



Issue 34

12<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear all,

I hope you are well and coping with this current lockdown. Let's hope the vaccine that has just been announced is approved so we can be on the road back to a new norm whatever that is going to be. Even more good news this morning the economy seems to be able to recover quite quickly as soon as lockdown is released so all is not lost.

I do not know what it was like round your way on Guy Fawkes Night but although all the public firework displays were cancelled there were still plenty of bangs and crashes coming from peoples' gardens around us. First time I haven't watched fireworks on November 5<sup>th</sup> for a very long time. We joined our road on Sunday for the minute's silence which was started and finished by a signal rocket fired from Muster Green.

A teacher from the school behind us handed me an injured Great Spotted Woodpecker he had found with something broken which I said I would take to a rescue centre. Little did I know the nearest one open was at Groombridge so I had a nice little drive through the forest enjoying its lovely autumnal colours. Otherwise it's been a quiet week with a few skypes, bit of gardening planting some bulbs, and sometime in the man cave cutting bits of metal for the chassis of the Brighton Belle.

Keep safe

**Mike W**

## **Brief club house NEWS**

We have a new roof.



I have to say that I think it looks very splendid. We are hopefully getting the scaffolding removed tomorrow (Friday 13<sup>th</sup>!!) leaving us with a tidy site again. Our grateful thanks go to Howard for overseeing this project and for getting up the club early each day to open the clubhouse and drive gate for the contractors. Good job done.

That leaves us to look forward to the 2<sup>nd</sup> December governments Covid announcement to see how we can move forward with club activities.



Scaffolding Eye view of the track.

Would have looked brilliant with a couple of steam engines passing through. Photos from scaffolding of roof and track courtesy of Andrew S.

I spoke with Hazel on Wednesday this week and Norman was still in hospital so I am now sending Hazel two copies of the Wharfedale so that she can send one to Norman to read.

The security will go back into full operation again now that there is no daily activity at the club so my grateful thanks to Andrew S, Andrew B, and Tom Broome for continuing with the security visits.

**Mike W.**

### Mike P's musings No.32

I thought, this week, I might conclude my musings about the Mount Washington cog railway, and also consider how our attitudes to risk have altered dramatically over the years.

Firstly, I'd just like to reflect that we have, very sadly, lost many dear friends this year. Early on, we said good bye to Jack Pitt and John West, and now we have heard that John Gange and Sheila Parsons have recently passed away. We all send our thoughts to Marian, Ray and Sally and their families. Time just keeps marching on. It doesn't seem long ago that we were sitting chatting together. There is no doubt that 2020 will go down as a sad and difficult year.

The dictionary definition of a "musing" is "a period of reflection or thought". I chose this as the title for my articles for Mike's "Wharfedale" news, because I thought the lockdown would provide plenty of time for such an activity! Back in March, we had no idea how long it might continue, let alone that here in November we would be back in "lockdown land" all over again! There might just be a glimmer of light on the horizon, as it has been announced that a new vaccine shows great promise. Hang in there!

A few nights ago, I found myself watching programmes about the restricted remembrance celebrations and then, changing channels, I followed the documentary of Vera Lynn reaching 100 years old. It was interesting, because, of course, Dame Vera was a local to us in Ditchling. I also flicked across to another documentary about Captain Sir Tom Moore, or "Captain Tom", as the media refers to him, also 100. Normally, I would not even have been looking at the TV other years! In fact, for the last 3 decades, I would have either been away working and busy on tour, or Sundays at home would have been spent at Beech Hurst, probably clearing leaves during this season, after a bonfire night.

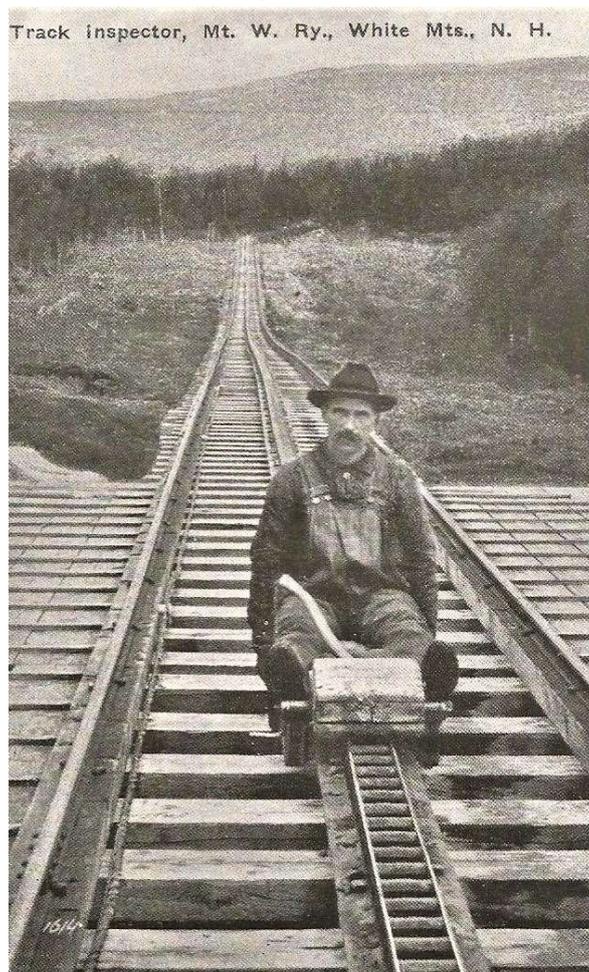
What struck me, is how much we stress and fuss about the petty things in life now, and compared with back then. Dame Vera said she didn't like to be down the air raid shelters in London because they were hot and stuffy, so she went up top and just thought "if my time is up, so be it!" You wouldn't be allowed to make that decision for yourself now, or you would have to fill in a form first! She also said she wanted to go and entertain the troops, somewhere no entertainer had previously ventured. They said, "no one has gone to Burma", so she said, "Ok, I'll go there then!" Can you imagine?

When I was young, and I expect everyone about my age will remember the same, everything was compared to what it was like, "during the war", even though it had finished eight years before I was born! In fact, I was probably

lucky to have even been born at all! My paternal grandfather, Herbert, before he was married, had to go “over the top” on the first day of the battle of the Somme in the First World War. He got shot in the neck for his efforts and was invalided home, only to be sent out to fight in Gallipoli later, where, like most soldiers, he went down with malaria. Imagine writing risk assessments for that lot! Really, what have we got to moan about these days? I wonder if we will be comparing our future lives to “back in the covid days”?

I think the thing we all miss most, is our freedom. The freedom to travel where and when we want. Of course, we have a duty of responsibility towards others, especially right now with regard to taking unnecessary risks in spreading the virus, but I know when this is over, I’m just waiting to go back into that “risky” world again and take my chances, just like Dame Vera.

Talking of risky worlds and freedom, how about this for fun? Care to write a risk assessment for this? If our Beech Hurst track gradients were steeper, Roy could have checked the track this way.....



Sometime during the early days of the Mount Washington cog railway, an innovative employee devised a fast but dangerous way to descend the mountain. This was by means of a homemade sled consisting of a wooden

board about 3 feet long and a foot wide, reinforced with steel. It rested on the central cog rail and had guides to prevent it sliding off. Two long wooden handles, parallel to the board on either side, served as crude brakes, and could be used to cause small steel plates to rub on the underside of the cog rail to slow the rider down! It says in the brochure, "riders had to be aware of obstacles and possible track problems in front". (Seems like a good idea!) Each man kept a sled with him and when the base station whistle blew at 5 o'clock, he'd place his board on the track, climb on with his tool box between his knees and, as it says, "have a thrilling ride down and be home in time for tea!" Apparently, a good ride from the summit to the base station could be done in 10 minutes. The workers often raced, and, one day, using a stop watch, the best time was recorded as 2 minutes 45 seconds, which equates to an AVERAGE speed of 60 mph.....the maximum speed reached being apparently unknown! When a man descended at night, a shower of sparks could be seen from many miles away! THAT'S FREEDOM!!!!!!

However, it reminds me of that joke about what was the last thing the fly saw as it hits the windscreen.....ha,ha. The railway was completed in 1871, and the slide boards lasted until 1906, when their use was forbidden, following the death of an employee and a serious injury to another. Such is the fate of all freedoms it seems!

Stay safe.

**Mike P**

## **A trip on an 'Up and Downer' Part 1.**

**By John Richardson.**

In 1968 I was an engineer cadet with Esso Tankers and had completed two trips on steam turbine powered ships. After a few weeks leave I was told my next vessel was to be the 'Esso Preston', a coastal tanker of 2790 tons deadweight. She had been built for the bitumen trade and all her cargo tanks had been fitted with steam heating coils to prevent the bitumen from solidifying. For me however, her most interesting feature was that she was powered by a triple expansion, steam reciprocating engine of around 1350 horsepower. I had always thought I would be too late to serve on 'up and downers', which were almost dead and buried by this time, so when I heard of my posting I was thrilled to bits.



I joined the ship at Purfleet – and found it to be almost deserted apart from the second mate who showed me my cabin and a seaman tending the ropes. Having unpacked my gear, I wandered down aft and poked my nose into the engine room where I was greeted by my first view of the triple expansion engine, which was a real beauty and the two Scotch Boilers that supplied the steam for it. The boilers were still fired up and were not far off their full pressure of 225 psi, although none of the other steam plant was running and all the electrical requirements of the ship were being met by a six cylinder diesel generator – I think it may have had a Perkins engine but after all this

time I can't be sure. When I had got down the ladder to the bottom plates I was met by the 3<sup>rd</sup> engineer, who said hello and gave me a quick guided tour.

The engineering crew of the Esso Preston consisted of the Chief Engineer - who was an alcoholic Geordie approaching retirement, who never once to my knowledge set foot in the engine room, a 2<sup>nd</sup> engineer, 3<sup>rd</sup> engineer as mentioned above and a 4<sup>th</sup>, together with one fireman/greaser on each watch. The 2<sup>nd</sup> engineer was not in fact a proper engineer at all and had started his career at sea as a cabin steward with the mighty Cunard Line. He had a foul mouth and an even worse temper, so I can't imagine how he managed to hold down a job like that on a passenger ship. He had been on the 'Preston' for so many years working in the engine room however, first as a rating and then by virtue of long experience, as 4<sup>th</sup> and then 3<sup>rd</sup> engineer, that he had been granted a dispensation by the Board of Trade to sail as 2<sup>nd</sup> without actually having to take his 2<sup>nd</sup>s ticket. I am fairly certain that this dispensation would only have been valid on coastal trade vessels like the 'Preston' and possibly only on the 'Preston' itself as he never mentioned to me that he had ever been on any other of the Company ships. I think it rankled with him that when the old Chief retired, it would be the 3<sup>rd</sup> (who did have a proper ticket) that would take his job, rather than him.

After the complexities of turbine ships, the dear old 'Preston' was wonderfully simple and within a few days, I had worked out all the pipe systems and could pretty much run the job on my own. The 2<sup>nd</sup> obviously thought so too, because he put me on his own watch (the 4 to 8) and unless we were on stand-by while entering or leaving harbour, I never saw him in the engine room before about 7.30 in the mornings. This didn't bother me at all, and in fact the less I saw of him at these times the better I liked it, as he too had a drink problem and was usually nursing a hangover every morning, which made him all too ready to work off some of his bad temper on me.

As to the machinery, nearly everything was steam driven – quite a bit directly from the main engine itself and apart from the lights, galley equipment and the domestic fresh water and sanitary pumps, there was hardly any other electrical plant. The two Scotch boilers had small Weirs' type fuel and feed pumps, while the forced draught fans were driven by a couple of high speed, enclosed crankcase steam engines (the boilers could also be fired with just natural draught if the need arose). The sea water cooling pump for the condenser, a bilge pump and the Edwards air pump for creating the condenser vacuum, were all driven from the main engine high pressure crosshead. The steering consisted of an old fashioned steam tiller, which would normally be motionless,

apart from a whisp of steam leaking from the glands to tell you it was actually turned on; when it got a helm order however, it would burst into life like some demented robot and clatter over to the required position before subsiding into quietude again. This was completely different from the electro-hydraulic steering I had been used to, where the only indication that a movement was about to take place would be a slight change in the whine from the electric motors, after which the hydraulic rams would silently move the rudder over to the new position. For our limited electrical needs there was a very small steam turbo generator to supply the load at sea and the aforementioned diesel to do the same when we were in port.

The triple expansion engine stood around 10 feet high from the floor plates to cylinder head level and was kept in a very clean condition, with all the copper and brasswork being polished at least twice a week, while the steel-work was kept bright and shining with 'Scotch-Brite'. The 2<sup>nd</sup> engineer was largely responsible for this and was forever going round wiping the engine over with an oily rag or attacking any rust spots with emery cloth before they had a chance to spread - whatever his other faults the engine was always a picture and did him much credit. The chequer plating around the engine was also kept in gleaming condition and was mopped over every watch – at the foot of the ladder leading down from the top level, which was the usual route in and out of the engine room, legions of engineers' boots had worn away the diamond pattern, so that it was now just a sheet of bright steel plate.

The triple expansion engine was invented well back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is so named because although the engine may have had three cylinders, the steam is only admitted to the first of them – the high pressure or HP cylinder. After doing its work there, the exhaust is taken to a second, larger cylinder called the intermediate pressure or IP and the exhaust from this goes in similar fashion to the low pressure or LP, which is bigger still. Finally, the exhaust from the LP went to the condenser, so the steam was used (expanded) three times.

As these engines go, the one on the 'Preston' was a quite modest affair; I seem to recall that the HP cylinder was 18" diameter, the IP was 28" and the LP around 42" with a common piston stroke of 30". As you can see, even an engine this size had a pretty big LP cylinder and some of the very large triples used two LPs, to avoid the manufacturing difficulties of constructing cylinder blocks with bores of 8 feet or more in diameter - although these would now have had 4 cylinders, they would still be triple expansion. The engines of the Titanic, which were amongst the largest ever built, had cylinders of 54", 84" and two LPs. at 97" diameter with a common piston stroke of 75".

The Titanic's machinery was in fact an example of quadruple expansion because the exhausts from the two reciprocating engines which drove the outside screws, were led to a turbine connected to the central propeller shaft in order to extract even more energy from the steam. Although the exhaust steam pressure entering the turbine was only 9psi and was then expanded down to whatever condenser vacuum could be created, the turbine still managed to produce 16,000 horsepower, which was the same as each reciprocating engine. The two giant 'up and downers' weighed around 1000 tons each and together with the boilers, will still be largely intact on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean long after the rest of that great ship has turned into a pile of rust.

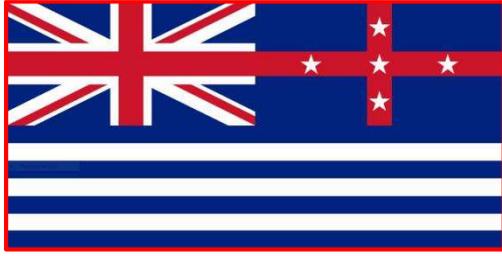
Unlike my previous deep sea ships, the 'Preston' was engaged on coastal and near continental trade only and we were therefore in and out of port every few days. From Purfleet, I can remember that our first trip was to Antwerp, where the 3<sup>rd</sup> engineer took me ashore. We went to a place called 'Danny's Bar' where there were a number of extremely good-looking women to be seen mingling with the customers. I have to confess that I was very attracted to one of them and mentioned this to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, who burst out laughing. "I should be careful if I were you" he said, "I think you may find that woman is in fact a bloke in drag!" I found this pretty hard to believe but when 'she' sidled up to me and asked if I wanted to buy her a drink in a distinctly baritone voice, I finally saw the light (and also a trace of five o'clock shadow under her make-up!) Having survived this embarrassment, we enjoyed a few beers and listened to a local group, so it finished up as a very pleasant evening.

From Antwerp, it was back to Purfleet, then to France and a trip up the river Seine, where our destination was a tiny place called Quillebouf sur Seine. Here we found a typical French bar/cafe where we sampled some of the local wine instead of beer – I was not impressed, although we also had a meal which was both tasty and cheap.

**(To be continued).**

**John R**

## News From Afar - 11 Nov.



### ***From previous:***



At CMR - Now identified by Trevor.

The bird on the left is a White-plumed Honeyeater. The one on the right is a Dusky Woodswallow.

### ***Monday tasks.***

Preparing to fit a second hand Patio to the front of the Kiosk. Extra shade, as we need all we can get for the public now that the weather is heating up. See pic later.

We also had a visit from Richard, 'The Rabbit Man' and for his proper title, closer anyway, a Ranger from ACT Parks, who manages their control among other feral animals. On a walk around our block looking for where the '*pesky wabbits*' had taken up residence we came upon this interesting section of fence. Why?



Part of a nice warren perhaps?

No, no, no.



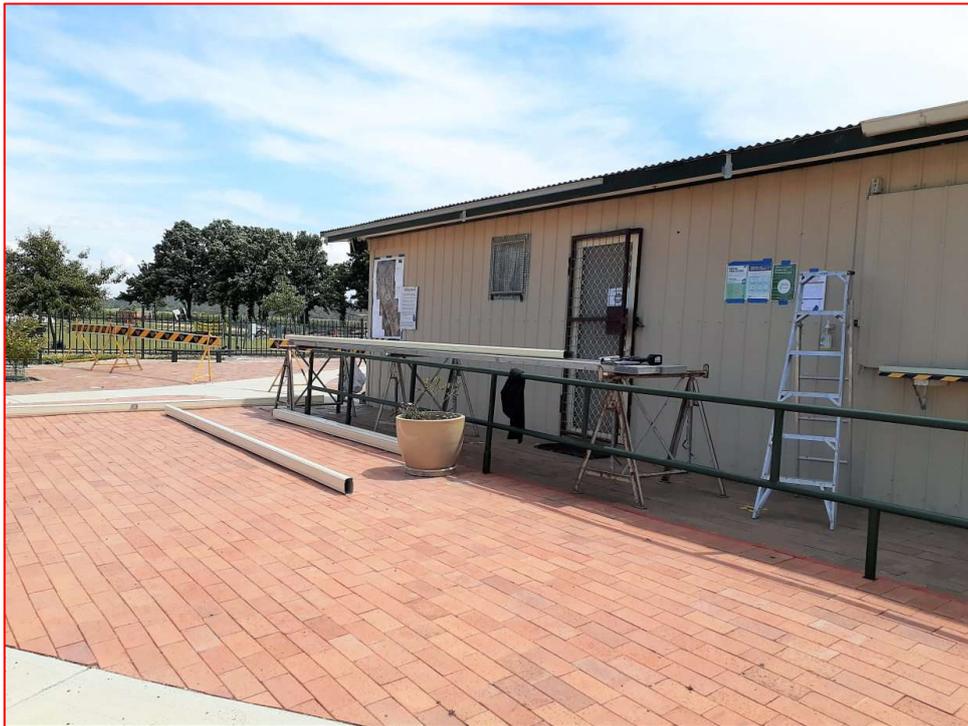
***Get the picture - not yet?***



***Now you see it - a well, rabbit fed, Eastern Brown snake dozing after lunch.***

*Thankfully! I am wary of, but not frightened of them. You stay alive that way.*

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 4, 2020**

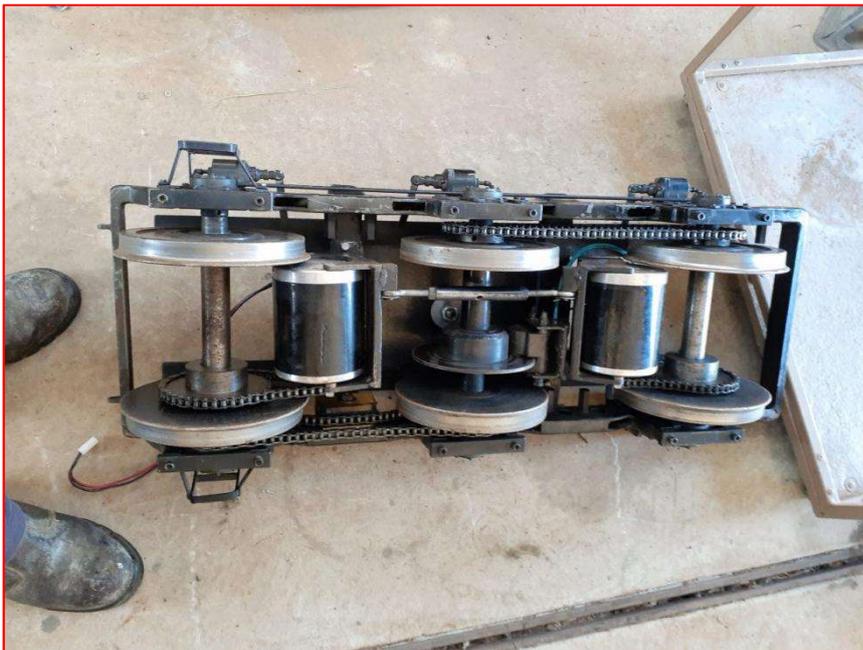


Work starts on the patio in front of our kiosk. Purchased second hand last year, we have finally got enough time between running days to get it up.

***Erratum.***

“John O has (*not*) sorted the electrics and the 422 Class is (*not*) operational again powered by 4 x 12v x 120 amp hour batteries. A 24 V system. 71/4 gauge.”

Failed on test lap Sunday last running day!



Study the picture and see if you can spot something odd in construction. It was not built by us I might add. One of the results is shown under.



Above: Cooked.



If not spotted by now, the motors at each end are both driving the third middle axle. Conflict? This is amplified by the fact that we (the royal we) noted that there are two different types of motors. Four new motors (all the same) are to be purchased, urgently, some rewiring done, and the hope is that it will be running by Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November, a bigger than normal day for us.

Left Darryl (left) and John having the initial inspection.

We used a one ton chain block to get the 'b' thing on the bench.



Got a little warm in the sun today for the time of the year, around 27C. Big hat time with Shemagh. A pained look also. Bl..dy 'selfies'.

***Stay well.***



A while ago, around August 1990, (winter) at Parachute Training School near Nowra NSW. Getting ready for a 'wet jump' into Jervis Bay.

***David - Canberra - 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020***



***Love your work John.***

David casually includes a photo of a snake in his article and if you are like me I had no idea what the Common Brown snake was about so I looked it up.

“The Eastern Brown Snake” often referred to as the common brown snake, is a highly venomous native to eastern and central Australia and southern New Guinea. The adult eastern brown snake grows up to 2 m (7 ft) long and can be found in most habitats except dense forests.

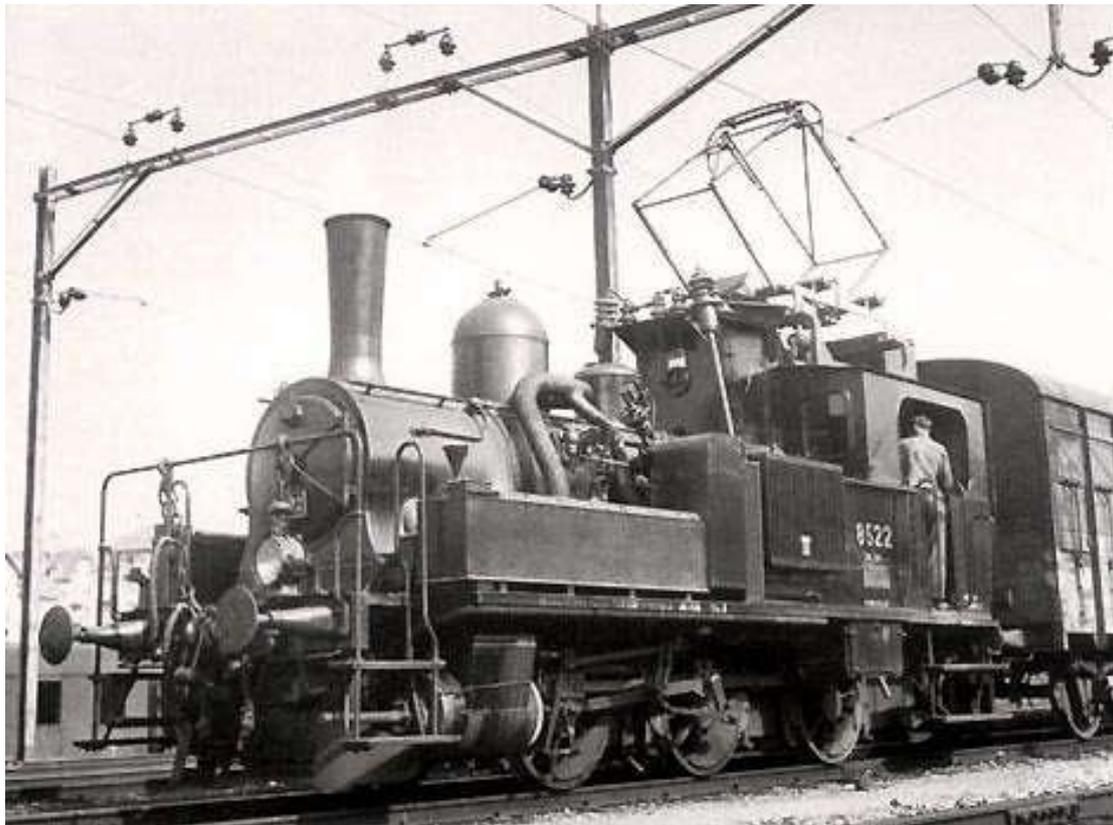
Considered the world's second-most venomous land snake and, although there are very few deaths per year in Australia, it is responsible for about 60% of those deaths.

Not being a snake lover I would need a very good telephoto lens to take a picture like David took!

**Mike W.**

## **Special Trains.**

### **Electric-steam locomotive**



The electric-steam locomotive is a steam powered locomotive that was built to use electricity to produce steam by heating the water rather than coal.

On paper this does not make sense but this locomotive was developed in Switzerland at a time of need when the country had to reduce its reliance on coal as there is no home coal resources.

Up in the mountains the Swiss had built many Hydroelectric power stations and at the outbreak of the Second World War Switzerland had converted over 70% of the countries rail network system to using this readily available and economically produce electricity.

They still had coal fired steam locomotives but the price of imported German coal kept rising so in an attempt to save coal the Swiss Federal Railways fitted two small 0-6-0 steam shunters of class E 3/3 with a pantograph. Power was taken from overhead lines and fed to heating elements, via two transformers rated together at 480 kW. The modified E 3/3 8521 was brought into use on 13 January 1943; 8522 followed on 11 February 1943. They could run up to 20 minutes without power supply once the boiler had been charged to full pressure.

The firebox was retained, usually keeping hot embers, with a classic fire for longer operation on non-electrified tracks. The water circulation pump, the control circuit and the lighting were powered by a battery that was charged from a rectifier fed by one of the transformers. The system, although it increased the weight of the locomotive by around 7tons, saved between 700 and 1200kg of coal per working day. The locomotives ran for several years and finally had their heaters removed in the early fifty's.

Locomotive 8522 is still in service today at the Sursee-Triengen railway which is about an hour's drive from Zurich but as an ordinary steam locomotive.



**Locomotive 8522 today**

**Mike W.**

## Puzzle corner.

### **Lorema's last week's challenge.**

#### Fruit and Veg Quiz.

|    |   |                   |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 1  | Which edible crop has varieties known as Hardy, Tarty and Prince Albert?                          | Rhubarb           |
| 2  | Which vegetable has the Latin name of Brassica rapa?  | Turnip            |
| 3  | What is the distinctive flavour of the vegetable Fennel?  | Aniseed           |
| 4  | Where on a citrus fruit would you find the zest?  | The outer skin    |
| 5  | Which fruit is banned from public transport in Singapore due to its smell?                        | Durian            |
| 6  | How is the fruit known as Ananas in French, known in English?                                     | Pineapple         |
| 7  | In which country did the fermented vegetable dish Kimchi originate?                               | Korea             |
| 8  | Cambridge no 5, Welland and Bedford are all varieties of which vegetable?                         | Brussel sprouts   |
| 9  | Which fruit juice is added to gin to make a gin gimlet?   | Lime Juice        |
| 10 | What is the area of New York City's Central Park containing a memorial to John Lennon , known as? | Strawberry Fields |
| 11 | Avola, Kelvedon Wonder and Little Marvel are all varieties of which vegetable?                    | Peas              |
| 12 | From which fruit is the drink Kirsch made from?   | Cherry            |
| 13 | What is the official fruit of the US State of Georgia?  | Peaches           |
| 14 | What is the scientific name of the Cabbage family?  | Brassica          |
| 15 | What name is given to the Spring Onion in the USA?  | Scallion          |
| 16 | What is the French name given to the Snow Pea?  | Mange Tout        |
| 17 | Which edible crop has varieties known as Apache, Kestrel and Vivaldi?                             | Potatoes          |
| 18 | What is the other name for Ladies Fingers?  | Ockra or Okro     |
| 19 | What are Green tops, Bronze Tops and Purple Tops?   | Swedes            |
| 20 | What is a Raphanus Sativus?   | Radish            |

## Lorema's this week challenge.

Find the 25 British birds.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q | W | Y | N | O | R | E | H | T | A | W |
| T | K | I | T | E | H | C | I | C | Z | R |
| I | C | K | Y | G | T | T | E | R | G | E |
| W | O | C | K | A | E | M | J | O | R | N |
| E | N | Z | H | U | J | S | L | W | O | L |
| E | N | T | L | A | I | D | M | P | U | E |
| P | U | B | S | S | F | K | U | D | S | R |
| N | D | Q | K | I | R | F | R | X | E | T |
| E | G | I | N | A | F | I | I | N | X | S |
| G | N | C | L | I | B | Q | I | N | Z | E |
| O | H | A | N | K | O | B | S | N | C | K |
| O | P | C | C | A | O | U | A | N | O | H |
| S | P | A | R | R | O | W | K | O | O | R |
| E | L | O | P | O | S | P | R | E | Y | R |
| B | U | Z | Z | A | R | D | T | Y | S | A |

**My thanks go to all who keep sending me the material.**

**If you have something for the NEWS please contact me**

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