

QUAINTON TODAY

Quainton Railway Society's fortnightly member newsletter
to help us stay in touch with you!



WELCOME!

Welcome to *Quainton Today*, your fortnightly member newsletter.

GET IN TOUCH

If you know someone who isn't receiving *Quainton Today*, please ask them to get in touch with their email address. Either call me, Louisa Richards, on 01296 655720 or email me at marketing@bucksrailcentre.org

If you know someone who is not on email and would like to receive a paper copy, please ask them to call the office on 01296 655720.

Also, if you have a news story to share with the membership, let me know! You can email me or find me in the office, usually on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Come and see me!



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Enjoy the read!

Louisa

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NEWS FROM OUR GM

Firstly, we were saddened to hear of the passing of former QRS Chairman Ben Jackson last week. Our condolences have been sent to his family. His daughter posted this photo of him with the sad news on social media. We shall aim to print an appropriate obituary in the next issue.

Due to the Easter holiday break, we have slipped a week with Quainton Today, so we will have three weeks of news to catch up on. In our last edition, we said The Gruffalo was coming and what a successful event it was. We had over 1,100 visitors on the day and the feedback was all very positive. Thank you to everyone who helps on event days; they are essential to the running of the centre.

We had great weather on Good Friday and Easter Saturday which helped turn our first Thomas of the season into a big success. We had over 1,600 people each day. This is a good start to the season with strong visitor numbers. We did have a couple of problems: The 04 ran for the first time as Mavis the quarry engine but developed an engine issue so had to stay in the platform for the two days as a photo opportunity. Vickie was guard on the vintage train and caught her arm on the door handle. A big thank you has to go out to all the people who helped look after Vickie. Laura kindly took her to the hospital for a checkup. Adrian came in and took over guard duty and Ann stepped in to guard on Saturday to cover Vickie's other duty. I would like to thank Adrian, Ann, Laura and Helen for all they did to help Vickie and keep the show going. It was Quainton at its best.

Last weekend was a sad moment. The last steaming from Platform 1. Trackside magazine came to record the event and Met 1 had a starring role. At the end of the shift, Colin and William locked the points and the line was handed back to Network Rail on Monday. We are still unsure of the timing of the line being renewed through the station, so the points will remain for the moment. The delays that HS2 are experiencing are also having a delay on Network Rail's ability to build the new line. We will know more by the end of the month. If the project is delayed by HS2 civil engineering work further up the line, then there might be a possibility that we can continue to use platform 1 for a bit longer. It's only a possibility at the moment but we might be able to benefit from the project delays.

For those of you brave enough to put your head into Romney 3 you will have seen something special happening. The cab taking shape for the new build B17 project. It was assembled and given a coat of grey primer before being shipped off for display at a fundraising event. You will have seen it online and in the rail magazines. Not many people will know it was constructed by Ian and the team on site here. There is a possibility, I understand, that we may get the job to build the front leading truck as well.

Stephen Green, General Manager



ENGINEERING UPDATE

MILLOM

Millom had a great weekend playing the role of Percy for our Day Out With Thomas weekend on Good Friday and Easter Saturday 3/4th April.

The engine passed its hot boiler exam on 3rd April and ran well for two full days of passenger rides.

The team is now carrying out some general maintenance, including replacing a leaky gasket on the gauge glass fitting. They have also fitted a drain to the ejector exhaust pipe to stop water coming out of the top of the engine!



Left: This week, the team has also welded in a new piece of plate on Millom's smokebox door because it has rotted away. Dave has since repainted the smokebox and the chimney.

ARTHUR

Arthur also had a great Easter weekend playing the role of Thomas! The engineering team has taken both injectors apart, removed the cones, descaled the cones and clacks and lapped in the clacks to prevent leakages... and then put it all back together again!



ENGINEERING UPDATE CONT'D

MAVIS

The O4 diesel no.2298 had her first starring role of the year as Mavis. It was great to see her running up the track on Good Friday, alongside Thomas (pictured above).

She had a few issues with her engine, so spent Saturday static on Platform 1, where visitors spent the day visiting her and taking photos! The plan wasn't actually to always have all three running anyway, so the Friday was just a bonus!

In the future, either Percy or Mavis will be running and the other will be static for photo opportunities. No.2298 will need to undergo some maintenance before running again.



MET 1

Met 1 was brought out for the Steaming Day on Sunday 12th April. It was the last chance for us to use the main line, so we thought it fitting to have photographs taken with her sitting in the original platform where she would have collected passengers back in the day when she ran on the Metropolitan line. There are photos of this on the montage pages.

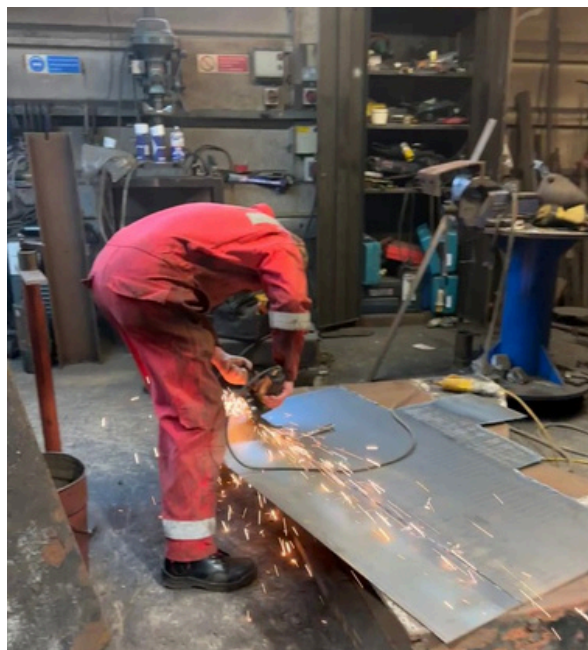
William, Neal, James and Duncan have spent today refitting the coupling rods onto Met 1, pictured here.



ENGINEERING UPDATE CONT'D

PILL BOX WAGON

Gareth is pictured here welding replacement sections that were rusty in the wagon's sandboxes. Below: Dave has replaced some of the rotten wooden slats and primed them, and he has also painted the ceiling inside.



BUFFERBEAM

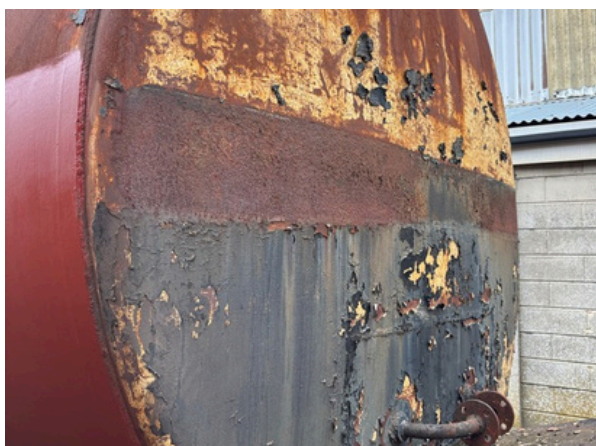
The team is hoping to fit the wheels soon. They have been stripping the paint off the wheels ready for painting. They are currently deciding which Peckett green to go for, pre- or post-war.



ENGINEERING UPDATE CONT'D

ESSO FUEL WAGON

This Esso fuel tanker wagon has been at Quanton for around 30 years! It is no.1869 and was built in 1939. It is currently sitting on a transporter that was used for Army tanks! John, pictured, and Richard, are gradually scraping off the old paint and repainting in red oxide primer to prevent rusting and further corrosion. Eventually, it will be craned back onto its original chassis (below right).



B17 PROJECT

Elvar Engineering, based here at Quanton Road, has taken on an exciting new project. They have been asked to build the cab for the new B17 loco that is being built by the B17 Steam Locomotive Trust. A similar project to that of *Tornado* built by the A1 Steam Trust, this project's aim is to produce a brand new B17, named *Spirit of Sandringham*.

All B17 locos, built to haul passenger services for LNER on the Great Eastern Main Line, have since been scrapped. The B17 is the only 4-6-0 loco designed by Sir Nigel Gresley that is missing from our heritage.

The Trust had an open day last Saturday and the cab was taken there for viewing. It will return here soon to be finished. Next, they'll be working on the splashers, can doors and steps. A great project to have here at Quanton!



B17 CLASS LOCOMOTIVE NEW BUILD 61673 'SPIRIT OF SANDRINGHAM'

Drawn for the B17 Steam Locomotive Trust by Ian Francis © 2021

AROUND THE SITE THIS WEEK

REWLEY ROAD TEAM

I don't give enough credit to these two fabulous volunteers and the rest of the Rewley Road Team who come in every Monday and Wednesday, and also every open day. The main reason for this is because I am not here on the days they are, so I don't witness the work they do, and they just quietly get on with it independently.

Pictured right are Bob and Terry doing some maintenance on one of the children's play tables.



This week they also put up two of Bill Simpson's beautiful paintings, which he has donated to us (left). They can be seen adorning the walls of the Gift Shop.



The team also offers invaluable work on open days clearing tables, keeping on top of the bins, cleaning the loos and so much more!

THE NEW YORKER

Our caretaker, Ben, and Josh have been refitting the New Yorker getting it ready to open on event days. It will be offering hot drinks, cake, snacks and pre-made sandwiches to take pressure off the main cafe. The counter, coffee machine and till have all been installed. Watch this space!



CHUFFLEPOP JUNCTION

Chufflepop Junction was a huge hit with the children at their opening weekend for Day Out With Thomas at Easter. The children loved seeing the model trains and all the model buildings, and they especially enjoyed pressing the buttons and making the trains move! There was a steady stream of visitors over both Thomas days, and again on the Wednesday Steaming Day. A great asset for us to have here at Quainton! Well done to the team!

You may be able to see the sign at the front (photo below) that says the layout is in memory of former QRS Chairman Peter Lovegrove - this is in recognition of all the items he donated to the society on his passing. His memory shall live on here at Quainton Road!



MOVING THE MAIL

This year's Moving the Mail event on Sunday 5th July will be a fun day out for families and railway enthusiasts alike. Planning for the event is well underway.

As the key image for the event, we are using this painting by Bill Simpson of the TPO and the Railway Centre's own Morris Commercial 240cu.ft. Royal Mail van on Platform 5. Bill is an artist and author, and among the many roles he has taken on at Quainton, Bill has been a TPO steward.



There will be a special Family Trail encouraging children to find items in the TPO carriages and around the site. Visitors will be invited to report their successful completion of the trail to stewards in the TPO, where they can also try sorting letters into the historic sorting frames. Details of the trail are currently being finalised. Illustrated talks will be given in the Visitor Centre Cinema Coach. The subjects covered will be the history of the Great Western TPO and the Mail Bag Exchange Apparatus.

Regular readers of *Quainton Today* may remember that we now have our own trackside apparatus, which was installed last year. In the TPO carriages, visitors can peruse a poster display on the history of the postal service and the Great Train Robbery. All the usual Steaming Day facilities on site will be available on Moving the Mail Day including, of course, Steam Train Ride, the miniature and model railways, the Museum, Bookshop, Café and Gift Shop.

UPDATE FROM TRAINING

Huge congratulations to Sam Baker (pictured right with Alison) on passing his exam and completing his first turn as a Trainee Fireman/Passed Cleaner.

It's a fantastic achievement - well done, Sam!

Sam is one of several trainees working their way through the ranks of footplate and guard. Seventy-five individuals have at some point started the induction part of training during the 5 years I've been running this. Some decided it wasn't for them, while others moved on to other roles at Quanton.

Currently, 18 are doing turns, and between them took 54% of footplate or guards' positions in 2025. There are a further 17 people working through the induction process.



So, what's the difference between induction and training?

The point of the induction process is to get people to a stage where they can do their first turn on the footplate or with the guard safely and then progress through the "on the job" training.

Volunteers usually come to us in one of three circumstances – they volunteer in a similar role on another railway; they volunteer or work at Quanton in a different role (including older Q Branchers) or they come in with little or no experience but loads of energy and enthusiasm. Add to that a mix of life experience, work experience, risk awareness and possibly some medical constraints, what does "safely" actually look like?

Regardless of background, everyone gets to do the Personal Track Safety (PTS) briefing and exam. Eyesight tests are done for distance and colour blindness, a medical form is submitted, and we walk round the site; this includes getting in, on and under a cold steam engine. Some love this, others realise that perhaps it might not be for them – this is all on day one!

My advice – find out now that you don't like it before spending too much time and money. I tell it as it is: it is cold, wet, dirty, very hot, it hurts, you'll come second in any collision with an engine, coach or wagon, explain the bruises and grubby fingernails at work the day after when muscles you didn't know you had are complaining!

Continued overleaf...

TRAINING UPDATE CONT'D

After the first day on site, inductees get a bundle of material to take away – a (small) section of the rule book, an (even smaller) extract from the “Black Book” (Handbook for Railway Steam Locomotive Enginemen), and a personalised Training Development Log – full of useful info, and when the time comes, a record of their training turns.

Progression is at their pace, taking days, weeks or months to complete each section. It starts with a bit of reading to get to grips with the basics; terminology for those new to heritage railways or “Quantonisation” for those familiar with steam.

After a quick test to make sure that the information has been understood, it's back on site for another day – experience the footplate and spend time with the Guard; each end of the train needs to know what the other is doing!



This is also a day of expectation setting: Just how dirty is it? What time did you start? How much does the kit cost? Along with some site awareness, just putting on overalls means the visitors expect you to know – where's the loo, what time is the next train, where's the miniature railway, what year was that built?

Assuming that hasn't put people off... and it's ok if it has. The cab can feel overwhelming, the Guard may have upset/lost/sick passengers to deal with, it's further from home than I realised, I can't do that with my knees... There's another bit of reading, this time tailored to footplate and / or guard roles, and other quick test (this one has pictures!) then it's all good to go! A HOPS account is set up and a date booked for training turn #1!

Any questions or for further information, please contact, Alison, at training@bucksrailcentre.org



FORMING LINKS WITH QUANTON PC

We have met with Quainton village Parish Council and they have put forward the suggestion that one of our members becomes a Quainton Parish Council councillor to help form closer ties to the village. The idea is that this person could act as a go between bringing the council and the railway centre closer together. We could then feed information back and forth more effectively working together more closely.

The criteria required for any prospective Councillors:

1. Be registered to vote in Quainton parish OR
2. Have occupied land or premises in the area for the last 12 months (this can include a workplace or office) OR
3. Have had your main or only place of work in the area for the last 12 months (this includes volunteering in many cases, depending how formal/regular it is) OR
4. Have lived within 3 miles of the area for the last 12 months.

Councillor Advert:

Quainton Parish Council (soon to become Quainton Rural Community Council) is inviting QRS volunteers to step forward and help shape the future of our local community.

What Does a Parish Councillor Do?

- Represents local residents
- Helps make decisions on village services and projects
- Supports planning, community events, and local initiatives
- Works with partners to improve parish life
- Attends monthly meetings and occasional working groups

No experience needed — just enthusiasm and commitment.

Who Can Apply? You must be:

- 18 or over
- A British, Commonwealth, or EU citizen
- IT literate - email, whatsapp, spreadsheet
- Living in, working in, or within 3 miles of the parish

Find Out More

Useful guides for prospective councillors:

- The Good Councillor's Guide <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/801-good-councillors-guide/file> (nalc.gov.uk in Bing)
- Becoming a Parish Councillor (NALC) <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/be-a-councillor> (nalc.gov.uk in Bing)

Interested? Get in Touch

If you'd like to find out more or express your interest, please contact:

Helen Butler, Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer: email: parishclerk@quainton.org

You're also welcome to attend a council meeting to see how things work in practice.

OUR FAVOURITE REVIEWS SHARED WITH YOU!

We get reviews all the time on Trip Advisor and Google etc. I thought it would be nice to share one in the newsletter every now and again - most of the time our dedicated volunteers are given a mention!

A fabulous review from The Gruffalo event from our Google listing this week:

FIVE STARS:

"We really enjoyed The Gruffalo Day Out today at Buckinghamshire Railway Centre. It was a very well-organised event and everything ran smoothly, which made the day feel relaxed and enjoyable. The volunteers and staff were fantastic throughout friendly, helpful, and clearly working hard to make the experience special for everyone.

A particular mention goes to the two staff members within the Royal Mail postal train today, who really went above and beyond. They were incredibly engaging, knowledgeable, and brought so much energy to the experience. Their enthusiasm made a real difference and was one of the highlights of the day.

Alongside the fantastic staff running the steam train journeys, the storytelling with Amy was also amazing. It was engaging, warm, and really held everyone's attention. It added a special touch to the day and was clearly enjoyed by children and adults alike. Definitely would visit again."



QRS CONTACTS:

Steve Green, General Manager: Email: stephen@bucksrailcentre.org

Sarah Neale: Email: accounts@bucksrailcentre.org

Chairman of the Executive Committee, Barry Payne: Email: barry@bucksrailcentre.org

Membership, Zoe Dann: Email: membership@bucksrailcentre.org

Marketing/Quinton Today, Louisa Richards. Email: marketing@bucksrailcentre.org

Caretaker, Ben Pepper: Email: caretaker@bucksrailcentre.org

Footplate, Guard & PTS Training, Alison Wilkins. Email: training@bucksrailcentre.org

Museum Curator, Vickie Aylward: Email: museum@bucksrailcentre.org

Or email the office at office@bucksrailcentre.org or call 01296 655720.

2026 CALENDAR

Sunday 22nd March:	Museum Day
Sunday 29th March:	The Gruffalo is coming!
Good Fri 3rd & Sat 4th April:	Day Out With Thomas
Wednesday 8th April:	Easter Holiday Weds Steaming Day
Sunday 12th April:	Steaming Day
Sunday 19th April:	Museum Day
Sunday 26th April:	Museum Day
Weds 29th April:	Schools Day
Sun 3rd & Mon 4th May:	TBC
Sunday 10th May:	Museum Day
Sunday 17th May:	Museum Day
Sun 24th & Mon 25th May:	Day Out With Thomas
Sunday 31st May:	Steaming Day
Sunday 7th June:	DINO DAY!
Weds 10th June:	Schools Day
Sunday 14th June:	Museum Day
Sunday 21st June:	Father's Day Ridgeway Run
sunday 28th June:	TBC
Sunday 5th July:	Moving The Mail
Sunday 12th July:	TBC
Sunday 19th July:	Museum Day
Sunday 26th July:	Emergency Services Day
Weds 29th July:	Summer Holiday Weds Steaming Day
Sunday 2nd August:	Steaming Day
Wednesday 5th August:	Summer Holiday Weds Steaming Day
Sunday 9th August:	Museum Day
Wednesday 12th August:	Summer Holiday Weds Steaming Day
Sat 15th & Sun 16th August:	Day Out With Thomas
Wednesday 19th August:	Summer Holiday Weds Steaming Day
Sunday 23rd August:	Museum Day
Wednesday 26th August:	Summer Holiday Weds Steaming Day
Sunday 30th August:	Steaming Day
BH Monday 31st August:	AUTO FEST
Sunday 6th September:	Museum Day
Sunday 13th September:	Steaming Day
Sunday 20th September:	Museum Day
Sunday 27th September:	Steaming Day
Sunday 4th October:	TrackPlay Day
Wednesday 7th October:	Schools Day
Sunday 11th October:	Museum Day
Sat 17th & Sun 18th October:	Day Out With Thomas
Sunday 25th October:	Steaming Day
Fri 30th & Sat 31st October:	Halloween evening event: Night Fright
28/29th Nov and 5/6th, 12/13th & 19-22nd Dec:	Panto Express with Father Christmas



Photo Montage: Metropolitan No.1

Met 1 spent a couple of hours in the sunshine on platform 1 on Sunday for a final opportunity to take photos in this historic position. This is where Met 1 would have collected passengers back in the day when she travelled on the Metropolitan line from Baker Street to Verney Junction, through Quanton Road!



Photo Montage: Easter Day Out With Thomas

