

# Tube & Tunnel

**Photo:** Slip End Lower School, seen just before the event opened. Our new gazebo provides rain and sun protection (and makes a nice station).

[A. Allum.]

"Tube & Tunnel" is produced by The "Little Red Train" to promote an interest in our 7¼" gauge (1/8th scale) models of a 1938 'Tube' train and "Ginny" 'Sub-surface' train.



Website: [www.littleredtrain.co.uk](http://www.littleredtrain.co.uk)



#20 / Autumn & Winter 2008/9.

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I struggled the other day to make our event 'name badges' look good. We have a different one (same style) for each event, shewing not only who we are, but also shewing what the event is. Fitting in the relevant details for one event was tricky, so I decided to redesign the badge, and in so doing, adopted our 'corporate image.' I was so pleased with the result, that I have done the same for this newsletter! It is less cluttered, I think, and very smart.

We have had a very busy summer season, but this has taken its toll on the train with electrical and mechanical failures, proving to be an embarrassment at the Great Cockcrow Railway, yet again! (Their patience with our efforts to sort out the problems is admirable and appreciated, to say the least!) Until we can bring the train into a desired state (and this includes the state of the body), we will probably have to turn down a few events next year.

Regrettably, we have had to turn down a repeat visit to Caversham this November; but that is due to a lack of available members. Caversham needs more staff than usual (four instead of three), due to the necessary deployment of the point! But our usual crew are away on apprenticeships and other important matters!

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## Reports from Events.



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As usual, the LRT started its summer season on May 5th, at the May Fayre organised by the Ottershaw Scouts & Guides. This was the first event with our new Edmondson tickets, and despite the lack of artwork (no picture of the LRT), they certainly generated compliments from people who recognised the style. This event also broke a new passenger record, 444 carried in one day. We had Livvy with us (but no steam loco), and we borrowed a carriage from the Great Cockcrow Railway to go with Livvy. This was a blessing, because as the day almost reached its end, the LRT's electrical couplings finally came apart, and we had to stop running. See the notes under the "Ongoing Maintenance" report, further below!

The next event was on June 8th, at a primary school in Ashford. There were many fairground style rides, and this certainly brought the punters in. With 283 passengers, this event holds the record for the number of passengers carried at a school event (schools are usually lower in numbers). Unfortunately, we were very poorly staffed, and we were unable to get any photos!

June and July are our busiest months, and we were certainly kept busy. On the 14th, we went to a summer fayre at the



© D. Hill

Knowl Hill School in Pirbright, booked through a friend at the Great Cockcrow Railway. It was a much smaller event, but still an enjoyable one. The school caters for children with Dyslexia, so, in a way it was especially nice to be able to contribute to their event.

Then, on the 21st, we went to our usual venue in Luton (Slip End Lower School). We had decided that Luton was really "out of our area," but there are very few other portable railways, and the school there is *very keen* for us to be there, so we are prepared to do this one! Unfortunately, the weather was 'middling,' but we did have a steady flow of passengers. We experimented (at the host's request) with a 75p fare, but this proved difficult with the change, and there were less passengers (at 50p, a child can get two rides with their £1 coin; at 75p, they have one ride and waste the rest on sweets)! We also had a half-hour stop to make way for a "Birds of Prey" demonstration.



On the 28th, another regular client, the 1st Hook Scouts at Tolworth. Two very young children offered to help us set up (their mother was on one of the other stalls), and for some of the afternoon, we let them date-stamp the tickets when people bought them, and clip them as they got onto the train. We also gave them free rides when we were not busy ... the sight of children on a moving train advertises that we are open for business! They didn't mind, and neither did we.

Into July, and the LRT went to the summer fair organised by the 11th Finchley Scout Group, at Totteridge Green on the 5th. This is another one where the distance is not favourable (it was a very long day), but we carried 336 passengers, which although not the record, is still pretty good. Unfortunately, very strong winds caused some damage to our gazebo, so we need to find a way of not just fixing it (the Velcro straps and tears around other fixing points), but a way to reduce the chances of further damage.

We returned to Hook on the 19th for the Rotary Club where we carried 199 passengers; but with only a minimal opportunity to charge the batteries overnight, we went to Brompton Cemetery on

the 20th. For this event, the host took fares and we provided a station at each end of the full length 200' of track. We carried over 200 passengers and it was a popular event—except for one rather belligerent van driver who threatened violence against us just for being there! Nevertheless, we have been asked about attending other similar events in the area.

On the following Saturday, we returned to Slip End, but not to the School; to a field nearby for the Village Day. Here, we charged a 60p fare and carried 158 passengers. We were given the use of a dummy semaphore signal, but it was only for show!

After Slip End, we took a rest (much earned) before taking the train to the Great Cockcrow Railway for a special event arranged in conjunction with Cobham Bus Museum on the August Bank Holiday. Unfortunately, a worrying noise that had been developing during the last few events was diagnosed as a 'damaged' bearing within one of the motors, and the train saw very little service. When we got it home, the wheel-set with the offending motor was dropped out for repair.

We returned to the GCR for their Gala Weekend, which was also their 40th anniversary celebration. We were disappointed to discover that our repairs had not cured the problems with the train, and it had to be taken out of service immediately! With a sizeable break before our next event, we hope to be able to do a more thorough job!



### **Forthcoming Events.**

We have a few bookings at this point, as follows:

November 1st & 2nd; Acton Miniature Railway.

November 22nd; Sonning Common Primary School.

November 30th; Christ Church Infants School (Virginia Water).

December 6th; Slip End Lower School, Luton.

March 7th & 8th; Acton Miniature Railway.

Enquire or see our website for details (when available).



## Ongoing Maintenance.

Following an unfortunate end to the day at Ottershaw on May 5th, it was decided to use the following Sunday to repair the train and replace a lot of the wiring. The low current 12v wiring has been ribbon cable, kindly donated by a friend at the Great Cockcrow Railway. Unfortunately, it is not very pliable, and made worse by the couplings (plugs & sockets) that have not lived up to expectations! During a clear-out at home, Adrian came across some multi-core cable, each core being made up of 7/0.2 cable; exactly what he uses on his smaller scale model railway. This multi-core had been made redundant following the breaking up of the old "Köpingsvik" layout, and there was over 40' of it; enough to rewire the complete (3-car) LRT and to do Ginny when ready! For electrical couplings, we replaced the 'kit' types with more professional 12-way connectors, and apart from a minor 'issue' with the sockets, we are very pleased with them. The control box is no longer plugged in through the roof on the D-car; instead there is a socket for it on each car, near the driver's left foot rest.

Whilst all this was going on, we decided to also replace some of the wiring on the High Current 24v circuits, especially at the couplings, because the very thick strands of wire just don't stay where they are in the crimps, and too many times, these have fallen out! A friend at the MoD donated some very pliable cable to us, but not enough to run the length of the whole train, so we had to join it in places; but at least now, we can rely on power from all batteries, and going to all motors! Instead of having electrical couplings on one car and trailing leads on the other, there are now couplings on both cars and completely removable inter-car leads.

The biggest project of late, has been the commissioning of the centre-car for the 38 stock. There are four main jobs to be done to get this car ready:

1. A complete set of wheels and axles;
2. New footboards;
3. New roof seat/cushion;
4. Electrical through wiring.

The wheels and axles have been subcontracted out to Paul Trotter at Camberley Engineering, and we understand that these are being built alongside new wheels for the Great Cockcrow Railway.

The footboards will be built in-house, and this work includes the replacement of the present ones on the 2-car set. The new ones will be smaller and are less inviting as something to stand on!

For the seat/cushion, a friend of Adrian's kindly made up a complete set for the whole train (with enough material left over to go onto Ginny, later), and stitched together instead of using glue. An extra cushion has also been made for the driver, and this can be adjusted to suit each driver's preference. These have already proven so popular, that the Spinney Light Railway has asked for a set for their Cromer White carriages also!

With no batteries or motors in or on the trailer (centre) car, we only need to run a set of electrical cables through it, to connect the A-car to the D-car. This includes extra sets of inter-car connectors and a coupling.



### **General News.**

The 1:1 scale 38 stock celebrated its 70th birthday on June 29th, with three return trips along the Northern Line, from Morden to High Barnet via the City branch. Adrian and Daniel travelled on the second of the three trips, and were given, as souvenirs, a pen and pen holder, the latter suitably decorated for the occasion.



### **AMR News.**

A new riding truck to go with Sarah Siddons arrived in June, a fibreglass body on a steel chassis, built by Mike Dickinson, the owner of the Metropolitan A-class loco that often runs at the AMR.





Above: Daniel on duty at Totteridge.

(Photos: A. Allum (above), P. Furze (below).)

Below: Most of the LRT team with both "Sarah Siddons" Locos!

