



Chairman's Annual Report for 2020-21

Mike Collins

14th April 2021

My report format follows that used by Clive Reynolds in previous years and is based around the club's activities with the addition of Finance.

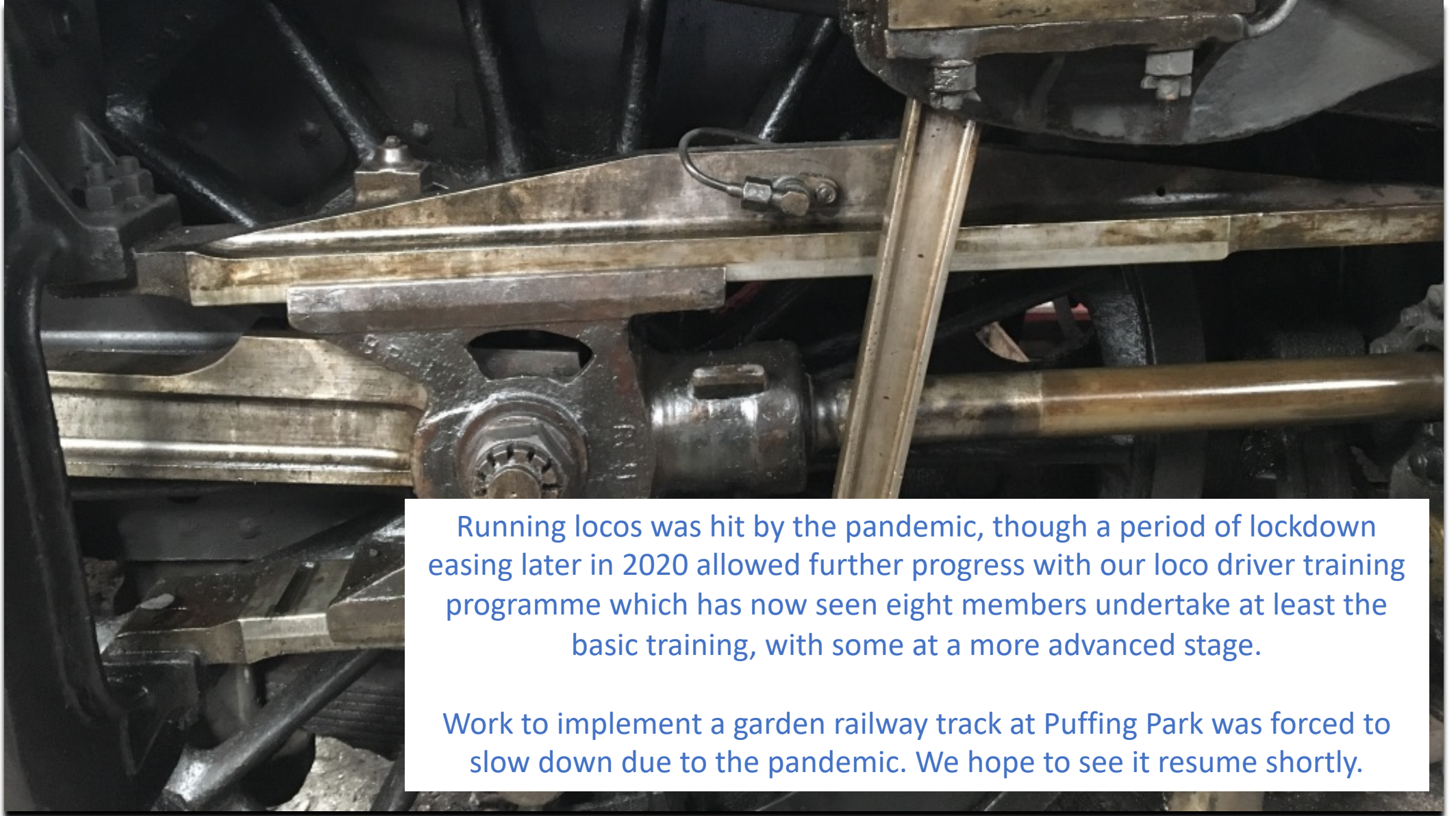


Introduction

The year 2020-21 has been dominated by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdown began in March 2020 leading to restrictions on socialising, the closure of various business and services and the banning of events and gatherings. While the details of the lockdown changed at times throughout the year, much of what we do as a club was affected. As this is written, in late March 2021, the vaccination programme is beginning to take effect and the government has a roadmap to normality in its early stages. The year 2021-2022 holds the promise of us returning to meetings and exhibitions.



Running Locos



Running locos was hit by the pandemic, though a period of lockdown easing later in 2020 allowed further progress with our loco driver training programme which has now seen eight members undertake at least the basic training, with some at a more advanced stage.

Work to implement a garden railway track at Puffing Park was forced to slow down due to the pandemic. We hope to see it resume shortly.



Running Locos – Driver Training



8 members through basic introduction

Several at further stages



Running Locos – Tunnel Issues



The deterioration of the tunnel got to the point where it was judged too risky to continue using it lest the roof cave in. The tunnel was removed, along with a small number of trees that would have become unsafe without the tunnel structure and a new bridge and cutting was built from the spoil between the steaming bays and the station. The team undertaking that work showed immense ingenuity and hard work and they did a fantastic job keeping the costs down and getting the work done swiftly ensuring Puffing Park is ready for action when the lockdown easing permits



Running Locos – Tunnel Issues



Neil driving the dumper truck



Alan operating the digger



Running Locos – Tunnel Issues



Peter, Andy, Clive & Chris



Spoil heaped up to form bridge



Running Locos – Site Security



A wildlife camera has been installed at Puffing Park to keep an eye on trespassing and any wildlife that wanders in front of it.



Running Locos - Tenure

Investigating and assessing options

Our future at the Puffing Park was thrown into uncertainty when the landlord informed us in 2020 that he would be seeking planning permission to build a house on the land. The committee initiated a project led by Clive Reynolds to ensure that the club has use of a track in the future, be it the current Puffing Park or at an alternative site. Ideally the outcome will be increased security of tenure for the club.



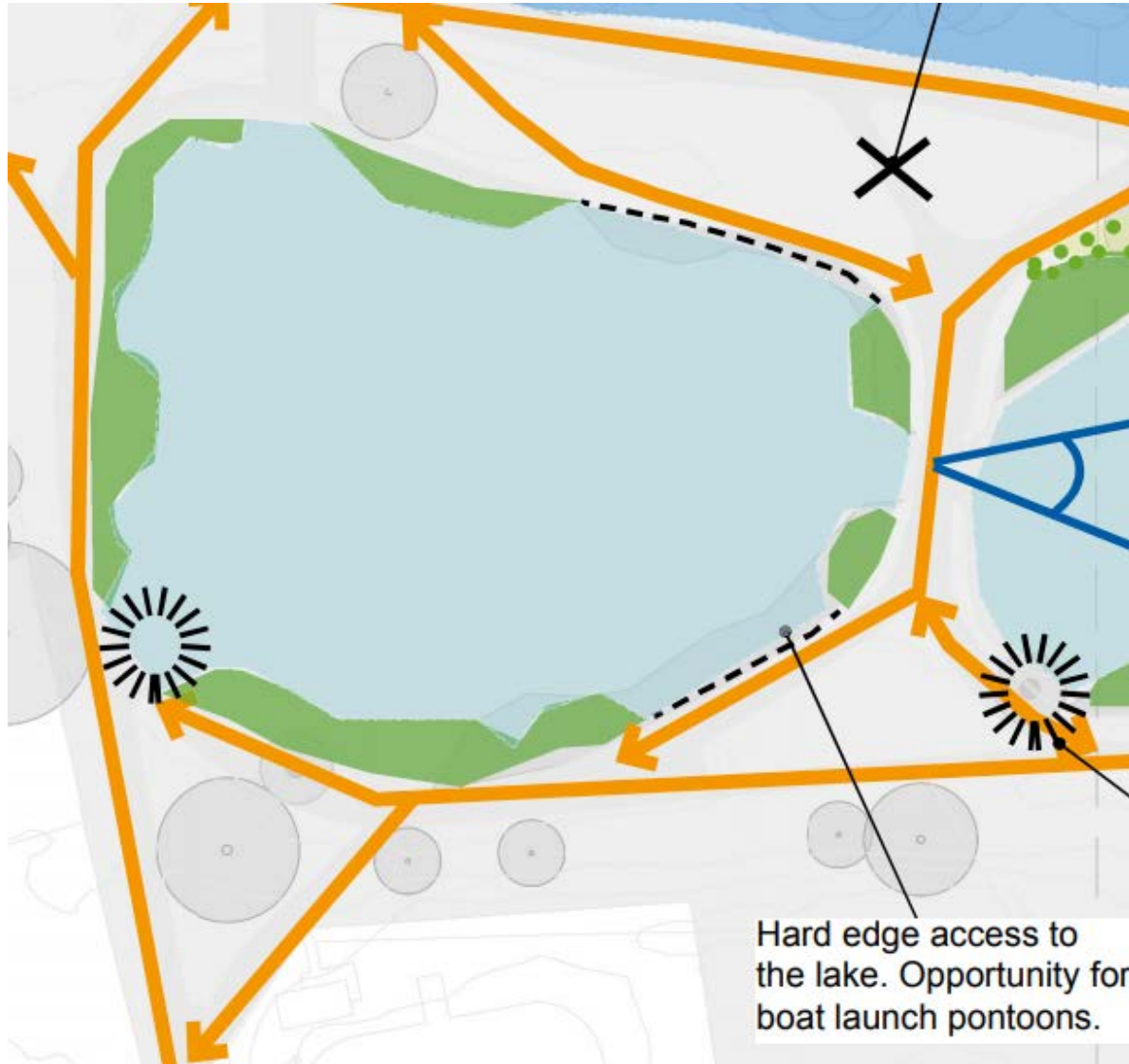
Sailing Boats – State of the Boating Lake



The limitations on social gatherings effectively put a stop to meeting up to sail boats throughout the year. This was compounded by the poor state of the boating lake in Verulamium park making boating largely impractical.



Sailing Boats – River Ver Project



The club was contacted in 2020 by St Albans District Council to discuss our views on the boating lake in the park as the project to address the issues with the River Ver chalk stream had received funding and was going through the planning stage. The discussions were positive but the initial response to our input and the weight of history make it uncertain whether the boating lake will be practical for boating once the River Ver project completes

Hard edge access to the lake. Opportunity for boat launch pontoons.



Newsletter

St Albans & District Model Engineering Society

February 8, 2021



NEWSLETTER 27



Chairman's Letter - Mike Collins

First off I'd like to thank Mike Grossmith who delivered a fascinating and interactive talk about his gauge 1 model build projects at our January virtual club meeting. In the early days of Zoom we were more concerned about its limitations but Mike showed us how we can play to its strengths and do the type of meeting that would have been harder had we done it at the Christchurch centre. The two short talks lined up for our February meeting, this Wednesday evening, also look to be very interesting. We have Michael Watts discussing his first foray into model building courtesy of Roundhouse kits and Roy covering the construction of his scratch built boat Sea Jay plus a small feature on a suicide torpedo. If you are not sure how to go about joining a Zoom meeting then the article on joining Zoom meetings by Baz in this issue will clear everything up for you.

Are you comfortable using social media apps such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter? Do you want to use this skill to help strengthen our club? In this issue we are advertising for a club publicity officer. This person will be instrumental in advising the committee as well as developing and executing publicity plans to support our activities. I'm crossing my fingers that someone steps forward as a result of this appeal in the Newsletter or I might have to resort to putting a request out on the Twittosphere....

I've noticed that if you are in the market for a 5" gauge 0-6-0 Austerity loco right now then you are spoiled for choice. There is the Austerity-like Polly version available as has been for a

Streamlinia Part 5

Malcolm gives us an update on the boiler and fittings. Unfortunately the burner flame is behaving strangely.

Pilot's Boat Part 9

Rob updates us on progress with his pilot's boat. This instalment focuses on the scratch built improved cabin.

Chilled Castings? Call your Local Blacksmith

My six chilled wheel castings are transformed into machine friendly items of joy.

Club Library

Yes we have a library!!!! Clive outlines the books we have and invites people to borrow them. That's what a library is for.

Guide to Using Zoom

Not sure how to join a Zoom meeting? Baz explains everything you need to know to get going.

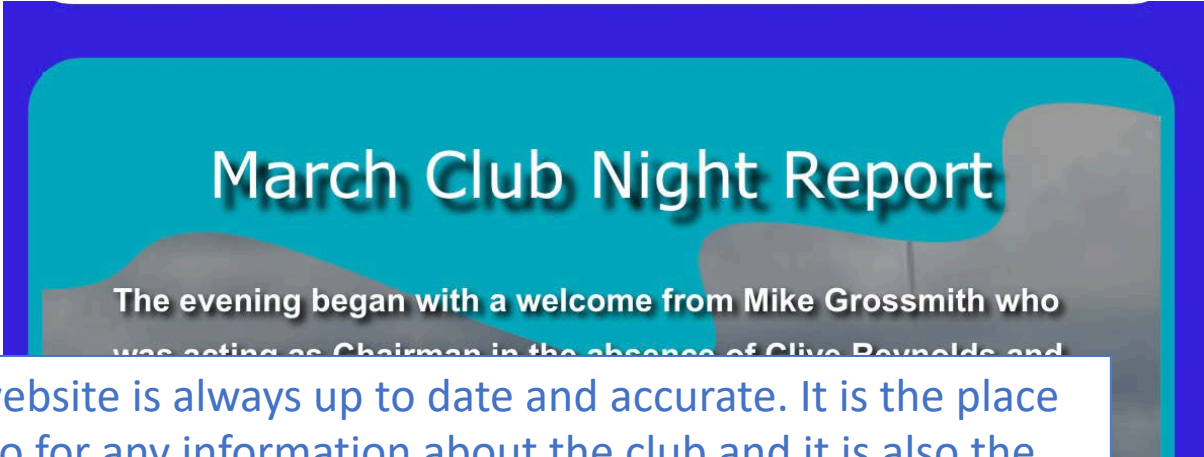
Title	Author	Issue
Keil canal trip article	Alan Holt	14
Molli Railway	Alan Holt	
Wood Glues	Alan Phillips	13
78 Derngate: Streamliia advertisement	Alan Phillips	21
Minutes of March Meeting	Baz	14
3D printing part 1	Baz	18

At the point of lockdown in March 2020 the electronic Newsletter had been going for ten months. It was doing its job of keeping the membership informed and saving the club the cost of printing and posting the Gazette but as club meetings were cancelled for the foreseeable future its importance was increased. The call to step up the volume of member's articles was met with an impressive response and publication shifted to fortnightly instead of monthly through the height of lockdown. It is now back at monthly. We have a high-quality Newsletter that we can be very proud of. Huge thanks goes to those who provided, and continue to provide articles

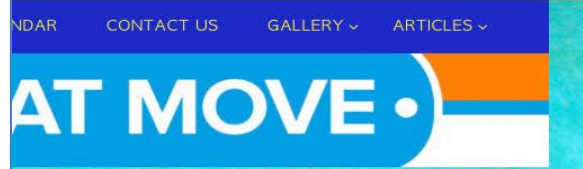
Mystery object - brake pipe flaring tool	Justin Watkins	16
Roundhouse kit build	Justin Watkins	22
3D printing of model windows	Kevin Blake	20
Streamlinea Project part 1	Malcolm Beak	13
Streamlinea Project part 2	Malcolm Beak	16
Streamlinea Project part 3	Malcolm Beak	19
Streamlinia Project part 5	Malcolm Beak	27
Follow on from the Dave Batchelor hot air engine	Malcolm Beak	20
Streamlinea Project part 4	Malcolm Beak	23
Steam of Gull	Malcolm Beak	24



Website



Our website is always up to date and accurate. It is the place we go for any information about the club and it is also the place where prospective members often find us. The collection of member's articles continues to grow making it a useful model engineering information repository. We now have all gazettes and newsletters dating back to January 2000 available electronically on the website



2021 Events

- 2nd January - Saturday Informal Club Zoom Meeting - 2.00pm
- 13th January - Monthly Club Zoom Meeting - 7.30pm
- 16th January - Saturday Informal Club Zoom Meeting - 4.00pm
- 27th January - Wednesday Informal Club Zoom Meeting - 2.00pm
- 10th February - Monthly Club Zoom Meeting - 7.30pm

COME AND SEE US AT:

The BIG St. Albans Model Show


THE BIG ST. ALBANS MODEL SHOW

September 25th & 26th 2021

LAST SITE UPDATE:

29th March 2021

SITE VISITORS



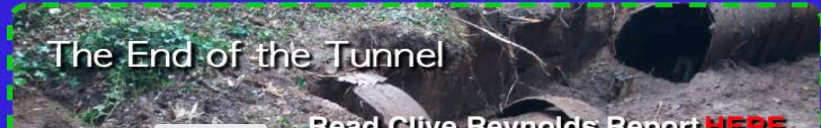
St. Albans & District Model Engineering Society

Model Engineering for All Ages



WELCOME TO THE ST. ALBANS & DISTRICT MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY WEBSITE.

Please click on the 'About The Club' Menu item to find out more about us



Read Clive Reynolds Report [HERE](#)



Club Nights

All Members

F2F

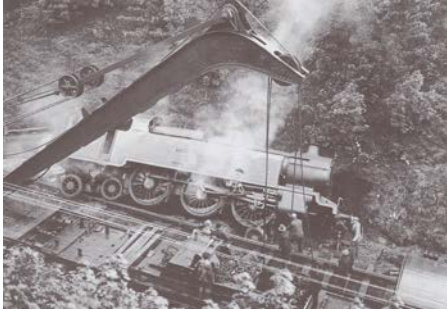
From the beginning of lockdown in March 2020 we were unable to meet up at the Christchurch centre for our usual monthly club meetings. Monthly meetings are an important aspect of this club and they were missed. When it was realised that the lockdown might be with us for some time the club decided to adopt the use of Zoom to hold “virtual” meetings. This was a period of learning for all but it wasn’t long before we were able to competently run not only the monthly club meeting but additional informal chats by Zoom. We were even able to play host to an international Zoom meeting organised for the Model Engineer magazine forum.

The numbers attending Zoom meetings has never matched the number that attended Christchurch centre meetings but for those that did attend it was an enjoyable and valuable event in the calendar. It is an example of the resourcefulness of this club that we adapted so quickly to the new circumstances.

We intend to return to the monthly Christchurch centre meetings as soon as practical.



Finances



Insurance



Expenditure



Membership



Money

Ignoring large one-off items the club did slightly better than break even during 2020. There was a significant one-off cost for dealing with the tunnel at Puffing Park and that caused a reduction in our reserves. Every effort was taken to keep the tunnel remediation costs to a minimum. We benefitted from a donation, labour from members and friends equipment hire rates.

Insurance, the other significant but annually recurring cost, was slightly up on the previous year. In common with other clubs we were unable to obtain a discount to reflect the lower level of public activity.

Apart from membership fees, the only other significant source of revenue for the club is the annual exhibition, from which there was no contribution in 2020.



Outings, Exhibitions & Other Events

No outings, exhibitions and other events have been possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic





Looking to the Future

- Meeting up in person again
- Successful resolution to our puffing premises
- Membership growth
- Big St Albans Model Show

We are looking forward to meeting up with each other whether it be sailing boats, operating locos or representing the club at exhibitions and we are working hard to achieve a successful resolution to our Puffing premises challenge.

To give us more possibilities we will put extra effort into growing our membership. And of course we are looking forward to staging our own exhibition in September if circumstances allow.

Thank you to all who stayed with us through the pandemic and to those who worked hard to look after our facilities and operate our services to ensure the club carried on through these challenging times.