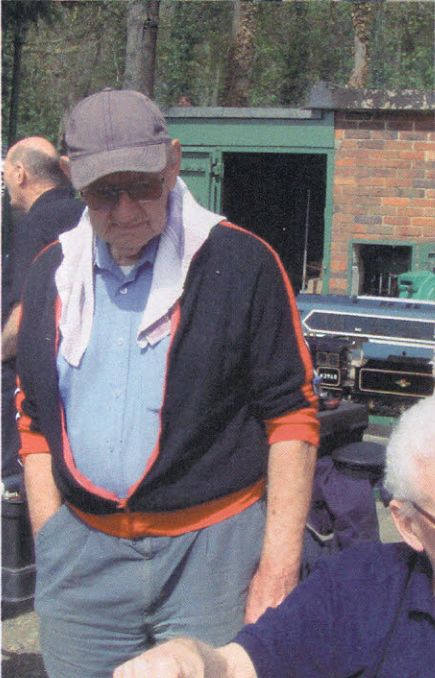




MAIDSTONE MODEL ENGINEERING SOCIETY NEWSLETTER Summer 2010

**SUNDAY 18TH APRIL 2010:
RE-ENACTMENT BY THE
MAYOR OF MAIDSTONE OF THE OPENING OF
THE TRACK IN MOTE PARK IN 1950**



SIXTY YEARS ON by Sue

This being the 60th year of our track in Mote Park is yet another special year for us, last year 2009 being the 80th anniversary of the formation of the Society. In delving for old pictures we were actually able to come up with some unique shots from the DVD of the video of the original cine film faithfully shot from



1949 to 1973 by Mr P.G. Wallis, another copy being kindly given to us by his son Peter. It is thanks to Phillip Wallis that so much of the Club's history has been faithfully recorded, because otherwise it would be lost to us.

This picture is the actual attendance and opening of the original track in April 1950 by the then Mayor Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake. I wish I could name more of the other people present, I do recognise former president Jack Payne. The man in white in a hat with his back to us is Ernie Rix, about to show the Mayor his locomotive Liberty.

Current Club Vice President Ken Linkins and his wife Joan can remember attending the actual event in 1950,

although they were not members at this time. I think it nice to print this picture of Ken driving his Schools class loco taken not so many years after the track opened.



It was especially nostalgic for them attending the re-enactment sixty years later with one of their sons Richard and his youngest son Alex, so I feel it is only right to include their picture next from the day of our 60th celebrations on 18th April 2010, behind Martin and his Duchess, which was the locomotive used in the 2010 re-enactment ceremony.



This next picture is of the actual Founder Member for the Society, Mr L.V. Wicks, taken at the club



premises when he was invited to help celebrate the club being in existence for 50 years in 1979. He formed the club in 1929 originally as a Meccano club for his two sons who were interested in construction sets at that time. After the war some of the members got together and the name of the club was changed to Maidstone Model Engineering Society to reflect the wider interests of the members in other forms of modelling. Regular meetings were held at members' home workshops (In one of those strange coincidences in life, Martin and I now live at the house built for Mr and Mrs Wallis in 1935, where he had a workshop at the bottom of the garden where members met. The building still stands but today it is a summerhouse.) Meetings were also held at the Maidstone Technical School Workshop.

In the last few years of the 1940s a portable track was constructed and this was used at local events in order to raise funds for the building of a permanent track. The track in Mote Park was constructed by the members over 1949 to 1950. The next two pictures are of Mr Wallis himself, driving his Duchess, in the good old days:



Of course, our longest surviving member Bernie White can remember helping to build the track during 1949 and 1950, having joined the club at that time with his friend, our late Treasurer Peter Roots.

So, here's Bernie, having a drive:

And I must include a picture of young Peter Wallis, son of Phillip, who helped to build the track at the grand old age of four years old, and also a picture from this year's celebrations, "Then" and "Now":



Where was I..... oh yes, the track was originally constructed as an oval shape for 2½", 3½" and 5" gauge locomotives. In 1961 the 2½" rail was removed and extending the track commenced to the present shape and length of 1826 feet, completed in 1963..... I feel another celebration in order in a couple of years! Over the years the club has gone from strength to strength and continually improves its facilities as much as it can, given that we are in a public park.

But let me continue by writing about 18th April this year. It was a gloriously sunny day, just right for the occasion, and a wonderful show of club members, some with their families, turned up to celebrate the day. Our Queen of Catering, Pat Riddles, had been busy, organising over the last few weeks home cooking from members' wives and volunteers to help on the day, Pat herself up at the crack of dawn that day to do some cooking. The ladies were certainly busy in the kitchen, assisted by Rex the washer-up part of the time. They turned out a wonderful array of food for lunch. Specially invited guests included:

Peter Wallis (son of the late Phillip and Winifred Wallis, the couple who did a lot for the society from the 1940s into the 1980s until they could no longer) with his children and grandson,
Marion Ledford (sister of our late Treasurer Peter Roots) and family,
Peter Chislett, former President and his wife Wendy,
Joy Payne, wife of former President the late Jack Payne.

Our Guest of Honour was His Worshipful the Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Peter Parvin, who was kind enough to attend with his wife Daphne, a former Mayor of Maidstone herself.

The Mayor and his wife arrived in time for the celebration lunch and were shown around the club premises and facilities by our current Chairman Graham Kimber (member over 30 years) and our current President Geoff Riddles (member 50 years). The four of them were then joined for lunch by our longest serving member Bernie White (member 60 years) and our Hon. Secretary Martin (member 40 years, Hon. Sec. 32 years).

At around 2-15 the Mayor sat behind Martin's 5" Duchess of Hamilton so that he could drive the first lap of the afternoon and cut a ribbon over the track. Holding the ribbon were Joy Payne and Marion Ledford. Seated behind the Mayor on the train were Martin, Daphne the Mayor's wife, Bernie, Peter Wallis, Geoff and Graham. The ribbon was cut and the Mayor drove the first lap faultlessly. When he returned to the station, a toast to the club was made in champagne, or orange juice, or a combination of both. The Mayor then made a very good impromptu speech, and said this was the best event he had been to his entire year as Mayor. After that, he went and admired Graham's steam lorry. Pat and Geoff Riddles then presented the Mayor's wife with a bouquet of flowers before they left us.



The rest of the afternoon was very enjoyable with rides given to the public as usual, and although we had not meant to charge for once, many donations were given. The event was later reported in the local press, in the Kent Messenger and in the Downsmail, which you may have seen. I would mention that other club members took some wonderful pictures of the occasion, namely Richard Cook, Richard Linkins, and Steve Hopkins, they have kindly sent them to me and I wish I could include them all!

Carrying on with the tradition started by Phillip Wallis, Charles Darley has done an excellent DVD lasting 40 minutes (well, 39 minutes to be precise) of this event. It is available for purchase at the sum of £2 per copy to cover minimum costs with a small donation to the club, a real bargain and a nice memory of the day if you were there (or even if you weren't). Please contact the Secretary if you would like a copy.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009

The last year has been another satisfactory year from our financial position. Takings from the track have been up, although where I was there seemed to have been an awful lot of wet and miserable Sundays in July and August. Takings at all the various rallies I have attended have been down, but maybe the economy has had a bit to do with that.

The year had hardly begun when we lost one of our longest standing members, Peter Roots. Pete had carried out the task of Treasurer from 1960 until he died in 2009. Forty-nine years must be something of a record for *any* society. We are going to put a small plaque on the seat outside the clubhouse window, Pete's favourite as it was nearest to the tea and cakes.

The committee would like to give Pete a fitting memorial for his service maybe in the form of a cup or plaque to be awarded annually; and at the end of the AGM I would like to bat a few ideas around for something which would be in favour of all members. Edgar Playfoot has bravely stepped into the position of Treasurer and will be holding his hand out for any monies going into society funds.

Our annual lunch, which we had last Sunday, was its usual success and it was nice to see a few fresh faces, please see if you can attend next year if you did not this, as it is very nice to see our male members scrubbed up and on their best behaviour, accompanied by their long-suffering 'better halves'.

We seem to be having quite a few milestone celebrations, 80 years of the society last August, and coming up on 18th April a re-enactment of the first track opening by Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake, by our current mayor, I do hope as many members as possible can turn up.

Finally, with the toilets all working and paid for, the committee are casting around for the next project and a new kitchen with all the mod cons is favoured. The good thing about the club is we have experts in almost everything and our younger members are playing a valuable role in the running of the society and the future is looking bright, let's hope the weather will be.

Graham Kimber
Chairman.

Note: At the after-AGM discussion amongst all the members present, it was decided that Pete would be commemorated by naming the annual Family and Friends Day, the Peter Roots Family and Friends Day in the future; as these were so important to him. The 2010 Peter Roots Family and Friends Day will be on Saturday 21st August.

*Just a reminder that we still need **STATION STAFF** for public running Sunday afternoons this summer.*

Please offer to help.

The committee member in charge of the list is Jack Ruler. He can be contacted by telephone on 01634 327186; mobile 07791 986058, or e-mail jackruler@blueyonder.co.uk

Thanks folks.

TRAINING & TWO UNUSUAL OPERATIONS by Ron Attfield

After my article 'Two Simple Mistakes' in the winter 2009 news letter it was suggested to me a further article could be of interest.

This will be in four separate sections – Training – The Squadron – Detling – Rochester. The latter two sections are included because of their local interest.

TRAINING

After joining the Fleet Air Arm (FAA) in 1943, one of the first hurdles faced was a practical trade test. We were given a piece of half inch thick black mild steel about 4" square, in the middle a ½" diameter hole was drilled. In addition a billet of 1.1/8" diameter steel about 7/8" long.

The Job:- square up the square edges and file a ¾" square hole in the middle. The billet was to be made into a ¾" cube to fit. The tools available were an engineers square, an assortment of not very sharp files and a 1" and 2" micrometer, the latter shared between four people. The cube had to fit all ways and was supposed to be a push fit! It wasn't that easy. It is interesting that in all my service I only actually made about half a dozen parts, mainly shims and tab locking washers.

After being issued with uniforms etc. we arrived at a Naval camp near Warrington. Here we did square bashing, small arms instruction and firing plus clambering over the assault course. This lasted 3 months and I have to say we were more fit at the end than we had been at the beginning. Technical training was at RAF Hednesford. The camp was on the top of a hill about two miles north of Cannock – Staffordshire. In the winter it was bitterly cold and the heating very basic.

In the previous article I mentioned the 14 cylinder Bristol Hercules Radial engine. This was a sleeve valve unit and with the rear cover removed you were looking at a maze of gears. My first thoughts were 'I'll never understand that lot'. Our instructor made the point 'If you mentally divide the total by 14 it will become a lot more clear.' He was right.

I think it may not be generally known that the propeller shaft, of an aero engine, rotates at a much slower rotational speed than the engine crankshaft. This reduction is very approximately 0.5 : 1 and is effected by the use of a reduction gear. The Merlin inline engine uses a straight spur gear system and Bristol Radial engines an Epicyclic arrangement. Lubrication/oil systems are of great importance and were illustrated using a large screen. This had a schematic layout of a system painted on it's front with clear sections indicating the various oil ways. When illuminated from the rear coloured dots or dashes moved along these allowing you to follow the flows. All dry sump engines will have a pressure and scavenge pump. In the main these are gear type units which were simple and reliable. Different pressures were required for different functions. Typically 150lbs"² to operate the variable pitch airscrew – 70 to the crankshaft etc. and 6 for auxiliaries and servo valve operations. Rolls Royce designed a very compact triple pressure reducing valve as one unit.

Automatic Servo actuated Controls were fitted to control Air/Fuel mixture and engine revolutions. As an aircraft climbs the mixture will vary as atmospheric pressure changes. A small cylindrical valve attached to an Aneroid type bellows will move as the bellows expand and contract. This allows oil to flow and actuate a control valve. The Constant Speed unit was a governor controlled small cylindrical valve. This operated when an engine under or over sped at any given throttle setting.

Another feature on most modern American and British carrier aircraft was the use of cartridge starters – The Coffman Starter. The design principle was high pressure gas pushing against a piston. The piston itself actuated a series of a series of external and internal helical splines which in turn gave a rotational movement to an output shaft. This was connected to the cranshaft via a gear which disengaged as the engine started.

The gas is fed to the cylinder through a stainless steel tube when a cartridge is electrically fired. The cartridge itself looks like an average 12 bore one and is filled with cordite type pellets. They are very fast burning. The system gave the engine four or five revolutions.

Variable Pitch propellers were in the main fully hydraulically controlled and allow the blades to rotate in the central hub, thus changing from fine to coarse pitch. For take off and landing fine pitch was always selected. If the oil supply was broken it would always revert to fine pitch. Our passing out test/exam was both theoretical and practical. The latter included starting and running up the engines of a Wellington Bomber and hand starting a Tiger Moth Trainer. The authorities considered us "qualified"! We had learned a lot but had a lot more to learn.

781 SQUADRON was formed as a communication unit linking the UK with the continent. I joined it in 1944. Our aircraft was a twin engined Airspeed Oxford, normally used to train bomber pilots. It was reliable but unexciting. The NORE Naval HQ was at Chatham and responsible for the channel ports. It was decided Detling was the nearest airfield. Not only was the aircraft unexciting but being posted to a communication squadron was normally also considered not very exciting – this was not always the case as I found out!

DETLING was a Coastal Command Station. However, the RAF were used to having Naval Aircraft arriving from time to time and we settled in quickly. Our pilot and c/o was Lieutenant Griffin. Informally called Griff and formally Sir. Although a ground engineer I flew on at least half of the operations carried out. At that time the temporary landing strips on the continent were very basic and my job was to attend to our fuel, mechanical and servicing needs – as required.

I have not before given details of any of the operations in which I was involved. The two I now record, one from Detling and one from Rochester, were to say the least, somewhat unusual although for different reasons. The vagaries of the weather has been the cause of many a crash and loss of life. On one of our operations it gave us more than a few problems.

We had landed in light snow showers at an airfield some miles south of Paris and were then taken to the Allied Headquarters at St Germain. The Naval Captain we were to collect had not arrived – probably because the snow was now very heavy and was to continue for several days. Each morning a visit to the Met Office gave us a forecast. One morning we were told to expect a clear spell probably lasting for three hours or so. Such a break was long enough for our flight. We were driven to the airfield, Griff talked to flying control while I, with help, cleared the aircraft of snow, checked the fuel and ran up the engines. We were airborne after a rather long take off run.

All was well as we flew over Calais, weather still good, Griff called Manston for a course. I was looking forward to a bath, shave and bed, having slept in an armchair for three nights. Halfway across the channel what looked like mist covered the horizon. All of a sudden we were in a blizzard so it was flying on instruments. Griff said 'We will land at Manston'. He called them again. Their reply was simple 'Manston is closed due to blizzard conditions'. We had a problem. Griff called again. 'When you hear us approaching fire one or two rockets. We will watch out for them.' This they did and amazingly a hole in the snow opened up with a rocket in the middle. It was absolutely clear – down we went and we landed – a very heavy landing.

How we ever found the runway I don't know. We sat in silence and just looked at each other. I don't think our passenger realised how lucky we had been. Griff and I had parachutes – he didn't. A call to flying control – their reply 'you were bloody lucky to get down – by the way we'll come and get you – where are you?' It took them about half an hour to find us. Our Captain insisted on transport to take him to Chatham. A WAAF arrived in a van. We loaded on our gear and climbed aboard. Griff asked for us to be dropped off at Sittingbourne. The journey started in heavy snow which suddenly completely cleared – you could see the stars!!

We were dropped off outside The Bull in the High Street. In the bar we put our flying gear and maewests etc. in a corner. No one took any notice of us, the bar tender simply said 'Good evening gentlemen'. A couple of hours later a van from Detling picked us up. I was somewhat the worse for drink and was not finding it easy to walk.

We were thankful to be alive and lady luck had been with us.

ROCHESTER

Not long after this we were ordered to move to Rochester Airport. Our aircraft would be parked in the Main Hanger. Our accommodation was the Nissen Huts originally used by the AA gun crews, but now home to half a dozen RAF personnel, including a cook. We were to be well fed! We soon found the Robin Hood and in the opposite direction, The Star on Star Hill. Many enjoyable evenings were had and the walk back to the airfield tended to sober you up.

The other unusual operation was in May 1945 several days before the war in Europe ended. Griff advised me to put enough personal gear in a holdall to last about a week. We left Rochester in late afternoon and landed at an airstrip near Krefeld in the Ruhr and stopped overnight. Next day we flew to Lubeck, refuelled and picked up a Naval Captain. We left Germany at Rostock and headed for Denmark.

As we circled Kastrup airport I could see several F.W.190 parked on the perimeter. I said 'I hope they are not operational'. Griff answered 'the resistance are in control and there is a RAF officer in Flying Control'. We landed and taxied to the control building. A Flight Lieutenant came down the steps to greet us 'I'll arrange transport for you'. Our transport arrived in the form of three German type jeeps, each with heavily armed resistance men. After shaking hands we were off to the city at high speed, actually very high speed!

The Hotel Angleterre was then the largest in the city and a handful of British Officers, in conjunction with the resistance, had taken it over as headquarters. The resistance were very excitable and had put down most of the German fighters in street battles. I told Griff I wanted to look around the city and walked towards the dock area. On my way I passed the police headquarters outside which was a threatening mob. I noticed a girl in the middle being punched and kicked, with one person trying to cut off her hair. I asked the person standing next to me 'why?' 'She was a collaborator' was his answer. I turned and walked away. A little further on was a crossroads. As I was about to cross bullets started to fly. Everyone – including me – dropped to the ground and crawled to the nearest cover. Within seconds the resistance were firing at an apartment. It ended very quickly with a body falling from a balcony.

I continued my walk to the docks. To my surprise there was a large German Cruiser and two Destroyers tied up and going nowhere. What was even more surprising was the sight of German sailors acting as guards at the dock gates. They gave no trouble. Further on I was pleased to see the Mermaid statue still in place on the causeway.

I slept that night in a comfortable bed in the Angleterre. Next day I moved to the Hotel Cosmopolite and was befriended by a gentleman named Albert Lerup. A day or two later we stood together in the crowd welcoming the British Airborne troops as they marched into the city. Quite an experience. Next day we flew out of Kastrup. On our way we refuelled and stopped overnight at Knokke on the Belgium coast. The accommodation there was a bell tent!

Back at Rochester I was given two weeks leave and within a month on a ship bound for the Far East. War was an odd business. You did not know or have any control over where you were sent. You met and often lived with a cross section of society. At times you knew fear but didn't show it simply because the chap next to you didn't. I think that's as good a reason as any.

One good thing to come out of it all was at an 18th Birthday party in Rochester where I met Jean, who two or three years later became my wife.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SOME OF THE DETAILS IN RON'S ARTICLE

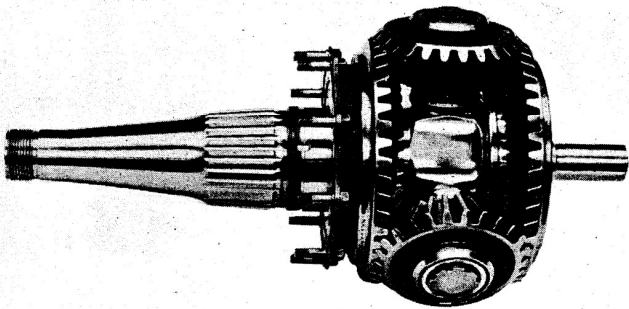


FIG. 231. Airscrew reduction gear of Bristol "Mercury" engine.

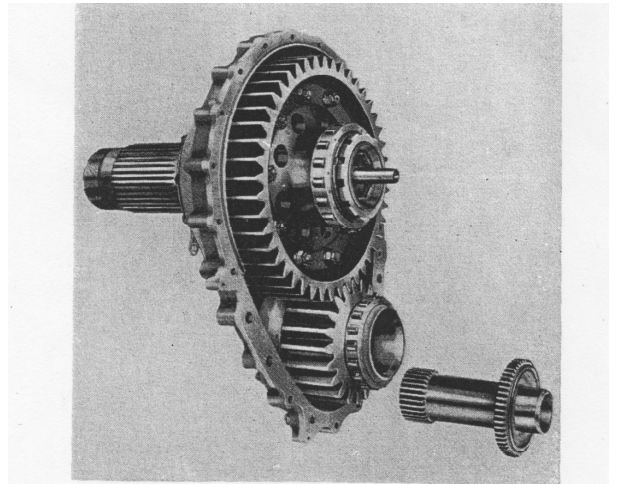


FIG. 232. The Rolls Royce "Merlin" engine airscrew reduction gear, which is similar in principle to that shown in Fig. 233.

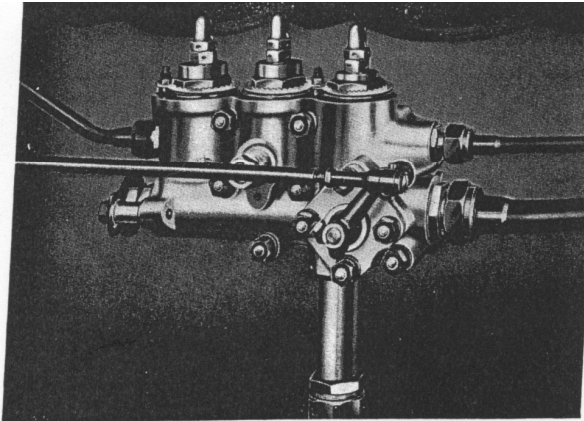


FIG. 272. The Rolls Royce triple oil pressure relief valve unit.

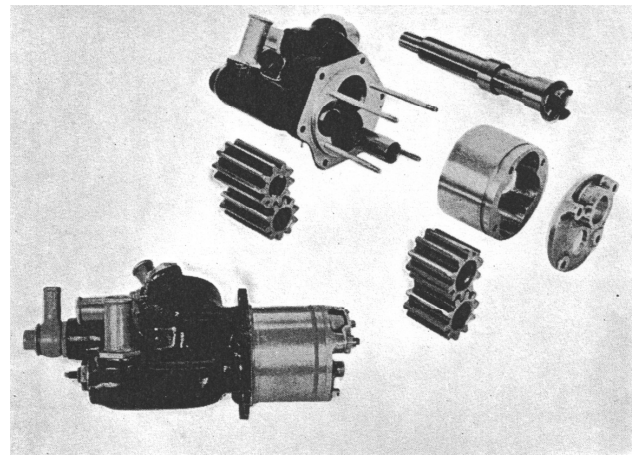


FIG. 268. The Bristol oil pump and its components.

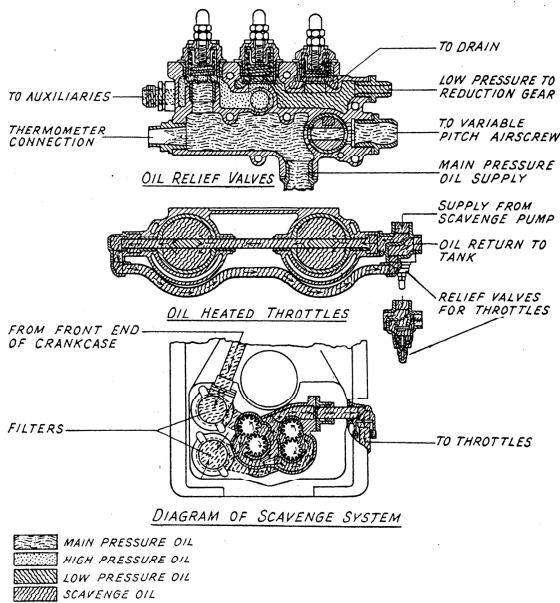


FIG. 271. The Rolls Royce "Merlin" engine lubrication system, oil pumps, relief valves, etc.

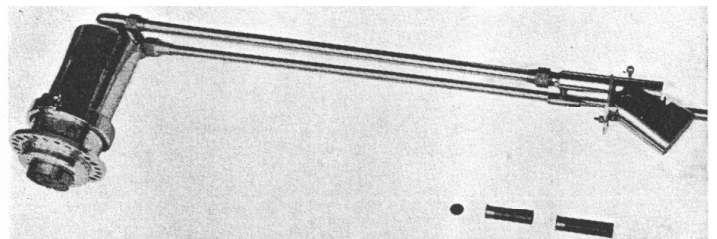


FIG. 336. Coffman cartridge starter unit, showing (below) relative size of cartridges.

A STEAM DRIVING COURSE EXPERIENCE by Charles Darley



Members may know that I have a narrow gauge railway locomotive in the style of Sweet Pea called Baudot. I have always enjoyed narrow gauge railways, so when I was given the chance to again drive for the second year running a loco at the Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway on one of their steam driving courses – I took it.

As with the previous course in 2009 it started with a handshake with Bill Best the owner, and the other chaps there, including our club member Paul, followed by about a 20 minutes introduction to driving a “real” steam loco. Bill always makes the other candidates chuckle by saying that “Paul and Charles should not need to attend this talk because they probably know more about driving than I do”. Driving a 5” loco is one thing, driving a 20 ton loco and a passenger coach and guard's van is quite another.

Our joint driving ability had impressed those at B&WLR to the extent that they offered me a drive on a more complex loco, “Limpopo” in 2009. Sadly, Paul could not make it onto the footplate, but still enjoyed the day. Bill asked Paul to sort out from the engines at B&WLR which would accommodate him on the footplate for another course in 2011 and the planning for that is well in hand.

By 11:00 we were starting to take turns at the controls running up and down the approximately ½ mile of track, including a test on our ability to stop the loco at the desired point, a suitably positioned milk churn on the platform of the station at one end of the run and a lamp standard on the other station at the start of the run. We also had to operate the points to take the loco into the siding and give hand signals to confirm that all was well.



Lunch was provided at 12:30 in the mess room and happy banter about the morning ensued. Then about 13:15 it was time to couple up a coach and a guard's van. This added another 20 tons approximately to the total rolling weight and the driving was entirely different.



B&WLR is located in rolling countryside to the south of Sittingbourne, and thus the track is nowhere near level over its length, in fact it was deliberately built to have a natural low point, so that should there be a “run away” then it would stop gently at the bottom of the dip. This does mean that as one is going down into the dip the loco tends to gain significantly in speed, and then lose speed as one climbs out of the dip.

We were charged with making the ride for the passengers as smooth as possible, thus one hand on the regulator and the other on the brake to keep the speed of the train as constant as possible and certainly no rapid acceleration followed by rapid braking which could throw passengers off their seats.

It was no easy task but we were given many a run up and down, and most did achieve a degree of competency. When the instructors were confident in our driving abilities they also allowed us to uncouple and couple up the coach, for being an out and back line there was a run around at each end, necessitating the regular uncoupling/coupling procedures.

From 14:00 family and friends were permitted to come to the track and enjoy the afternoon running, by riding in the coach or taking a picnic or just sitting in the stations and watching the trains go by.

It was a very happy event made more so by seeing our young club member Harry there taking charge of the somewhat complex points and signal at the distant station. Thanks Harry for your time at the track.

If you are interesting in doing a driving course, then take a look at the website www.bwlr.co.uk and make a booking. If you just wish to visit then the B&WLR is open on the first Sunday in the month, from Easter to October, but do check dates and times on their website.

(With acknowledgement and thanks to Mike Goodes for taking the pictures.)

CCTV - A CAUTIONARY TALE by Peter Jackson

In the days of analogue CCTV, which recorded images on a tape, each camera contained a sensor, infra-red lights and a microphone. The pictures were recorded with sound and it took at least the movement of a small animal to trigger the sensor. Returning from holiday I was treated to pictures of the cat washing its face. The modern digital system has nine degrees of sensitivity, records pictures onto a hard drive but, unless one pays a huge sum of money, no sound.

Setting my system to minimum sensitivity I find that it responds to:-

A cloud crossing the sun

A shadow appearing on the garden path

A flower waving in a gentle breeze

A spider weaving its web in front of the camera.

This took a long time and every movement was shown.

The modern system is triggered if the picture changes and at night the moths are attracted to the infra-red which radiates a frequency picked up by their antennae. Watching the recordings is far from entertaining sometimes it is impossible to determine the reason for the recording being triggered.

Come back analogue. It did its job well, recorded intruders in the garden and the sound showed their intentions, no more so than when two local foxes had a digging competition in the flower bed.

Good luck to whoever has to sit and watch the recordings.

MERTWITT'S MOTORING AND OTHER MEMORIES by JB

Food for thought:

Mertwitt's motoring memory spans about 60 years. 60 years previous to that there were very few cars. 85 years before that, in 1805, Nelson was giving the French a good seeing to at the Battle of Trafalgar in a 40 year old wooden boat.

More recently, during the years of hostility, most car owners 'laid up' their vehicles and the majority of the roads were very quiet by today's standards. Buses ran, of course, delivery vehicles and military convoys, comprising a whole range of equipment including even small track layers. The few car users were farmers, doctors and other professional people. The chance of having a ride in a car was remote and getting to know how they worked even less likely, unless you had access to books. At school I had swapped something for a bundle of old pre-war Meccano magazines, a publication which had ceased during the war, unlike the Model Engineer which continued throughout. I had been given an old Meccano set (the blue and gold painted one) by an older cousin, so I was able to start building models. I pestered Mother about ordering the MM for me and I believe publishing resumed in late 1946, much to my excitement.

I remember sometimes carrying a packet of eggs all the two miles to school for the Head Mistress. Dad kept chickens and as food was on ration, surplus eggs were always welcome. I don't remember any money changing hands, but these acts of generosity got me out of a sticky situation on one occasion. One day I was fighting with another boy (as boys do) and in the mayhem I tore the sleeve right off the other's shirt. Remembering that clothes were still on ration as well as food, this was a serious act and resulted in the boy's mother coming to the school to confront the Head Mistress. Somehow the Head managed to pacify the irate parent and I was not seriously disciplined. It was probably something to do with the free egg supply.

When the war finally ended in 1945 following the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in August, we all celebrated the victory and looked forward to better times to come. In Barming at the junction of Queens Road and the A26 Tonbridge Road, Sid Longley, whose photo is on the Clubhouse wall, ran a fish and chip shop. Sid was a chain smoker and this habit continued even throughout the process of serving us with a bag of chips for one old penny. The premises are still a takeaway fish and chip shop to this day. Sid's brother had the grocery store next door where I bought my first Lyons icecream. Icecream came in a round bar and for 1½d you got a portion stuck in a cone. I walked back to school during dinnertime with the icecream to be met by a boy whom I thought was a friend. On seeing the icecream, he suggested that I swap my icecream for his toy gun. As I had already licked some of it by this time it seemed like a good exchange, but after finishing the icecream he beat me up and took his gun back. He wasn't a friend any more and the next time I bought an icecream no deals were struck.

Uncle George (his name has been changed to protect the guilty) had a coal delivery business in Southport, and was entitled to a petrol allowance to operate his lorry. In those days many trucks had petrol engines and I should imagine that they were not very economical on fuel consumption. Anyway, we had a letter from Uncle George to say that he and his family were planning a holiday in Kent, and could they stay with us. He had managed to save some of his lorry fuel and they arrived in a 1936 Morris 10 with enough petrol in cans for the return journey. His biggest worry was crossing London as all the road signs were still absent, having been removed during the war in case of invasion. He couldn't stop to ask directions because of his Lancastrian accent, which would have raised the obvious question "with petrol on ration why are you so far from home?" Uncle George's arrival lifted everybody's spirits as he was a fun person to be with, and gave us all a much needed tonic which included a few short local runs in his car. Thus I became really interested in cars when I was ten years old.

I never aspired to much academically at that time because I sat and failed the eleven plus exam without knowing much of what it was all about. One of my teachers, a Miss Parker, had observed that I was quite precise at drawing and painting and remarked that I would probably end up being a draughtsman, but I didn't know what one of them did. At twelve years old I sat another exam, this time for the Boys Technical School. I was considered a borderline case and had to go for an interview at Westree Road, Maidstone. I had never experienced anything like that and was very nervous. During the interview I was asked what interests I had, so I talked about my Meccano hobby. I was then asked what I knew about cars and had my father got one. Well, we hadn't got a car at that time, but my albeit limited knowledge of cars must have helped me to pass the interview.

In 1949 another uncle and his family all came to us for a holiday in a 1933 Triumph 9. Days out by car were still a novel experience for us, and on one memorable day we went as far as Hastings, all seven including Grandma squeezed in somehow. I remember buying my first Dinkytoy car in Hastings for 6d (2½p), but the event which clearly comes to mind happened on the journey home. Uncle Bill was driving when we suddenly heard a police car bell behind us. In those days the speed cops had black MG sports cars with canvas hoods, so no police signs on the roof. On stopping, Uncle Bill was very polite with the officer and got off with a warning, even though he had exceeded the 30 m.p.h. speed limit. When we again got underway, Dad questioned why his brother had been so polite, as it was not usually his nature. "If I had made a fuss," said Uncle Bill, "with seven in the car, he could easily have had me for overloading."

Soon after that, Dad decided that perhaps we should have a car. Being a Yorkshireman, Dad had been prudent with money and had managed to save a little in spite of the austerity of the times. He asked if his brother could get us a good car with a budget £200. Uncle Bill was still in the motor repair trade, so he managed to buy a car for £100 and spent the remaining £100 on 'doing it up'. The following summer of 1950, Uncle Bill and family came to Kent for a holiday again, this time bringing our car with them. Uncle Bill drove his Triumph 9, and Madge, the 'Girl Friday' at his firm, brought our 1936 Morris 8. The car had been completely overhauled including a full body respray in black cellulose. Uncle Bill had made his own spray gun which worked off the blow end of a cylinder type vacuum cleaner, using peanut butter jars as reservoirs. Brushing Belco cellulose could be bought at Halfords and when mixed 50/50 with thinner, could be sprayed at low pressure. Also at Halfords, at that time in Week Street in Maidstone, we bought spanners and a footpump, because you went nowhere without having a toolkit.



Mother was a bit of a 'go-getter' and had started taking driving lessons in advance of the car's arrival, but was still a provisional driver. Dad had never driven a car, but as he had had a motorcycle licence many years ago when running the shop with his brother, this would still qualify as a full licence without taking a further test. Thus he was able to sit alongside Mum while she got her practice between official lessons.

Once you get a car, you need a garage to keep it in, and this was when the help of yet another uncle came in useful. Dad and Uncle Pad drew up a plan for a garage about 20ft. x 12ft., to be erected in a corner of the garden next to the fence. Buying new materials was out of the question, so an order was placed with Faggs, a demolition firm in Ashford. The framework was constructed using 3" x 2" timber all clad with reclaimed corrugated steel sheets. Windows were positioned all along the back and a full length bench complete with a new 4" engineers vice. An overhead cable from the house supplied electricity for light and power.

With Uncle Pad's guidance, I was soon to learn the rudiments of car maintenance, such as distributor points setting, valve tappet adjustment and regular 'de-cokes'. All these jobs are now history for the average car owner, but in the 1950s they were a necessity if reliable running was to be achieved.

Not long after this, Dad thought that it would be a good idea if I had a shed of my own, to keep me out of his garage where I was always doing things and making a mess, which we all know boys never clear up. We had two chicken sheds, one of which had become redundant and could be cleaned up for me to use. Windows were installed, a bench and mandatory electricity supply. About this time the Wolf Cub electric drill outfit was produced which included many accessories to enable wood turning, sawing, grinding and polishing. I was presented with the basic outfit, my first power tool, and on a visit soon after, Grandma was aghast that a 15 year old should be let loose on such a dangerous device. Eventually I had all the attachments for the drill and spent many happy hours in the shed, sometimes late into the evening. The 'Practical Mechanics' which I bought each month had a great influence on my workshop activities at that time, and I continued to get that publication for many years.

In 1954 we had a big holiday, not in terms of expenditure, but gathering of the family. A chalet had been booked at Jaywick Sands near Clacton. Aunt Em and Uncle Pad now had their own car and we went in ours. To get to Essex it was best to use the Gravesend/Tilbury ferry, otherwise a journey to London would be involved. Aunt Edith and Uncle Bill were coming south from Yorkshire towing a caravan, still with the 1933 Triumph 9. Well, that was the plan, but it was an experience to remember. They arrived at the campsite minus the caravan, but with the car engine emitting a horrible knocking sound. They had to abandon the caravan near Colchester after the engine became overheated and a big end bearing had failed. Uncle Bill said he had been 'pushing on a bit' because my cousin who was serving in the RAF had to be dropped off at camp by a certain time. Not to be daunted by this minor mishap, Uncle Bill who was a true 'hands on' man, said that he would try to fix the problem at the campsite the next day.

The following morning he donned overalls, dropped the sump and removed the failed con rod and piston. The white metal lining of the bearing had melted and the particles were laying in the sump oil. We toured the backstreet workshops of Clacton until Uncle Bill found what he wanted – some waste white metal swarf. Back at the campsite with methylated spirit, Bakers fluid and two bean cans, he melted the white metal and poured it onto the con rod cup and cap. That was the easy bit, because for the next few hours, he painstakingly scraped in the bearing by offering it up to the journal and removing the surplus material with just a penknife. Uncle Pad, who was a vehicle Test Engineer at the REME works in Ashford, could refit an engine and more, but he had never witnessed anything quite like that, pure skill and patience.

John Barrow.

Motoring Brain Teaser:

Britain's last battleship, HMS Vanguard was scrapped in 1960, having been in service only 16 years. How many Minis could Alex Issigonis have built from the reclaimed metal?

Clue: HMS Vanguard was 814 ft. long and had a reputed armour belt 14” thick.

The answer is further on in this newsletter.

WINTER WITTERINGS by Edgar Playfoot

(Editor: This was meant for last newsletter but the email vanished.) Well, this was written nearly at the year-end, and as is commonly said, the year 2009 has just flown by, almost literally because I can now fly my fleet of six model helicopters quite competently, together with several fixed wing models. I have also successfully passed the 'A' certificate for fixed wing Radio Controlled model flying as ratified by the British Model Flying Association (BMFA). All my model helicopters and planes are built from kits, which only take a few days to complete. So I still have plenty of time to pursue steam engine building. Although I am still building a 5" gauge Peppercorn A1 to Michael Breeze's design, the building gets interrupted many times by these other interests, including Gauge One.

I do find that Gauge One engines can be quite a challenge to get to run really well. Only this summer my Aster Battle of Britain Light Pacific started to run out of steam following an incident when a valve gear rod detached itself from one of the eccentric straps. In order to re-attach it I had to substantially dismantle the engine. After reassembly it just did not run as well as previously. On further examination I found that one of the outer slidebars was binding a little which I corrected. But it still would not keep up pressure. The wicks appeared to be OK and undamaged, but I decided to fit new wicks. What a transformation, I just could not believe the difference new wicks made.

I built the Wainwright 'D' in Gauge One early in 2009, or was it 2008! Anyway, I painted it during the summer of 2009. I built it to the 'words and music' of Dick Moger and Barry Applegate known as The DEE Book. I made several mistakes in the building, the most significant being the drilling of the steam ports 3/32" rather than 1/16". I was using a particularly nice piece of German silver for the cylinder block and didn't want to bin it. So I compensated by adjusting the valve length and cutout. I consulted both Dick Moger and Barry Applegate admitting my error. Dick did not think it would make any difference. Barry thought it would upset the exhaust event.

I steamed the model before painting both on rolling road and track. First steamings were disappointing. The engine ran fast but had little pulling power and would not run consistently at low speed. Later I improved this drastically by retarding the slip eccentric timing. Another problem I had was piston tightness, which I found to be due to the 'O' rings having swollen presumably due to oil intolerance. I replaced these with Viton 'O' rings from Polly Model Engineering and have had no further trouble.

Test steamings continued mainly on my rolling road. The axle pump worked superbly and easily kept up with boiler demand. I was, however, dissatisfied by the steaming of the boiler, which only just kept up with the steam demand of the engine on the rolling road. Running trials on track showed that the boiler could only cope with steam demand when running light. I tried all sorts of modifications to the smoke box, blast pipe, burners, fire arch etc. I even made a new 'B' type boiler. The best performance I could achieve from the engine was with a rake of four of my Southern coaches. The engine would pull my rake of six coaches, but steam pressure would gradually fall away and it would have to stop for a blow up.

After painting I put the model away not wanting to dirty it. I am also a bit concerned about spoiling the paintwork, which is mostly done with Phoenix Precision Paints because my local supplier and mixer of cellulose paint have ceased to trade. I did try and match up using the cellulose paint I had in stock, but with limited success, and eventually I gave up. I have never been very impressed with Phoenix Precision Paints, but using their special thinners and applying the paint in warm summer weather produced quite satisfactory results, I just hope the paint proves to be durable and heat resistant.

Just the other day I decided to make a new cylinder block for the Dee with the correct size steam ports. I steamed it on my rolling road and I don't think it has made any difference, but to date the gales and wet weather have prevented me trying it out on a track. So I have been back to work on the A1, but I now see that there is decorating indoors with my name on it!

NEW MEMBERS

Nick Sands, from Maidstone, a former member who has rejoined the Society now he is retired, having built a Boxhill 25 years ago and is building an Ariel (Merchant Navy)

and

Colin Hayman, from Iden Green, a Retired Facilities Manager, who is building a 5" gauge GWR Manor.

We welcome them into the Society.

SAD BAD NEWS

We are sad to report that long standing member Ron Heathcote died in early April at the age of 90. He never fully recovered from a fall he had in February which had stopped him joining our annual lunch with his daughter Carole as he liked to do. Ron was Hon. Secretary of the club between 1970 and 1973. He was also a member of Gravesend Society which was closer to where he lived, so he was able to get there much easier than to Maidstone in later years.

He is pictured last August here at Maidstone on his 90th birthday weekend, with the locomotive he called his B12, that he sold in recent years to Edgar Playfoot. Ron was a Life Member of the Society and although he had not been able to attend Maidstone very much in the last few years, we still feel his loss.



Our sincere condolences go to his family.



I don't necessarily mention when a member's wife passes away, perhaps I should, but I think nearly everybody knows Dave Deller and his wife Sheila, as she did on occasions accompany him to the Park and other Club functions, although she was also known for packing him off to the club when she wanted some time to herself!

I am so sorry to report that I have heard that Sheila has just died (it being the end of May as I finish this newsletter). She had bravely battled bone marrow cancer over the past couple of years. Sheila was a tower of strength and support to Dave (as all good couples are to each other), and we know how hugely he will miss her.

She may have been small of stature, but she was one great lady.

Our hearts go out to Dave, his two sons and entire family.

Dave & Sheila pictured at the club lunch in February.

PROVERBS

(The “Funnies” pages)

1. A day without sunshine is like night.
2. On the other hand, you have different fingers.
3. 42.7% of all statistics are made up on the spot.
4. 99% of lawyers give the rest a bad name.
5. Remember, half the people you know are below average.
6. He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
7. Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.
8. The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese in the trap.
9. Support bacteria. They're the only culture most people have.
10. A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
11. Change is inevitable, except from vending machines.
12. If you think nobody cares, try missing a couple of payments.
13. Light travels faster than sound.
That's why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
14. Okay, so what's the speed of dark?
15. When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
16. Hard work pays off in the future... Laziness pays off now.
17. How much deeper would the ocean be without sponges?
18. Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.
19. What happens if you get scared half to death, twice?
20. Why do psychics have to ask you your name?
21. Inside every older person is a younger person wondering, 'What on earth happened?'
22. Just remember -- if the world didn't suck, we would all fall off.
23. How many of you believe in psychokinesis? Raise my hand.
24. Life isn't like a box of chocolates. It's more like a jar of jalapeños. What you do today, might burn your butt tomorrow.

And don't forget that Mark Twain once wrote, “Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.”

POLITICS.....

While walking down the street one day a Member of Parliament is tragically hit by a truck and dies. His soul arrives in heaven and is met by St. Peter at the entrance.

'Welcome to heaven,' says St. Peter. 'Before you settle in, it seems there is a problem. We seldom see a high official around these parts, you see, so we're not sure what to do with you.'

'No problem, just let me in,' says the man.

'Well, I'd like to, but I have orders from higher up. What we'll do is have you spend one day in hell and one in heaven. Then you can choose where to spend eternity.'

'Really, I've made up my mind. I want to be in heaven,' says the MP.

'I'm sorry, but we have our rules. '

And with that, St. Peter escorts him to the elevator and he goes down, down, down to hell. The doors open and he finds himself in the middle of a green golf course. In the distance is a clubhouse and standing in front of it are all his friends and other politicians who had worked with him. Everyone is very happy and in evening dress. They run to greet him, shake his hand, and reminisce about the good times they had while getting rich at the expense of the people. They play a friendly game of golf and then dine on lobster, caviar and champagne. Also present is the devil, who really is a very friendly and nice guy who has a good time dancing and telling jokes. They are having such a good time that before he realises it, it is time to go. Everyone gives him a hearty farewell and waves while the elevator rises.... The elevator goes up, up, up and the door reopens on heaven where St. Peter is waiting for him.

'Now it's time to visit heaven. '

So, 24 hours pass with the MP joining a group of contented souls moving from cloud to cloud, playing the harp and singing. They have a good time and, before he realises it, the 24 hours have gone by and St. Peter returns.

'Well, then, you've spent a day in hell and another in heaven. Now choose your eternity.'

The MP reflects for a minute, then he answers: 'Well, I would never have said it before, I mean heaven has been delightful, but I think I would be better off in hell.'

So St. Peter escorts him to the elevator and he goes down, down, down to hell.

Now the doors of the elevator open and he's in the middle of a barren land covered with waste and garbage. He sees all his friends, dressed in rags, picking up the trash and putting it in black bags as more trash falls from above. The devil comes over to him and puts his arm around his shoulder.

'I don't understand,' stammers the MP. 'Yesterday I was here and there was a golf course and clubhouse, and we ate lobster and caviar, drank champagne, and danced and had a great time. Now there's just a wasteland full of garbage and my friends look miserable. What happened?'

The devil looks at him, smiles and says, 'Yesterday we were campaigning, today you voted.'

BARBECUE RULES (more “Funnies”)

Standard Operating Procedures.....

As we are about to enter The Barbecue Season, it is important to refresh your memory on the etiquette of this sublime outdoor cooking activity.

When a man volunteers to do The Barbecue, the following chain of events are put into motion:

The Routine...

- (1) The woman buys the food.
- (2) The woman makes the salad, prepares the vegetables, and makes dessert.
- (3) The woman prepares the meat for cooking, places it on a tray along with the necessary cooking utensils and sauces, and takes it to the man who is lounging beside the grill - beer in hand.
- (4) The woman remains outside the compulsory three metre exclusion zone where the exuberance of testosterone and other manly bonding activities can take place without the interference of the woman.

Here comes the important part:

- (5) THE MAN PLACES THE MEAT ON THE GRILL.

More routine....

- (6) The woman goes inside to organise the plates and cutlery.
- (7) The woman comes out to tell the man that the meat is looking great. He thanks her and asks if she will bring another beer while he flips the meat.

Important again:

- (8) THE MAN TAKES THE MEAT OFF THE GRILL AND HANDS IT TO THE WOMAN.

More routine...

- (9) The woman prepares the plates, salad, bread, utensils, napkins, sauces, and brings them to the table.
- (10) After eating, the woman clears the table and does the dishes.

And most important of all:

- (11) Everyone PRAISES the MAN and THANKS HIM for his cooking efforts.
- (12) The man asks the woman how she enjoyed ' her night off ', and, upon seeing her annoyed reaction, concludes that there's just no pleasing some women.

ACTUAL NOTES FROM HOSPITAL CHARTS (Very funny – but maybe scary too!)

1. The patient refused autopsy.
2. The patient has no previous history of suicides.
3. Patient has left white blood cells at another hospital.
4. She has no rigours or shaking chills, but her husband states she was very hot in bed last night.
5. Patient has chest pain if she lies on her left side for over a year.
6. On the second day the knee was better, and on the third day it disappeared.
7. The patient is tearful and crying constantly. She also appears to be depressed.
8. The patient has been depressed since she began seeing me in 1993.
9. Discharge status: Alive but without my permission.
10. Healthy appearing decrepit 69-year old male, mentally alert but forgetful.
11. Patient had waffles for breakfast and anorexia for lunch.
12. She is numb from her toes down.
13. While in ER, she was examined, x-rated and sent home.
14. The skin was moist and dry.
15. Occasional, constant infrequent headaches.
16. Patient was alert and unresponsive.
17. Rectal examination revealed a normal size thyroid.
18. She stated that she had been constipated for most of her life, until she got a divorce.
19. I saw your patient today, who is still under our care for physical therapy.
20. Both breasts are equal and reactive to light and accommodation.
21. Examination of genitalia reveals that he is circus sized.
22. The lab test indicated abnormal liver function.
23. Skin: somewhat pale but present.
24. The pelvic exam will be done later on the floor.
25. Patient has two teenage children, but no other abnormalities.

A DREAM IS NEVER FAR AWAY by Paul Rolleston

Writing this edition started off rather spontaneously, before Xmas when at the end of a pretty bad week at work, after a shower and after late night Xmas shopping and finally after dinner, it was time to crash out with a drink(s) and some favourite music. In a short space of time, and after a few drinks, I had mellowed, and was feeling like I could take on the whole world, I even thought that the Hon. Press Officer would be an easy challenge. In my heightened state of assumed invincibility I thought to actually beat her to it and deliver my manuscript ahead of schedule before she started the usual begging, pleading, threatening with menace e-mails.... Ah! Bless her, it is now May, so the dream of getting ahead of things was, not far away, but simply unrealistic. Where did it go wrong, I'll blame Xmas and Easter and the Election etc. Right, heads down for the usual agenda.

Drink

Yes, definitely first things first. I am already well stocked for this article courtesy of a satisfied Lady customer (stop it): a Flient, who has donated a bottle of single malt whiskey taken from her dearly beloved's private stash, so sshh! I don't think he knows. But the selected drink is gin and tonic, why? I'll explain; I believe in experimentation in all things, until that is, I settle on what's right for me and then I become immovable and entrenched in my good old fashioned way. Why change when you know it works for you, anyway for this edition a bottle from a satisfied Custend was a Beefeater 24 Gin so I figured I'd give it ago, purely for the purpose of determining its' suitability as an author's aid. Let me know what you think.

Definitions:

A Custend is a customer who has become a friend.

A Frustomer is a friend who has become a customer.

A Flient is a friend who is also an up-market client.

A Custard is a customer who is also a complete and utter Bastard.

Music.

In between now and the last article I've had a birthday and spent my gift vouchers on some classical guitar discs. I can't imagine how they could influence the article in any way at all but we shall see what transpires. Suffice to say I'll enjoy hearing the music in the background.

Emotion.

Well, as I have mentioned previously I think that emotion does have its' place in engineering and I'll come back to this in a later episode.

Humour.

To coin a phrase (mine): Live to laugh to live, or Laugh to live to laugh, so a couple of chuckles are in the programme.

Memories.

Right, have you got your drink? Cheers! Let's pick up where I left off at the Crampton Museum. Has anybody been? I've had no demands for reimbursement. Mertwitt (JB) went, but he also found it shut, so phone first.

I'll now get back to the story of my time at Fords, particularly as it was also a significant period in time when I was formulating my model engineering Dreams.

Let's return to where I was last in my epic saga: Rollestons' the name and Cock ups the game. (But, I did have some triumphs - read on).

The scene is once again the same Ford Motor Company tool room and you will recall my referring to two jig borers of the planner table type.

The high degree of precision possible with these jig borers meant that they were only used for work pieces that required the ultimate in accuracy. I did get a bit obsessed with the concept of accuracy to the nth degree, which endeared me to one of the more affable foreman, so much so that I was more often than the others given certain jobs that would satisfy my craving. As a consequence, I started to move amongst the cream of toolmakers and in doing so I learned a great deal that was well beyond apprenticeship training at Chatham Dockyard. For example; I was introduced to 2 methods of measuring the angle of a tapered bore using precision steel balls, namely; the two ball or four ball methods (otherwise known as the Man and Superman methods). Said balls, that were referred to as 'The Marbles' came in a beautiful, upholstered wooden box in pairs of different sizes and were kept in the inspection crib. The trigonometry involved was v e r y i n t e r e s t i n g , but if I could blow my own trumpet on just one academic subject it would be maths. I was enjoying myself and moving upwards career wise. Having got myself a little off the bottom rung of the ladder, so to speak , I thought that I should start to behave myself and not be so much 'Jack the Lad'. Easier said than done, since I was all too often provoked by 'friendly' mischief makers into acts of forgivable reprisals which were expected and were part of the tool room culture. But, to put that into perspective, on the other hand, at the same time and much more so over later years, I have developed a deep vindictiveness that comes from repeatedly being the victim of Machiavellianism as practised not only in the workplace but in all walks of life. I learned the hard way that the facts of life are more than just the birds and bees and that the comfort of naivety was something to avoid i.e. get streetwise or crawl into a hole. So, anyway, where was I..... Ah! Yes; the humour and seemingly safe culture of the toolroom, especially on night shift. This is a long story so have another drink.

A funny story, well actually I thought it was more than funny, it was hilarious, but as I've just indicated my efforts could be seen as an act of extreme retribution, and on this particular occasion one that was not much appreciated by Kenny who was the perpetrator of an incident that was just one too many that went too far. So Kenny the bully became a target for my style of justice; sweet revenge.

It will take a bit of effort to describe to you what I can so clearly visualise in my mind's eye, so I will try and set the scene in as few words as possible. All toolmakers were allocated a large wooden cabinet, being half cupboard and half drawers, usually alongside any machine or bench where they were working either permanently or on a 6 month rota basis. On top of these cabinets the toolmakers would place their own cabinets (chests). We had chairs tucked into corners and crevices all over the place, gotta sit on something whilst tea or lunch breaking. Now, lunch is an important word so remember it. There was a works canteen but it was only open for the day shift, so for the night shift it was every man for himself; sandwiches mainly, but in the welders crib there was an industrial oven for pre-heating welding rods. This was pressed into domestic service to warm lunchtime pies, toasted sandwiches and also to heat cans of soup. You got the picture? Good!

Kenny liked his can of soup at lunchtime. He used to keep a stock of them in his cupboard, all Heinz, and several different flavours. His favourite was Oxtail, this is another important word. His usual routine was that during the early tea break he would select his can and leave it on the bench top, and then about an hour before lunch run a can opener around the lid and lift it about a ¼ inch, and wander off to put it into the oven. Are you with me so far, Good.

Now, a small but necessary deviation from the story. In those days I had a dog that I called Dudley. He was a Mutt of the highest order and there will be further mention of him later. Dudley had his own pantry at home for his Winalot, Bonios, chews, treats and cans of Pal meaty chunks in gravy. Can you see where this is going? No, alright, I'll explain further. Mum and Dad didn't have a car so I used to take Mum shopping and of course a can of Heinz oxtail soup fell into the trolley. Got it yet?

Further background information that should be stated is: that we had in the toolroom a foreign chap of Asian origin, one Paul Bandarhri and he used to have some weird concoctions for his lunch and was often taunted about Alsatian stew, Catomeat etc. Have you got it yet? No, oh! Dear me.

The Modus Operandi.

I used a very sharp craft knife to carefully remove and re-affix the labels off of one and onto the other can and vice versa. Hands up all those who don't get it yet. Ye Gods!

And so, on the next turn of night shifts the stage was set. I waited for the night when Oxtail was the choice and simply swapped the cans when no one was looking. Up to that point in time I'd been able to keep the whole thing to myself. In due course, proceedings started with bated breath on my part and a nonchalance born out of ignorance on Kenny's part as he toddled off to the oven with his 'soup'. When he returned it was my turn to sneak off with my can of 'Pal Meaty Chunks' and as, quite naturally, this drew some attention in the welders crib, I explained it away as 'doing it for Paul Bandarhri'. He wasn't actually in on that night, but nobody seemed to have noticed – there was an IN but not IN fiddle on the night shift. The ~~smell~~ aroma was surprisingly not too bad as things warmed up, it might have got a bit lost or mixed in with all the other odours emanating from the oven, so there was no suspicion at all.

The bell rang for lunch, quietness settled all around and Kenny went off and returned with his "soup", sat himself down alongside his cabinet lifted the lid scooped up a spoonful of the gravy and (are you ready for this) eagerly swallowed it. It was easy to see that it wasn't what he anticipated by the look on his face, but he dipped in for another go and found a chunk of meat. 'What the ****, 'ere Percy look at this'. Percy (one of the Elders) looked at it, took a sniff, and was of the opinion that the can had the wrong label on it. How perceptive. How little did they know. The all important question was 'what the **** is it Percy, beef stew, Irish stew, do Heinz do that sort of thing in cans?' Percy didn't know but thought that the notion was at least plausible, so Kenny ate a bit and wasn't put off. By this time I was not believing the success of my jolly jape and had to go for a little walk otherwise I might have given the game away. When I returned Kenny had given up after half a can, he'd come across something gruesome (gristle?) but he was reading a paper and drinking his tea. It is said, is it not, that ignorance is bliss. Better do something about his ignorance I thought, read on.

The coup de grace.

What happened to the can of "Pal"? It was delicious, and so was the satisfaction of the success. I'd sat down and tucked in with my spoon, in Kenny's full view. He couldn't believe that I was actually eating the stuff, 'I thought that was for Paul Bandarhri' he said. 'Oorh goodness grracious me no,' I said wagging my spoon at him. I left the empty can on the table of my milling machine and went for a walk to watch shunters, wagons, and the industrial wild life at night. When I returned there was quite a gathering around my milling machine, and eventually one of the more astute amongst them put two and two together. The words; abhorrence and admiration are not natural bedfellows but it seems that views were split 50/50 on my revenge. But, I was very pleased with the whole, I think, episode, is the best word, because there's more of that ilk. The next candidate was a foreman, and I got him twice, so tune in again folks. Time for a drink.

Whilst I was getting my feet under the bench at Fords, I was also getting a Model Engineering Revolution underway. Up to that point in time it was all talk and dreams. In his younger years Dad aspired to be a lathe owner, but the closest he ever got to his dream was an instruction manual for a Drummond round bed lathe. I still have it.

From the outset it was very much a Father and Eldest Son project, my younger brother was not all that interested and Mum had not much idea as to what was going on and therefore couldn't really work up any interest, although she had often listened to Dad's assertions that if he had a lathe he could do wonders, making and repairing things and also, the necessity to own an oscilloscope was similarly solicited (Dad was an electronics engineer). Dad had always maintained that all homes should have these items in order to do wondrous things. Mum couldn't understand what these wonders could possibly be and therefore she didn't have much enthusiasm for the idea, especially as it was at a cost we couldn't afford anyway, and so it remained only a dream.

A dream, that was, until I left 'The Yard' and started to earn a respectable wage at Fords. If I put in the hours I could net £50 a week which in 1968 was a very good wage and four times what the Admiralty paid me.

Consequently, the Model Engineering thoughts and dreams that started during the closing stages of my apprenticeship now looked like becoming a reality. Many things happened at the same time; a lathe: Myford Super7 with accessories, a bench grinder and a pillar drill was ordered from Reeves.

We, that's me and Dad, were establishing the Rolleston Locoshed by doing some major size increasing alterations to our existing workshop, a small brick outbuilding with a concrete roof at the back of the house. Our first ever visit to a Model Engineer exhibition, at the Granby Halls in Leicester, was killing two birds with one stone as we also visited Dad's family over the same weekend.

Anyway, it was a long wait for the delivery from Reeves and whilst waiting we received a letter, from Reeves, demanding that we return the packing crates that the lathe and stand were sent in. As we hadn't had a delivery the immediate concern was that our lathe, which had, it seems, been dispatched, was lost or even stolen en route to us as we certainly hadn't received it. We didn't have a telephone in those days so it was all done by letters and 3d stamps. Letters went to and fro and then out of the blue it arrived. The installation into the workshop of all items was a pretty slick operation as it was very well prepared for. We were in business.

In no time at all the lathe was humming industriously, piles of swarf were generated, and, the electricity bills increased. The workshop was not in a central heating system, the whole house wasn't either, that came later, so heating in the workshop was by electric fan heater. Daylight was also in short supply (small window) so lights were on all the time. Mum soon picked up on the bigger bills, and then, another blow that undermined the justification for our prized and very expensive acquisition. One evening Dad and I were in the workshop turning out locos left, right and centre, ha! in our dreams, when the door opened and there stood Mother. In one hand she held her large glossy bright yellow PVC handbag, and in the other hand, the strap that had become detached from the bag at one end. She nodded at the lathe and said, 'will that thing mend this?' Dad and I took it in turns to hold each other up laughing, Mum was not amused.

Whilst at the Granby Halls Exhibition we bought a LBSC book, and drawings for Speedy, this was going to be the first of many models. 40 years on the first loco is still a dream. How does that happen?

A dream is never far away, but the realisation of that dream??

Answer to JB's Motoring Brain Teaser : Probably all of them.

SUE'S SPOT



Hello Folks

I know, where did I get that hat.....

Welcome to the 2010 Summer Newsletter, a bumper edition and my usual thanks, plus all members' thanks, to all of our contributors, including those good enough to send on various "funnies" (Roger for one) to me to include.

Another year of celebration for the club, how great, any excuse for a party, so many sad things come to pass it is important to enjoy the happy events whenever they occur. Last year 2009 was a big year, celebrating the club being in existence for 80 years, and this year 2010 celebrating 60 years of the track in Mote Park. We had a simply wonderful re-enactment of the opening of the track in April sixty years ago on 18th April this year. There must have been nearly 80 of us at the Do, and as I write we have the visiting clubs day ahead of us in August, when invited societies can join us in another celebration of having had our track at Mote Park for sixty years.

My single brain cell is so full of the track's sixtieth celebrations I'm having trouble thinking about anything else I should write about. So, it's just brief bits from me this time, a rather small spot from Sue for once.

The Annual Club Lunch this year, held in February, found 52 of us enjoying the food and drink at the Grangemoor Hotel in Maidstone, still our favourite venue for this occasion:



We have pictures if anyone wants copies! Roll on next year!

The Club's Enterprise is currently undergoing a radical overhaul as Dave seeks to sort out its timing issues and Tom has commenced a repaint (with a different colour).

The wooden fence in the station has been replaced by a posh new heavy metal one – I'd like to see the vandals try and kick that one down!

Most recently, the big old fir tree in the steaming bay, under which we often sheltered from the weather, has had to be cut down. However, there was no option, it had become dangerous, and to give the council their due, they were contacted Monday and took it down on Wednesday. But it has to be said we will certainly miss it!

One good thing about having “a bit of a do” is that it makes us do some of the jobs that inevitably get put off. So bench renovation, decorating the clubhouse, replacing the cracked window, putting up new curtains (thanks to Mick and Jeanne Starnes), carpet cleaning, and all sorts of “sprucing up” has been done around the premises, all before the Mayor's visit this year. All I can do is give a hearty thanks to all those who have worked so hard, and continue to do so, to make MMES better for us all.

Crowborough club recently joined us on the Members Running Wednesday in May, and I am pleased to say that they all seemed to have an enjoyable time and a good run. We have all our events listed in the Club Diary overleaf, so do get to what you can; we always have a great time. I try and keep info as up to date as possible in the clubhouse, and Himself updates the website from time to time. Newsletter articles are always welcome at any time, and if you have never written one, please give it a try.

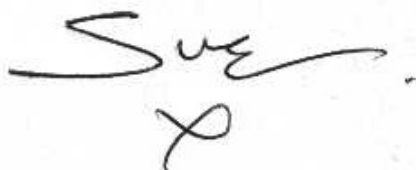
I would like to think that my newsletter this December (I'll be aiming to have it out in November, but you know how it goes by now) will be my last..... I will have then been Hon. Press Officer for 30 years so it is certainly time someone else took over..... I can't believe you aren't all fed up of me by now! Martin and I are feeling the time has come for new blood (he has been secretary for 32 years now); we have been doing our posts for so long, too long..... volunteers, please!

And finally..... should you find spelling, grammar, punctuation mistakes in this newsletter they are probably my fault, sometimes the more you look at something to make sure it is correct, the more you can miss! It means you are cleverer than me, but before you feel too pleased with yourself, bear in mind this isn't difficult!

Keep healthy, be happy, appreciate all that you have....while you still have it!

May your locomotives never stop steaming.

See you soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right and a small 'x' mark below it.

M.M.E.S. DIARY DATES 2010 updated 5/2010

Friday June 4:	Evening Run & Fish & Chips & Cheesecake £6pp
Wednesday June 16:	Members Playtime Run
Saturday June 26:	Visit to Canvey (confirmed) – Lunch provided
Friday July 2:	Evening Run & Barbecue (Bring your own food)
Saturday July 17:	Visit to Beech Hurst – Lunch NOT provided
Wednesday July 21:	Members Playtime Run
Saturday July 31:	Visit to Birchley 10½” Railway at Birchley, Biddenden at 2pm.
Friday August 6:	Preparation Evening for:
Saturday August 7:	Visiting Clubs Day to celebrate 60 years of the track in Mote Park
Saturday August 14:	Visit to North London Club at Colney Heath
Wednesday August 18:	Members Playtime Run
Saturday August 21:	The Peter Roots Family & Friends Day
Friday September 3:	Evening Run & Pizza £3pp
Wednesday September 15:	Members Playtime Run
Friday October 1:	Guest Speaker & Tea & Cakes
Wednesday October 20:	Last Members Wednesday Playtime Run of the year
Sunday October 31:	Last Public Run of the Season – and Halloween
Friday November 5:	DVD/Video & Crumpets Night £3pp
Friday December 3:	Bits & Pieces & Fish & Chips & Cheesecake £6pp
Sunday December 26:	Boxing Day Run

Wednesday Playtime Runs start about 10-30am, generally finishing early afternoon. Most Friday evening events start at @ 7-30pm; evening runs can be a bit earlier. Donation of a minimum £1 per person (if no sum is stated, or if you are not eating) for Friday evening meetings, please, it goes towards club costs, and, should you feel generous, more is always welcome at anytime. Please note that Friday evening meetings are only for members and associate members (their families), occasionally members' friends, and people who intend to join the society. Events only change if necessity demands it.

OTHER EVENTS ELSEWHERE KNOWN ABOUT AT TIME OF PRINT:

June 12-13:	Harrow & Wembley Open Weekend; Sweet Pea Rally at Fareham; Welsh National Locomotive Rally (20 th) at Cardiff; North Wilts Annual Rally
June 13:	NSPCC Fundraising Open Day at Birchley, Biddenden (10 ½” railway)
June 19:	Harlington Open Day; Bournemouth Open Weekend
June 26:	Gravesend Visiting Clubs Day
June 26-27:	LITTLELEC at Birmingham
July 3-4:	IMLEC at Bournemouth
July 10-11:	Guildford Rally
July 24-25:	Dreaming Spires Rally at Oxford
August 7:	Staines Three Gauges Open Day
August 13-14:	Frimley Lodge Open Days
August 20-22:	Bristol Exhibition
August 28-30:	Harrow & Wembley Open Weekend, Mainline Rally at Gilling
September 11-12:	Birmingham National Loco Rally; GWR 175 Rally at North Wilts; Canterbury Open Day 11 only
September 18-19:	Southern Federation Autumn Rally at Rugby and Open Day next day
October 9:	Welling Open Day
October 15-19:	Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition