

# 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](mailto: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!

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# GM UPDATE:

The last GM report came to you from Florida, and I said let's hope for good weather for Thomas this last weekend. Well, I never expected it to be the same temperature as Florida!

I have to say such a big thank you to all the people who made it happen. Everybody rose to the occasion in unbelievably hot conditions. It didn't stop the customers coming though and we had 1,356 on Sunday and 1,176 on Monday.

The New York subway car opened as a cafe and was well received. I have heard tales of our new famous iced coffees; it sounded like a great couple of days. Thank you again to everyone who made it happen.

I couldn't have chosen a more challenging time to go away and ended up packing my laptop so the 'Florida Office' could open at 7am each morning (12 noon at home) as I continued to deal with HS2, Network Rail and EKFB. The timings we are working to at the moment could not wait for a holiday! We also had the issues with Wightwick Hall to deal with. Quainton never sleeps!

## Goodbye to Alice & Angie

The one sad thing I came back to is the news that Angie and Alice have decided to move on to pastures new. Catering has come on so far to what it was. When I first joined it only opened on event days, now it runs as a café during the week and caters for events at the weekend. This has all been possible due to the hard work of the team. I would like to thank them both for their contribution to making this happen and wish them all the best for the future.

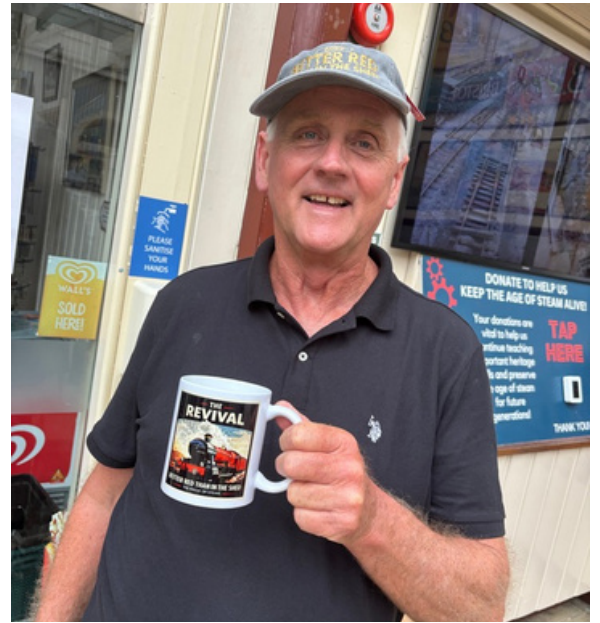
## Wightwick Hall: Better Red than in the Shed!

So, to start with good news... Wightwick Hall arrived back to Quainton after filming. In the background, we did have an agreement that the team at the Bluebell Railway was going to help retube the engine, but they came back to us while I was away and said they could no longer help. Ian then managed to get Mid Hants on board to do the work. We could then arrange a lorry to transport the engine to their workshops, which is where the engine is now.

The boiler inspector has now confirmed this week that if we replace the 120 small tubes and do the patch screws and stays, he will sign the engine fit to work. Next year, we need to replace the large tubes, and he will then issue a new ten-year certificate for the engine. So, by having an agreed maintenance plan for the engine we will gain a new ten-year certificate. The engine will be back on the film set in September. Until the Warner Bros contract, I never thought I would see Wightwick Hall with a new ten-year certificate! This is why our marketing campaign is "Better Red than in the shed"!

Staying on the red engine front. The new website to promote the engines is progressing, along with the merchandise range. We will be reviewing the website design this Friday, so hopefully it will be live soon. We need this for crowd funding and corporate sponsorship for the locos. I know people think we have a money tree, but 120 small tubes don't grow on trees! This is why we are so grateful to all the people who volunteer to keep the centre running.

Continued...



# STEVE'S UPDATE CONT'D



I will update Hs2 and Network Rail separately below as we have so much going on around the site. As I have said we always knew this year was going to be difficult, but it has turned into so much more of a challenge than we thought.

## **Network Rail**

After being able to run on the MCJ line and having both yards joined with points, we now have to look forward to the next stage of the line's life. It seems a long time since trains ran through the station. We have legally handed the line back to Network Rail now and they will be looking to start work again in June. We have been working with both NR and HS2 towards the 1st June date for losing the old level crossing to enable work to start. Plans have changed slightly. NR intend to put a new point in the line near the overnight sleeping wagons, and the station will be double tracked for the first time since the line closed back in the sixties. They are building a head shunt, which will run down through the new bridge arch and finish parallel to our old overflow car park, which they are renting off us until 2028 while they build the new line. This will make for a lot of photo opportunities having platforms 1 & 2 in use and the double track running under the bridge. They hope to have this element of the work completed by the end of July. The platform 1 line will extend through the arch ready to carry on to Claydon and then connect to the East West line running into Winslow.

The embankment from the end of our site towards Aylesbury has to be rebuilt and the track relayed. This is due to years of the stone trains for HS2 running on this section. When you look at it you are surprised they can even run on it. When the bridges are complete running north of our station (see photo above of the progress) they will bring in the continuous track laying train, of which there are only two in the country, which should be very interesting to watch it work. Network Rail said that the target date for completion is still December 2027, with test trains running in the first Quarter of 2028.

## **HS2 Update**

### **Water works down yard**

Now we have definite dates for NR, the access issues have become more focused. The water works have always been the issue blocking the down yard entrance. Completion should have happened by now but the test in March for the new main connection failed and due to the level of water in the reservoirs on Quainton Hill, they have not been able to turn the pressure down to work on the lines since. We have a new date of 31<sup>st</sup> August for completion, but this is weather dependant. If it's hot and dry, people need more water so the pressure cannot be turned off. As I have said before, the reservoirs serve 40k people in the area, so this is not a simple issue to deal with.

Continued...

# STEVE'S UPDATE CONT'D

## The new road alignment of Station Road

Work is progressing now the weather is dry. The posted date for completion is 17<sup>th</sup> July 2026 but with all the delays from weather the expected delivery is looking more like the end of August in line with the water works. Unfortunately, this will not be the end of our dealings with HS2 as we still have the Hammerhead to build, which you can see - right. The drawing shows the position of the new roads when they are completed. The hammer head is accessed by driving over the old station road bridge. Once all the roads are built and the water works are completed technically you can then build the hammer head to access the down yard.

## Temporary access road

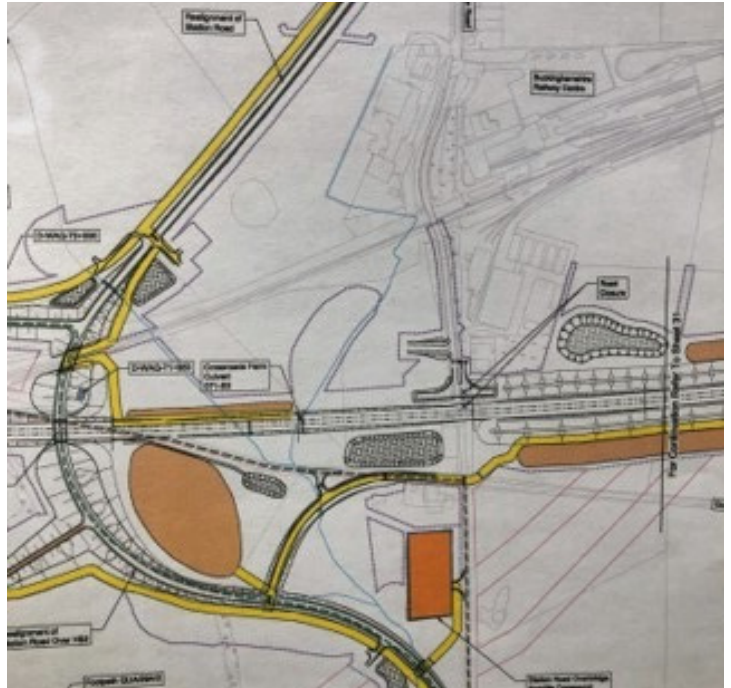
We saw that access would be a problem last July and in my report to the stakeholder group, I highlighted that if they failed to deliver on the agreed dates for work, we would be in the situation we are in now. At that time, we knew there was a likelihood of losing the old crossing to NR which would compound the issue. When I studied the ariel photos of the site, I could only see one place where we could build an access road. I drew this on a plan and said they would have to build us a road into the showground or risk closure of the site. To cut a long story short we now have a tarmac road (pictured right) into the showground. In June, the new way into the down yard will be over the old Station Road bridge past the Brixton buildings and left onto the new road which will bring you into the showground.

As they say in the films there is no Plan B. Well, that's not entirely true. To build the Hammerhead, they have to cut the access to the temporary road. This will take 3 to 4 months. This currently is the only access to that part of the site. The only solution I could come up with is the Needles Farm over bridge (pictured right) that you can see being built from the show ground. This is supposed to be delivered by December 2026. I offered it as a solution to the problem facing us and it is being looked at as a solution by HS2. If they built a road from the bridge to the showground, we could access the site from Quanton Road for four months while they build the hammerhead. When you look at the road layout above there is literally no other alternative.

The showground is now the focal point that all the temporary accesses can connect to. If we had no access to the down yard for fire, police or ambulance we would have to close it to everyone. Without that half the site, we would have been forced to close as we'd be unable to trade.

The showground has turned out to be the saviour of the site!

Stephen Green, General Manager



# ENGINEERING UPDATE

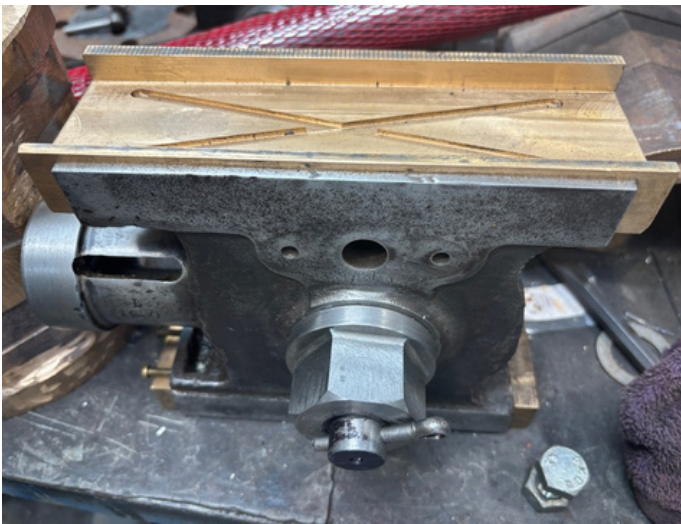
## ARTHUR & MILLOM

Last week, the team prepped Arthur and Millom to reprise their roles as Thomas and Percy at our May Day Out With Thomas event, by lighting warming fires; and they also did quite a lot of shunting of carriages in preparation for the weekend.



## FLYING BUFFERBEAM

The axle boxes and axle box crowns (below right) have been made. They have also worked on the cross heads. They have remade new gudgeon pins and nuts and new bronze slippers (below left).



## BAGNALL

You may remember a few weeks ago we discussed the rare octagonal axle boxes in the Bagnall... Well, it has become clear why they are so rare - the team has found it nigh on impossible to machine them accurately, so the decision has been made to make new, conventional, circular axel boxes.



# ENGINEERING UPDATE CONT'D

## B17 - SPIRIT OF SANDRINGHAM

I popped to see the B17 and found John, who is continuing work with Ian fitting up the cab, and I took this atmospheric photo.



## MET 1

James, Neal and Duncan are pictured painting Met 1's ashbox



## PILL BOX WAGON

Here is new volunteer Chris painting the sandboxes for the GWR brake van.



# ENGINEERING UPDATE CONT'D

## SIPHON G WAGON W1037

John and Nigel have been continuing with the painting on the Siphon G wagon - hopefully just one final coat required; it's looking fantastic in its shiny red paint.

This wagon was built in 1954 for British Railways to carry anything perishable - it was built on a fast coach chassis so these goods could be transported quickly to avoid spoiling.

They have also renewed the fall plates on the corridor connection. Nigel has welded in a large new section, which has suffered from corrosion (pictured below).



## LOCO NO. 6984

As I passed the hall shed, I popped in to see Trevor, and Graham, who was painting some smoke box cladding...



# RESTORATION NEWS

## MORRIS GPO VAN

Adrian has nearly completed the sandblasting of the Morris Post Office van chassis and has also welded in a few replacement patches where it had rusted. Once finished, the team will then paint it black.

Next, the team will sandblast the axles and springs, which, as you can see from these photos below, are corroded and seized up.



## MK1

Ric, Chris, Ken and Steve of the Ivatt Shed Gang have been working on the MK1 carriage.

Chris (right) has been sanding down and re-vernishing the corridors.

Ric (far right), Ken and Steve have been refurbishing the corridor window frames by removing any rotten wood and replacing it.



# NEWS FROM SROUND THE SITE

## BELINDA & ANGIE'S SKYDIVE!



Belinda from the office and Angie from the cafe completed their charity skydive last week, after one postponement due to low level cloud! They both said it was an amazing experience.

They are raising money for Great Ormond Street Hospital, and all donations will be appreciated! They both have fundraising pages on JustGiving.com:

[Click here to donate to Belinda's page](#)

[Click here to donate to Angie's page](#)

Together they have already raised over £1,500!

What amazing girls they are! Please do sponsor them if you can,

## NEW YORKER

We opened the New Yorker for drinks and snacks at our Day Out With Thomas event last weekend. Madeleine was based there all weekend, and after a relatively quiet Sunday, she reported back that there were several requests for Iced Coffee... so off we went to Tesco and bought bags of ice and lots of milk and added Iced Coffee to the menu on Bank Holiday Monday! She sold around 100!



The New Yorker will open again for Dino Day on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June.

# DAY OUT WITH THOMAS!

I am sure, even if you are not involved, you can imagine the amount of work that goes into putting on a Thomas event. It's all hands on deck... This is a non-exhaustive list of the jobs that are done:

The engineering team prepare the engines and then often volunteer to crew as well; our Rewley Road gang help put up the bunting and the extra tables and chairs (and take it all down again once the event is over!) and then volunteer across the event clearing tables and emptying bins; the catering team, who have to swap from our relatively quiet midweek cafe days to full-on catering for an event day with over 1,000 visitors each day; Ben our caretaker and Josh put up the Thomas flags, the garden toys and music corner and soooo much more; the office staff deal with Mattel, hiring performers, visitor bookings and queries, produce the literature, colouring sheets and site posters; the engine crew, guards and platform staff; welcome gate and shop staff, with Andrew working in the shop both days; the car parkers led by the wonderful Roy; Terry and Chris who drove the traction engine all weekend and offered trailer rides (which were a huge success!) and a steward who walked around in front of the traction engine to ensure visitors moved out of the way, and Richard who opened and closed the gate; not forgetting Richard and his team in the secondhand bookshop. Also, the Parks & Garden team prepare the site with lawn mowing and hedge trimming etc; the team up at VAMES run the popular miniature and model railways; Vicky and her team in the museum; the Travelling Post Office volunteers put on a great show for our visitors as always; the girls from the office were around both days lending a hand where needed and several exec members also made an appearance with Ashley, Karen, Colin and Barry all volunteering around the site... phew! Like I said, this is not everyone, there are too many to mention! I am sorry I didn't take any photos of people this time, but I shall endeavour to do so next time.

If you would like to get involved in this fabulous army of volunteers, please do get in touch with the girls in the office on 01296 655720. We all have such good fun! And you just need to read some of our reviews (see later on to read three...) to see what a difference we are making to the families who come and visit - we are helping to make their kids' dreams come true!



# PARKS & GARDENS

The Parks & Gardens team was in full force this week after the Thomas event, mowing, strimming and weeding... Pictured here are David, Ray, Ray and Nick...



# UNDERGROUND CAR

By George Chmielewski

Work continued on the four windows of Car 54233. (These windows are on the side facing VAMES, hence are not the ones you see when you walk along the underground carriages). With the glass in place and waterproofed, the weather turned wet. So we turned to work inside the car on a number of projects. We cleaned off surface rust under the windows with a wire brush and a lot of sand paper. Many areas are not easily accessible because of girders and fittings.

Cleaning the rust and painting took several sessions. As some areas were hard to access, we had to focus under each of the four windows on one small area at a time. When the rust was finally cleaned, we brushed on Fertan, which is a rust convertor. After 24 hours, the excess was washed off and then a primer and topcoat were applied.

*Brian Amman fitting the glass in Summer 2025*

*We relied on natural sunlight to see what we were doing in the hidden areas under the windows.*

*Some areas were hard to access.*



The rust had already been there when the cars were withdrawn. It was caused by water leaking between the glass and steel body. The damage was not too bad, considering the cars have been sitting out in the open since 1981, not to mention the time in service since their last overhaul in 1976.

*Rust was not too bad on the remaining steel girders and panels.*

*The application of Fertan turns the steel black.*

*The steel was painted with primer and topcoats*



The painted area will not be visible once we have prepared and reinserted the panels under the windows. The panels need to be repaired first and this is one of the next jobs.

Last summer, we waterproofed the windows with Hodgson's Sealants Heritage Putty and applied some primer. We had to leave some of the area unfinished as the weather prevented us from working outside. With the improved weather we finished applying the primer. The sealant where it was exposed stood well to the wet weather.

*An undercoat went over the primer:*



*Two coats of gloss top-coat:*



You can notice in the photograph, the yellow plastic over the top light. The top lights are being replaced with modern glass. When the glass is slid out, the metal surrounding the glass has to be treated. This is one of the next jobs to be done. We already started cleaning and treating the metal round the first top light. The car body will be rubbed and painted at a later date. The roof will receive attention as well.

In the next edition of Quainton Today, we will describe some of the other works being done in the three cars.

# 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 some in the newsletter so you can read how much our visitors enjoy their visits to us - I think it helps to see that people appreciate the work we all do here.



Here are three fabulous 5 star reviews from our Google listing, feeding back after our latest Day Out With Thomas event over the Bank Holiday weekend:

“One of our favourite places to visit, we even brought a season ticket. My little one loves trains and this is the place to go. Good facilities, a miniature train to go on and to watch. Lots of steam trains to see and ride, a museum. Great friendly, knowledgeable staff. Good family fun!”

“We had such a fantastic day at the Thomas Train Experience at Buckinghamshire Railway Centre! From the moment we arrived, the atmosphere was magical for the children. Seeing Thomas and Percy up close absolutely made our little one’s day.

The train rides were well organised, the staff were friendly and enthusiastic, and there were plenty of activities to keep the kids entertained throughout the day — miniature trains, live shows, games, and photo opportunities with Sir Topham Hatt. The whole venue was clean and family-friendly, with lots to explore beyond the Thomas attractions too.

Although it was busy, everything ran smoothly and there was a great balance of entertainment and train rides. Definitely worth the visit for any Thomas fan and a lovely family day out with memories that will last for years. Highly recommend booking early and arriving on time to make the most of the experience!”

“We visited for the ‘Day out with Thomas’ event and had the best day!

We didn’t have huge expectations as have been let down at similar events elsewhere and it was the hottest day of the year so far but we were so surprised at how much fun we had.

Everything was well organised, well kept, reasonably priced and clean. The trains ran like clockwork and there was so much to do we could easily have stayed longer than the 4 hours we did! The miniature railway was great, a really fun ride! The picnic area was lovely and spacious and the toilets were very clean in all areas.

We had rides on Thomas, Percy, the miniature railway and the steam engine. We visited the model railway and spent a bit of time in the cafe and visitor centre. We didn’t get a chance to do the museum but will definitely return for that.

Overall a brilliant day out and highly recommend.”

## 2026 CALENDAR

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



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# Photo Montage:

Better Red than in the Shed Merchandise as part of our crowdfunding for the red engines. Items are available to see in the shop - come on in and place your orders!



# Photo Montage:

