

Tube & Tunnel

Photo: The LRT at Sonning Common Primary School for their Christmas Fair in late November. We carried 282 passengers in just 2½ hours, and we were very popular!

[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



#21 / Spring & Summer 2009.

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This edition is very late. I had even thought recently about cancelling editions for this year! But then, I remembered that some of our readers do express an interest in what is written here, so the effort was worth while. It's not the fact that collectively, I produce some 14 newsletters per annum, but more the fact that domestic issues have interfered with all of them, and I hope to catch up by the end of this year!

The LRT now has its centre car in service. Save in exceptional circumstances, this will not be taken to events with the portable track—that is just too much to carry. So, it will be the likes of the GCR, SLR and AMR of course, where this is likely to be seen in the set.

However, body maintenance is an ongoing problem and the hopes of glass fibre replacements have been dashed. As you will read in this edition, parts of the bodywork have just fallen off, and the repairs are “get-you-home” bodge-jobs! Quite what the solution is, we don't know; we lack the skills that went into Fred's original construction, and soon we could be without a train!

But it's summer now, so let's enjoy it!

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Reports from Events.

The LRT, having been dismantled for repairs, was taken to the AMR for testing at the end of October and all seemed to be well. However, when it ran for their open weekend on November 1st & 2nd (see next paragraph), the bearing noises started up again! Some servicing was done before Sunday's operations and performance did improve, but we need to do further work.



Above: With evening encroaching, the LRT passes the new AMR signal cabin.

The LRT went to the Acton Miniature Railway on November 1st & 2nd, as this was the Museum Depot's Family Weekend. Customary to these events, it rained; but in a break from tradition, Acton Town station was open! We had more Bearing problems during the weekend, but the service demand was too high to take the train out of service! Further servicing took place on the Sunday morning in the hope of improving things for the day's operation, and we were successful.

On November 22nd, the LRT went to the Christmas Fair at Sonning Common Primary School. A slight miscalculation with journey time, coupled with the minibus breaking down, caused us to arrive an hour later than usual (we really need 90 minutes to set

up), but we were ready to go in 40 minutes, ten minutes after the event opened. We had an unusual set-up for this event; the passengers boarded the train halfway along the line, and then the train reversed back to the planned starting point before proceeding forward to the other end, where the passengers alighted to go to Santa's Grotto. The train returned ECS to the mid-way station. Also, passengers queued inside (in the warm) and were called forward to the barrier in train-load quantities, which given the 2°C temperature was probably appreciated! We were kept looked after by Daniel's grandparents who provided a tea-run along with mince pies and cake! But the service was non-stop. In roughly 2½ hours, we carried 282 passengers, averaging just under 7 per train; some passengers coming back for more (one little group of girls were so carried away that they made up a "Little Red Train" song ... which we declined to record; sorry)! For this event, the organiser took fares and produced their own tickets, one type for just the ride, the other including access to the Grotto. Although this is really out of our area, it is unlikely that we will turn down any future bookings!



Above Left: Chris with the LRT at Sonning Common, a very popular event!
Above Right: Daniel with the LRT in the rain at Virginia Water.

The LRT made another return visit to Christ Church Infants School at Virginia Water on November 30th; a very wet day, with very few passengers. Nevertheless, we did manage to raise some money for the school/PTA, and we were provided with a hot drink! Unfortunately, the destination panel that we replaced in 2005

broke away, and we had to make a temporary repair; the need for new bodies is becoming more apparent. This was the first time that we used our new Edmondson Ticket Dater, a nice compliment to our Edmondson style tickets.

On December 6th, the LRT visited Slip End Lower School for their Christmas Fayre. Due to an administrative error we copied down the opening time of 3-5pm as 13-15, and arrived two hours too early! Nevertheless, after setting up, some of our team, together with some of the school children who were already on site, had something that vaguely resembled a football match! Adrian managed to get plastered with mud just before opening ... but back to the trains ... we carried exactly 100 passengers, most of whom visited Santa's grotto, and the last half-hour was in darkness. Thankfully, the school switched on all the classroom lights alongside the railway at the end of the day so that we could pack away safely!

Below: The 3-car LRT with a full train-load climbing the 1:60 at the AMR. [Photo: S. Trower]



The LRT had its usual out-of-season spring run at the Acton Miniature Railway on March 7th & 8th, supporting the London Transport Museum Depot's Modelling Weekend. For this event, we inaugurated the centre car, thus a three-car set. It has metal footboards (and the other cars will be modified to match) to reduce the risk of people using them as platforms (and standing with both feet on the one side)! It needed a bit of running in, and by the end of the Saturday, the batteries had had enough! However, despite Sunday being busier, the batteries lasted the whole day, having been charged overnight.



Forthcoming Events.

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

May 4th—The usual Scout event at Ottershaw!

June 28th—The usual Scout event at Hook.

July 5th—The usual Scout event at Totteridge.

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



Ongoing Maintenance.

On a weekday evening in February - well, time was running out - we set to work with some of the repairs that the train needed. This included copious amounts of body-filler and glue to one of the car bodies; but the motor noise issue would be done later when we can run the train on track (probably at Acton). Having



Left: The bogies are being modified with a nylock over the outer springs to prevent the bolts dropping out and getting lost!

Near Right: A centre-car bogie stands on the track at last!

Far Right: The chassis is tried on the bogies, and the foot rests on that, though they are mounted beneath!

[Photos: D. Hill.]

taken delivery of the wheel-sets for the centre car, we also fitted them into the bogies (didn't quite complete this due to poor lack of fixings), and we were cautiously hopeful of having a three-car set at Acton in March! The wheels are flat sided, so we had to add washers to prevent them rubbing on the axle-boxes; thankfully we have a healthy stock of them.



On Sunday 22nd February, Adrian and Daniel continued working on the repairs to the train. After applying more filler to one of the bodies, attention was turned to the centre car. Enough square-section steel was bought to make the foot rests and cross pieces to support them, and these were cut to length. Fading light and encroaching coldness prevented further progress, but it was certainly nice to see (even if momentarily,) the body on the chassis on the bogies!

As our report from Acton shews, we did have the centre car in service in time for the event.



AMR News.

At last, we have the history of the Lever Frame that is being installed at the Acton Miniature Railway. It is the 11-Lever frame that was installed at Holborn (Picc) as a temporary measure whilst the older 'B' frame was removed to make way for the new IMR

signalling. This 'N' frame was in use there for just under one year. Previously, it had been part of the larger frame at Drayton Park.



Left: The former Holborn 'N' style frame, previously from Drayton Park, now installed at the AMR. Red levers are for signals, white spare, blue is the king lever (for auto working) and yellow is the ground frame release. There are no point levers because they are all spring operated by the trains! The mechanical locking frame can be seen below the levers, but without the locking, presently!

Below: Relaying the track at Depot Approach, and to the right, the area cleared for the concrete platform.

[All photos by A. Allum

Vegetation has been cut away along the back of Depot Approach station so that a new permanent platform can be provided, enabling passengers to queue off the road. The longer term plan is for concrete to be laid and then a proper ticket office to be provided. It is likely that a building similar to the signalcabin will be used instead of one of the original buildings from within the museum as the latter are generally not very weather-proof!

