

SRA BOWS OUT WITH COMMITMENT TO STOURBRIDGE STILL FIRM.

Rail industry reorganisation gives prime role to Network Rail and couples safety with keeping trains running

An important stage in the commercial development of the Parry People Mover light tramway concept was reached following a meeting at the headquarters of Centro, the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive on 20 May. The meeting was called by the Strategic Rail Authority which, despite occasional expressions of encouragement, had up until this time been unwilling to provide more tangible forms of support.

As reported in Parry News No. 38 the SRA's decision to promote the concept of Community Railways has been an important factor in the realisation that for some of the proposed 'community rail' lines, a lighter form of rolling stock - very much in the form of what PPM has been advocating - was going to be needed.

The increased interest by the SRA is to take the form of a significant financial boost to the Stourbridge Sunday service trial, and equally importantly, for its officers to become instrumental in clarifying any remaining safety or regulation issues blocking the commencement of the trial.

As Parry News goes to press, the rail industry is coming to terms with the White Paper issued by Transport

Secretary Alistair Darling on 15 July announcing a full scale reorganisation of the Rail Industry. Although the white paper announces the decision that the SRA itself is now to be wound up, the officers involved have advised Pre Metro Operations that the Stourbridge project will still go ahead under the new arrangements and the contract documents were now being prepared. *Community Railways Consultation Success, p3*

Railways, As If The Journeys People Make Matter
Comment p2
(A sigh and two cheers for the latest rail reorganisation).

SMALL ENTERPRISE ROLE RECOGNISED

Commonwealth study identifies livelihoods gain from Building Materials Initiative in Sierra Leone.

In the period 1998 -2002, JPA was commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat to provide a combination of technical services and small scale equipment to address the "acute shelter problem and mass unemployment" that existed in Sierra Leone caused by the recent rebel war.

In an internal study produced for No. 10 Downing Street during April 2004, (prior to the setting up of the new Commission for Africa) the Commonwealth Secretariat appraised the outcome of the work which is believed so far to have resulted in the employment of 30,000 persons in small businesses.

Full story: Development of Affordable Housing Construction Industry, p3

MALAWI SCHOOL PROGRAMME SHOWCASES HIGH QUALITY LOCAL PRODUCTION



Having received several consignments of equipment from JPA during 2003 and 2004, production of micro concrete semi sheets is in progress at centres throughout Malawi. Mr Andrew Maclean, the Director of the Education Building Programme, has sent us a photograph

showing construction at Phululu school near Malomo in Ntchisi District. In June 2004, a new £62,000 order for ten complete factories was placed via an international procurement firm for early despatch to the same region, again for school construction.

Also In This Issue...

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A sigh and two cheers for the latest reorganisation of the railways aimed at better decision-making. A sigh, because we were just getting used to the position of the goal posts, and have the first 'ball in the net' (the decision to support the Stourbridge Project, reported on page 1).

Two cheers: Hurrah No.1: The decision to bring under single governance at both national and regional level, the choice between the various options for how journeys should best be effected. Why have an unending fight between for instance the 'Railways for ever', 'I Love My Car' and 'Don't Forget the Humble Bus' factions now joined by the 'its Quicker and Cheaper to Fly' and 'Bring Back the Trams' lobbies. What matters is convenience, affordability, quality and environmental responsibility seen from the standpoint of people making journeys and through whose communities the journeys pass.

H.G. Wells would have been amazed – or maybe he wouldn't – to learn that in 2004 Network Rail was installing more and more cycle racks at stations and that the percentage growth of tram patronage was exceeding that of any other public transport mode. In a situation of continued and sometimes unexpected change therefore, how on earth can we have made the procedure

for planning to install a simple engineering device – the steel flanged wheel rolling on a rail – into one which takes so long and costs so much that people are tempted not to bother? Rail is just another means of undertaking a journey and it is logical that DfT make installing it or using it as easy as for any other form of transport.

Hurrah No.2: It also seems very sensible, having already established a Regulation Office, the ORR, that the process by which safety is regulated should also come within its remit rather than in a body also dealing with Health and Safety in factories, nuclear power stations and circuses etc. Letting safety matters be administered by a body which is equally motivated to keep trains and trams running while also making them safe, is more pragmatic than by one with having a single preoccupation of 'Safety at all Costs'.

Meanwhile it has always been a puzzle to us that those who seem to love railways the most are sometimes least interested in their role as a provider of routine transport. There is a double paradox in one of the recurring mindsets in the heritage railway sector. In the name of 'preservation' the railway companies and societies have taken possession of valuable transport corridors but instead of exploiting this

facility, have decided just to give their visitors a 'grand day out'.

Should not these lines have a role to play in the Community Railways programme, revitalising branch lines which escaped the Beeching axe of the 1960s? 'Grand days out' on the railways at weekends and holidays are valuable components of the Leisure Industry, but why resist the same corridors being used for passengers travelling with a purpose?

Local Authorities generally smile upon the enthusiast-run railways in their areas but at the same time have to wrestle with the problem of dangerously overcrowded and polluted roads. If, as will now happen according to the White Paper, they are to take a hand in the running of local branches of the national network, they might also take a look at the 'sleeping beauty' situations, rail lines which lie idle when the local roads are most crowded.

Meanwhile there are already some notable pioneers among the private and volunteer-run railways beginning to make their railways not only decorative but useful.

Let's hope this idea becomes infectious.

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PASSENGER TRANSPORT EXECUTIVES LOOK AT SHALLOW SECTION TRAMWAY CONCEPT

London Trams propose meeting to set design parameters

Britain and Ireland's principal public transport bodies at local authority level, represented by PTEG – the Passenger Transport Executive Group – are beginning to take a closer interest in proposals put forward by Holdfast Carpet Track Ltd, the "Fourth Company" associated with the Parry transport innovations.

HCT amalgamates two innovative themes of railway and tramway engineering. Holdfast Level Crossings Ltd, one of Britain's most successful rail infrastructure companies with over 3,000 level crossing systems completed, has used over 10 million reconstituted automotive tyres to form kits of durable, fitted panels which complete the road surface around the rails. JPA successfully brought attention to early prototypes of the PPM tram in the mid-1990s in Birmingham, Barking, Brighton and Swansea using a temporary tramway. This set in motion the million-pound design and development programme which has led to the PPM 80 railcar concept now specified for certain railway applications.

Following discussions and correspondence in the period April 2004, PTEG endorsed HCT's proposal to lead a research project on Shallow Section Tramway Track bringing together the two themes. An additional element has been introduced examining – with the help of legal, planning and insurance experts - ways to reduce the time and cost involved in approvals and to avoid moving underground statutory services before a tramway can be constructed.

The Holdfast/Parry concept sets out an approach aimed at reducing or eliminating such requirements. The PTEG have now begun discussions with the Department for Transport in order to initiate the work on the study.

Meanwhile, the London Trams unit of Transport for London has asked HCT Ltd to convene a meeting with PTEG members from different parts of Britain to begin to formulate a prescription for the proposed new method of building shallow section tramways.

Wedge sleepers level out the bumps. Technical News Page 8.

DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

A Commonwealth Secretariat-sponsored programme, undertaken by JPA during the closing phases of the rebel war in Sierra Leone between 1998 and 2001, was fully reported in previous issues of Parry News. ComSec's projects in Sierra Leone were appraised earlier this year on the instruction of His Excellency Don McKinnon, the Commonwealth's Secretary General, and forwarded to the UK Prime Minister's development advisers at No 10. The section of the report on the Affordable Housing programme which involves Parry equipment and services is narrated in full below :-

"The project is aimed at transferring building technology suitable for mass affordable housing in Sierra Leone and demonstrating techniques for the production of bricks, stabilised soil blocks, roofing, floor and wall tiles, and other building products.

It seeks to address the acute shelter problem caused by mass displacement of people and destruction of property occasioned by the rebel war. The project involves technology transfer, skills training; and entrepreneurship development programmes.



Mr Don McKinnon (centre) made a personal visit to Sierra Leone in January 2001. Here seen at a training centre near Freetown viewing Parry Semi Sheets during the curing process

The project has two distinct phases. Phase 1 covered the Western area of Sierra Leone and was implemented by six indigenous enterprises. Based on the lessons around Freetown, the government is now implementing Phase 2 in the Northern, Eastern and Southern provinces at chiefdom and district levels by installing facilities and establishing clusters of small building manufacturing technology units. The Phase 2 programme is centred on the community participatory role. The target audiences for the training were ex combatants, unemployed youth and women. This has created new business and economic opportunities, generated a competitive local supply base and employed over 30,000 persons in small businesses".

The P.M.'s advisers are understood to have passed the Sierra Leone report to the Secretariat of the new Commission for Africa which is assembling case histories relevant to the theme of livelihood creation in poorer parts of Africa.

COMMUNITY RAILWAYS CONSULTATION SUCCESS

SRA hails 'huge and positive response'

Initial results of the Strategic Rail Authority's consultation on its Community Railways programme (see Parry News 38) have shown the value of the concept. Over 300 organisations responded to the document, published in April, before the consultation period closed at the end of May.

"This huge and positive response to our initial ideas shows the importance of railways to the communities they serve, in business as well as environmental and social terms," said SRA chairman Richard Bowker. "The SRA's consultation has been the catalyst for bringing together local communities and the rail industry to chart the way forward for local and rural railways. Our final strategy will

ensure their continued growth, while reducing the call on public funds and securing greater community involvement."

Support for Appropriate Standards

Research by the institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales shows that business is dependent on local railways as much as on inter-city train services. Responses to the consultation show strong support for the SRA's approach. Of particular relevance to PPM is the support given to the concept of separate standards appropriate to usage and risks on individual routes, which opens the way for light rail operations on branch lines of the national rail network.

The Community Railway programme's future has been assured in the rail White Paper announced by the Government on 15 July.

A recent order received by JPA came from a distinguished doctor, originally born in Cameroon, who has worked for many years in Italy's health service. Dr Etabong J Esua has, over recent years, been helping people in his home country by constructing clinics and providing technical advice. He has now ordered a set of Parry roofing and wall building machinery to increase the local content of his construction projects. The picture shows workers commencing construction at one of the new clinics.





A slow city of 100 years ago.

countries. The conditions that must be met by a Slow City are carefully defined and upheld. They include special emphasis on the local environment, local produce and hospitality. Several British towns such as Ludlow are now said to be seeking the accolade.

tram is the only form of public transport that comfortably passes among people, as demonstrated around the world by trams already running down pedestrianised streets.

The town centre ambience may be 'slow,' but when it's time to be home to get the kids' tea, a swift predictable journey by PPM tram will be a welcome end to the day.

“SLOW MOVEMENT” SUPPORTERS SEE SYNERGY WITH CLEAR ZONES CONCEPT

The Clear Zone concept was suggested by John Parry during his tenure as vice chairman of the transport panel of Foresight Technology programme 1995-1998. This envisioned new way of arranging transport in city centres around the people who use them for work, business, shopping and leisure.

To make city centres more welcoming, “Clear Zones” were proposed, combining accessibility with liveability. Unlike in pedestrian areas where virtually all access and movement involves walking, Clear Zones permit the use of wheeled vehicles on defined routes but these must not have polluting exhausts. Trams - with their predictable movements - would pass into the zones while more polluting vehicles would remain outside.

The Clear Zone concept is now becoming adopted, with the most notable success being Nottingham city centre.

However, the concept is being taken one step further by the Slow City movement. This grew out of the need felt by some Italian pioneers for an antidote to fast living and encompassing an appreciation of the quality, origin and enjoyment of the good things including the food on the table.

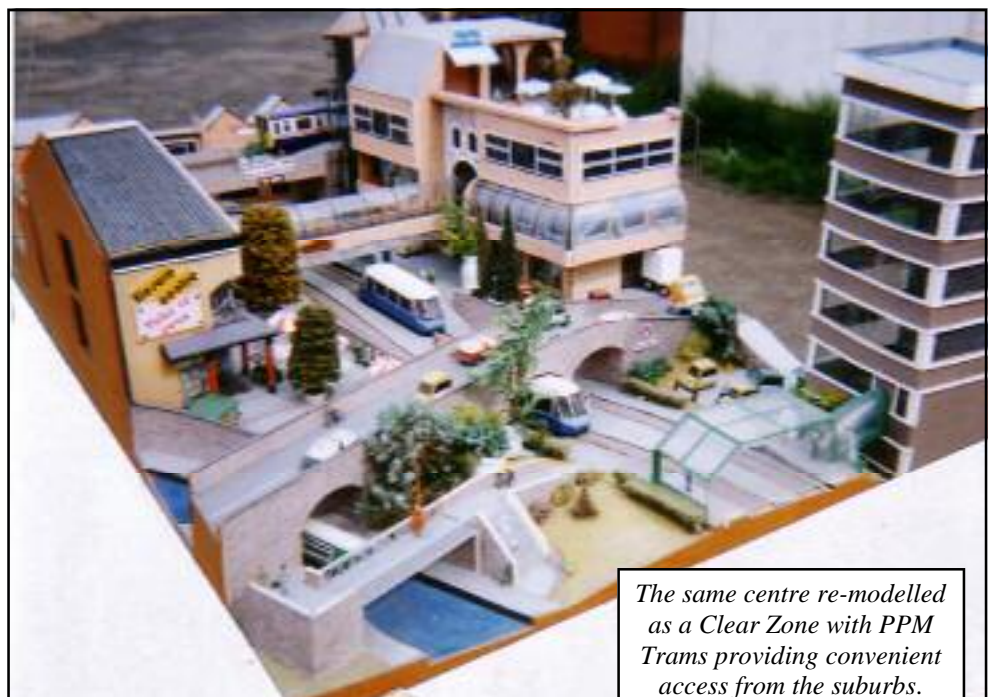
There are now over 35 Slow Cities in more than ten

Quality of life is the essential consideration. Slow City campaigners say they are not nostalgics - they are keen to use any technology that makes urban life more pleasant.. And being a Slow City can also pay off economically in increased local business.

Transport is a contributor to - or a destroyer of - quality of life. The illustrations show the difference that can be made by paying attention to transport in the urban environment. From a smoggy, noisy grid of clogged-up traffic can emerge a pleasant, easy-going city for people. Not only is the city centre better for all, but journeys to and from the centre are easier and quicker thanks to reduced congestion.

Several PPM shareholders have pointed out how compatible our concept is with this quality of life initiative. Guided by rails, the

A typical modern urban centre dominated by road traffic with attendant noise and fumes.



The same centre re-modelled as a Clear Zone with PPM Trams providing convenient access from the suburbs.

JPA FORMS MANUFACTURING PARTNERSHIPS

New commercial partners will create series building capacity for rail vehicles

The Parry workshops at Cradley Heath have proved invaluable for the building materials business and for the PPM R&D programme. However, they are not set up for series manufacture of complete trams and railcars.

However, new partnerships have been formed to ensure the ability to supply vehicles in quality and quantity. **Experienced vehicle suppliers** The latest manufacturing agreement to be reached was with Lathe Trays Fabrications Ltd, a large fabricator

bus body frames for Optare, one of the UK's leading bus suppliers.

JPA is now in discussion with other local firms with a view to further partnerships. We are fortunate in our location in the industrial heartland of the Midlands despite the assumptions of some economists and political leaders that industry in the Midlands has ceased to exist. Within a short distance of Cradley Heath lies a huge resource of manufacturing. Including firms specialising in transport seating, bus body construction, vehicle finishing and any manner of small components in steel, plastics and other materials.



Fully-equipped manufacturing facilities at Lathe Trays in Rowley Regis.

technical projects. Imagine the disruption when a 'just in time' crate of parts from China turns out to be



Lathe Trays' capability includes production of high-quality fabrications for vehicle frames.



Modern Optare bus built on framework from Lathe Trays (image courtesy of Optare)

The new partnerships will provide the missing links in the PPM supply chain. With vehicle chassis sourced from rail industry suppliers, it was the body structure and fitting out of the vehicles that needed new capabilities.

and metal worker based in Rowley Regis. Lathe Trays have experience in the transport industry: in addition to supplying components to numerous new train projects, LTF have built 300

The virtues of working with local partners are often ignored in these days of excellent telecommunications and logistic sourcing, but ease of transport for people and materials can be crucial, particularly on

Keeping it local

just not right. Furthermore, the involvement of local Black Country firms strengthens the aim of keeping as much manufacturing as possible in the UK or, if from overseas, from firms with a fully resourced UK base.

PPM EYED BY EXPORT MARKETS

From the very beginning, it was always expected that export business would be significant to PPM technology. Although a showcase operation in the UK is important to gain experience of the system in service, the virtues of the technology – simplicity, reliability and affordability – make it ideal for a wide range of applications worldwide.

Australia and Argentina

PPM has recently received some interesting enquiries from the southern hemisphere. Representatives from Australia and Argentina have visited the Cradley Heath offices and seen Car 12 at the Chasewater Railway, and market possibilities in these countries have been discussed in detail. In recent months, Mr Juan Manuel Martorell has set up an office in Buenos Aires with the express intention of getting PPM technology on to Argentinian rural railways, where numerous

possibilities exist to bring communities closer together and stimulate local economies. In addition, Mr Phil Cochrane, an independent businessman from Queensland, Australia, has experienced Car 12 in action with a view to opening up a new link in a major tourist area. Urban tramways are also a possibility in both countries.

No competition

Both Mr Martorell and Mr Cochrane undertook their own in-depth research into suitable rolling stock. They both reported the same result from their enquiries: PPM currently has no credible competition when it comes to light, low-cost rail transport. It is tempting to start thinking about re-gauging a PPM vehicle for a role as a demonstrator overseas...



Mr Cochrane riding on Car 12 at Chasewater



Queensland's scenic railways: an underused tourist resource (image courtesy of Queensland Rail)

PPM SHARE PRICE DIPS AS SRA ABOLITION DISTURBS MARKETS

Strong response to Entitlement Issue indicates shareholder satisfaction with SRA response

PPM shares tipped by national titles

On 12th July the OFEX Market, on which PPM shares are traded, itself reached a milestone when three stockbroking firms - Hoodless Brennan, Teather & Greenwood and Winterflood Securities - joined JP Jenkins (the founders of OFEX), participating as market makers

trading in company stocks. Holders of some OFEX shares have hitherto noted somewhat sluggish trading activity, said to be partly due to the 'match-bargaining' arrangement that tended to restrict opportunities to buy and sell shares.

Commencement of competitive market trading coincided with PPM's own launch in early July of a new Entitlement Issue of its ordinary shares and of 6½% Convertible Loan Stock. In the first six days of mailing receipts, 20% of PPM's 190 shareholders sent in applications, an indication of satisfaction in a recently circulated letter from the Strategic Rail Authority, as reported on page 1. The mood can only have been

enhanced by two favourable mentions of PPM in the context of the SRA's Community Railway proposals, by *Investor's Chronicle* magazine and by Patrick Lay of the *Daily Telegraph*. As at 14th July, PPM shares stood at the mid price of £1.85. This dipped to £1.75 coincident with the announcement in the Government's White Paper of the winding up of the SRA in the coming months which may have been incorrectly interpreted as endangering the Stourbridge Sunday trial.

The PPM offers' closing dates are 1st August 2004 for ordinary shares and the 30th September 2004 for the Loan Stock issue.

PPM UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

PPM developments, both present and with future potential, have made the headlines around the UK recently. The *Stourbridge News*, local to our Cradley Heath base and covering the area where Car 12 will shortly enter service on Sundays on the Town branch (see page 1), has featured PPM with two separate stories. The first was about the potential for converting the Stourbridge Town line into a tramway and extending the rail service into the town centre proper. More controversially, a story on 20 May covered the possibility of a PPM transport system linking Stourbridge Junction station to Wolverhampton Airport (see Parry News 37 and 38), complete with an image of the PPM 80 vehicle. The airport development plans have generated much criticism locally,

and PPM received some flak for its willingness to supply vehicles for the project. However, our view is simple and non-partisan: either the expansion will happen or it won't - and if it does then it is surely better that a good public transport link takes pressure off the local roads.

Car 11's arrival at Oswestry (see Parry News 38) was featured in *The Shropshire Star* on 5 April. Accompanied by a photograph of Cambrian Railways Society members in front of the vehicle, the article described the eventual aim of reconnecting Oswestry to the national rail network at Gobowen, and details of PPM technology.

On 22 April, the *Eastern Daily Press* also featured a prominent photograph of Car 11 with a story about the possibility for trams to return to the streets of Great Yarmouth. Again, the technological possibilities of a tram system that does not require overhead

wiring were explained, along with the support of the local authorities for the tramway.

RailStaff, the industry newspaper, included an article entitled "Flywheel Revolutions: Green, Quality Transport from the UK" in its special feature sent out with the May edition. The text paid particular attention to the PPM 80 Community Railcar (see Parry News 38) and the new potential arising from the combination of PPM vehicle technology and Holdfast Carpet Track infrastructure for new, affordable tramways.

The specialist railway press, meanwhile, continued to report PPM developments in various news items. Coverage included Car 11's move to Oswestry in May's *Heritage Railway* and June's *Tramways & Urban Transit*, while the latter also mentioned the potential for a PPM tram system in Aberdeen, supported by prominent environmental groups.



INTERMEDIATE BUILDING TECHNOLOGY FOR THE NIGER DELTA

Parry technology proposed in plan to boost economy and employment in Nigeria's riverine areas

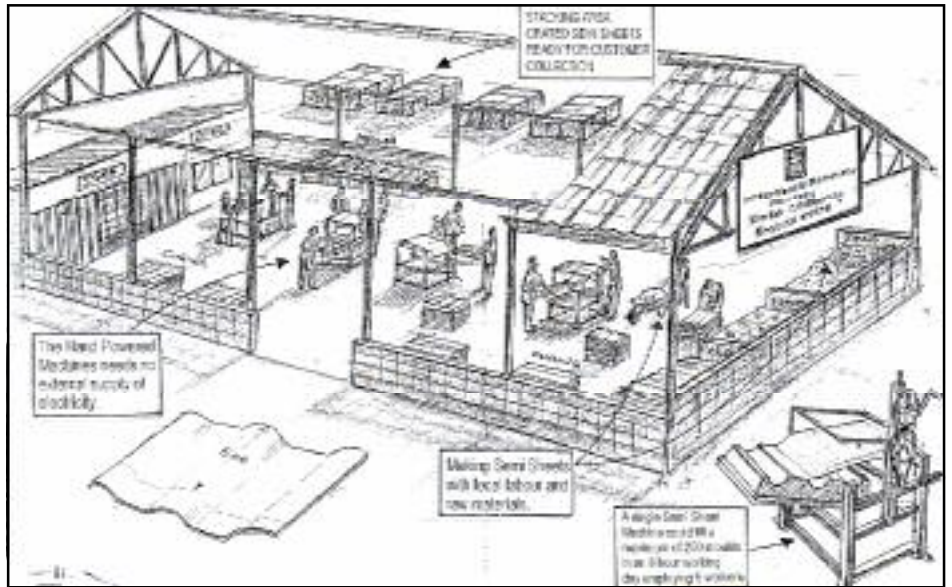
JPA's building materials expertise is being put forward in a plan to establish small scale industries throughout the Niger Delta in Nigeria. The area, now suffering from underdevelopment, is an excellent example of where intermediate technology can bring in the benefits that "classic" development projects have failed to deliver. We were visited by Chief John Wright and President Ayaogo on 23 June; they explained the background to the project and gave confident expectations of an early start.

The Niger Delta is made up of largely pastoral areas between the myriad natural waterways that bring the Niger River into the Atlantic Ocean. The discovery of oil and the development of the petroleum industry has not, however, brought material advances to the majority of the local population. Today, people are migrating away from the region towards Nigeria's large cities to find work and a better life, and those left behind are finding that the local economy is steadily worsening.

The Federation of Ijaw Communities (FEDICOM) has now proposed a plan for intermediate technology training in the Niger Delta as a way of combating these problems, using JPA building materials technology as the means to do it.

Work for unemployed youths

The plan is aimed at tackling under-employment in the region, where it recognises that "the prime requirement



... is the provision of work". In particular, it takes account of the problems of unemployment among the local youth population: people who could be the most productive members of society but who, in the wrong circumstances, can also be its most destructive.

The main plank behind the proposals is the installation of intermediate technology workshops in decentralised, village locations - avoiding the need for people to move to the cities to work and generating wealth for the existing communities. Local conditions mean that the workshops will be built near the riverside, so each workshop has a jetty for shipping of the finished products.

All round benefits for Delta communities

The programme is intended to turn

round the declining rural areas of the Niger Delta. By introducing intermediate technology workshops that don't require expensive maintenance, foreign spare parts or rare skilled labour, the income and livelihoods created by the plan will reverse the existing exodus of people, skills and wealth from the Delta region.

The FEDICOM plan recognises and responds to the realities of the situation in the area, rather than trying to impose inappropriate solutions imported from elsewhere. Apart from the benefits of using local workshops, the proposals also include the use of local transport by river and the involvement of the local clan hierarchies in the villages.

NAO POINTS OUT THE R&D GAP

In April, the National Audit Office released a report on "Improving Public Transport in England through Light Rail". Very positive about the potential for light rail schemes to improve transport throughout the country, the report pointed out however the strange current situation where national policy encourages such developments, but no R&D funding is available for rail-based modes.

This disparity has helped road transport improve its environmental performance faster than rail (see Parry News 38) and for light rail, the mode which is most effective in switching motorists to use public transport, but is "too expensive", it is almost impossible to secure public sector support either for R&D or for pilot schemes involving innovative technology which might reduce costs. In the new funding that Chancellor Gordon Brown is providing for Transport, officials are said to be hopeful that some might be allocated to fund innovation.

NESTA SAY NO, NOT THIS TIME

Reminiscent of Monty Python's search for the Holy Grail, PPM's project managers have spent copious time and energy seeking financial support from the National Endowment for Science and Technology, which is funded by the National Lottery.

Other transport innovations including an amphibious truck and a driverless taxi system have altogether been blessed with several million pounds of cash to help them through the innovation phase of their ventures. PPM's bid was scheduled to be considered at the April 2004 meeting of the Fund's Trustees, but the bid was not submitted for a reason which was as bizarre as it was painful. The officer who was to have submitted the bid was seriously hurt in Martial Arts combat the evening before, and instead of being at the meeting, was in a hospital bed sedated by painkillers. By the time the project came up again two months later it was crowded out by other applications and its prospects dimmed by news of yet another Rail Industry reorganisation.

Not bad news for everyone however, three teams of consultants were used to evaluate the case for supporting the PPM innovation. The "door" meanwhile, has been left slightly open by the suggestion that under clearer skies PPM may wish to submit its application at a later date.



PPM Car 11 now installed at the Cambrian Railway Society's base at Oswestry has completed commissioning trials and is expected to be able to enter passenger service in August now that platform construction and other infrastructure work has been completed.

PPM 80 BOGIE: UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION YIELDS RESULTS

The PPM 80 Community Railcar and its low-floor tram counterpart are the way ahead for cutting the cost of both rural branch lines and new urban tramway systems. An essential part of the development is the design and validation of a suitable bogie.

In the new vehicle concept, the entire powertrain is incorporated within the bogie structure, based on the existing PPM 50 chassis. No space is

taken away from passenger accommodation, there are no complicated power transmission connections between the bogie and the body, and with two powered bogies, a vehicle will get back to base even with a failed driveline. To return a faulty vehicle to service, a new bogie is put in place, leaving the failed component easily accessible without the body obstructing repair work.

Parry designers came up with a workable arrangement for the bogie frame. The next question was: would it

stand up to the forces of everyday service?

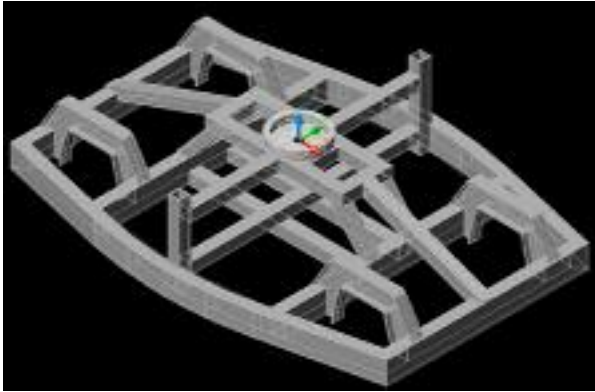
The solution came in the form of the Innovation Direct programme, which combines the resources of two West Midlands universities.

Under this programme, PPM was able to gain free access to the structural analysis facilities of the University of Wolverhampton.

Parry engineers defined the maximum forces on the bogie, with reference to Railway Group Standards and Railway

Safety Principles & Guidance where required.

Although PPM vehicles are likely to be exempt from some mainline standards, these were chosen to give "worst-case"



loadings. Based on this data, the University conducted a simple finite element analysis (FEA) study, modelling the effects of the forces on the bogie frame.

The results could hardly be more encouraging. The maximum stress of just 72 MN/m² in the bogie frame is well below the yield strength of the structural steel of 250 MN/m².

Although a complete FEA was not possible, the very low stressing of the frame gives great confidence that the general bogie frame design is the right one.

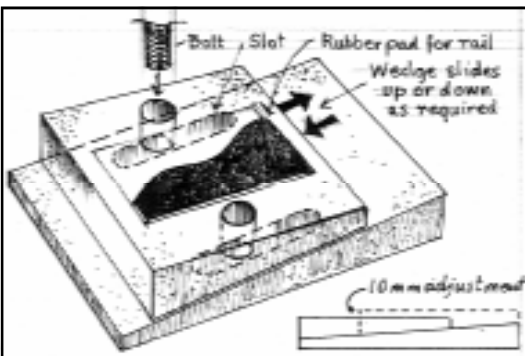
JPA DESIGNERS DEVISE UPPER FLOOR REFUGE

A New Type of Balcony

The statistics are worrying. For every person killed on the railways, ten lose their lives in house fires, often trapped on upper floors, as fire usually starts in kitchens and living rooms. Many more are injured with shattered ankles and broken backs caused by jumping out of upstairs windows. Add to this the terror experienced by householders, particularly the elderly, when they become aware of intruders downstairs in the night hours. While the bold and the fit may decide to have-a-go, it is generally more prudent to leave it to those best equipped to deal with conflagrations and burglars – but how to get away?

The Parry solution is a free standing, quick to install external platform - some would call it a 'balcony' - equipped with the means to secure the exit so that the wrongdoers, fire or smoke stay within the envelope of the building.

Descent from the refuge platform can be effected safely once help is in hand.



WEDGES FILL GAPS UNDER RAILS

Tramways laid with Carpet Track technology could be laid anywhere, including on uneven hard surfaces. So how do we ensure the rails don't reflect undulations on the ground? The answer lies in a new product developed jointly by HoldFast Level Crossings and JPA.

Two wedge-shaped rail support blocks in pre-cast concrete are put in place and adjusted to fit the gap between ground and rail. A rubber pad immediately beneath the rail provides the required resilience. Then, when the height is correctly adjusted, two bolts fix the rail in place as well as setting the support height.

Another gap in the rail market filled!

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