

LIONSHEART

Number 36

MARCH 1995

Charlie Ashforth.

It is with sadness that we record the passing away of Executive Committee member Charlie Ashforth, in December. He had been our Northern Representative since July, 1991. Charlie was a keen volunteer attendant at the Manchester Museum of Science & Industry, where he was often to be found shepharding parties of schoolchildren around the exhibits. Indeed, he took charge of several OLCO members during the visit to Manchester for the 1994 AGM and showed great pride in the massive GL Class Garrett which is on display in the Power Hall.

Unfortunately, I know little of Charlie's past - where he worked, his trade, his interests, etc. If any member can furnish me with further details I should be pleased to publish them. I have written to the museum in Manchester and to the warden at his address (I believe he lived in sheltered accomodation), but have had no reply.

LION.

At long last, LION has been restored to display condition and returned to her home in NMGH. It is because of this that the AGM, proposed for Leeds, has been moved instead to Liverpool. (See later paragraph - AGM 1995).

The restoration has included the touching up of all paintwork, revarnishing of the wooden cladding, filling and painting of the badly pitted rear panel of the tender and repair of the right hand wooden frame between the wrought iron flitch plates which together form the main outer frames. This repair was necessary to replace the rotted portion of the frame in the vicinity of the reversing lever support bracket. The wastage of the flitch plates themselves in the same area has not been repaired. This would have been a considerable task, probably involving some controversy, since originality may have been compromised.

I gather that the considerable discussion as to the type of wood used in the frame has been resolved by the 'flotation' test and that it is, in fact, greenheart. This would have been readily available in Liverpool during the early 18th century, since it was used extensively in the construction of lock gates and other 'wet' dock furniture.

Since there are no plans to steam LION in the foreseeable future, the boiler will remain tubeless. However, all driving and valve motion has been assembled in working order and has been tested under air pressure. Members of the Executive Committee were invited by John Kearon, Head of Shipkeeping, Industrial & Land Transport Conservation at National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside to the works of Dorothea Restorations at Whaley Bridge on 6th January to examine LION in her 'restored' condition. We were also able to witness her working under air pressure whilst being supported by a rolling road. I am indebted to Jan Ford for the following report.

LION AT WHALEY BRIDGE

Before the cosmetically-restored LION was returned to the Transport Gallery at Liverpool, a number of members of OLCO were allowed to visit Whaley Bridge to see LION rotate her axles on the 'rolling road'. My thanks to Dorothea Restorations and the Museum for allowing me to be present. It was a rather sad occasion for me. LION certainly looks fit and well after Dorothea's ministrations but, of course, the boiler is untubed and the main steam pipe is missing - LION is no longer in steamable condition. I understand the argument about the conservation of unique artefacts but so much is missing when a locomotive is not in steam.

Well, whilst on the ingenious rolling road built by Dorothea, LION could operate under air power, although this did involve the indignity of leaving the chimney off and connecting an air main through the top of the smokebox to feed the valve chests. Instead of a regulator, a small air regulating valve was provided near the floor. I was fortunate enough to get permission to 'drive' LION one last time. Up onto the footplate and haul the lever reverser back to engage forward gear (LION's reverser is backwards to most locomotives), down onto the floor and gently open the air regulating valve, keeping an eye on the air pressure gauge. Sure enough, at about 10 p.s.i. LION's venerable wheels start to rotate. Remember, LION's boiler is only rated at 50 p.s.i., which was typical at the time, so it's not surprising that LION can drag herself into action at 10 p.s.i.

I've moved 'Flying Scotsman' light engine with only 25 p.s.i. on the clock and 'Defiant' at about 35 p.s.i. Best performance was probably the fireless steam loco. 'Lord Ashfield' with two four-wheeled coaches crammed with passengers at Manchester Museum. We started the trip with 15 p.s.i. on the clock and got back with about 12 p.s.i. Further trips were not possible because the steam could no longer hold the (vertically-mounted) slide valves against the port faces!

Back up onto the footplate, forward with the reverser and down on the floor to ease LION's wheels into motion backwards. Air off, back onto the footplate to put the gear into 'mid' and say a last farewell to LION. The end of an era. Still, we'll all be able to see if LION has settled into her Liverpool home at the forthcoming OLCO AGM.

Jan Ford

We were all surprised how smoothly the whole mechanism worked at such a low pressure, though as Peter Gardner has since remarked, there was probably a fair bit of flywheel effect from the wheel rims. There was a small amount of vibration and rumble present, but this was probably from the rolling road itself. During these tests, LION was about 6" above normal height. The rear axle was suitably jacked and it's wheels chocked.

Our thanks are due to John Kearon for the invitation and to Dorothea Restorations for allowing us access to witness this interesting test and to the Dorothea team for doing such a splendid job, albeit limited, on LION.

The whole idea of putting the driving and valve mechanisms to work under air pressure was to ensure that the crank axle was properly seated within its four bearings following the lifting of the boiler from the frame, as reported in LIONSHEART number 35. This aim appears to have been well achieved.

AGM 1995.

In LIONSHEART number 35, it was mooted that the AGM would be in Leeds. However, since LION has now been returned to NMGM, it would seem to be entirely fitting that the meeting should be held in Liverpool, so that members should see LION in her restored glory. Following enquiries to NMGM I am pleased to report that we are able to hold our meeting not only in that city, but actually in the museum, within a few feet of LION. It may even be possible to watch video (footage?) of LION on the rolling road, though at the time of writing I am unable to confirm this. I hope we have a good turnout at this important meeting. We need to get together to plan the way ahead for OLCO and to elect new Executive Officers.

The retiring committee is as follows-

David Neish - Chairman - eligible for two more years;
Geoff Wright- Treasurer - eligible for two more years;
Peter Gardner - Modellers' Representative - eligible for four more years;
John Hawley - Secretary - eligible for four more years;
Vernon Smallwood - not eligible, having served for five years.
(Thankyou Vernon for your help and encouragement - Ed).

Nominations may be sent to the Secretary (address later) or may be made from the floor at the meeting. However, nominees and seconders must be fully paid up members of OLCO. All the above positions are up for election. The position of Northern Representative, held by the late Charlie Ashforth, is also open. Nominations, please.

Please let me know if you have any items you wish to have included on the agenda.

I have attached a list of accommodation addresses to the back of this newsletter. Besides the AGM and a look at the Museum in which LION is housed, there are many items of interest to visit in Liverpool. I expect the Maritime Museum may be a favourite. However, if you wish, ring 0151-709 3631(Merseyside Welcome Centre) or 0151-708 8854(Atlantic Pavilion) for an information pack. I rang both and received more or less identical packs, so I suppose either number will do.

The meeting starts at 3.00 pm and will be held in the Lecture Room, which is adjacent to the Transport Gallery where LION is displayed in Liverpool Museum. To get there from Lime Street Station, which is the Intercity stop for Liverpool, come out of the station and turn right along Lime Street, with St. Georges Hall on your left. About 300 yards from Lime Street station turn left into William Brown Street, where the museum is situated. See you there.

I've had a suggestion for a venue for the evening dinner. Its called The Legs of Man, at 2, London Road, near the museum. They do a hot or cold buffet for about £4.00 a head and I need to find out more but will announce details as soon as possible.

LIONSMEET.

And now a few words from Peter...

LIONSMEET 95 and Other Model Items.

The next "Lionsmeet" is confirmed to be on 13th August at Sutton Coldfield Track "Balleny Green". Let's see if we can have a really good turn-out of Lions and other early Locomotives. It would help if all OLCO members could lobby any owners and builders and their local clubs to participate. Lionsmeet is after all one of our two oportunities to get together each year.

The usual competition for maximum work done (not efficiency) by a Lion will take place. We will use a dynamometer car for measuring the work, if available; otherwise I will use a formula of load x distance per unit time. This procedure may be a more suitable one for the 7 1/4 " G locomotives due to the long reach over the tender from the driving car. For those who wish to use the raised track, driving cars can be provided for visitors but if you prefer your own, the minimum ground clearance is 16 inches.

Enquiries of the Sutton Coldfield Society Committee with regard to local bed and breakfast accommodation suggest that little is available in the area other than the national hotel and motel chains and hotels in nearby towns so I can only suggest Yellow Pages. However, by prior arrangement, space can be found on the site for up to 5, caravans.

At the recent committee meeting, the conclusion was reached that we are not at present capitalising on the wealth of information, drawings and patterns which exist within the OLCO community. This is particularly true for new members like me or prospective members for that matter and we intend to make sure that information is, in future, more routinely available.

NOTE - Maps and track plan in next issue. Ed.

GORSE BLOSSOM RAILWAY.

And now for some sad news from Peter...

Some of you may be aware that we had been asked if a 7 1/4 " G LION could be available to run on the "Gorse Blossom Railway" near Newton Abbot during a visit of the Newcomen Society in July. As an owner of such a miniature LION and model representative I have looked into the feasibility and, unfortunately, the venue proves to be unsuitable. The railway is constructed to heavy narrow gauge standards with gauge widening to 7 1/2 ", inclines of 1:60 using alloy and heavy steel rail and tight radii. In addition, rolling stock is heavy and provided with centre buck-eye coupling only. A visiting LION made with wheels suitable for standard gauge would risk derailment on points and curves and rolling stock with conventional coupling and buffering would have to be transported to the site.

Unfortunately Model Engineer, who can normally be relied upon to be late with notice of events (cf last years LIONSMEET) have already published notice of our appearance at Gorse Blossom. Lets hope we do so well for LIONSMEET.

Peter Gardner

MODELLING.

As Peter has suggested above, there is a wealth of information within OLCO covering both the prototype and models of LION. With the unlikelyhood of the real LION being in steam for some time, now is the time to think seriously of modelling. I suppose LBSC really started the ball rolling, with his series in Model Engineer way back in 1953/4. I understand he never actually built the model and have gathered that those who did had to incorporate certain modifications to ensure that she ran properly. Many were built and doubtless many more will be completed as time passes. Indeed LBSC designs continue to

compete for and to gain the coveted LIONSmeet award. For those of you who require dates of the Model Engineer construction articles and subsequent modification notes, see LIONSHEART numbers 9 or 32. If you wish, I can send details.

However, time marches on. An increasing number of club tracks up and down the country are being equipped with 7 1/4" ground level tracks. LION is an extremely small prototype and is therefore eminently suited to modelling in this gauge. (ie 1/8 of full size). To give some ide of size to those of you who may be on the brink, this scale results in:-

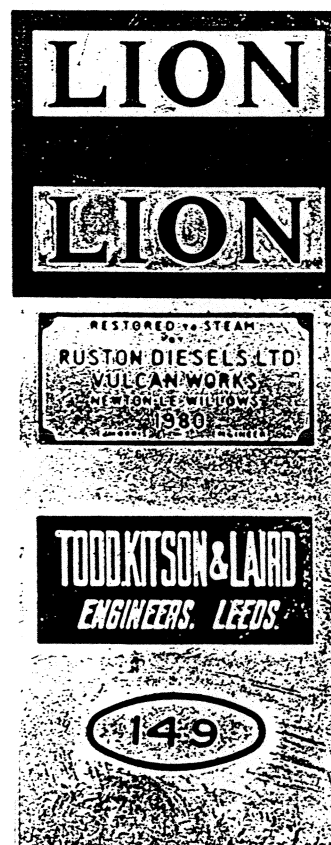
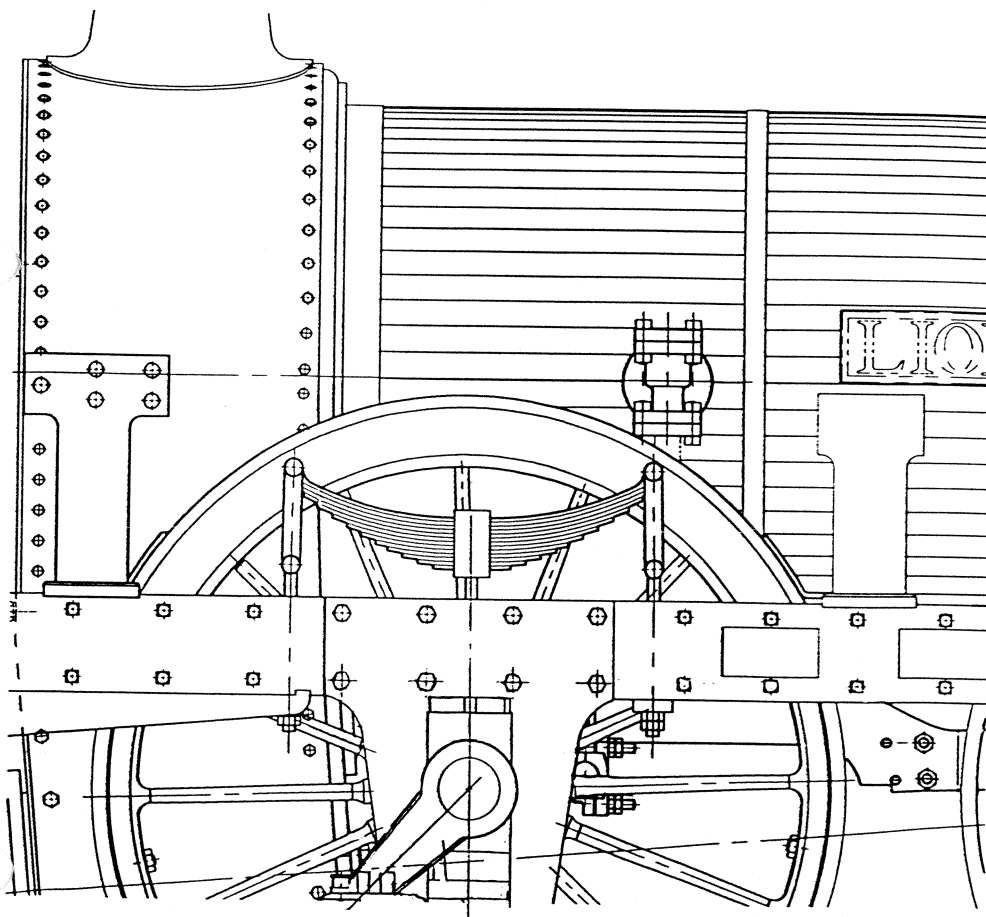
Overall length (inc. tender) - 49".

Height - 19 1/2".

Width - 11 1/2".

Weight - well.. about 140 lbs.

There are currently at least four 7 1/4" LIONS in existence. There is one in Belgium. There is another in the USA. Closer to home, our modelling Rep. Peter Gardner and Treasurer, Geoff. Wright both own LIONS of this size. Chairman David Neish and myself have got as far as purchasing a boiler each. I understand new member Desmond Hill is proposing to build. So, readers, there are several precedents and a fair bit of experience for you to draw on. If you are still not convinced, come to LIONSMEET at Sutton Coldfield on August 13th and have a look. Better still, come to the AGM in Liverpool on May 13th and meet the people. Then if you hurry, you can have one ready by August and join the competition! For those of you who can't wait, we (your executive committee), have details of sources of wheel and cylinder castings, name and builders plates, boilermaker, drawings, boiler cladding, etc. Also there is the "Yellow Book", a comprehensive potted history of LION. Certain items of regalia are on their way to me from Vernon Smallwood. Write to me if you want details of any or all items. Meanwhile, just to whet your appetites, here is a detail of the General Arrangement drawing. It is not yet finished, but is well on the way. Drawings of detail parts are also under construction. I've also added a photocopy of a set of nameplates.



Now for an item of interest from E F Clark...
This is from the Yorkshire Evening Post, dated 9-12-1994.

HISTORIC FIRM IS SOLD OFF

**EXCLUSIVE by
VANESSA BRIDGE
Transport Reporter**

A TOP Leeds engineering company has been taken over by a Barnsley-based firm.

Hunslet Engine Company, which has been producing locomotives at Jack Lane, Leeds, for 130 years, has been sold for an undisclosed sum to mining ~~and loco~~ manufacturers Qualter Hall.

Workers at HEC were told today the new owners had still to decide how many of the 80-strong workforce would be retained.

A spokesman for HEC said job losses could not be ruled out.

HEC's two directors — who will continue to run its sister company Hunslet TPL — will be replaced by Qualter Hall's four-strong board.

The historic name of Hunslet Engine Company will be retained on its products but the company will trade as Qualter Hall.

Ownership of the whole south Leeds site has been transferred to Qualter Hall.

HEC's turnover last year was £2.8m.

Qualter Hall, which designs, manufactures, installs and commissions mining and conveyor systems ~~as well as locos~~ — had a turnover of £16m last year.

HEC and its sister company Hunslet TPL have been struggling for survival for nearly a year.

In March TPL sold its 50-strong design and engineering team in Birmingham to Dutch multinational Holec Machines & Apparaten.

The following month HEC lost a multi-million pound order to supply trains for the London Underground Jubilee line extension.

A German company which won the £6.2m contract was accused by Leeds Central MP John Gunnell of "dirty dealing" and Labour peer Lord Merlyn Rees protested to the Government.

TPL has only one contract — a trouble-hit £90m order to supply 43 "state-of-the-art" Class 323 trains to Birmingham and Manchester.

The contract is running 14 months late because of mechanical problems, but once the last train is delivered next May TPL has no more work.

Last week the company announced it was to make 95 of its 204-strong workforce redundant in January.

TO PAY FOR EQUIPMENT OBTAINED FROM HOLEC

PROBABLY STILL OWNED BY JENBACH

And another from Jan...

CRUEL TRAIN

Scheduled for transmission in March is BBC2's version of the Emile Zola story 'La Bete Humaine'. It has been updated, titled 'Cruel Train' and is now set on the Brighton Line during the Second World War. Stars are David Suchet and, carrying false plates, preserved King Arthur Class 'Sir Lamiel'. The entire railway filming was carried out on a specially-created set inside a factory building on the GEC Witton industrial estate in Birmingham. The set included a double track 'mainline' section with tunnel, signal box and level crossing together with a terminal station capable of holding a 3-coach train. Our friends at Birmingham Railway Museum provided their 4-coupled saddle tank 'Henry' and a loco crew, as well as coaches and a wagon. In addition to scenes featuring 'Henry', the locomotive was kept busy moving vehicles ready for the next shot.

OLCO member Jan Ford spent one shift crewing 'Henry' for shunting and comments "It's the first time I've been told to shunt quietly because of filming in progress! The inside location and the flammable nature of the materials used in the set meant that firing had to be carefully regulated. In addition, care had to be taken that the hot injector overflow did not melt the plastic 'brickwork' on the platform faces. There was no run-round, so certain shunts involved the loco dragging coaches with a long rope, allowing the loco onto one road and the stock onto a diverging siding. Even standing on the set, it was hard to remember that it was all 'make-believe'. I'm looking forward to seeing the transmitted film".

Subscriptions.

Yes, its that time of year again! Subscription renewals are due on April 1st. Just to remind you, the rates are £8 for an individual member, £10 for family and £15 for institutions. I've added a slip for you to complete and send off to the treasurer. I do hope you are able to stay with us. Although LION is currently out of action, she still needs your interest. There is also modelling, the LIONSmeet competition, the forthcoming AGM in which you can have your say as to our future direction and of course, there is always this news letter to keep you informed. (Don't forget, its your voice as well. If you wish to make a point - let's hear it. Perhaps you have something to advertise, or wish for advice, information, etc. Well, drop me a line...). I apologise for the rather short notice, but at least it won't be hanging over you for weeks!!

My thanks to all contributors of articles for this issue. I look forward to receiving more.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

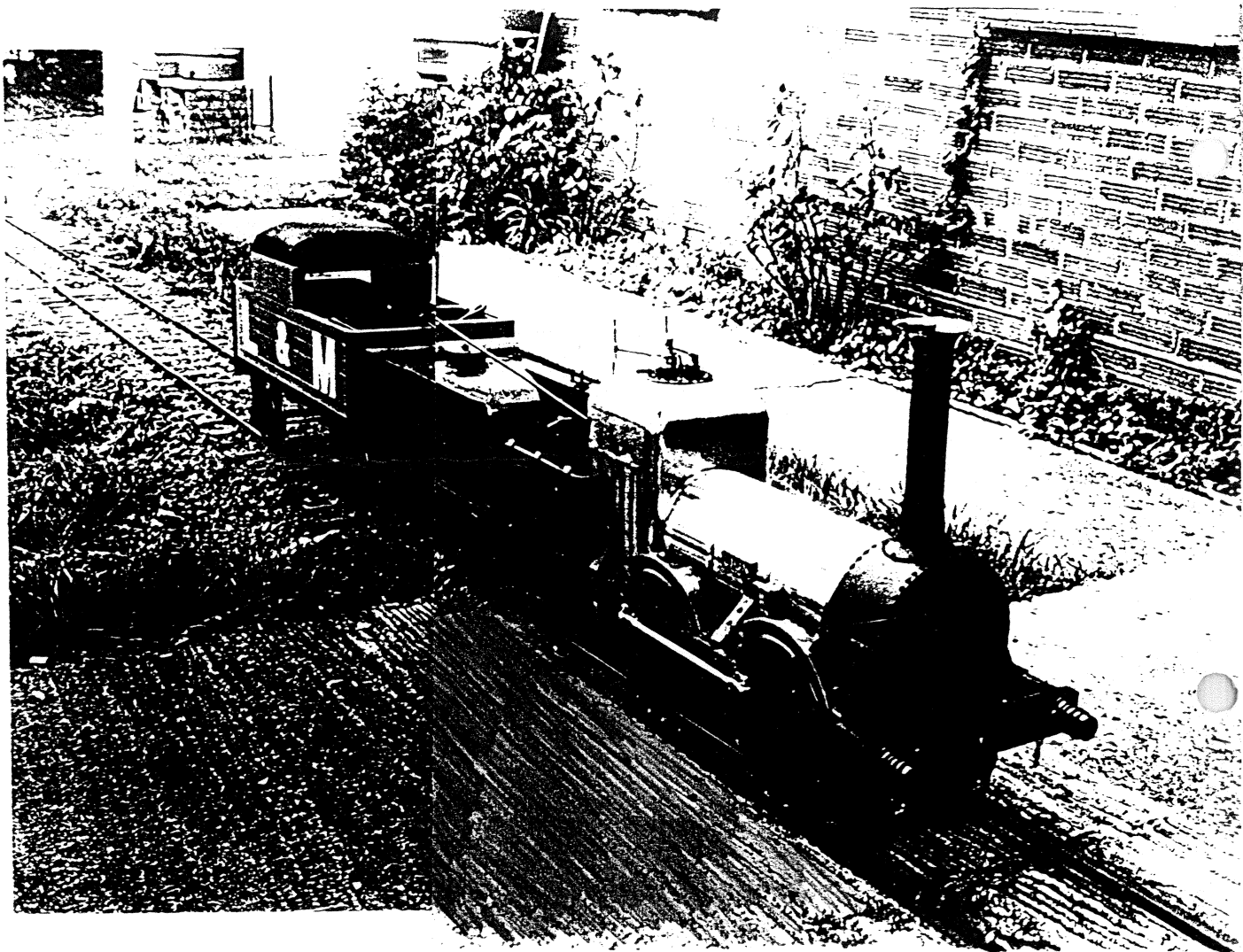
For Sale.. Full set of Spink castings and drawings for 5" gauge LION to LBSC design. £50 ONO. Contact OLCO Secretary.

LIONSHEART is published by The Old Locomotive Committee.

Address for correspondence, queries, etc.

LATE NEWS -

I rang the BBC recently, to ask when the Cruel Train would be screened. A 'spokesperson' refused to divulge this information on the grounds that to pre-empt announcements in the Radio Times would lead to criticism if the actual screening date were to differ from the date given in advance. From that, I assume that it has not yet been shown. So, there you have it. Watch your local press or, dare I say it, the Radio Times.



Two views of Geoff. Wright's recently completed 7 1/4".

