

Tube & Tunnel



"Tube & Tunnel" is produced by The "Little Red Train" to promote an interest in our 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " gauge models of a 1938 'Tube' train and "Ginny" 'Sub-surface' train.

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#13 / Spring & Summer 2005.

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These last few months have been very busy for us, and the 38 stock is better off for it! We are indebted to Paul Trotter from Camberley Engineering (and the Great Cockcrow Railway) who gave up a lot of his valuable time to get the new wheel-sets made up for us (as we just don't have the facilities to do this) and whose advice has been invaluable. As you will read, the event at Acton was a success - all the stress paid off, it seemed!

I was hoping to conclude the history of the LRT's early years in this edition, but I have had to trim it (to conclude next time) to make way for the report from Acton. At least this journal is now bi-annual.

We also have this journal available online as a PDF download at our website (address on front cover). This journal is produced to bring you the news, not to raise funds, so if you prefer the PDF version, please let us know, so that we can keep production costs down. Thanks!

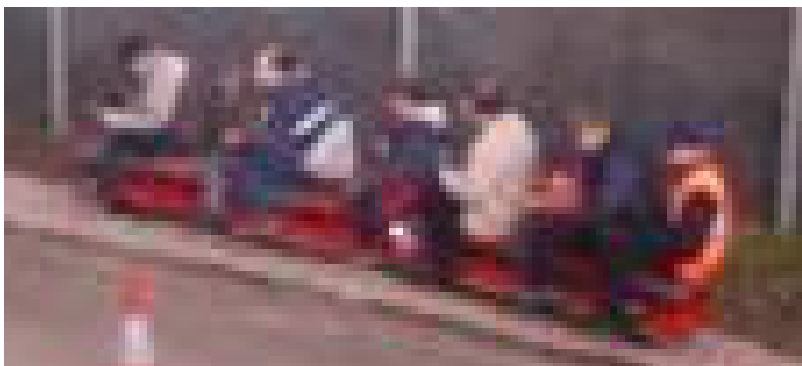
(We will still proliferate copies with our complements.)

Front Cover:

Steven "Stese" Davison driving the Tube train as Daniel Hill keeps a lookout! For short out-and-back tracks, it is usual for the train to be driven from the rear in one of the directions. This photo was taken on the weekend before the Acton event, and used in some of the publicity there!

[Photo: A. Allum.]

London's Transport Museum Depot's Open Weekend.



Thomas Crame at the controls with Martin Hill as guard, the LRT is seen from the staff canteen on the upper floor of the museum!

(Photo: A. Allum.)

On February 26th & 27th, the Tube train appeared for the first time in public since purchase by its new owners, and for the first time at the Museum Depot at Acton.

We had the use of the Depot's new 7¼" gauge track, which we shared with a Metro-Vick Bo-Bo and a class 60! Thankfully, with this back-up, our 30-or-so minutes out of service due to mechanical failure didn't cause any real problems! As with anything new, there were teething problems to be overcome, and we had our share, mostly nuts, bolts and screws vibrating loose! Both axles on our first bogie (first to be overhauled) were re-drilled on the Saturday evening and that eliminated one of the problems. The threads into the motor casings need to be held in with locktite, and we are using locking nuts at the outer ends of these threads. Nevertheless, we were available for service for about 95% of the time.

The temperature did not raise above 0°C during the weekend and we even had a heavy fall of snow on the Sunday! We carried roundly 600 passengers over the weekend, with an average of about 6 passengers per load! (Yes, that's 100 trips!) Because of the cold weather, at least one driver found that his fingers were becoming too numb to hold in the Deadman button, and had to hand over the controls to someone else. We had four qualified and insured drivers available on both days, plus one extra to assist as guard, and two juniors who assisted with other duties.



Passengers disembarked in this short spur, into which the train is reversing. It would then pull forward (towards the photographer) to pick up its next load. Once everyone had understood, it was a very effective system.

(Photo: J. Hill.)

The train's builder, Fred Blois, accompanied by his wife, visited the event on the Saturday, and enjoyed a ride on the train after looking around the Museum Depot. A number of other friends also turned up, and it was a great boost to see them there.

The train was invited to visit two

other permanent layouts (just to turn up anytime) and its popularity was awesome. Many remembered the train from its many events in previous ownership and were delighted to see it in service again.

After the event, Adrian declared that he wanted his front room back, so March is an idle month for the LRT, but in April, we start work on the track panels, to get them ready for use. Then there's the air braking system to sort out, then the centre car, and then the Ginny!



The History (continued...)

On April 20th, 1987, the Y&DMRS arranged their first "steam-up" at the Frogmore Community Campus, Yateley. A car from the Tube was on static display, and two narrow-gauge style locomotives provided the train service. Fred's track was used by the society for the following 18 months, and the Tube train car chassis had replacement bodies made to provide more rolling stock for society events.

It was during a visit to the 7¼" Gauge Society Week at the Blue Ribbon Railway at Hemsby (Norfolk) in late May 1987, that Fred had a discussion with Steve, a former member of the Harrow & Wembley MES, about a controller for the Tube train. That winter, the power car went down to Axbridge to have the necessary controller fitted, but not before some more events. Fred



Fred Blois driving the train on the track at the Hollycombe Steam Collection near Liphook, Hampshire. This is an early shot; no seat cushions!
(Photo: Anon.)

recalls, "Meanwhile, I just had to be patient!" However, on June 13th & 14th, the Y&DMRS took the track and trains to the IWA National Steam and Small Boat Festival at Frimley Lodge Park, Frimley. Over 2000 passengers



Adrian driving the tube train at a London Underground depot open-day in 1990, with, in the background, a prototype for the model ... a real 1938 tube train!

(Photo: Anon.)

were carried, among them, one Adrian Allum! And the rest is history ... or so they say!

On August 31st, the first 'real' run for the Tube train took place at the Harrow & Wembley track.

The controller had arrived, but it didn't want to work! Steve had travelled all the way from Axbridge to see the train work, so some bodging was required.

Fred recalls, "As the motors were yet to be tested under load, Steve agreed to test them for me by feeding power directly to them and bypassing the controller wiring. 'All you have to do,' he said, 'is to touch the bare wires together ... and hang on!' Boy-oh-boy, was that hairy!? (It was) one of the most lively drives of my life. The spark it made when the wires touched was seen from 50 meters away!" It was soon after this event that the train went down to Axbridge.

In April 1988, Fred received a telephone call, "Come and pick up this load of old rubbish!" It was a 'polite' way of saying that the train was ready to be collected. The long wait had been worth every minute. A test track was set

The 'leaning forward' that the train needed, was becoming quite painful for the back, so Fred would often drive from the back, knowing the control layout so well!

Later a remote unit on a lead was also provided, and this has become the only way to drive it, now!

[Photo: A. Allum.]



up at Collingwood School and the train was given a good testing. It was also found that gentle use of reverse gear was useful for brakes, but the train hardly needed them. Thus, on May 2nd, the train carried its first passengers at the Yateley May Fayre.

To be concluded...



Forthcoming Events.

The Little Red Train has been requested to return to Acton on June 4th & 5th, and has also been booked to appear at the Hook First Scouts Fayre on June 25th, a one-day event with our portable track, and before then, a similar event at Ottershaw (near Chertsey) on May 2nd.. Also, in September, we are hopeful of a run at the Great Cockcrow Railway, for their Gala Weekend ... and maybe a return to Farnham...?

⊖ More Scenes from Acton, February 2005. ⊕



Photos (from top), all by Adrian Allum: unless noted otherwise.

February 26th was also the official opening of the new 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " gauge line at the Museum Depot.

One of the Locomotives that we shared the track with, was this beautiful Metro-Vick Bo-Bo, but the 'other' 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " gauge "Underground" loco was on a plinth indoors! (See below.)

The class 60 made a few trips with passengers also, but this and the Metro-Vick had to share the one carriage!



The LRT crew; L-r Thomas, Martin (at back), Daniel, Stese and Adrian. (Photo: J. Hill.)

Maybe next time...?

