed onto the Bedford to Hitchin Railway, I well remember trains of gas cylinders coming by pulled by steam and later diesel engines, so extensive were the sidings at Cardington, they even had their own diesel engines to shunt the trucks around the site. In the mid sixties, I also remember calling in on Cox and Danks scrapyards along Kingsway, Bedford and seeing two shunters in their scrapyards and the foreman saying that they had come from Cardington.

The RAF station began to decline in importance in the 1970s and the numbers of personnel were reduced. RAF Cardington officially closed in 2000 and on 26th March the ensign of 217 Maintenance Unit was laid up in Cardington church.

Philip Bettles

Cardington Airfield today

Cardington is known for the 2 Airship sheds which dominate the landscape. After the loss of the R101 the Airship programme was cancelled and the sister ship the R100 was scrapped. It was another 42 years before an airship returned. In the early 1970's the Goodyear airship "Europa" was assembled in No.1 hangar. Cardington served as its base for several years, it was regularly seen at major events throughout the country providing telecommunication support.



In the 1980's a newly formed company Airship Industries set up in Hangar No.1 to develop and built a new range of airships their 1st airship was Skyship 600 which made its maiden flight in March 1984. Six Skyships were built at Cardington before the collapse of the company in 1990. The Skyship programme was taken over by US company Westinghouse, but located in the States no longer in the UK. The latest attempt to bring airships back to Cardington took place in 2016.

The company took over a 2013 project in the US to develop a military airship. The prototype flew several times but had a series of mishaps culminating from breaking its moorings in 2017 has been severely damaged. Although now not at Cardington the company hopes to build the new airship at Doncaster airport in the near future.

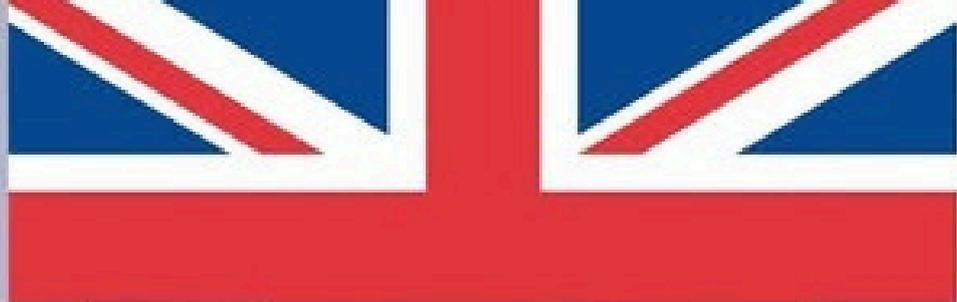
Cardington's landscape today is still dominated by the two airship hangars. In 2015 the hangars were restored by English Heritage at the cost of £10.5 million. Hangar No 1 is now a Grade II listed building. Hangar No 2 is used as a film set by Cardington Studios, for Hollywood blockbusters including the Batman trilogy. The sheds have also been used to host several TV series including in 2023 for a Channel 4 reality television series, Scared of the Dark.



IMAGE : WIKICOMMONS - CARDINGTON HANGARS 2010

The land around the sheds is gradually being developed from housing. The former RAF officers Mess are now apartments, but the Airship Hangars /sheds to provide an evocative atmosphere.

Catharine Young



ARMED FORCES DAY
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

ARMED FORCES DAY RUSHDEN

Saturday 28th June 2025

Parade Starts 1pm

**Alfred Lord Tennyson School,
Playground, John Street NN10 9NL**

At the Station from Midday-Late
Station Approach Rushden NN10 0AW

**Stalls & Displays in the Goods Shed,
Train Rides. Bar & Buffet Carriage Open.**

**Contacts: Jake Baker
RHTS (Rushden Station)**

**afdrushden@hotmail.com
Tel: 0300 3023 150**

**Tel: 07525 441267
secretary@rhts.co.uk**

Armed Forces Day Rushden is organised and run by Rushden & District Veterans Group (RDVG) in collaboration with Rushden Historical Transport Society and Rushden Town Council. The RDVG is supported by members of Rushden and District Royal Naval Association, Royal British Legion, Royal Air Force Association and the Northants Veterans Breakfast Club.

*(*subject to availability)*



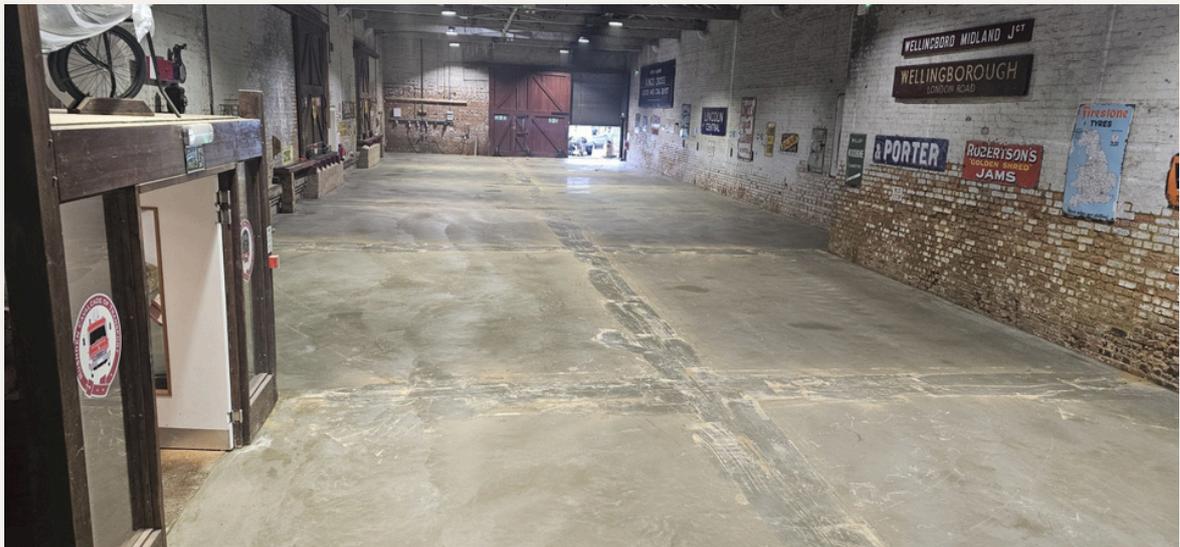
Rushden & District Veterans Group



GOODS SHED NEWS

The winter break in events held in the Goods Shed provides the opportunity to undertake maintenance and improvements to the shed and the Station site in general. This winter has seen the following work undertaken:

GOODS SHED FLOOR: Using a “Mick George Community Grant” the Goods Shed has new concrete floor. The new 150mm thick screeded floor with damp proof membrane has produced an excellent smooth surface with no water ingress, made its use much safer and has made disabled access easier. Although the original floor had been coated and levelled several years ago, the ingress of water continually damaged the coated surface. Several events have already been held in the shed and the new floor has been acknowledged as a great improvement



GOODS SHED BAR: Another major project in the Goods Shed this winter was the rebuilding of the bar. One of the complaints from bar staff working the bar is the lack of space behind the bar. The bar has been re-profiled and the floor space behind the front counter increased. New chillers and fridges have been installed to ensure the bar can be used around the year.

GOODS SHED - NEW TOILET BLOCK has been named as teh “West Wing” by the Goods Shed volunteers in appreication of the work of Robin West during the past 30 years. Robin is now in ill health, but still offers advice and opinions on projects.



RUSHDEN AND DISTRICT QUERY MOTOR CLUB – PART 4

THE SEVENTIES PEAK AND OBLIVION

Where we ended last time

We ended Part 3 as the 1960's were finishing. The Query Club and the Mid Counties Association of Auto Clubs were all going well with car rallies, off the road events, social runs and quizzes. However, looking back it is really quite surprising at how quick the club and much of MCAAC could all come to an end in a few short years.

The Seventies Peak

The MCAAC had introduced championships for the car rallies and off the road events and there was much competition between the clubs on these events.

Off the road events were thriving with up to 100 entries in a range of classes. Basically any old vehicle could be used as seen in the image below..



Other entries were rather newer with generally more serious drivers as seen below.



Although the MCAAC car rallies which were now authorised through the RAC continued to get up to 60 entries, because of the increase in Sunday traffic, the events were now all held over Saturday nights. The longest rally was the Andre Baldet Night Rally (AB used to own garages), which was held over some 200 miles. This was always the car rally to win and I was in the navigator seat on three occasions with in the event different drivers.

Below are some examples on typical rally entrants.



The Query Club continued to organise the carnival parade each year but the crazy car entries in the parade came to an end. The annual dinner dance continued to be held at the Overstone Solarium. The attendees peaked in 1972 with 260 people and some turned away.

Personal Bit

On the personal front, 1971 was the best year for winning the car rallies. With driver Dennis Mobley and the trusty Ford Cortina we managed to win seven rallies and consequently the driver and navigator championships. However, Dennis was quite a bit older and hung up the driving gloves in the early 70s. I carried on for a few more years with several different drivers until following three unexpected 'off the road events' on car rallies, decided that it was time to also retire. The final off road event took place in the ford near Marston Trussell, where the Ford Mexico actually arrived at the wet ford on its side! Fortunately there were spectators watching

at this point and after some man handling we were back on four wheels. As I recall we only lost 8 minutes, mainly caused by levering a rear wheel arch off the wheel!

All Down Hill

Many members were now beginning to get much older, family responsibilities were increasing, and the costs of motoring were increasing significantly particularly rally insurance.

Whereas in the 'old days' one could hold a car rally on a Sunday afternoon without seeing many other motorists, there were now many more 'Sunday motorists' on the roads which made things more dangerous and anti social.

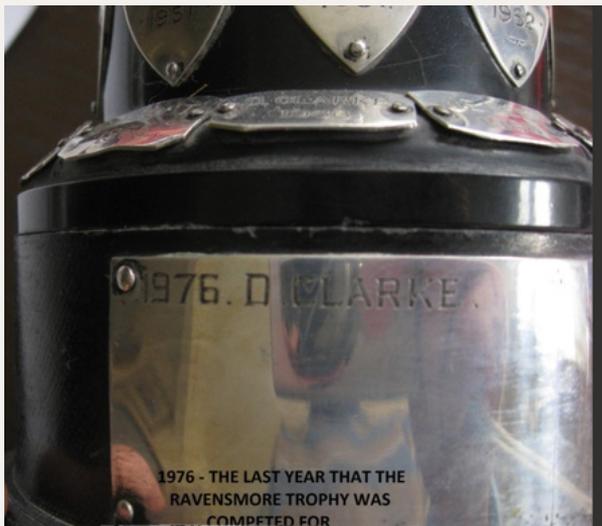
As mentioned the annual dinner in 1972 had 260 attendees but just 3 years later in 1975 the numbers had dropped down to 130 people. This could be blamed on the ticket prices which from 1972 to 1975 had risen in price from £2 to £3.50, as seen in the next picture, but I rather doubt it!

As mentioned the annual dinner in 1972 had 260 attendees but just 3 years later in 1975 the numbers had dropped down to 130 people. This could be blamed on the ticket prices which from 1972 to 1975 had risen in price from £2 to £3.50, as seen in the image right ,but I rather doubt it!



The numbers were now too small and this was the end of the annual dinners at Overstone. Around this time new people took over the running of the Griffin Inn and so the main contact with the club was lost. The club activity no longer justified the Gearbox clubroom at the Griffin and it was subsequently turned into the kitchens, as it is now albeit closed for the time being! Several other MCAAC clubs were now also struggling and 1978 saw the final annual dinner for MCAAC. It is noticeable on the menu that RDQMC hardly features in the results.

1978 also saw the last time that Query club car rallies and off road events were run. This was thus also the last year that trophies of the club could be presented. In fact for several years the number of trophies exceeded the number of events when they could be presented. Below is the image of the Ravensmore trophy first presented in 1931 and last presented in 1976 to another of my drivers Derek Clarke.



By the end of the 1970s all of the people who were members when I first joined had departed one way or another. The existing members carried on with small social events well into the 80s, but really in name only and not as a motor club.

And so to Oblivion

It was eventually decided that something had to be done with the large number of trophies the club had accumulated. Consequently some could be returned to the original donors and the remainder sold to members with monies donated to charity. I hold several of the trophies and would love to find a home for them!

One solid silver trophy, the Risdene Trophy, was the favourite of my main driver Dennis. Sadly Dennis had passed away much too soon and well before the trophies were sold.

However, it was decided that the trophy could be presented to another event in his memory. Dennis had been as steward for motor cycle races to FIA level and officiated at many motor cycle race meetings – including the Motor Cycle Grand Prix at Silverstone when they were sponsored by John Player. His favourite race track was Cadwell Park. The Risdene Trophy was then mounted on a larger plinth and presented to a motor cycle race winner at Cadwell Park.

The image opposite shows the Risdene Trophy being presented in 1991 to a race winner at Mallory Park by Dennis' widow, Joan accompanied by the last RDQMC chairman Andrew Hern.



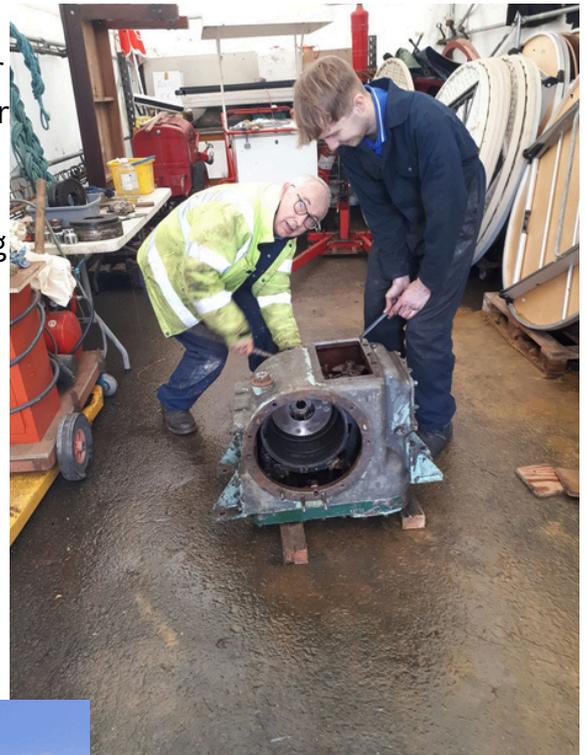
The club finally officially folded in 1995 which meant it had lasted in various forms for 64 years. I find it amazing to realise that it has essentially been finished competitively for over 40 years! I have a lot of club artefacts which may one day find a new home – please let me know. Thanks for reading the articles.

Richard Lewis

Railway News

During the winter months, several railway projects have been undertaken, including the formation of a volunteer team to rebuild a gearbox for one of the Society's ex War department shunters. WD72222 has been non-operational for over 5 years due to this issue. Now in April 2025 there has been considerable progress, testing on the repaired gearbox is underway. It is hope the gearbox will installed during the summer months with a return to service soon afterwards.

Image - opposite - (2 of the members of the gearbox team examining the outer casing)



Our ex Wolverton tube wagon and LMS brake van are being prepared for our complimentary, alfresco experience running. (see image below)



Work is also well advanced on new metal ends and foot boards for our LMS brake van, (see image below:)



The Society was disappointed when the change in Government during last year meant that a grant award to the Society for improvements including a maintenance shed was withdrawn. We have in the interim started to construct a small pit for basic access to the underside of vehicles. When finished this will have a sump with pumped extraction.



The cabin next to the RHTS shop on the upper platform has now been fitted out as a ticket office/waiting room. The cabin can also double up as extra event space (ie. Santa's Grotto) as well as a community room for private hire.



Another long term restoration project is the "Bubblcar" otherwise known as a class 151 DMU. The unit art Ryushdne was acquired over 10 years ago, it is owed by a consortium of members. It has been steadily worked upon over the past few years, this month considerable progress was made on the paintwork. It is now looking smart in its BR blue .



The past few weeks have been very productiobe in the work going on , long may it continue.

New Acquisition for the Society

A new acquisition for the Society this spring is a 1965 Scammell Scarab, this is the successor to the 1934 Scammell Mechanical Horse which the Society owns. The vehicle is very much relevance to the Goods Shed as the Scarab was used extensively around the site during the 1950's and 1960's. The Scarab acquired is a 1965 Perkins diesel engine 6 tonne version. It has been donated to the Society by Mark Carrington who has owned the Scarab and trailer for the past 10 years.

The Scammell Scarab name is commonly believed to be derived from the rounded bonnet that resembled the elytra (wing covers) of a Scarab beetle, but the name really comes from a more conventional source. It was a combination of the two words, that being Scammell and an Arab horse (Sca - rab = Scarab). The horse can be found on the the Scarab logo on the front of the cab, the horse referencing the image of the vehicle as a mechanical horse.



After the end of the Second World War, Scammell Lorries looked at the Mechanical Horse, which was basically unchanged from its 1934 design, realised that something more modern was called for and set about re-designing the vehicle. The successful automatic coupling was retained from the 1930's Mechanical Horse, but the rest of the tractor was completely new. The frame was cranked downwards to give a lower centre of gravity., whilst the engine, gear box and rear axle were built as one unit and fitted low down in the frame behind the cab which aided major maintenance. The radiator was fitted in the back wall of the cab, drawing cooling air from a duct behind the driver's door. The side valve petrol engine of 2090cc was used for both the 3 and 6-ton models. Later Scammell offered diesel engines, these were the Perkins 4-199 for 3-ton and P4 and P4203 for 6-ton models. The Scarab had a rounded all steel cab, this was more comfortable for drivers than the mechanical horse. With the engine being mounted lower and more centrally than in the Mechanical Horse, the Scarab was much more stable.

The railways for which this style of vehicle was originally designed continued to be a primary customer, advertising by Scammell claimed there were 7500 Scarabs in service with British Rail.(see advert on next page). There were many other users, the manoeuvrability proving popular for companies operating in city environments.

The Scarab lasted in production until 1967.



Mike Ashworth Collection

In the interests of transport economy . . .

7,500
Scammell
MECHANICAL
HORSES
serve

BRITISH RAILWAYS

7,500 Scammell Mechanical Horses operating with 30,000 semi-trailers are now cutting transport costs for British Railways—and their customers.

For Scammell operation always means more loads delivered in less time and at less cost all round.

As an example: one Scarab motive unit with three semi-trailers can replace at least three rigid four wheelers with a very considerable saving in initial outlay, overheads and running costs. Deliveries too are speeded up. Automatic coupling and uncoupling ensures an instant switch over from one trailer to another with no time lost in waiting.

And then there's the Scarab's amazing manoeuvrability. It turns in its own length, negotiates the most congested areas and threads through the thickest traffic with ease—delivering the goods on time and every time.

SCAMMELL LORRIES LIMITED

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"651" MOVES UNDER ITS OWN POWER

Over two years ago, an article was published in "Olde Wheels," providing a history of the Society's flagship vehicle, the Bristol Lodekka "651." A new bus group was formed with the intention of restoring "651" to operational condition. The bus was brought back to the station site, and work began to source missing parts and complete the restoration.

Early in 2023, new team members joined the group, bringing considerable expertise in engines and running gear to the project. One such member was Ed Nutt, a diesel engine fitter with experience in Gardner engines. After a few months and many hours, Ed Nutt repaired the fuel injection systems, and in August 2023, the engine fired up and ran.



Over the next year, Ed and his friend Phil worked many hours on the bus, with help from other members of the bus group. In the summer of 2023, the bus could move under its own power, revealing issues with the brakes. Apart from the brakes being seized, there was also an issue with missing components in the braking system. Components were sourced and fitted, and in May 2024, "651" moved under its own power for the first time in possibly 15 or so years.

The team also took a trip to a bus museum in Birmingham to look at a finished Lodekka to see how the cooling system was done. Using the information gleaned, plans were made to install the same system on "651." Now, in April 2025, the radiators are fitted, and the cooling system is working. "651" has been running in the Goods shed yard, testing out the newly installed system.

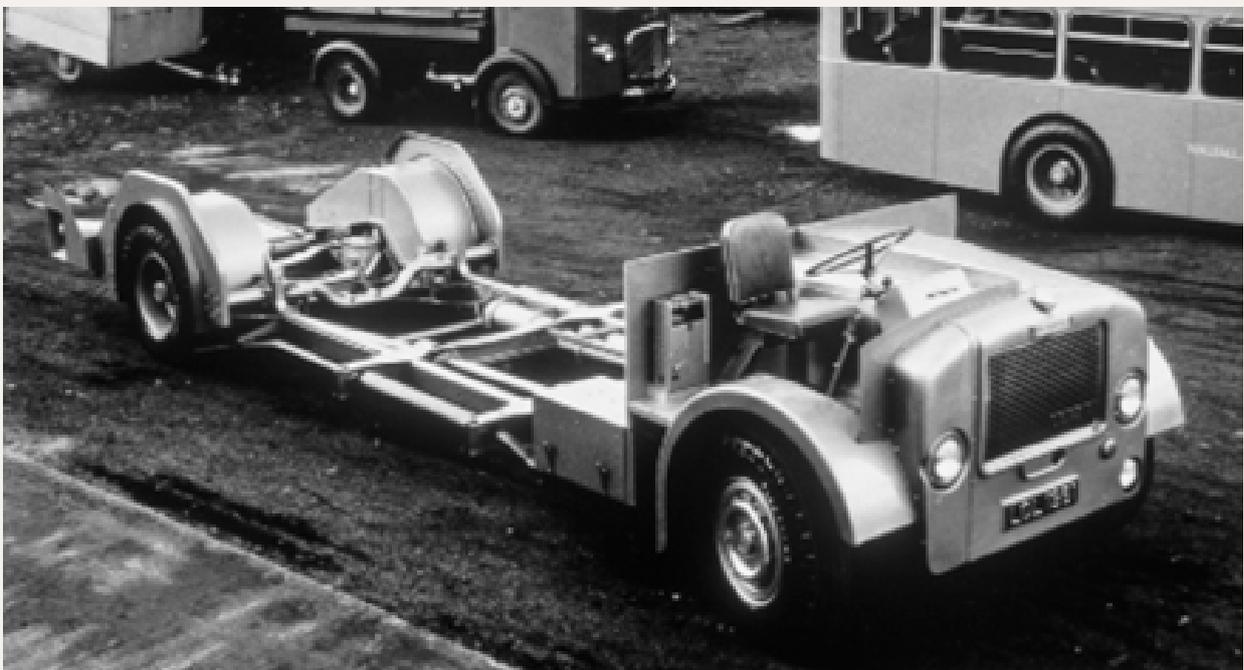
The project to restore the bus has been ongoing since 2009. Hopefully, this coming summer, the project will be completed, and "651" will be seen on the open road once more.

The restoration of "651" has been taking place over many years, with many members contributing their time and skills to keep the project alive. Now, after many years, these efforts are coming to fruition. Let us salute all those who have contributed over the years as the Society's flagship returns to service..

The Bristol Lodekka



The Bristol Lodekka was a revolutionary double-decker bus introduced in 1949 to solve a long-standing issue: traditional double-deckers were often too tall to pass under low bridges. Bristol Commercial Vehicles, working with Eastern Coach Works, designed the Lodekka with a drop-centre rear axle, allowing for a lower overall height without sacrificing passenger space.



Production ran from 1953 to 1968, and over 5,000 Lodekkas were built. The design eliminated the need for a step up into the lower deck, making boarding easier. Most models featured Gardner engines, though some were fitted with Bristol or Leyland engines. Despite its success, a legal quirk meant that only government-owned bus companies could purchase Lodekkas, leaving many private operators unable to use them. Eventually, Dennis of Guildford produced a similar low-floor bus under license.

Spring Events 2025

This year's events calendar started with the now monthly Rushden Craft Market at the start of March. These events are run by Rushden and Higham markets has become very popular in the area with a full Goods Shed of stalls every month.

Another popular event in March was the Mother's Day Afternoon Tea ,which was sold out several weeks in advance and once again was praised by visitors for the excellent service. Thank you to Delph and her team for all their hard work in providing the event.

The first railway event of the season was the annual "Easter Bunny Express" event, aimed at families looking for an Easter event for children. After initial slow ticket sales, the week before Easter saw bumper ticket sales with all trains fully sold out.

Events like these bring together many parts of the Society, from the train operating crew, buffet car staff, shop staff, bar staff, museum and model coach volunteers, and not forgetting our volunteers who undertake gardening and site maintenance.

Whatsup Bedfordshire, a Facebook site offering ideas for events and activities gave a lovely review of the event - "Thank you to everyone who volunteers and works here we had a great day!"



This year saw the first Spring Beer Festival on the Station platform at the end of April. The weather was excellent leading to lots of people on the platform enjoying the event.

The bar committee organised another excellent event on the first May Bank Holiday Monday as a VE 80th celebration. The event would be on the platform, this was an invite for the local community to bring along a picnic and celebrate the anniversary. The museum opened for the afternoon and there was a display of World War Two artefacts in the new Waiting Room from long standing member Peter Horn. The event was very well received with some very nice comments about the event on social media..



BAR NEWS

Since the last edition of Olde Wheels the bar has been very busy. We have held the 1st Spring Beer Festival, which was a great success, so this event will be held again next year. In celebration of VE Day, we held Picnic on the Platform which was very well attended.

We also have a new Bar Committee with new members all who are looking forward to carrying out active roles. Although the Bar Committee are responsible for the running of the bar, we do on occasions need help around the platform or at events, any help is very much appreciated and essential. If you are able to help, then please come and speak to us or leave a message behind the bar.

Please keep an eye on the notice board in the bar and outside the Station building as well as our facebook sites. for details of up coming events.

Bar Committe Chairman- "Fez"

The Raleigh Winkie

Why on earth have an article about a strangely named kids bicycle. Until recently I had never heard of the name the Raleigh Winkie. Then watching a new episode of “Bangers and Cash” when a newly restored tricycle went under the hammer. I realised this was in fact my first bike , a 3 wheeler in yellow and black with a boot! Most people remember their first car , but how many people remember their first bike. Raleigh Winkie was a children's tricycle produced by Raleigh

Your paragraph text



Image above - Raleigh Winkie -the.saleroom.com - e

Bicycles from 1950 to 1970, designed to appeal to young riders with its name. The brand promoted road safety through the 'Circle of Silver Knights' club, which encouraged safe riding practices. The tricycle gained popularity partly due to members of the British Royal Family being photographed riding it, and Raleigh's extensive advertising efforts included a campaign inviting Winkie owners to join the club. An optional metal 'boot' was available for the tricycle, further enhancing its appeal to children.



The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles and Princess Anne on tricycles, most likely at Royal Lodge. Royal Collection Trust / (C) All Rights Reserved

Catharine Young

Ooh! thank you
for my

RALEIGH WINKIE



MODEL 32

MAIN FRAME: Twin Tube. REAR FRAME: Detachable. FORK: SAFETY type. TYRES: 16". CHAINGUARD: Gives complete protection. BOTTOM BRACKET: Standard cycle design. BEARINGS: Fully ball-bearing. METAL BASKET: On front fork. FINISH: Bright Red or Worcester Blue.

With Dunlop 'Airsprung' tyres £11.9.6

With Dunlop Pneumatic tyres £11.19.6

AVAILABLE AS ACCESSORIES

LUGGAGE BOOT. Handsome, useful and a delight to the little rider. £1.9.6

PATENT TELESCOPIC CONTROL HANDLE. An ingenious and inexpensive safety device, cleverly concealed inside the axle when not in use. 13/-

Your Dealer will be pleased to give you further details.

DE LUXE MODEL 32DL. Complete with Luggage Boot, Patent Telescopic Control Handle and Dunlop 'Airsprung' tyres. FINISH: Black and Yellow or Blue and Yellow. Otherwise to above specification. £14.9.6

THE CIRCLE OF SILVER KNIGHTS

All "Winkie" owners can become Shield Bearers of the Circle of Silver Knights. They receive an illuminated scroll on enrolment and, after 12 months, a handsome antique finish silver badge—entirely without charge.

Museum Matters

It is always good to have something new to put on show in the museum and for this season we are thrilled to have had a donation of three marvellous “O” Gauge scale models LMS ‘Royal Scot’, LMS Stanier and Bulleid diesel-electric 10201.

LMS ‘Royal Scot’



The donation was even more appropriate because the modeller was a Northamptonshire man, called Walter Newcombe, who lived his whole life in Gayton and during the 1950's/60's worked as a tool maker and model engineer for the world class model engineers Bassett-Lowke, the head office of which was on St Andrews St. Northampton.

when Walter died in 2008, and he models passed to his niece Sue, her late husband submitted an article about the models to 'Model Rail magazine' in August that year, and posed the question:

*“The Bulleid diesel intrigues me, as Walt was a committed LMS man!”
The editor replied:*

“In the mid-1950's, the three Bulleid diesels, 10201-203, moved from their Southern Region home to work London Midland Region expresses on the West Coast Main Line. Perhaps this explains the attraction?”

SHOW & TELL
YOUR layouts and projects revealed ...

Want to share your latest layout or project with fellow modellers, or to get advice on some aspect or even admit to some disaster as a warning to others? In this new feature, we'll bring you a selection of the best, and if you're willing, the worst!

An 'O' gauge legacy

Clive Harbeck/Walt Newcombe, Northampton

My wife's uncle, Walt Newcombe, was a tool and model maker for Bassett-Lowke in Northampton in the 1950s. He had a great workshop at home and, over a number of years, constructed the three models you see in these photographs – an LMS 'Royal Scot' 4-6-0, LMS Stanier 1-Co-Co-1 diesel prototype 10201. Each model was hand-built from scratch designed to 1:76.281 scale and finished with all the parts himself with the exception of the wheels.

My wife would be interested to see the buildings in Peter Hall a few months back and we had discussed sending in some photographs of his model collection for you if you would publish them. Sadly Walt passed away a few weeks ago.

As to always the ones with their things, I have 100 quarters I wish I had added for regarding materials, techniques and

Inspiration: I built the models late 1960s for the occasion, the Bulleid diesel intrigued me, as that always came over as a committed LMS man!

In the mid-1950s, the three Bulleid diesels, 10201-203, moved from their Southern Region home to work London Midland Region expresses on the West Coast Main Line. Perhaps this explains the attraction? - Cl.

Bulleid designed 1-Co-Co-1diesel prototype 10201



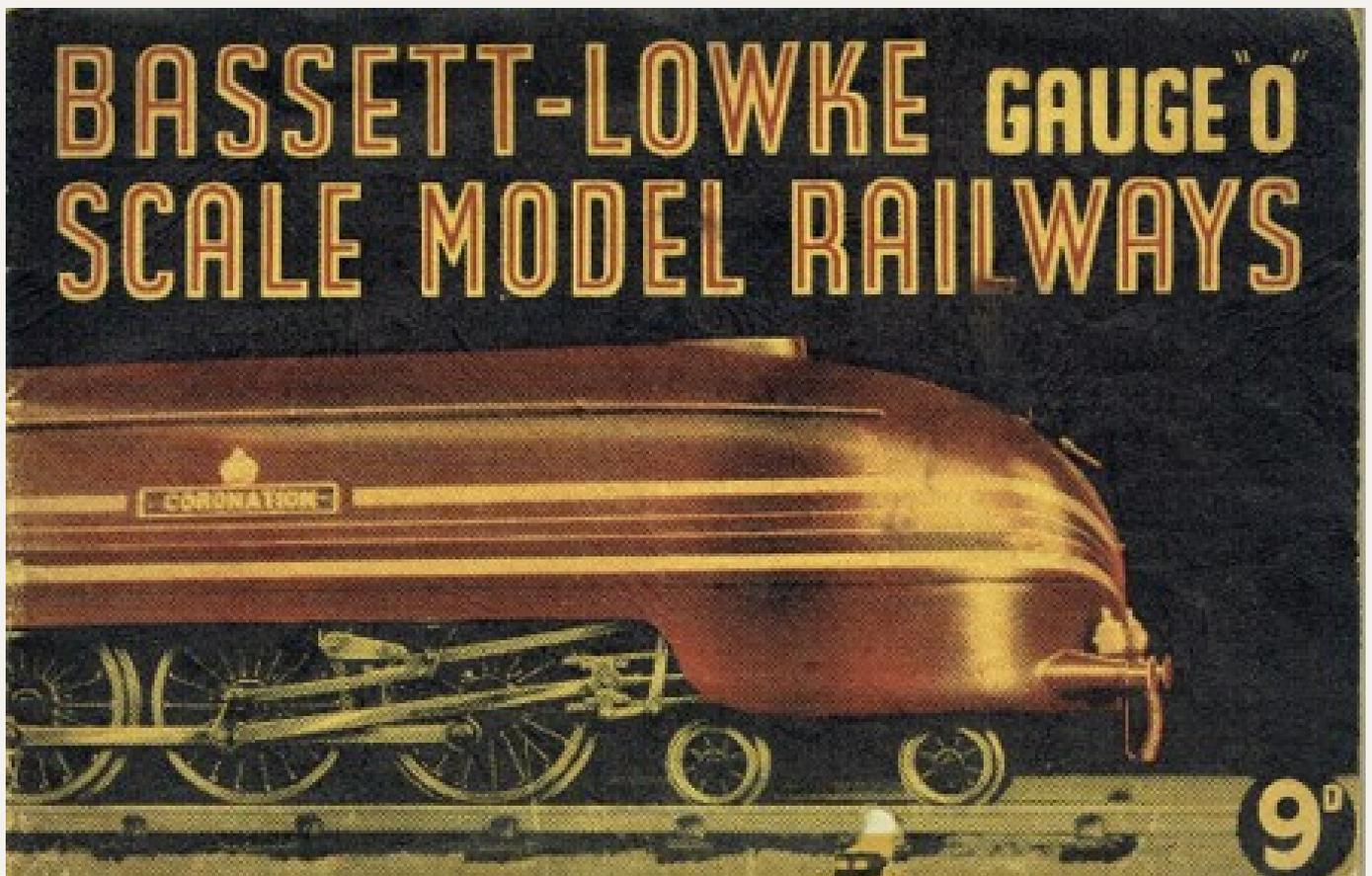
What makes the models even more amazing is that Walter was blinded in one eye by a work-place accident, they were scratch built using J. Skinley drawings, also on show in the museum's Ticket Office.

The models have been looked after since 2008 by his niece Sue Hardwick who wrote: "I don't think anyone apart from close family ever saw his models. I feel they deserve to be seen and appreciated for the works of art they are, rather than being stored away. I know that your museum is somewhere he would have taken pleasure in visiting and hope he would approve of my decision to donate them."

Many thanks Sue, for your thoughtful and kind donation.



Al hope you will visit our museum to admire them.



Donated also is this 1941

Bassett -Lowke catalogue a copy of which is available to browse in the museum.

A Short History of Bassett-Lowke.

The Bassett-Lowke company started as a model engineering supplies company in 1899 and became a limited company in 1909. It was founded by Wenman Joseph Bassett-Lowke and H.F.R Franklin, the former working as an apprentice in his father's engineering workshops. Franklin worked as the company accountant in the Bassett-Lowke family's boiler making business. It went on to become one of the country's largest suppliers of medium and large-gauge model railways, model ships, and exhibition models.



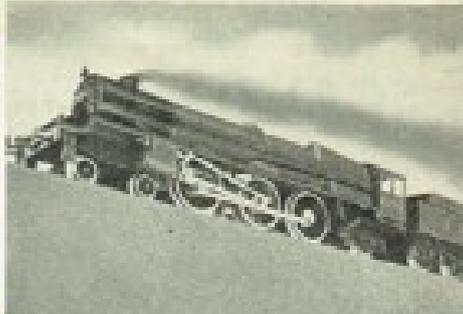
PROGRESS

**A Personal Message from
Mr. W. J. Bassett-Lowke, M.I.Loco.E.**

Over thirty years ago I was an apprentice in my father's engineering workshops and my hobby was model making. The model engineers of those days had very little help other than that of his friends engaged in the hobby. Drawings, castings, parts were practically unknown and he had to make everything himself, so you can imagine it was an uphill task. It felt there was room in the country for some firm who would supply the wants and needs of the model enthusiast and it was with this aim in view that my friend, Mr. H. F. R. Franklin, and I started the present business, and out of an enjoyable hobby we made a worthwhile job.

DIRECTORS:

W. J. BASSETT-LOWKE (Managing Director)
R. BRADSHAW BLOOD (Works Director)
H. F. R. FRANKLIN, M. W. FRANKLIN (Directors)
CYRIL DERRY (Chairman of Directors)



THE BASSETT-LOWKE SHOP

In Northampton we have premises in different parts of the town. Our Head Office and Warehouse is in St. Andrew's Street, about seven minutes' walk from the Castle Station, and here a full range of our productions are stored to ensure the rapid execution of customers' requirements. All Postal communications, whether orders for goods, remittances, or general correspondence, should be addressed to:—

BASSETT-LOWKE, LTD.
Head Office: St. Andrew's Street, NORTHAMPTON

OUR MODEL SHOP IN LONDON

Is at 102 High Holborn, W.C.1, close to the top of King's Cross. The new "Holborn" (Kingway) station of the London Underground railway is immediately opposite.

The following timetable runs to the street: 1, 8, 17, 23, 29 and 31. Buses Nos. 44, 48, 77 and 149, going along King's Cross, also stop within one minute's walk of the shop.

In our extensive showrooms a comprehensive and well-stocked stock of our productions is always available for inspection and our assistants are cordially invited to avail themselves of our service or advice on any matter relating to model engineering, without obligation to purchase.

H. C. FORBES

Unless, of course, they refer to goods supplied, or an order, from our London or Manchester branches.

The Railway Factory, devoted to the production of model locomotives, railways and accessories, is a large and modern building situated in Northampton, and is equipped with the latest machines for the accurate and economic production of model locomotives, track, wagons, stations and every type of model railway equipment.

The model Shop, situated in Northampton, is specially devoted to the building of all models of every description, also parts and fittings for those who wish to build their own craft.

AND OUR MANCHESTER BRANCH

We have now been many years in the centre of the cotton industry. The premises are situated at No. 25 Corporation Street, modern shop on the right-hand side going from Market Street to Victoria Station. A full range of our model railways, model ships, etc., is to be seen there. Our staff includes a technical expert, able to give advice on all matters relating to models, and a visit from our north of England patrons will be much appreciated.

H. C. FORBES




Official Site: www.bassett-lowke.com

By 1905, the Bassett-Lowke range was split across three catalogues: Section A (Model railways), Section B (Engineering) and Section S (Ships).

Wenman J Bassett-Lowke met Stefan Bing at a Paris trade-fair and they became convinced that there was a market for new model trains based on British locomotives, as opposed to the "continental-only" designs then being produced by German companies. Wenman drew up a design based on the LNWR 4-4-0 locomotive, which Bing put into production. The success of this first locomotive encouraged Wenman to source more German-made locomotives and rolling stock.

When WWI ended Bassett-Lowke stopped importing German trains, to concentrate on their model ship business, which boomed as shipping lines rebuilt their fleets to make up the war losses, and wanted models of their newbuilds, with Bassett-Lowke often being the default supplier.

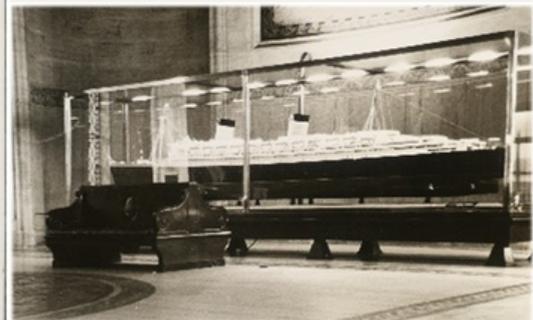
With the German hold on railway model production broken other competitors emerged including Meccano Ltd. which began making gauge "O" train sets and Hornby making clockwork-only models which were far more toyish than Bassett-Lowke's engineered steam-powered models.

By the mid-1930s, there was a three-way distinction in their advertising between 0-gauge model railways, larger-gauge railways, and ships, with a separate booklet for architectural models.

Bassett-Lowke spent WW2 producing lots of models of ships and aircraft to make it easier to train recruits in how to identify friendly and enemy aircraft and ships, or to find their way around ships or technical equipment. Bassett-Lowke models were used to plan the D-Day landings, and to train operators to assemble the Mulberry Harbours and other new equipment.

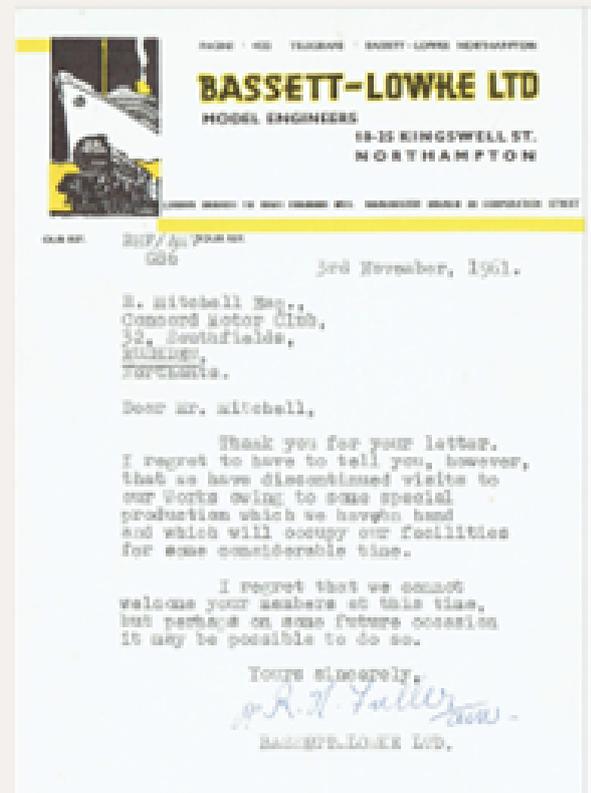


image below shows the scale of the model next to some seating



When the war ended the need to rebuild Britain's bombed-out infrastructure resulted in a lot of new buildings and a great demand for architectural models. However, that period was less kind to the other Bassett-Lowke ranges, as the main market for model railways was now "00"-gauge such as Hornby Dublo.

In 1963, two years before the company ceased trading, the Concord Motor Club in Rushden tried to arrange a visit to the factory but were refused due to "a special production occupying all their facilities."
I wonder what that was!



The name Bassett-Lowke is still held in high esteem today due to the brilliance of its products and engineers, one of whom was Walter Newcombe.

Jane Demet & Philip Bettles



Charity No:
285535

RUSHDEN HISTORICAL TRANSPORT SOCIETY

Supported by Rushden Town Council



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Sunday 3rd August 2025

Hall Park, Rushden

11am - 4pm



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RUSHDEN TRANSPORT
MUSEUM & RAILWAY

UPCOMING EVENTS 2025

Jun
15

Father's Day Ploughman's on
the Pacer

Armed Forces Day

Jun
28

Jul
5/6

The Shed of Hell

Cider & Sausage Festival

Jul
25 - 27

Aug
3

Rushden Classic Car Show

Teddy Bears Express

Aug
30/31

For more info see:
www.rhts.co.uk



[rushdenrailwaystation](https://www.instagram.com/rushdenrailwaystation)

**RUSHDEN TRANSPORT
MUSEUM & RAILWAY**

Rushden Historical Transport Society



**BEER & MUSIC
FESTIVAL**

Fri 26th - Sun 28th September
Fri 4pm - 11pm, Sat & Sun 12noon - 11pm
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ONE SHOW AT A TIME!**

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THE SHED OF HELL

**A TWO-DAY CELEBRATION OF
CULT, FANTASY AND HORROR**

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5TH-6TH JULY 2025 The Rushden Historical Transport Society & Goods Shed,
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Visit our quality traders' tables, selling all kinds of horror merchandise including, DVDs & Blu-rays, T-Shirts, Film Models and Figures, Books, Magazines, Posters, Artwork and much, much more...

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Also in attendance will be The Dark Side's Allan Bryce and his team from Ghoulish Publishing

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You can find Screaming Skull Enterprises on Facebook and Instagram

More guests to be announced

*Please note that guests are subject to change

Rushden Historical Transport Society



**MODEL
WEEKEND**

13th - 14th September
10am - 4pm

Model Railways, Cars, Boats & Lego Displays.
 Diesel train rides & refreshments available

Tickets
 Adult - £5
 Child (over 4) - £3
 Family Ticket - £14
 Payments by cash or card on entry



Rushden Station and Goods Shed, John Clark Way,
 Rushden Northants NN10 0AW

Rushden Historical Transport Society
 Registered Charity No: 285535

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With The Bierkeller Schunklers**

- German Oompah Band
- Traditional Food & Beer
- Dancing
- Yodelling
- Marching & More!



TICKETS: £12

**SAT 20TH
SEPTEMBER
2025**

7.30pm - 11pm

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