

Left Hand Running

The April 2009 Newsletter of The British Train Society
www.britishtrainsociety.org

A View From The Footplate

On March 28th we had our most successful display ever at the annual “All American Railroad Show” at Lyons Township High School in La Grange. The display looked great and ran equally well thanks to the solid effort spearheaded by Harry Raynis, Grant Harrison and Robin Ross who rewired the modules, relayed track where necessary, refitted the legs and test ran to ensure the modules were aligned and level. Their work paid off and with the assistance of several others at various times over the last 3 months we were able to put on a show that was a credit to everyone involved. This is not the finish of our work but forms a great platform for future shows.

I would like to personally thank the efforts of all involved and to the dozen or so individuals who came out to assist in the assembly, running, and takedown or just to provide moral support. One visitor who I talked with was a commercial artist and he had many cogent comments on our efforts but concluded his remarks with an appropriate “Best in Show” statement! A job well done guys and a credit to our organization.

Now we turn our attention to the future program and will have a new venue for our next meeting in that it will be at my new place in Batavia on April 25th and hopefully I can give you sufficient information to find it. Also it seems like an appropriate time, for a variety of reasons to officially announce my resignation of the Chairmanship following the election of a replacement. I informally mentioned this at our meeting in January and this seems to be the time to act. Hope we get to see many of you on the 25th, I think you will be impressed with the potential for grand layouts that my new quarters provides and your comments and

ideas will be most welcome. Until then
Happy Modeling!

Don Buchanan

Calendar of Coming Events

April 25th, 1:30 pm

BTS Regular Meeting

Batavia (D. Buchanan, 700 W Fabyan Prkwy, #24B)

May 3rd, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

Great Midwest Train Show

Wheaton [DuPage County Fairgrounds]

May 23rd, 1:30 pm

BTS Regular Meeting

Lombard (Ralph Transue, 82 West Rd.)

June 14th, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

Great Midwest Train Show

Wheaton [DuPage County Fairgrounds]

Fun and Run Sessions

We will be starting up the Fun and Run sessions again now that the module rework project is over. Dates for this month are Wednesday the 15th and Wednesday the 29th at Harry's in Naperville from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. All BTS members and prospective members are welcome. Bring trains to run or come and help rebuild both approach tracks to my mountain loop. I have to regrade and relay both the ascent and the descent lines. We will also be discussing plans for a small shunting railway module for BTS that can be taken shows as a table-top display.

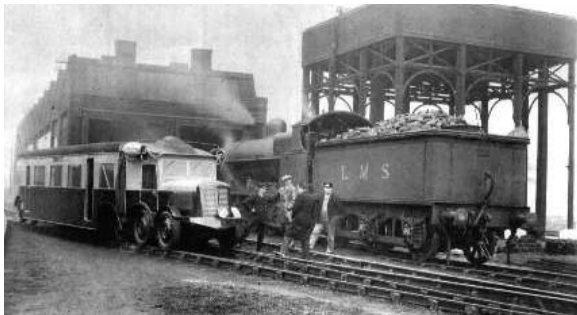
Harry R.

Rubber Tires for Steel Rails

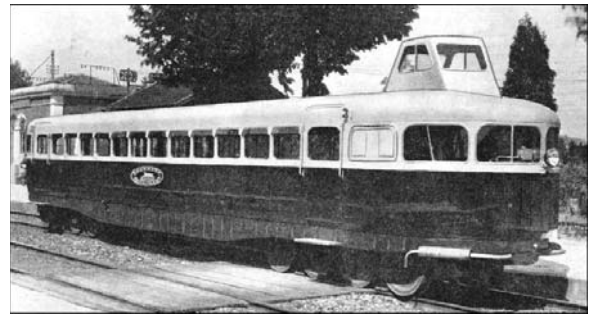
For the true road and rail enthusiasts, there could perhaps be nothing finer than to drive his automobile on the railroad track [keeping a close eye out for trains, of course]. And this is not just stuff of Hollywood or of back-woods blacksmith shops, but the stuff of serious railway engineering. It has long been recognized that the steel wheel and steel rail are not the quietest things around. Wouldn't it be nice, it was reasoned, if one could have the advantages of the quietness of rubber tires and the low rolling resistance of the steel rail? Not to be undone by the nay-sayers, a number of such rubber-tired railway vehicles have been built and tried on several of the world's railways, including the LMS.

In 1929 France's Michelin company, the famed tire manufacturer, developed a rubber-tired, gasoline-engine powered railway car. The cars became known as "Michelines" and the first prototype was built in 1930. A Micheline had three axles in front, two in the rear and weighed 5 tons. Steel flanges were mounted on the wheels inboard of the pneumatic tires. The 27hp engine would speed the Micheline at up to 70 mph and the vehicle would carry 24 passengers.

In 1932, a Micheline was brought to Great Britain for evaluation. It was tested by the LMS on the line between Bletchley and Oxford. When looking at the low-slung Micheline, however, one wonders how the traveling public reacted to it.



An improved Micheline, using French technology and design and known as the Coventry Pneumatic Rail-Car, was built with a 56-seat capacity and a 240hp, 12-cylinder engine. Unlike the French-made Micheline, the Coventry car had a more railway-like look to it. The driver sat in an elevated compartment with coning tower to allow bi-directional operation from one operating cab. It bore a striking resemblance to the Bugatti "Autorails" then finding favor on several French railways [Renault also participated in the French Autorail craze although, like Bugatti, with steel wheels].



The Michelines, while not successful, spawned additional interest in rubber-tired railway vehicles. In the 1950's the Swiss Federal Railway built two experimental coaches with rubber-tired bogies and they ran for nearly 30 years on one of Switzerland's secondary railways [although later rebuilt with conventional bogies]. Not to be outdone, several lines of the Paris Metro were built with rubber-tired metro cars – and these are still running 'neath the streets of Paris.

